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IS MAGIC LAND OZ? A. M. VOLKOV AND THE QUESTION OF ORIGINALITY

The originality of Volkov's *Wizard of the Emerald City* has traditionally been found in the revisions that allegedly made the book more Soviet. However, it is far more constructive to examine Volkov's fairy tale within the context of his own life and other publications, rather than from the generalizations and stereotypes of any particular culture or worldview. Volkov approached Baum's text like the mathematician that he was, correcting, tightening, and connecting details to make the fairy tale more rational, logical, and emotionally satisfying.

Key words: A. M. Volkov, adaptation, Soviet Union, L. F. Baum, Wizard of the Emerald City.

When L. Frank Baum published *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900, he had no idea that it would become an international phenomenon. Not only has his simple children's story been translated into almost every known written language, but the tale has also been borrowed, appropriated, and rewritten by authors, playwrights, hip-hop artists, screenwriters, gamers, and app-builders from Siberia to Boston. Inevitably, these works are compared to Baum's original and more often than not found lacking.

The one exception and by far the most popular collection of foreign Oz books began appearing in the Soviet Union in 1939, with the publication of Aleksandr Melentevich Volkov's *Wizard of the Emerald City* (*Волшебник Изумрудного города*). Since Volkov's name appeared on the cover as author and the only reference to Baum showed up in small print on the copyright page, this book was considered a uniquely Russian creation. Generations of children across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union grew up never knowing that this first volume was an adaptation. In 1959 Volkov published a significantly more revised edition that helped further distinguish and distance his work from Baum's¹. Spurred on by enthusiastic letters from young readers, Volkov eventually wrote another five original volumes in what came to be known as his Magic Land series.

When the existence of Volkov's works became known in the United States in the 1960s, Americans were astonished to see what has long been acknowledged as the first distinctly American fairy tale appropriated

in this way. Some cried plagiarism. The ambiguous U. S. legal status of translations into foreign languages complicates the situation, because although according to copyright laws, translators must acquire authorial permission, American law also allows translators to copyright their translations in their own names, since they compose in a foreign language and thereby create an original work [Venuti 1995, p. 9]. Because Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* went into the public domain in 1956 and the Soviet Union² did not sign the Universal Copyright Convention Treaty until 1973, Volkov's adaptation is ostensibly legal, but nonetheless a sense of unfair appropriation lingers in the West. Not merely a product of Cold War thinking, this difference of opinions over authorial ownership of the story exists to this day, long after the dissolution of the Soviet Union². In no small part, this conflict over the authorship of Volkov's first volume persists due to the approach taken by critics and scholars, but I will argue instead that it is more productive to analyze elements of Volkov's life and other works to discover the originality of his *Wizard of the Emerald City*.

Scholarship on Volkov's and Baum's works has typically been framed according to Cold War attributes of Soviet vs. American, and the stories are then read and interpreted through the national frame of reference of each of those cultures. As a result, studies that attempt to ascertain and explain the differences between the versions mostly fall back on the stereotypes or generalizations of each culture. For example, in 1976, the Soviet journalist A. S. Rozanov suggested that Volkov's version "acquires unexpected details, acquires a new color, a new ideological direction. Of paramount importance <...> (is the) conviction that friendship, honesty and fairness overcome adversity. («Сказка обрастает неожиданными подробностями, приобретает новую окраску, новую идейную направленность. Во главу угла <...> убежденность в том, что дружба, честность и справедливость преодолевают все невзгоды»)" [Розанов 1976, с. 19]. Ten years later, M. S. Petrovskii asserted that Baum's American version was too rational and that Volkov improved it by adding ironic psychology to the text. («Пересказ Волкова обогатил сказку иронической психологией (или, если угодно, психологической иронией)») [Петровский 1986, с. 368]. Similarly, B. A. Begak wrote that in contrast to Baum's, Volkov's work had a completely "different tonality" suggesting a fairy tale naivety without the sarcasm, irony and mockery that he saw in Baum's *Oz*. («В "Волшебнике"... господствует, однако, иная тональность. В ней преобладает простодушие. Ирония, скепсис как бы исчезают

под ласковым взглядом маленькой героини...») [Берак 1989, с. 67]. Despite their slightly different approaches, all three of these early Soviet perspectives provided only vague and superficial assessments of how Volkov allegedly cleansed the work of its capitalist undertones and imbued it with healthier communist values, thereby creating a new story, suitable for Soviet children. No doubt critics and scholars have been influenced by a sentence in an afterword appended on to the 1959 edition, where Volkov explained that Baum's *Land of Oz* "resembles the author's familiar capitalist world, where the prosperity of the minority is built upon the exploitation and deception of the majority. («... все это похоже на знакомый писателю капиталистический мир, где благополучие меньшинства строится на эксплуатации, обмане большинства»)" [Волков 1959, с. 186]. Indeed, this is one of the few quotes by Volkov that blatantly politicizes the story, and it seems likely that it was added at the behest of the publisher to help smooth over the awkward choice of adapting an American story in the Soviet Union. However, it was precisely pronouncements such as this one, often taken out of context, that have long influenced how the story has been read and interpreted.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, literary scholars still reverted to cultural clichés and Cold War attitudes, but now they paid more attention to specific details. In addition, the post-Soviet approaches to Volkov's series suggested that his books had a more negative or darker tone than Baum's, something they regarded as a product itself of Soviet culture or Russian mentality. For example, Xenia Mitrokhina saw Volkov's works as an illustration of his "willingness to conform to official policy, but also as a window into the larger Soviet mentality and its views on appropriate role models for children" [Mitrokhina 1996–1997, p. 183]. Mitrokhina described what she considered the Soviet ideology in the story, including a paranoid search for the "enemy", personalities "subordinated to the regime", and a blind obedience to authority [Mitrokhina 1996–1997, p. 184]. In a slightly more nuanced approach, Anne Nesbit claimed that Volkov "cared more about the imagination than about politics" but then like the others before her, went on to describe how Volkov "attempt(ed) to add a revolutionary strain to the story," because Elli, Volkov's main character, at one point asks why the people haven't risen up against the wicked sorceress, Bastinda [Nesbit 2001, p. 81, 84]. It is not that these elements do not exist in Volkov's text, but taken out of context like this, they do not accurately represent the overall tone and meaning of the work. Moreover, one can just as easily identify so-called Soviet details in Baum's original. For instance, Baum continually

uses the word “comrade” when referring to Dorothy’s companions, his most wicked of the witches is from the west whereas his eastern witch appears only as a victim of a flying house, and the Quadling Country, where everyone is equally rich and happy, is red. On the other hand, Volkov more often than not changes the word comrade to friend or companion, Gingema, his wicked sorceress from the east, plays a significant role in the action of the story by creating the tornado, and his southern country is prettily pink. This proves that if a reader approaches the text expecting a particular cultural or political reading, it is not difficult to find the details to support it. A clearer understanding of the text, however, is to be found by examining how Volkov joins the various elements of the story to create the work as a whole.

Coming from different perspectives and with different goals, scholars from non-literary disciplines have likewise examined Volkov’s texts and come up with findings curiously similar to those of earlier literary scholars. For instance, N. V. Latova, a sociologist, argued that Volkov’s stories were a representation of the national character of the Russian people [Латова 1995, с. 50]. In this respect she finds that whereas Baum’s main idea in his first book was moral improvement (нравственное совершенствование), Volkov’s books emphasized instead the themes of friendship, companionship, love of homeland, and the collective struggle for freedom [Латова 1995, с. 51]. Interestingly, this is how Volkov himself described his book in a letter to S. Ia. Marshak, when he was seeking help in getting his work published. “I tried to instill throughout the book the idea of friendship, genuine, selfless, big hearted friendship, and the love for one’s country. («Я старался провести через всю книгу идею дружбы, настоящей, самоотверженной, бескорыстной дружбы, идею любви к родине»)» [Галкина 2006, с. 98]. To be fair to both Volkov and Latova, these elements are to be found in Volkov’s version, but they are not what make his work original or Soviet, because friendship and home-sweet-home are also at the core of Baum’s writing, as well as common elements found in children’s literature from around the world. After all, what child anywhere in the world doesn’t long for the comfort of home and the love of family and friends? These are not unique Soviet values.

Using a more complex and compelling argument, V. G. Krasilnikova, a neurolinguist, who wrote her 1998 dissertation on semantic transformation in translations, determined that the translation of a literary text has an interpretative character, such that the translator’s worldview can influence his translation and when the “emotional-semantic dominant”

(ЭМОЦИОНАЛЬНО-СМЫСЛОВАЯ ДОМИНАНТА) of the author and translator conflict, the translation differs. Her research suggested that whereas Baum's "emotional semantic dominant" was neutral, Volkov's was dark and in fact darker than the other translations of Baum that appeared in Russia in the 1990s [Красильникова 1998, с. 19].

Although the work of both Latova and Krasilnikova is far more nuanced than that which came earlier, these scholars still see the predominant qualities of Volkov's series as being most strongly influenced by his Soviet worldview. However, the types of changes he made to the text were not culturally specific. For example, Volkov did not imbue his fairy tales with traditional Russian characters like Baba-Iaga or Ivan Durak; instead, he added a cannibal and saber-tooth tigers, both of which fall outside of Soviet, Russian, and American cultural boundaries. Similarly, many of the details that have been interpreted as "Soviet" or "dark" are in fact characteristic themes and plots found in fairy tales written in every culture, as for instance the struggle of the weak against the strong, the ultimate success of good over evil, the ubiquitous quest, and even the one-for-all-and-all-for-one mentality that goes back at least to Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*.

Another reason why it makes little sense to read Volkov's books through a "Soviet lens" is because he wrote and rewrote his Magic Land series over a period of 40 years, from 1937 until his death in 1977. This meant that he developed the series from the time of Stalin's Purges, through Khrushchev's Thaws, and on up through Brezhnev's Stagnation. It is far too simplistic to think that publishing, censorship, and the demands on children's authors stayed the same for all those years, and as such the tone and content of his works cannot simply be the product of the Soviet censor or a socialist worldview. Instead, these works show evidence of Volkov's own maturing style and confident authorial voice.

Naturally, writers are products of the cultures in which they live and the languages in which they compose, but they are first and foremost individuals with distinct value systems, interests, educations, and experiences. In order to ascertain the true novelty and attraction of Volkov's tales (or Baum's for that matter), it is far more constructive to examine the author's work within the context of his own life and his other texts, rather than from the generalizations and stereotypes of any particular culture or worldview. Volkov's fairy tale series is largely the product of the man himself, his own background and personality, which taken together helped him to create his own flavor of Oz books, which differ as significantly from Baum's, as he, Volkov, the mathematics professor

and prolific author, differed from Baum, the one-time actor, salesman, journalist, and finally children's author.

To illustrate the novelty of Volkov's version of the first volume in the series, it makes sense to examine Volkov's life and to consider the influences that helped him to create his series. In 2012 I had the great fortune of working with Volkov's archives in Tomsk, where his granddaughter, Kaleria Vivianovna Volkova, has generously deposited many of his personal papers and journals for the benefit of the Volkov museum, which opened there in 2002, under the direction of Tatiana Vasilevna Galkina of Tomsk State Pedagogical University. Reading through his daily journal entries, I learned that Volkov was above all a loving and devoted father and husband, a life-long learner, a passionate teacher, and a consummate perfectionist, someone who loved history, research, and detail. Most of all, however, Volkov loved books and learning. According to his writings, Volkov learned to read at the tender age of four and by the age of five he was enjoying the long adventure novels of Mayne Reid in translation [Волков 1978, c. 65]. Despite money being tight in the household, Volkov's father, a professional soldier and talented mathematician, subscribed to literary journals and young Sasha spent considerable time at his father's barrack's library, where he read and memorized the Russian classics. A precocious childhood reader, Volkov also devoured the translated novels of Jules Verne, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Max Pemberton, and Charles Dickens among others. He credits his mother, however, for his writer's imagination, because she spent endless winter evenings telling the children fairy tales and folklore from memory as she sewed by the fire [Волков 1978, c. 66]. Thanks to a childhood filled with books and stories, Volkov began writing his own first adventure story about a shipwrecked man on a deserted island in 1903, when he was just 12 years old, but he admits that this first effort never got passed twenty pages. Nonetheless, his love of adventure stories, history, and science was apparent already at this young age.

From 1907–1910, Volkov studied at the Tomsk Teachers Institute, founded in 1902 as the first teachers institute in Siberia. There he remembers reading Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, books that he admits made an enormous impression on him. After receiving his teacher's degree, he taught history, physics, and math to high school and younger students. He also continued his own studies, eventually earning a *dotsent* degree from Moscow State University at the age of 40. In 1931, while working as a mathematics

instructor at the Institute of Nonferrous Metals and Gold in Moscow, Volkov began translating Jules Verne's stories from the French. In his memoirs he writes of this period that he considered continuing on for the rank of full professor, but literature distracted him. "This was my passion, my calling from a young age" («Это — моя страсть, мое призвание с юных лет!»)³. *The Wizard of the Emerald City* was his first book publication, in 1939, when he was already 48 years old. Enthusiastic letters from children encouraged Volkov to continue the story of Elli and her friends in Magic Land, but his own fascination with history, science, and technology led him to compose historical novels and short stories filled with adventure as well as more scientific-technological literature dealing with topics as diverse as space travel, military conflict, and fishing. Thus, over the rest of his long life, in addition to continuing the Magic Land series, he painstakingly researched and wrote over a dozen historical novels, military tales, and scientific works for children.

These other writings, particularly the longer historical fiction, for children provide a useful background upon which to examine Volkov's Magic Land series, since these works perhaps better illustrate Volkov's own interests, voice, and literary style which appear in his Magic Land series as well. In a letter to the State Children's Publisher, Detgiz, in 1937, Volkov admits that having taught history to middle school students for many years gave him the inspiration to write historical fiction for children, whose interests and tastes he claimed to know well as a result of his early years as a teacher [Галкина 2006, с. 99]. Volkov's first effort at historical fiction, *The Wonderful Balloon* [*Chudesnyi shar*], a story about the earliest hot air balloon ride in Russia in 1731, appeared in print in 1940, but he had begun work on this story already in 1931, several years before he happened upon L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. In contrast to the two to three weeks Volkov admitted to having spent "translating" Baum's *Oz*, he spent a full year and a half composing the first draft of *The Wonderful Balloon*, while working full time as a professor and raising two young sons of his own.

Even before the publication of these first efforts, Volkov had already begun the research and writing of his next more ambitious and mature work in the historical fiction genre for children: *Two Brothers* (*Dva brata*), which focused on Peter the Great and his construction of St. Petersburg. He followed this up with *Architects* (*Zodchie*), set in the 16th century, during the early reign of Ivan the Terrible. Both of these books describe a significant period in Russian history and explore the rule of a prominent and pivotal Russian ruler, but they also provide interesting

detail about the trades and technology of the periods. For instance, the main character in *Two Brothers* becomes a skilled, award-winning lathe operator and in *Architects*, the narrative focuses on the architectural talents of a fictional character, said to have helped in the construction of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow. Perhaps as a result of negative reviews of his first historical volume that reproached him for historical inaccuracies and the lack of ideology, Volkov researched and wrote these next two historical novels over a long period, spending twenty-three years (1938–1961) revising *Two Brothers* and eight years (1946–1954) working on *Architects*. Thus, these two works represent Volkov's mature style and exhibit elements and qualities that spill over into his work on the Magic Land series. For instance, Volkov paid acute attention to factual detail in these works, using over 440 footnotes between the two books to elaborate on the historical or cultural significance of some element or to provide deeper context for better understanding of the plot and characters. He also created highly engaging, adventure-driven plots that read more like the adventure novels of Jules Verne than the expected socialist realist stories of the time. Furthermore, perhaps drawing on his love of Twain, Volkov created well-drawn, emotionally complex fictional characters, with particular attention given to their relationships and friendships, as well as detailed, intricate, and deeply woven story lines. For each of these novels he researched the language of the time and used both the historically accurate vocabulary and idioms of the day for further historical accuracy. Moreover, he did not write down to his young audience. There is no evidence that he simplifying the history or language in either volume to make them easier for young readers to understand or appreciate. Thus in his role as a children's author, Volkov took the opportunity to teach and not simply to entertain. Accordingly, he put a strong emphasis on factual accuracy, technology and trades, caring relationships and authentic role models; these are some of the very same elements that Volkov actively sought to include in his *Wizard of the Emerald City* and especially in its sequels.

Because he came to children's literature and publishing later in life from a background of math, physics, and pedagogy, Volkov had an eye for detail and accuracy, but also early on paid close attention to the advice of his mentors and friends and to the opinions of his critics and reviewers. Ultimately, the changes he wrought on Baum's original *Oz* came not from his Soviet worldview, but rather from his educational background and the opinions of those more practiced in the literary world. To a large extent, Volkov approached Baum's first text like an editor, correcting,

tightening, and flushing out details where necessary. Thus, his changes to the text can be broadly classified as falling into three somewhat overlapping categories: correcting errors, strengthening logic, and changing the emotional tone.

According to his 1937 correspondence with Marshak, Volkov felt that Baum's story contained so-called mistakes and too many irrelevant details that distracted the reader from enjoying the plot [Галкина 2006, c. 97–98]. Some of the things to be corrected were simple matters of fact such as changing Baum's tin woodsman to an iron woodsman, since iron rusts and tin does not. Likewise, Volkov correctly renamed Baum's cyclone a hurricane and changed the fuel in the Wizard's balloon from hot air to hydrogen gas. Volkov also filled in and connected details that were left unexplained in Baum's story. For example, instead of giving Elli a house in Kansas, which would be difficult to rebuild after every storm, Volkov's version had Elli's family living in a trailer, with the wheels removed. He explained that the school was too far away for Elli to attend, which explained why she spent her days at home and instead learned to read, write, and count from her father. Volkov's Wizard comes from Kansas, not Omaha, so that Elli meets him at the market when she returns home, providing a structural frame that gives the story symmetry. Unlike Baum, Volkov related the emotions of Elli's parents upon losing her and again upon her return home, thereby adding to the emotional depth of the tale.

Volkov also deleted two of Baum's chapters, "Attacked by the Fighting Trees" and "The Dainty China Country," which he felt were not related to the storyline and merely slowed down the action. In addition, he left out much of the backstory of how the flying monkeys fell under their curse of servitude.

Furthermore, unlike in Baum's Oz, the names of the inhabitants of Magic Land have meaning. For example, the Munchkins become *Zhevuny* or Munchers, because as Volkov explains, they seem to be constantly chewing. Likewise the Winkies become *Miguny* because they continuously blink. And Baum's Quadlings become *Boltuny* or Chatterers, because they never stop talking. Whereas Baum only named Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, Volkov called his good fairies of the north & south Villina and Stella respectively, and the wicked sorceresses of the east & west became Gingema and Bastinda. Volkov gave other supporting characters proper names as well; for instance, he called the Queen of the Mice: Ramina, the Guardian of the Gates Faramant and the Soldier with the Green Whiskers became Din Gior. Notice that none of these name changes show the slightest hint of being culturally specific; they are instead pure fabrication and fantasy,

but according to Volkov, they made the story less abstract and thereby more enjoyable and satisfying for children.

Finally, since all the other animals in the story can speak, Volkov also logically gave Totoshka a voice. With a speaking part, the little dog became a much more involved and active participant in the plot. For instance, Volkov explained that Totoshka discovered the sorceress's silver shoes in her cave and retrieved them for Elli, whose own shoes were worn out and unlikely to make the long journey on the Yellow Brick Road. Also, it was Totoshka who sagely suggested that they could each use the magic cap thus they had more than simply three wishes. Finally, it is due to Totoshka's intelligence and curiosity, not fear, that he ultimately revealed the Wizard behind the curtain. Volkov also gave him a backstory that provided motivation to return to Kansas in that he had an on going feud with a neighboring dog named Hector. These changes to the plot provide a segue to the next category of alterations, those that provide better logic.

Apparently, as a trained mathematician, Volkov wanted the story's details to add up and be more rational or scientific, but more than anything, he felt the plot needed motivation. In a short essay published in *Detskaia literatura*, Volkov explained: "I was not satisfied with many things in the Baum fairytale; the storyline was indirect and unclear and everything happened by accident. («Многие в сказке Баума меня не удовлетворяло, не было в ней ясной и прямой сюжетной линии, все совершилось случайно»)" [Волков 1968, с. 22]. These reflections may in fact stem from the criticism of Iu. M. Nagibin, who wrote the first and only published review of Volkov's 1939 text. Nagibin questioned the causality, or the lack of logic and motivation, which he erroneously assumed were present in the original and that he believed Volkov had deleted. For instance, if it is a magic land why then can't the Wizard also be a real wizard? Why is there magic just for the sake of magic? Nagibin explained: "A child lives in a causal world: it is natural that he will seek an internal plausibility, causality in every situation. Even in the fantastic, he will seek an internal plausibility, causality. («Ребенок живет в причинном мире: естественно, что в каждом следствии ищет он внутреннего правдоподобия, причинности. Даже в фантастике ищет он внутреннего правдоподобия, причинности»)" [Нагибин 1940, с. 61]. Nagibin concluded that young readers would have too many unanswered questions and would consequently be unsatisfied with the story. Likewise, Marshak was known as a consummate editor, and after a brief correspondence, Volkov met with Marshak in person

to further discuss his writing. Thus, it is entirely likely that Marshak's strong-handed editing is also to be felt in this tale⁴. This feedback on his first efforts at writing for children upset Volkov but did not deter him. Instead, it pushed him to revise and innovate even more; he rewrote up to a quarter of the text for the 1959 version.

The biggest change and the one that makes his story significantly different from Baum's involved providing primary motivation for the plot. Instead of accidentally dropping her house on the Wicked Witch and then by chance befriending others in need of the Wizard's help along the way, in Volkov's work, Elli's quest was foretold in the Good Fairy's magic book. Moreover, her wishes would be fulfilled when she helped three others fulfill their wishes, and so the story had motivation and Elli had an intentional rather than a random or happenstance quest. Likewise, the hurricane was not simply an act of nature, as in Baum, but was intentionally created by the Wicked Sorceress Gingema, who hated people and wanted to destroy them all. The Good Fairy Villina, however, changed the spell so that the tornado only picked up Elli's home, which was supposed to be empty.

Volkov also made emotional changes to the text. As discussed earlier, various scholars have concluded that Volkov's version was darker and gloomier than Baum's. However, the situation is not that black and white. It is true that Volkov added a chapter that describes Elli's near demise at the hands of a cannibal and another tells of a frightful flood, but these merely add to the adventures of the tale. Volkov also consciously added numerous details both large and small that softened the horrors and actively minimized the depressing details of Baum's story. In the first few paragraphs of the book, he actually played down the drabness and sad details of life on the Kansas prairie that Baum described at length in his opening chapter. As we know, in Baum's story, Dorothy was an orphan, living with her aunt and uncle, but in Volkov's 1959 version, Elli instead lived with her own parents and additionally had other relatives living nearby as neighbors. Consequently, Aunt Em's scary hostility in the original was erased completely, because now Elli interacted with her own loving mother and father. Furthermore, this strengthened the logic behind Elli's desire to return home, despite all the attractions of the Emerald City. Likewise, Totoshka no longer bore the guilt of making Elli miss the balloon out of Magic Land; in the revised version a sudden large gust of wind, a natural occurrence, is responsible.

Another significant rewrite involved softening Elli's suffering. In 1959 Villina, the Good Fairy, takes the credit for killing the Evil Sor-

ceress, thus easing Elli's horrible guilt. Likewise, Volkov included details of the food that Elli ate and how/where she slept each night, thereby removing the fears that she was starving and homeless. Furthermore, Oz Goodwin, was not as cruel and self-interested in Volkov's version. He did not send Elli to her certain death nor did he ask Elli to kill the Evil Sorceress, but simply rather to free the Migyny from having to spend their days collecting leeches, spiders, and bats for the wicked Bastinda. He also introduced Fregosa, Bastinda's cook, who became an ally for Elli and helped her cope with her incarceration and separation from her fellow travelers. With these changes, Volkov erased the very real seeming dangers that could easily terrify a young child, and replaced them with fantasy adventures that would provide thrills but not nightmares.

From the sheer quantity and quality of the changes Volkov wrought on the original text, it is clear that his was not an act of translation as we think of it today. Instead, he used Baum's canvas to paint his own, in some ways more logical, rational, and factually accurate fairy tale. He wanted not just to entertain children with whimsy and magic, but also to educate them and teach them about the world, which could only be achieved if the stories made sense and were free from error. Highly educated with a life-long thirst for knowledge, Volkov was a first-rate pedagogue and all of his books, even his fairy tales, reflect his desire to inspire, nurture, and instruct. Whereas Baum admitted that he wrote his Oz stories off the top of his head, with no eye for detail, logic or consistency, Volkov crafted his Magic Land series far more carefully, taking into consideration input from critics and readers as well. In addition, by the time the 1959 version of the first story was published, he had already written and published seven of his own completely original books for children, including carefully researched historical novels and military stories, so he was by then a far more confident and experienced author with his own clear voice and style. Thus, with time, experience, education, and a lot of critical feedback behind him, it was inevitable that Volkov would ultimately make the 1959 version of the Wizard his own.

So, when can an imitation be considered an original? When it stands up to the test of time. In 2014 Volkov's *Wizard of the Emerald City* celebrated its 75th anniversary and can be found on sale in Russian bookstores, displayed proudly side-by-side with contemporary translations of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

References

¹ The 1939 edition is closest to Baum's original, whereas the 1959 version exhibits the most significant alterations and plot changes, as well as new illustrations

by L. V. Vladimirskii. There were also minor changes made to the 1941 and 1971 editions that mostly involve word changes and added names. As a result of the changes to the 1971 edition, Volkov more effectively linked all six books in his Magic Land series. This further supports the idea that Volkov edited his series for consistency and logic.

² Even today when Baum's work is widely recognized in Russia as the original source for Volkov's first volume, it is not uncommon to encounter articles that insist on the originality of Volkov's work. For instance, a piece in the online newspaper *Томский обзор* from 25 June 2014 suggests that Tomsk was the inspiration for Volkov's Magic Land: «Сравнительно недавно Томск узнал, что он не просто город в Сибири, а еще и прообраз знаменитого Изумрудного города из серии детских книг Александра Волкова» (URL: <http://obzor.westsib.ru/article/415869> (accessed on 26.06.2014); heart-felt thanks to V. M. Galkin for sending me this citation).

³ Архив А. М. Волкова. Дневник. Кн. 4 (Томск)

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