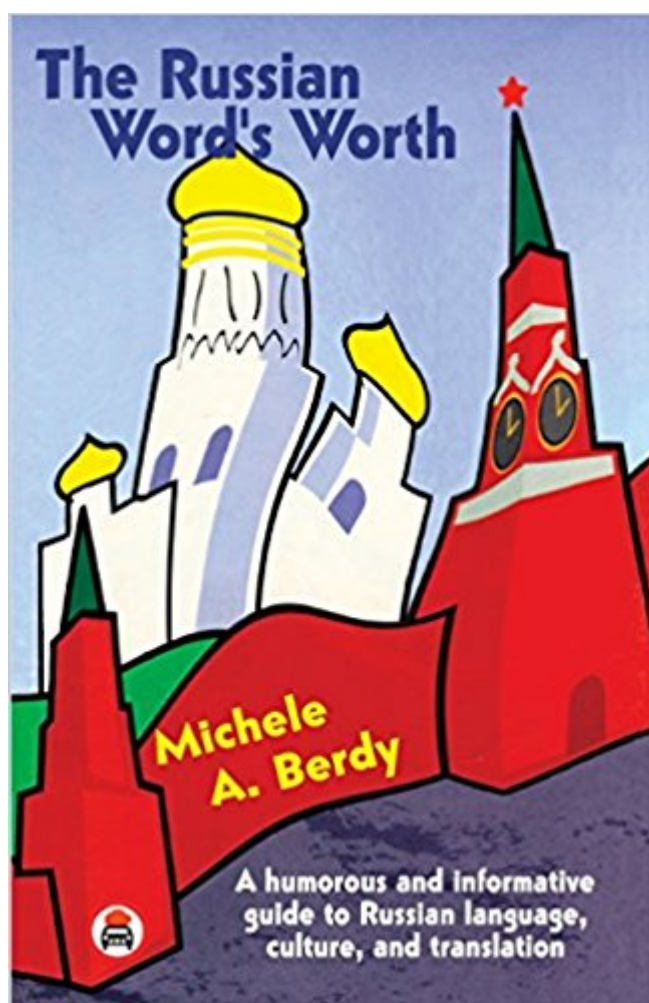


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The Russian Word's Worth: A Humorous And Informative Guide To Russian Language Culture And Translation (New Russian Writing)



Synopsis

The book will surely find its way into the classroom. Publishing Trends A quirky, opinionated, sometimes hilarious yet always thoughtful and authoritative guide, Michele A. Berdy looks at Russia's changing culture, politics, and daily life through language and the art of translation. She explores the language of popular and youth culture, politics, the workplace, culture (high and low), and the comical struggle of expats trying to cope with a foreign language and culture. The entries in this book are grouped thematically, and with the forty-eight page index, it can be used as a dictionary. The Russian Word's Worth is essential reading for students and teachers of Russian, translators, Russia-watchers, and anyone who wants to understand Russia today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This volume represents a collection of 230 columns on Russian language and culture published in the English language Moscow Times. Its author describes herself as: "...an American who learned Russian as a second language, who has lived mainly in Moscow since Brezhnev was in his dotage... For nearly all of these years I have been translating and interpreting in various contexts and for even longer I have been pondering, discovering, contemplating, positing, theorizing, and occasionally arguing about what makes Russians so, well, Russian and how that [compares with] what makes Americans so American." Many Russophiles have already discovered Berdy, waiting eagerly for her column to become available each week on the Moscow Times website. This book is

suitable for any English speaker professionally involved with Russian and/or living in Russia, learners of the language of virtually any level, and general Russophiles (garden variety or exotic). Topics Berdy covers include the political (linguistic quirks of Russian leaders), the personally serious (expressing condolences in Russian), the etymological (why the Russian equivalents of complain, pathetic, welcome and salary have the same root), the annoying (especially Moscow traffic and drivers), and the just plain essential (calling and dealing with a plumber in Russia, or excusing oneself to visit the facilities), twenty-first language slang, as well as Soviet-speak remnants. All of these are treated in an entertaining and ironic style, suffused with the author's deep knowledge of both languages and cultures. Berdy's book fills this reviewer, who has been working professionally as a translator of Russian since Brezhnev, with what the Russians call "white envy."

This is not a book which will teach you a few Russian idioms. Rather, it's a book which will give you the Russian context; it will give the Russian sense. I am anti-Kantian and for me language IS creation of reason. In my view our thoughts and activities are already linguistic -- they are saturated with language. Ergo, if you want to understand the Russians and make sense of us, you must understand the language. This new book will help you along the way. Michele Berdy is an American and a columnist at "The Moscow Times" - an English-language paper in Moscow. I read this paper and do not think much of it - their editorials and op-eds treat Russia with patronizing superiority. But Berdy's columns collected in this book are different. They are refreshing and most of them are non-judgmental and apolitical. She is an open-minded person who loves to dive into non-political linguistic discoveries. Although she does look at Russian language through American prism, she does it inoffensively and with good humor. She opens a curtain, behind which one discovers riches, nuances, and idiosyncrasies of Russian language. There are a lot of them, some riches are better than others. For example, "six" is "shest" in Russian, but "the number six" is "shestyorka". But wait, "shestyorka" also means Lada car, while "on shestyorka" means "he is an unimportant person, a lackey". "Yaschik" could mean a box, a crate, a TV set, or top-security military enterprise, all depends on a context. I won't translate to you "Swedish family" or "his roof has slipped/moved" -- you must read this book. I like her referring to Griboedov and other Russian literati. Russian has a great number of sayings borrowed from literature -- they became aphorisms. We call them "the winged expressions".

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