

On Liapunov
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Liapunov (1) Vadim Vsevolodovich, Ph.D. (2) American (3) philologist, college professor, (4) and scholar of Russian literature, (5) childhood and boyhood spent in Estonia and Germany, educated (6) at Harvard (7) and Yale Universities, (8) teaching at Indiana University since 1976, (9) translator and annotator of the philosophical texts of Mikhail Bakhtin, (10) master of the zametka, baritone soloist with the Yale Russian Chorus. (11) Father, grandfather; (12) much loved and respected also by students, colleagues and friends, (13) who, on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday, congratulate him and look forward to many more years of learning with him.

1) Descendant of the sometimes heroic, sometimes meddling Liapunov brothers of Riazan, opponents of Boris Godunov, see N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo*, 5th edition (Saint Petersburg: 1845), vol. 12. Solovev berates the ambitious and unscrupulous Prokopii Liapunov, "who was unable to subordinate his personal aspirations to the common good," and, in conspiring with his brother Zakhar to depose Tsar Vasiliu Shuiskii, stands accused of prolonging the Time of Troubles (though Prokopii did distinguish himself in battle with the Poles; see S. M. Solov'ev, *History of Russia*, vol. 15, ed. and trans. G. E. Orchard [Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1989], 134, 222 and *passim*).

2) Yale University, 1969.

3) Multiply refugeeed, under sponsorship of Tolstoy Foundation arrived in New York in 1950 via a Displaced Persons camp. Claims to no longer re - member Estonian, but sang in Estonian for his colleague Felix Oinas on the occasion of that scholar's retirement.

4) Since 1976, at Indiana University; before then (in reverse order) New York University, Yale University, and Wesleyan University. Has also taught at Brown University, San Francisco State College, and in the Russian Schools of Middlebury College and Norwich University.

5) Noted in particular for his work on Pushkin, Baratynskii, and the poetry of the Golden Age, but has written and lectured also on Solzhenitsyn, Brodskii, Bakhtin.

6) Began high school at Benjamin Franklin in East Harlem with no knowledge of English; graduated valedictorian three years later; wrestled; track and field athlete; lifted weights; weights later replaced by thick encyclopedia volumes.

7) To which he proceeded from Benjamin Franklin High School, having determined that he wished to study Russian literature. Received partial scholarship, through the intervention of the historian Mikhail Karpovich, who also offered much personal kindness and support—perhaps the model for his own future treatment of students? Enjoyed the end of an era at Harvard: the last years of full maid service for all students living in dormitories, to which have been attributed his subsequent housekeeping habits.

8) Where he was the admiring student of Kiril Taranovsky and Roman Jakobson. Perhaps he

hears their voices when he undertakes to speak about literature and unconsciously mimics their gestures while lecturing; those of us who studied under Vadim certainly suffer this mild and, I hope, flattering form of hysteria.

9) Has directed dissertations at Indiana and at Yale on Blok, Brodskii, Dostoevskii, Gogol', Korolenko, Nabokov, Romanov, and Tsvetaeva, among others.

10) Daunting texts, subject to much mistranslation, misinterpretation, and ignorance of the cultural and philosophical context, until meticulously and masterfully rendered by Liapunov. See: M. M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. and notes Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); M. M. Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, ed. Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist, trans. and notes Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993); and the currently emerging M. M. Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, ed. S. G. Bocharov and L. A. Gogotishvili (Moscow: Russkie slovari, 1997-), to which Liapunov is contributing commentary and notes.

11) Is reputed to have accompanied Joan Baez in cafes all around Cambridge in the 1950s; but I have never heard him sing!

12) See: Alya, Liza, Danny, and, in the lapse between celebration and publication, Tanya (personal communication).

13) See contents of present volume.