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AN ANXIETY FOR INFLUENCE: SHAKESPEAREAN THEMES AND IMAGES
THROUGH THE PRISM OF RUSSIAN MODERNISM
(POETRY OF THE EARLY XX CENTURY)

By

EKATERINA SUKHANOVA

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Comparative Literature in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The
City University of New York

2001

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

2/19/00
Date

12/19/00
Date

Daniel Gerould
Chair of Examining Committee

William S. Coleman
Executive Officer

Prof. Amy Mandelker

Prof. Robert McCoy

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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by

Ekaterina Sukhanova

Advisor: Professor Daniel Gerould

The present dissertation offers an attempt to fill the gap in substantive studies on Shakespeare's reception during the age of Russian modernism. Works of Russian modernist poets opened a qualitatively new stage in Russian appropriation of Shakespeare. This change in the reception of Shakespeare serves as a litmus-paper which helps to illustrate two major characteristics of Russian modernist poetry: an intense focus on inner experience and a desire to escape the "badger's hole" (an expression of Mandelstam) of one's concrete national and socio-historical surroundings.

The issue of tradition as both archaistic and innovative can be explored profitably via Yury Lotman's model of culture as a dialogue and his theory of textual

functions, which has been chosen as the main analytical tool to study the mechanisms of the appropriation of Shakespearean text in Russian literature.

Within this theory, a literary text is seen as capable of entering into a complex relation with the cultural context and with readers; such a text may cease being a mere piece of information addressed by the transmitter to the recipient and become an independent conversational partner with capacity for memory and for creating new meanings. Through close textual analysis, the present dissertation aims at demonstrating that, within Russian cultural context, all functions of the Shakespearean text came to full actualization only at the time of literary modernism.

Themes and images taken from Shakespeare came to be used as parts of a new poetic language, inextricably belonging to the inner world of a twentieth-century author. The semiotic character of the Shakespearean text, brought to the foreground by Russian modernists, was conducive to generic (from the tragic to the lyric), cultural (from the social to the personal) and stylistic (from the plot to the word) transpositions taking place in Russian poetry of the period.

The Shakespearean text became capable of generating new meanings, effectively functioning as a participant in this poetical dialogue between two cultures.

Acknowledgments

I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to my advisor Prof. Daniel Gerould for his guidance and encouragement throughout my work on the dissertation. I would also like to thank Prof. Amy Mandelker, without whose valuable help this project would not have taken off. I am also grateful to Prof. Richard McCoy for taking the time to be on my dissertation committee and for his insightful comments.

Finally, I owe deep thanks to my parents for their unswerving support and belief in my project.

PREFACE

The present study is the first attempt to provide a general outline of Shakespearean themes and images in the poetry of Russian modernism. Works of Russian modernist poets opened a new stage in the Russian appropriation of Shakespeare, culminating in an intensive meaning-generating dialogue between cultures.

Shakespeare's texts contained a unique dynamic energy enabling the assertion of independence on the part of those writing in the Russian literary tradition. When a foreign text is received by a new audience, it may gain the capacity to function as a collective cultural memory of its new audience. This capacity, however, may be achieved only through the process of actualization of all textual functions as defined by Yury Lotman. Being at first defined in Russian literature by way of negation because of their lying outside the dominant European tradition (normative French Classicism) and being received within a framework of critical debate, Shakespearean texts acquire the qualities of a cultural model during Russian literary modernism. Therefore they take on the dialogic quality defined by Lotman as the necessary precondition for cultural self-determination. The assimilation of Shakespeare at various stages of Russian literary history accomplishes

needful transformations in Russian literary and cultural self-identification through transformations in genre--from tragedy to lyric, style--plot to word, and in cultural identity--from the social to the personal. Shakespeare offers a unique dialogic situation whose analysis may provide valuable insight on the mechanisms of assimilation of foreign texts by Russian modernist poetry as contrasted with this assimilation during the preceding epochs of Russian literature.

Due to peculiar political circumstances, the heritage of Russian poetical modernism had until recently remained outside of the Russian scholars' attention. Indeed, the very term "modernism" along with the names of some turn-of-the century poetical schools, had fallen out of use in the Soviet Union. At best, these terms were mentioned only in an apologetic tone, as if referring to some youthful indiscretion of recognized poets; more often, such terms (as symbolism, for example), were used as a strong term of disapproval. The typical context in which these terms could be used is illustrated by the following quotation from the 1939 Soviet literary textbook, the only one approved to be used in classrooms across the country: "The works of acmeism reflect the parasite psychology of the bourgeois period of decaying capitalism and the fear of the ruling class in the face of growing revolutionary proletariat" (Michailovsky 338).

For many years afterwards, official Soviet literary criticism continued to treat the very term "modernism" with a great suspicion, as a trend of social pessimism and irresponsibility, which presumably could have occurred only in bourgeois societies and, though helpful in describing some social conflicts, ignored the complexity of real life. Referring to the authors of modernism, the *Soviet Literary Encyclopedia* published in 1987 listed only foreign names, with the sole exception of Mayakovsky. For all writers considered "progressive" (Mayakovsky, Brecht, Becher, Eluard, Aragon, etc.) influence of literary school which could be linked to modernism was supposed to have ended in a break up with the literary school after it started displaying "typical for modernism features of social indifference, anti-historicism, formalism and hermeneutic" (226).

Even when the term "modernism" was avoided, early the twentieth century Russian poetry and its connections to world literature still held a dubious value within official Soviet scholarship: "Decadent, symbolist interpretations of Shakespeare did not have a basis in our country and did not spread widely, precisely because we have firmly grasped the realist nature of the great English playwright's work" (Anikst 5). Under these circumstances, it should not be surprising that the modernist period only recently has been

given serious attention in the critical literature of the former USSR.

However, the disappearance of the term "modernism" could not have eliminated the traces of the profound influence of modernist poetry on subsequent Russian literature. Russian modernism can be said to have shaped the development of Russian poetry throughout the twentieth century, not unlike the historical events of that period, which, as Pasternak put it in his *Doctor Zhivago*:

. . . contained the foretaste of new things, those portents and promises which before the war [WWI] . . . had appeared in Russian thought, art and life, in the destiny of Russia as a whole and in his own, Zhivago's.

В этот круг, родной и привычный, входили также те признаки нового, те обещания и предвестия, которые показались на горизонте перед войной, . . . между двенадцатым и четырнадцатым годами, в русской мысли, русском искусстве и русской судьбе, судьбе общероссийской и его собственной, Живаговской (3: 160).

Also contributing to the lack of studies on Shakespeare and Russian modernist poetry is the peculiar situation with regard to the study of literary influences and interrelations itself. Under Stalin, Comparative Literature as a subject of academic study was outlawed: the very possibility of admitting a foreign influence on any recognized Russian author was simply unacceptable. For a long time, engaging in comparative literary studies in the USSR required considerable diplomatic skill: an overly strong insistence on the existence of parallels between Russian classical works and works of foreign authors risked coming under attack for lack of national self-consciousness and originality. "Bad critics always prefer looking for old ready labels to a search for new definitions" (*Shakespeare in World Literature* 27).

When speaking of Shakespeare's themes and images as seen through the prism of Russian modernism, both sides of this poetical dialogue should be paid attention to: Russian modernist poetry may also be viewed through the prism of its reaction to Shakespeare, which represents no lesser interest for the purposes of present study. Just as a prism disperses a single ray of light, resulting in multiple layers of different wave frequency, Shakespearean themes

and images enter in a complex relationship within Russian poetical texts.

In contrast to previous periods of Russian literature, Shakespeare in the modernist period did not serve merely as a cultural icon or as an embodiment of tragedy. Images taken from Shakespeare were used not as a metaphor easily reduced to a specific object, but as parts of a new poetic language, inextricably belonging to the inner world of the twentieth century author. The Shakespearean text became capable of generating new meanings and thus was no longer functioning as a transmitter of information but rather as a participant in this poetical dialogue between two cultures.

The goal of this study to demonstrate the evolving perception of the Shakespearean text in various epochs of Russian literature, analyzing the expanding functions of the Shakespearean text throughout the preceding periods of Russian literature and showing the major principles on which the modernist approach was based, with concrete textual analysis drawn from a wide body of poetical works.

The foregoing should serve to establish that the reception and appropriation of Shakespeare in Russia (and the underlying problem of interaction with the preceding literary tradition) do not fit comfortably into Harold Bloom's concept of the "anxiety of influence." Rather, as Michael Wachtel has

observed à propos of the Russian Symbolists, Russian modernist poets manifest "an anxious desire to be influenced." For these poets, tradition is a challenge that will not provide convenient solutions, but which opens an impulse towards the future, essential for finding one's own voice. Thus tradition, in its transformative, creative aspect, has kept its vitality and dynamism for Russian poets: "To all of us tradition has appeared; to all it has promised a face; to all, each in a different way, it has kept its promise" (Pasternak, *On Art* 2).

The issue of tradition as both conservative and innovative can be explored profitably via Lotman's concept of the functions of literary text. Chapter One applies Lotman's theory of the five potential functions of text (communication between transmitter and recipient, between audience and cultural tradition, communication of a reader with her/himself, communication between reader and text, and communication between text and cultural context) to the interaction of Russian modernist poetry with the Shakespearean text.

Finally, the discussion will turn to the tracing of the generic, cultural, and stylistic transpositions in Russian poetry arising through interaction with Shakespeare. Each of these transpositions may, with a certain degree of

abstraction, be associated with a specific period of Russian literature.

The generic transposition from the tragic to the lyric stimulated by Russian literature's contact with Shakespeare will be explored through the work of Pushkin, whose heritage played a key role in the reception of Shakespeare by Russian modernists.

The cultural shift of artistic interest from the social to the personal will be reviewed in Chapters Two and Three within the context of Russian classicist literature (preceding Pushkin) and realistic literature (following Pushkin), in which Shakespeare's themes were integrated into the current social agenda. It would be the task of the Russian modernist to return to Pushkin's psychological approach towards Shakespeare and to develop this approach further.

The stylistic transposition manifested in the shift of gravity from the plot to the word will be addressed in Chapter Four through textual analysis of selected works by the major poets of Russian modernism: Akhmatova, Balmont, Bely, Bryusov, Mandelstam, Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, among others.

The destiny of Shakespeare's heritage in Russian modernist poetry was defined by the notion of dialogue, of an interaction between text and cultural contexts, rather

than by the Darwinian struggle for shaping one's identity through repression of another's legacy, as suggested by Harold Bloom. Joseph Brodsky, whose own aesthetics were influenced by Russian modernism, made a strong case for literary tradition in a context involving discussion of the poetry of Pasternak, Tsvetaeva and Rilke:

A true poet does not avoid influences or continuities but frequently nurtures them, and emphasizes them in every possible way. . . . Fear of influence, fear of dependence, is the fear--the affliction--of a savage, but not of culture, which is all continuity, all echo. That is why we have so many "variations on a theme" and pastiches; that is why genre and strophic imitations are so widespread, why such forms as the sonnet, terza rima, rondeau, ghazal, and so on, exist (*A hidden duet* 13).

This approach towards tradition as a creative inspiration rather than a potentially destructive force which must be overcome, has shaped the dialogue between the Russian modernists and Shakespeare. In seeking what to appropriate from other literary traditions and epochs, Shakespeare was among those chosen by Russian modernist poets not because he

was a canonical figure, or because he expressed Renaissance humanistic values, but because his work was seen as providing an especially extensive range of interpretations.

A modified Library of Congress system of transliterating Russian is used, except for personal names traditionally known in an alternative spelling (e.g. Mandelstam, Dostoyevsky) to English speakers. Unless otherwise specified, the translations are done by the author.

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INTRODUCTION

Я получил блаженное наследство--
Чужих певцов блуждающие сны.

I received a blissful inheritance:
The wandering dreams of foreign bards.

O. Mandelstam

"Бурю и натиск" символизма следует
рассматривать как явление бурного и
пламенного приобщения русской литературы к
поэзии европейской и мировой.

"The Sturm und Drang" of [Russian] symbolism
should be seen as an impetuous and ardent
process of bringing Russian literature closer
to European and world poetry.

O. Mandelstam, *Word and Culture* 204

CRITICAL BACKGROUND ON MODERNIST DIALOGISM

Like any scientific classification system, the term "modernism" necessarily reduces the complex and contradictory relationship of various forces contributing to a phenomenon; "modernism," as Irving Howe points, is a term that is "elusive and protean, and its definition hopelessly complicated" (*The Idea of the Modern* 13).

Efim Etkind convincingly argues that the problem of terminology is common across all literary traditions of various nations and epochs:

Italian Renaissance, French Enlightenment (the feud between Voltaire and Rousseau!), English Romanticism (the quarrel between Southey and Byron), Russian realistic novel (the mutual dislike of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky); each of these trends is an example of a contradictory unity; contemporaries and close heirs see irreconcilable differences, while more distant descendants see unity (*There, Inside* 10).

Nevertheless, the term "modernism" has firmly established itself within Russian literary criticism:

With the historicizing vision of hindsight, as the early twentieth century receded into the past, Russians were able to view the culture of the era as a single, unified phenomenon which may be designated--at least provisionally--as the "age of Russian Modernism" (B. Gasparov et al, *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism* 1).

In 1940, Akhmatova herself found it possible to use the term "modernists" to characterize the developments in Russian poetry in which she herself has been an active participant: "Modernists have accomplished an important thing for Russia. . . . They have once again taught the people how to love poetry" (Chukovskaya 1: 135). Indeed, Akhmatova clearly applied the term "modernist" to her own work; in a conversation recorded in 1952, Akhmatova openly said "we modernists . . ." (Chukovskaya 2: 35).

Admittedly, the concrete definition of Russian literary modernism remains just as elusive as that of Western modernism:

The term of Russian modernism denotes a chronology of ideas and personalities rather than a particular style, even though the approximate

period 1900 to 1925 is identifiable with certain formal and thematic characteristics (Terras 284).

Giving a definition of the Russian modernism, Terras notes such qualities as "audacious experimentation, artistic synthetism, forceful expression of individuality, and works of literature and art that stood in sharp opposition to traditional values" (284). A foreseeable objection is that the qualities listed by Terras may be seen as insufficiently specific. Rather, they seem to be applicable more generally to the moment of the avant-garde, as outlined in Poggioli's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, understood as a dynamic moment, inherent in all artistic movements and not firmly restricted to a particular historical epoch. As Richard Chase has put it, "under modern conditions the avant-garde is a permanent movement" (145). However, since it was modernist literature that first afforded us with a paradigm of avant-garde, it may be argued that though some of these qualities referred to by Terras were perhaps present at the beginning of each new literary trend, their combined intensity did not reach the momentum attained during the onset of modernism.

In both Russian and Western critical literature, one can often see Russian poetry of the last years of the nineteenth

and early twentieth century referred to as the Russian "Silver Age" (in parallel to what is known as the Golden Age of first half of the nineteenth century). Omry Ronen, and now Terras, have dedicated an entire book to the history of the "Silver Age" term and to the discussion of the term's appropriateness. Some scholars determine the timeframe of the Silver Age "with a prologue and an epilogue" as starting from 1880, the date of Dostoyevsky's famous speech on Pushkin and ending with Alexander Blok's speech "On a poet's calling" (also dedicated to Pushkin) in 1921 (P'yanykh, *The Silver Age of Russian poetry* 511). Another relatively wide-spread point of view (represented by M. Gasparov) dates the end of the Silver Age as early as 1917, the year of the October Revolution.

While there is clearly some overlap of works covered by the terms of "Silver Age poetry" and "Russian modernist poetry," the two terms ought not to be viewed as interchangeable. The main difference between these two terms lies, first of all, in the scope of works encompassed. The "Silver Age" is a term primarily used for poetry and more closely connected to a specific timeframe: it includes all poetry produced at the same time, even the revolutionary democratic, proletarian and peasant poetry which largely followed the nineteenth century conventions of "civic literature."

"Modernism" in specific reference to literature is the name usually applied to the major trends in Russian poetry which asserted themselves at the turn of the Twentieth century. The first one chronologically and probably the most powerful was Symbolism. Within which two generations are usually distinguished: the older one, characterized by works of Balmont, Bryusov, Merezhkovsky and Gippius, and the younger one, encompassing Blok, Bely, Vyacheslav Ivanov and S. Solovyov.

At the beginning of the Russian Symbolism stands the essay written by Dmitry Merezhkovsky and published in 1893, *On the causes of decadence and on the new trends in the contemporary Russian literature*. In this essay, Merezhkovsky describes this new movement in Russian poetry as a 'strive for transparency in the search for the inexpressible: "Symbolism makes the style which gives spirit to the substance of poetry, transparent, like thin walls of an alabaster amphora containing the flame" (42).

This image of an alabaster vessel containing flame may be used to explain the difference between the Symbolism and other modernists. While for symbolists, interested in the "flame", transparency of the "alabaster wall" was crucial even if that meant "thinning" of poetical substance, for their opponents, mainly interested in the poetic substance,

it is the ability of the wall to resist to flame, to provide new shades of flame and direct the attention towards the substance itself. One such school focused on the "resistance of the alabaster," was Acmeism (represented by Gumilyov, Akhmatova, Mandelstam, and others), which put forward the problem of the word and its connection to reality. Acmeists wanted to restore to the image of a rose, with its color and shape, its own artistic value independent from being an embodiment of mystical love or another abstract concept.

Acmeism is a school with which some greatest poets of the twentieth century are associated. Paradoxically, a clear definition of it has not been formed. Usually, acmeism is defined in terms of its opposition to symbolism which were announced as principles of this new movement in manifests by Gumilyov (*The heritage of symbolism and acmeism*, 1913), Gorodetsky (*Some trends in the modern Russian poetry*, 1913), and, substantially later, in 1919, Mandelstam (*The dawn of acmeism*). As the date of Acmeism's emergence may be taken 1910, even though the term itself was first used in 1912. However, 1910 year is given by A. Blok in a later (1919) introduction to his long poem *Vengeance*. Blok cites 1910 as the year of the crisis of

Symbolism and strengthening of literary schools opposed to symbolism, especially acmeism.

The theoreticians of Acmeism, which Terras calls a "symbolist heresy" (8), stressed that Symbolism has exhausted itself and set their artistic task as a search for equilibrium, clarity and precision to replace the vagueness and fluidity of Symbolist images. Mandelstam added that, for acmeists, the word is not a value in itself, but a poetic material. However, as V. Terras points out, Mandelstam was redefining Acmeism throughout his life, even though the movement preserved its structure until about 1915.

The third major literary movement singled out within of Russian modernism is Futurism, a name applied to several radical poetic groups of the 1910-1930 (the best known authors associated with this movement being Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov, and Burlyuk). As Mandelstam noted in his article *Sturm und Drang*, futurism was making use of the national linguistic heritage without transferring poetical culture from a foreign soul. Mandelstam further explained that futurism lived mainly through the poetic device, and developed not themes, but devices: "In futurist poetry, it is difficult to distinguish between a theme and a device" (*Word and Culture* 205). Considering the above, the present study, which primarily addresses influence of Shakespearean

themes and images, does not include futurist poetry within its scope.

The presence of other minor trends, usually of considerably lesser significance, further added to the diversity of Russian literary life. "In the pre-war [WWI] years literary trends, schools, circles grew like mushrooms, to vanish without trace; that was a noisy and simply chaotic time: countless "-isms" piled up (Etkind, *There, inside* 25). The analysis of the numerous, often short-lived, literary schools and trends, has to remain outside of the scope of the present work as they bear no direct relation to the authors whose works are being reviewed here. While most prominent authors eventually outgrew the limitations of their poetical schools (as is the case with Pasternak, whose affiliation with the Futurist school lasted only briefly), there have been also those who never formally belonged to any one school, notably Tsvetaeva and Khodasevich.

While fully recognizing the inevitably conventional nature of the existing classification of literary schools, and even of the term *modernism* itself, the present dissertation must have recourse to these terms as necessary tool because "we have no other mechanism of cognition other than turning "ours" into "alien," and the subject of cognition in its object" (Lotman,

Culture and Explosion 210). As Lotman explains in *Culture and Explosion*,

. . . an external viewer has a tendency to unite different trajectories into synonymous bundles

. . . to create conventional generalizations "a Russian writer of the given epoch." Everything that is encompassed by this circle will be treated as synonymous from such a viewpoint.

However, from inside of a given culture, no oeuvre of a given author may be treated as a synonym of another author's oeuvre (at least insofar as original work is considered). Each of them is a separate, individual, and inimitable path. This does not cancel their being included in some common categories (210-211).

The problem of the timeframe of Russian literary modernism, needs to be addressed before other issues in studies of Russian modernism may be examined in greater detail. While Russian literary modernism did not fully overlap with the corresponding trend in Western European literature, there is even less consensus among scholars regarding the precise timing of Russian modernism than there

is regarding the modernism moment in Western literature. Furthermore, several important authors (such as Pasternak and Akhmatova) continued to work and write in periods, which are clearly acknowledged to be beyond the upper time limit of Russian modernism. So, just a year before her death, in 1965, Akhmatova still described herself as an "Acmeist" in a biographical statement, *Something about Myself* (2: 237).

While certain modernist literary trends, such as Symbolism, reached Russia later than Western Europe, the term "Russian modernism" is usually applied to an earlier, more narrowly defined chronological period than that of Western (specifically English-language) literary modernism. By the time Joyce's *Ulysses* appeared in 1922, Russian modernism had already passed its high point. In Soviet history, 1922 signifies a turn from a more liberal treatment to a strict control of the state over all intellectual production. In May of 1922, Lenin writes to Dzerzhinsky a letter on necessity of preparing "to send into exile abroad writers and professors who are on the side of counterrevolution," suggesting specific measures. The intensification of the state ideological campaign was signaled by a forced exile of a large group of prominent members of the Russian intelligentsia, including such prominent philosophers as N. Berdyaev, S. Frank, and N. Lossky.

At the time of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), literary life in Soviet Russia was already being ruthlessly leveled to free space for "party literature" with a merely utilitarian role as a vessel of propaganda, though modernist traits were still present in the works of still surviving Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva and Pasternak, among others. 1925 marks the publication of the party resolution "On Party Policy in the Field of Literature" which, though still permitting literary work by "fellow travelers" who have not yet joined the party ranks, paved the way for a unified "proletarian" literature.

Discarding anti-proletarian and anti-revolutionary elements. . . . the Party should be tolerant toward intermediate ideological forms, patiently helping to overcome these inevitably numerous forms in the process of increasing collaboration with the cultural forces of communism (*Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary* 291).

In 1932, all independent organizations were dissolved by a government decree and the formation of a Writers Union of the USSR was mandated. Beginning in 1934, the concept of Socialist Realism, defined as "the fundamental method of

Soviet literature and literary criticism," was added to the first Statute of the Writers Union. Very few works that did not conform to the party view on literature could find their way into print. Describing the uncompromising nature of cultural repression in Soviet Russia, Renato Poggioli observes:

The same thing happened under other dictatorial regimes, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Franco's Spain, but not so radically as in Soviet Russia, precisely because the Communists had broken the ties to the previous society in a more thoroughgoing way than any other regime, thus becoming much more totalitarian (*The Theory of the Avant-Garde* 105).

Michael Gasparov argues that Russian modernism lasted through 1920s, which roughly corresponds to the timeframe given by both Poggioli and Terras as well as by other critics. However, it is more difficult to agree with Gasparov's statement that modernism "dissolved in the poetic style of the new Soviet epoch" (304). Certainly, modernism as a literary trend may be said to have come to an end by the late 1920s, if only because many modernist authors were in exile or no longer

alive. Yet for those who survived and continued to write, the change of literary epochs was not to be announced from the front page of the state-run newspaper. In his 1930 *Forth Prose*, Osip Mandelstam passionately denied the right of any external entity to proscribe him his literary work:

All works of world literature I divide into those permitted and those written without permission. The former are mud, the later--stolen air. I want to spit in the faces of writers who deliberately write permitted works. I want to hit them on the head with a stick. . . . I would prohibit such writers to marry and have children. . . . after all, our children are supposed to finish our work, to say the most important things we did not finish saying--and those fathers are sold to the devil for three generations in advance.

Все произведения мировой литературы я делю на разрешенные и написанные без разрешения. Первые--это мразь, вторые--ворованный воздух. Писателям, которые пишут заведомо разрешенные вещи, я хочу плевать в лицо, хочу бить их

палкой по голове. . . . Этим писателям я бы запретил вступать в брак и иметь детей. Как могут они иметь детей?--ведь дети должны за нас продолжить, за нас главнейшее досказать-- в то время как отцы их запроданы рябому черту на три поколения вперед (2: 92).

The works of modernist poets may have been outnumbered in 1930s and onwards, just as they were outnumbered in the total volume of poetry published in Russia during the high point of modernism, but they were not annihilated or "dissolved." As Howe says, "modernism need never come to an end, or at least we do not really know, as yet, how it can or will reach its end" (*The Idea of the Modern* 13).

The influence of modernism is apparent even in more successful poems by such largely mediocre poets of Soviet establishment as Nikolai Tichonov (who received official recognition for his propagandistic verse) and Aleksei Surkov (who was appointed the Head of the Writer's Union in 1954 and later became a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party). Gasparov acknowledges that Tichonov and Surkov "each in his own way, reworked Gumilyov's intonation and devices even in those years when it was forbidden to mention Gumilyov's name" ("Poetics of the Silver Age" 8). In

the works of younger contemporary poets, Gasparov believes, there also are many traits that echo turn-of the century poets, circumventing more immediate and "canonical" predecessors. With the modernist movement are linked such different Soviet-era poets as Evgeny Bagritzky, Pavel Antokolsky, Samuel Marshak, Konstantine Simonov, among others.

Although literary modernism as a trend was no longer viable, as a phenomenon it has continued to exist well beyond the 1920s. Thus the present study will include analysis of poetic works written by the authors associated with modernism at the time when this literary trend has already subsided.

Within the vast scholarship on modernism in Western European literature, works dealing with Russian modernism have only a modest proportion. This is to a large extent due to the peculiar historical conditions that had shaped the development of literary criticism in Soviet Russia. Even the use of terms "modernism" in Soviet times was not very precise, as Vladimir Weidle justly observes in his article "The Poison of Modernism" published some sixty years after the October revolution of 1917; the word became simply a term of abuse for "anything out of step with ideology, along with anything not slated for mass consumption and therefore unsuitable for the political "education of the masses" (20).

Naturally, after gaining a negative connotation, the term quickly ceased to have a meaningful application and all but disappeared from the critical writings. "For instance, to call Vladimir Mayakovsky, even retrospectively, a Modernist is not advisable, while calling him an innovator is recommended. In today's official lexicon, "Modernist" indicates an enemy and "innovator" a friend" (*Russian Modernism. Culture and the Avant-Garde* 20-21).

Works of most Russian modernist poetry have become widely accessible in Russia only very recently, and unprejudiced scholarly investigation of their works has become possible only ten years ago. Western monographs thus had to fill in large gaps existing in Russian literature rather than to build on prior discussions. It is therefore not surprising that most monographs on Russian modernism so far have addressed the more general topic such as historical development of Russian modernism (e.g. Efim Etkind, Peter France, Poggioli), its place in world literature (e.g. Georgette Donchin) or importance of an individual author's oeuvre (within this later category may be listed e.g. Susan Amert's study of Akhmatova, Victor Erlich's study of Pasternak, Michael Gasparov's work on prosody in modernist

poetry, Henry Gifford's work on Mandelstam and Pasternak, and many others).

The first comprehensive works dealing with two of the major trends in Russian modernism, Symbolism (by Avril Pyman), and Acmeism (by Justin Doherty) came out in 1995. Unfortunately, Pyman's thoughtful comprehensive overview does not dwell in any detail on the problem of the reception of foreign authors in general; Shakespeare is mentioned briefly only in connection to his influence on the philosopher Lev Shestov.

Some more recent monographs have been dedicated to the general problems of Russian modernism (e.g., Stephan Hutchings, Irina Paperno, etc.). Steven Cassedy in his *Flight from Eden* provides a thoughtful and detailed analysis of the various aesthetic and philosophical movements of the period. A collection of articles, *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism: From the Golden Age to the Silver Age* edited by B. Gasparov, Robert Hughes and Paperno, provides new perspectives on self-construction of the modernist movement.

Still more rare are monographs dealing with influence of particular Western thinkers and writers on Russian modernism. One of the early works which still has not lost its relevance is the monograph by Donchin on the influence

of French Symbolism on Russian poetry. In Gumilyov's well-known programme article "The heritage of symbolism and acmeism" French, German, and Russian symbolism are discussed as three stages of the same literary trend in Europe. Gumilyov views French symbolism as the starting force of European symbolism, dedicated to primarily "literary tasks." German symbolism, in Gumilyov's view, was the period which rose the question about the role of man in the universe, a the human being in society. Russian symbolism represents the final phase in the historical development of European symbolism, a phase which "turned with all its force towards the Unknown." What is especially important here is that Gumilyov does not distance Russian literature from the process of development of European literature in general (*Letters on Russian literature* 55-59). Gumilyov would have been likely to agree with Virginia Woolf's view that "literature is one mind"; this was a premise of Gumilyov's own theory and art.

Donchin analyses multiple aspects of the influence French symbolism had on Russian poetry: discussions on aesthetics, common themes, development of poetical techniques. It is particularly interesting to note Donchin's observation that, though French was commonly spoken by educated Russians at that time, "the diffusion of French symbolism was to be conditioned

to an important extent by the attitude of the Russian press, by the first critical studies, and by available translations" (23). Furthermore, that diffusion of the Shakespearean text was also conditioned by Russian criticism and translation, even more so because English, unlike French, was not a language mastered by every modernist poet (for example, Mandelstam first read Shakespeare in German translations). Donchin explains that the overly zealous social criticism of 1860s had questioned the very necessity of poetry, thereby hindering, if only temporarily, further development of Russian poetical techniques:

When in the late 1890s the young poets sought new forms and more supple media of expression and tried to assimilate the recent achievements of their Western colleagues, they were attacked and disparaged by their contemporaries. And even if the generation of the 1890s and 1900s overstressed their cult of form--a normal reaction--the attitude of the critics and society may be explained only by an innate lack of culture and understanding of the meaning of art (117).

Donchin's assertion does not, of course, refer to prominent critics such as Chernyshevsky, Belinsky and Dobrolyubov, the less than generous contemporary opinions of figures such as Dobrolyubov notwithstanding. (After all, it must be said in all fairness that even Leo Tolstoy, whom no one yet has dared to reproach with a lack of culture, later in his life made similarly pragmatic demands for literature with a straightforward social function). Rather, Dochin's criticism aims at the later generation of critics, many of whom failed to see in modernist poetry more than a search for novelty and technical virtuosity. As Tsvetaeva herself said about a 1940 "inside review" of her book in a Soviet publishing house, which had inevitably resulted in the book being banned from printing: "A person who could classify these poems as *formalism* simply lacks conscience. This is I, speaking from *the future*" ("Человек, СМОГШИЙ аттестовать такие стихи как *формализм*, просто бессовестный. Это я говорю--из будущего") (Shveitser 489).

Perhaps a similar explanation may be given to the paradoxical suggestion found in the 1974 edition of *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetics* that "sound became more important than contents (e.g. in poets like Balmont and Blok)" (526). This approach still operates within the framework elaborated by the utilitarian criticism of the

1900s and, later, by dogmatic Soviet criticism, that divided form and content as two completely independent aspects of a literary work--the form being seen as a mere embellishment of a clearly defined subject. As Victor Terras fairly observes, many contemporary readers of Russian symbolists were far from such vulgar dualism: "Symbolism began to be welcomed by some of the intelligentsia as a resurrection of spiritual goals in cultural life" (461).

In the last twenty years, the situation has changed: in the 1993 edition of *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetics* the disparaging remark on Balmont and Blok has been removed. However, such facts as lack of reference to Russian authors within the article "Modernism and Postmodernism" in the *Princeton Encyclopedia* reflects the insular character of Slavistic literary studies, which are, regrettably, often overlooked within the framework of larger literary trends.

Among the more successful recent examples of studies on intercultural connections of Russian modernism may be noted the monograph by Edith Clowes on Nietzsche in Russia modernist literature, published in 1988, and Hilary Fink's book, *Bergson and Russian Modernism*, published in 1999. Discussing Nietzsche's reception in Russia, Clowes does not limit herself to evaluating the degree of Nietzsche's influence or to tracing allusions to Nietzsche in Russian works, but attempts to grasp

the nature of the mechanisms of this influence in a concrete historical situation and in a concrete cultural environment. Acknowledging the superiority of Bloom's dynamic theory of influence over the traditional understanding of influence as imitation, Clowes nevertheless intelligently asserts that "Bloom cannot account for the active role played by the text in historical discourse carried on across national, social, and cultural boundaries" (3-4).

Returning to the problem of Nietzsche's influence, the importance of this phenomenon is downplayed not only in the official Soviet criticism (as Clowe correctly points out), but also in contemporary Russian criticism, where the view still exists that "quotations from Nietzsche and their discussion comprise merely the external embellishment of the philosophical culture of the Russian Symbolism, playing a modest role of an ethical and aesthetic provocation" (Kondakov 7). Noting that the key ideas of Nietzsche's philosophy were understood as refracted in the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov, whose paradoxical interpretation of Nietzsche in its turn goes back to Dostoyevsky and Pushkin, Kondakov inadvertently reduces the very mechanisms of textual influence to the disdained "embellishments." Furthermore, such a view effectively denies Russian authors an active creative role in appropriation of canonical

texts. The question also arises as to why the supposedly superficial reception of Nietzsche is juxtaposed to the apparently profound and creative interpretation of Russian canonical texts such as those by Pushkin and Dostoyevsky. It would seem, however, that a greater universality should be allowed for the major mechanisms of reception.

Paperno's position on these issues is close to that of Kondakov. To Russians, as Paperno observes, Nietzsche's doctrine was not acceptable in its entirety, primarily because of its anti-Christian nature:

In Nietzsche's insistence on seeing life as a purely aesthetic phenomenon (i.e. as a text), Solovyov saw a view of life devoid of any mystical component. . . . Striving to resolve the contradiction between aestheticism and Christian doctrine, Bely and Ivanov too reinterpreted Nietzsche along the lines suggested to them by Solovyov's critique: Nietzschean aestheticism they read as Christian mysticism. Bely saw no contradiction between "philological" and religious approaches to life in Nietzscheanism; he read literally Nietzsche's metaphor "God as supreme artist," and understood the Nietzschean concept of

aesthetic creation in life as mystical activity akin to the creation of the world (*Creation of Life* 17-18).

These examples show that even when a particular reading of a foreign author appears to be inaccurate or oversimplified, it cannot be dismissed easily as an intellectual fad since the importance of such a "misreading" may be significant. Furthermore, the differences in Solovyov and Bely's approaches to Nietzsche also serve as a key to these thinker's own standpoints on aesthetics and religion, just as in different approaches to Shakespeare we witness the shift in Russian literary epochs.

Just as Fink in her book *Bergson and Russian Modernism* attempts to show the common grounds shared by different literary schools of Russian modernism by analyzing responses to a common referent--work of Bergson, the present study is aimed at showing that, though creative realization of Shakespearean themes obviously varied, the process of reception of Shakespeare was characterized by some qualities transcending the limits of individual literary schools:

We distinguish those common things which enable us to unite yesterday's adversaries: all of them

make *art* as their base . . . all of them are *poets* . . . all of them speak of *human being as asocial*, in most cases metaphysical; finally, all of them intensively think about the *uniqueness of the poetic word*" (Etkind, *There, Inside* 22).

In reviewing the modernist movement as a whole, general principles or mechanisms of reception of foreign text need to be addressed, which does not necessarily imply that points of view on each concrete idea were the same. For instance, Mandelstam turned to Bergson in order to set himself apart from the symbolists. Taking as his starting point Bergson's notion of history as parallel duration, Mandelstam refuses to see the history of literature as a linear progression stating that the unity of literature is secured not through evolution, but through language.

Fink also introduces the distinction between *vlianie* [influence] and *veiyanie* [trend or fad]; two different types of impact exercised by foreign texts on Russian cultural life, the former presumably a long-lasting and profound one, the later superficial and negligible. This distinction is necessarily an artificial one, not supported by either theoretical principles or textual examples. Moreover, it is not always possible to reduce the dialogue between two cultural traditions to the

influence/trend dichotomy, especially when considering work of prominent writers and thinkers. Even seemingly superficial encounters have been known to stimulate major works. As Akhmatova said: "I wish you were aware from what stray matter / Springs poetry to prosper without shame" ("Когда б вы знали, из какого сора / Растут стихи, не ведая стыда"--tr. by Peter Tempest). Furthermore, an apparent infatuation may often be extended into by an enduring assimilation or by a more analytical reevaluation at a later stage.

Poggioli also refers to the difficulty of assessing the impact of a foreign author on Russian literature, mentioning the "tendency of the Russian critical spirit to translate artistic and cultural facts into religious or political myths" (*The Theory of the Avant-Garde* 6). This point seems to be particularly relevant to the reception of Bergson as well as other Western European thinkers, though it should not be applied indiscriminately to all instances of intercultural dialogue.

Next to works examining the influence of philosophical works and authors other than Shakespeare (relevant to the present study because of their approach to the mechanism of appropriation of foreign text by the poetical culture of Russian modernism), there is a far less voluminous category

of works concerning the relation of individual authors to Shakespeare.

There are no substantive studies on Shakespeare's reception during the age of Russian modernism. Neither can Western studies be adapted to that purpose because, for example, Bloom's *Shakespeare: The invention of the human*, while apt for Western views of Shakespeare, cannot approximate the situation in Russian literature and culture. It is interesting that the Russian translation of this particular book by Bloom went almost unnoticed by scholars in Russia as it was considered to be aimed at the general public rather than the academic audience (Yampolsky online).

Leaving aside the question whether the writer of the Old Testament is really inferior to Shakespeare (as Bloom claims), Bloom's assertion that Shakespeare's work belongs to those capable of generating potentially infinite meanings bears merit. Certainly, all functions of the text, as identified by Lotman, may be found in Shakespeare's oeuvre. However, not all of these functions were immediately actualized for the Russian reader, even if they were so for the English reader. "Shakespeare took advantage of and included in his works immense treasures of potential meaning that could not be fully revealed or recognized in his [own] epoch" (Bakhtin, "Response to a Question" 5).

Perhaps Bloom's assertion that Shakespearean plays reached the level of Scriptures can indeed be accepted for the English-speaking world; within Russian context, however, the situation was critically different. Bloom interprets Shakespeare as an embodiment of the humanistic ideas of the Renaissance, but the very term of Renaissance can hardly be applicable within the framework of Russian culture of the eighteenth century.

Catherine the Great could afford to do her "imitations" of Shakespeare precisely because Shakespeare's work was considered to represent only a moderate challenge (as opposed to the plays of French Classicists), which safely excluded any possibility of Catherine's literary failure. If today's readers judge otherwise and find Catherine the Great's plays to be of inferior talent, it is due to the subsequent development of Russian literature and, to a large extent, specifically to the influence of modernists.

In Russia, Shakespeare was never studied by schoolchildren and there were no "copeck seats" to performances of his plays. Instead, Shakespeare's work was an acquired taste, for a relatively small proportion of an already small cultural élite in a country where the majority of the population could not read or write in their native Russian, and the accepted second language for the educated classes was French rather than English. The comparable popular theatre emerged only some two

hundred years after Shakespeare. The functions of Shakespearean texts were not actualized during the times when the cultural activity of the Shakespearean text was dormant. As Lotman indicates, only texts that preserve their cultural activity have the capacity to accumulate information and generate new meanings.

If Eleanor Rowe (the author of *Hamlet: A Window to Russia*) is now able to chat with her Moscow cab driver about Hamlet, and references to Shakespearean characters are often printed without footnotes in popular editions, this, again, would largely be due to the achievements of Russian modernists, who, to use an expression of Akhmatova's, "turned the country over in a condition different from that in which they had received it" (Chukovskaya 1: 135). The task of the modernist authors consisted specifically in preserving the cultural activity of the Shakespearean text, which had been decreasing by the end of the nineteenth century, when Shakespeare's work ceased to attract interest of broad circles of the reading public and started to be relegated to the area of literary scholarship. By turning to Shakespearean themes and images (and even, in the case of Acmeists, by listing Shakespeare as one of their main reference points), Russian modernist authors revived from relative obscurity the cultural activity of his texts.

There are also some minor claims in Bloom which do not prove to be universal. For example, in the poetry of Russian modernism references to Falstaff are lacking, though that character has been claimed by Bloom to be as important as Hamlet and even a "self-representation of Shakespeare."

Bloom's enthusiastic claim for Shakespeare's universal literary supremacy ("who else is there?"), so reassuring in this age of literary disenchantment, is reminiscent of Apollon Grigoryev's pronouncement shortly of Pushkin's death: "Pushkin is our everything."

Though Pushkin cannot be "everything" to the English-speaking world, his oeuvre is also a generator of infinite meanings. While many facts of Shakespeare's biography are still battled over, Pushkin has left behind a large volume of memoirs and mementos. Nevertheless, his philosophy and his view of the world has often seemed as enigmatic as that of Shakespeare, and just as often became the subject of mutually exclusive interpretations. Russian modernists were well aware of this parallel, which is why the evolution of their reception of Pushkin is comparable to the change in their approaches to Shakespeare.

The specter of problems faced by scholars when assessing the paradoxes and contradictions of Shakespeare's literary heritage has been thoroughly illustrated in Brian Vicker's

Appropriating Shakespeare. In his book, Vickers sharply attacks various schools of literary criticism which introduce anachronistic concepts and modes of behavior, establish parallels on the grounds of the faintest similarities, disregard entire passages and characters and otherwise bend the text to fit a preset theory. By painstakingly analyzing the exaggerated claims of various critical schools, Vickers effectively restores the old-fashioned idea of the actual literary text being in the center of literary analysis. While his combining the analysis of Christian and Marxist criticism into one chapter may make uneasy not only those readers who identify with one of these groups, Vicker's approach is essentially a Nabokovian gesture of protest against imposing ideological structures onto literary works regardless of any virtuous intentions such an ideology may have or claim or to have. Within the perspective of Russian literary criticism, for a long time oversaturated with ideology, this approach becomes especially poignant. Vickers considers that the process of literary interpretation is open-ended and inevitably subjective to an extent, but he insists that only interpretation based on close analysis of the text can produce a plausible interpretation.

Obviously, Shakespearean influences on Russian literature are far less studied than those addressing English-language

literatures. Critical literature dedicated to the more narrow topic of Shakespeare in Russian modernism is even further limited within a field of study that is already specialized. In our time, Shakespearean influences on Russian literature in the eighteenth century and, to a greater extent, in the nineteenth century has been a frequent subject of academic studies (e.g. Yury Levin). A substantial amount has been written on Shakespeare on the Russian stage and in film (e.g. numerous articles and monographs by Alexander Anikst and Alexander Bartoshevich; *Space of a tragedy* by Grigory Kosintsev, *Shakespeare and the cinema* by Sergey Yutkevich,), as well as on ballet and opera performances of works using Shakespearean subjects (e.g. the anthology *Shakespeare and Music* or Yury Kremlev's "Shakespeare in Music"). Further, there have been articles dedicated to individual translations of Shakespeare as well as to the general principles of translating Shakespeare (e.g. by Michael Morozov and Kornei Chukovsky). Probably the most substantial work in the English language was a monograph published by Anna Kay France in 1978, *Boris Pasternak's Translations of Shakespeare*.

However, it is problematic to group different studies according to differences of approach because the mechanisms of influence and dialogue were mostly avoided. In most monographs, Shakespeare is usually mentioned either with

connection to Gumilyov's well-known manifesto of Acmeism, (Poggioli 217), or as one name in the extensive list of "great authors" having influenced Russian modernists (Poggioli 61). Alternatively, Shakespeare is considered in connection to the influence of Pushkin's tragedies (Poggioli 23, 25, 272; Donchin 74-75).

As is apparent, there is no systematic assessment of Shakespeare's influence on Russian literary modernism. Native Russian scholars writing on Shakespeare in Russia shrewdly avoided the later period, due to constraints sketched above. For example, Levin's otherwise comprehensive historical survey of Shakespeare's influence in Russia ends with the first half of the nineteenth century. In one of his latest articles, "Hamlet and Ophelia in Russian poetry," Levin quickly dismisses Russian modernism as a movement irrelevant to his study, arguing that names of Shakespearean characters which may be found in works of turn-of the XX century writers "have only an indirect connection to Shakespeare." However, neither Levin nor other contemporary critics offer a substantive argument to support this contention, which would have permitted a meaningful debate.

The major collection of essays *Shakespeare and Russian Culture*, edited by Academician Michael Alekseev and published

in 1965, also omits the period in question. Western scholarship is also fragmentary. Rowe's comprehensive *Hamlet: a Window on Russia* (1976) dedicates only a few pages to the theme of Hamlet in Blok, briefly mentions Tsvetaeva and Pasternak but fails to characterize the period as a whole. Nor does Rowe's book make the consistent effort to establish patterns of Shakespeare's reception. Her observations are sometimes marked by sweeping generalizations; for example, "*negative capability* seems somewhat alien to the Russian consciousness" (179), "Russians tend to hold on to whatever has nourished the root of their being" (178). Alternatively, she makes paradoxical remarks such as one about a presumed decrease of interest in Hamlet "now" [e.g. in the 1970s] "because life is less hard" (177). Historical perspective suggests that external life circumstances were equally as difficult albeit in different ways, as those of the typical nineteenth-century Russian writer. Rowe seems to conflate in one gesture the official Communist ideology, the nineteenth century Slavophilism teaching of and Berdyaev's peculiar views of Russian Orthodox Christianity. These confused theoretical explanations, however, occupy only a few pages within an otherwise extremely informative book. Rowe's theoretical difficulties serve as a warning that Russian fascination with Shakespeare is in danger of being explained

away as an interesting anomaly, with no connection to the overall development of Russian literature.

Michael Makin, a young North American scholar, in his *Poetics of Appropriation*, dedicated to Tsvetaeva's work with other literary sources, refers to Tsvetaeva's reception of Shakespeare as to "a short-lasting interest" (203)--a debatable statement since Tsvetaeva turned to Shakespeare throughout her creative life. Consequently, the amount of space devoted to the review of Shakespearean themes in Makin's comprehensive monograph is minimal. His work is based on the premise that Tsvetaeva started using fewer literary allusions in her later works, as if emancipating herself from external influences. Such a view seems inconsistent with the aesthetics of Russian modernism, where a dialogue with literary works of the past is an integral part of the artistic method rather than a sign of immaturity. Furthermore, Makin does not extend his analysis to works of other Russian modernists and does not set it as his task to place Tsvetaeva within the historical or contemporary context. References to other authors are only occasional, such as a mention that Pasternak, whom Tsvetaeva valued highly, was working on translations of Shakespeare and that fact might have contributed to the appearance of Shakespearean images in Tsvetaeva's own work.

The only scholarly work directly related to the topic of the present dissertation is a small volume by Chekalov, *The Poetics of Mandelstam and Russian Shakespearism of the XX century*, published in 1994. Chekalov is the first scholar to provide a detailed and thoughtful analysis possibly encompassing all instances of direct and indirect Shakespearean allusions in Mandelstam's work. However, Chekalov does not raise issues of a more general theoretical importance; historical influences are traced from an older poet to a younger one (Browning-Annensky-Mandelstam). Thus Chekalov reviews not the function of the Shakespearean text or an immediate influence of Shakespearean texts and images on Mandelstam's work, but rather the continuation of approaches to Shakespeare in later epochs.

His work signals the emergence of an interest for the topic of Shakespeare and the twentieth century Russian poetry. Changing views on Shakespeare corresponded to the shifting focus within the Russian modernist literature: from epic to lyric, from social to the individual, and from plot line to the poetic word. Russian modernism rediscovered in Shakespeare the qualities it gave priority to, and made a new claim on the appropriation of his heritage. "You are ours because / all of us here are yours!" ("Ты наш чрез то, / что все мы здесь--твои!") wrote Balmont in a poetical address to Shakespeare.

Such an approach towards Shakespeare did not emerge at once: the perception of Shakespeare evolved from that of harmonious genius of the golden past to an author with a deeply hidden inner mystery to the author who, in Gumilyov's words, succeeded in showing us "the inner world of man," the most essential achievement for Russian modernist poetry, and thus was recognized as having an immediate relevance.

"A BLISSFUL INHERITANCE"

Russian modernism, a qualitatively different stage, in the Russian reception of Shakespeare, brought together two different approaches to viewing Shakespeare's themes and images: through the prism of individual psychological experience (mediated by Pushkin's Shakespearean experiments) and through the prism of social experience and critique, exemplified by Leskov and Turgenev. It was Pushkin's more psychological approach, however, that contributed more significantly to Russian modernism's new development. Bely noted that that his older contemporaries

. . . failed to understand that Pushkin,
Shakespeare, and Sophocles, too, have to be

acquired anew, that means cleansed of the clichés of the end of the [nineteenth] century not simply by going backwards, but by creatively reworking the very perception.

. . . не понимали того, что и Пушкин, и Шекспир, и Софокл должны быть по-новому добыты, то есть отмыты от штампов конца столетия не просто возвратом "вспять", а творческой переработкой самих восприятий сознания (*On the threshold of two centuries* 311; emphasis added).

If nineteenth-century realist writers had made Shakespeare part of their creative scope (by widely introducing references to Shakespeare's characters into their prose), modernist authors made Shakespeare part of their inner world, returning to complete the synthesis of the Western and Russian traditions once initiated by Pushkin. As Mandelstam put it in his article "On the nature of the word":

Thanks to the new taste that had arisen in Russia by the beginning of the [twentieth] century, such giants as Rablais, Shakespeare, Racine got up from their places and went to visit us at home.

Благодаря тому, что в России, в начале столетия, возник новый вкус, такие громады, как Рабле, Шекспир, Расин, снялись с места и двинулись к нам в гости (*Word and Culture* 66).

The quest for a place for Shakespearean characters in society gave way to a search for their place in an author's inner world. Parallels in plot developed into parallels of emotional stages, into projection of the author's personality unto a Shakespearean character. Thus the use of Shakespearean themes and images provides a reflection on the nature of changes in literary trends. Characteristically, in Gumilyov's programme article, "Heritage of symbolism and acmeism," where Gumilyov draws a link between classical authors and each of the four major esthetical principles he establishes, it is Shakespeare who is chosen to represent the inner world of the human soul.

In circles close to Acmeism, the names of Shakespeare, Rablais, Villon and T. Gautier are pronounced most often. The selection of these names is not accidental. Each of them is cornerstone for the edifice of acmeism, a high concentration of some

of its elements. Shakespeare showed to use the inner world of man.

В кругах, близких к акмеизму, чаще всего произносятся имена Шекспира, Рабле, Виллона и Теофиля Готье. Подбор этих имен не произволен. Каждое из них--краеугольный камень для здания акмеизма, высокое напряжение той или иной его стихии. Шекспир показал нам внутренний мир человека. (*Letters on Russian poetry* 58).

Turgenev's *Hamlet of the Shigri district* may be used as an illustration of this difference in approaches towards Shakespearean characters. In this short story, one of a series written in 1850s, Turgenev introduces the theme of the "superfluous man," portraying an impoverished nobleman who never manages to accomplish anything in life and, in spite of his intellectual and emotional refinement, seems to be an indirect cause of his wife's death. The reference to Shakespeare helps to advance a major idea in the literature of the period: the suffering of the modern man is exposed as pathetically non-heroic, yet not less devastating. Turgenev may have sympathized with his protagonist, yet it would be hard to imagine the writer identifying himself with this

tragicomic figure. While a character of Shakespeare is brought into contemporary discourse to add a new dimension, the gap between the world of Shakespeare and that of Turgenev is never fully closed in this story: Turgenev creates a type rather than character.

Authors of Russian modernism no longer distanced themselves from Shakespearean characters and scenes; Shakespearean characters overgrew the boundaries of a literary type and could become a part of the lyrical "I" of a modernist poet. Pasternak's "Hamlet", written during Pasternak's composition of *Doctor Zhivago* and Shakespearean translations, is a most striking example of this. Peter France, a literary critic and translator of Pasternak's poetry, acknowledging the close connection between Hamlet and Pasternak's lyrical hero, or perhaps even Pasternak the poet, says: "Christ, praying to the Father, is fused with Hamlet and with the actor playing Hamlet both of whom feel out of place in the tragic role they have to perform . . . it seems clear that this is a reluctant profession of faith, a distillation of Pasternak's views about his vocation and mission" (74-75).

Of course, the idea of Shakespeare as an author who possesses intimate knowledge of human psyche was not entirely new to Russian literature; Goethe's perception idea of Shakespeare as a great psychologist has become sufficiently

known to the Russian readership by the early twentieth century. Yet, when Gumilyov stresses that Shakespeare has "shown us the inner world of man," this is not merely a repetition of the ideas of Goethe or Ruskin. In the Russian realistic tradition of the second half of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare was also praised as a psychologist, a claim which particularly irritated Tolstoy, as shown in the previous chapter. As Levin explains, Tolstoy saw as especially false the recognition of Shakespeare "as an expert in human psychology *such as it was understood at that time*" (*Shakespeare and Russian Literature of the nineteenth century* 236; emphasis added). In fact, the psychology of that time tended to be understood primarily as social psychology, as an interpretation of motives of action performed by human beings within the social context. The search for convincing social motivation in Shakespeare led to disappointment on the part of liberal critics: thus the notion of Shakespeare as "psychologist" has been questioned, if not discredited, by Tolstoy's forceful attack on Shakespeare. Gumilyov, signifying a new orientation towards the poetical word rather than plot, resurrects the notion of psychological insights as a characteristic of Shakespeare's work, but with a different, more complex interpretation of psychological realism.

In his article "The Generic Word in Bakhtin and the Formalists," Shaitanov links Shakespeare's increasingly psychological approach to genre experimenting. In the 1920s, the interest in the generic word ("zhanrovoe slovo") became characteristic of the Russian literary criticism. Tynyanov addressed the problem of the odic word, and Bakhtin the novelistic word. Shaitanov sees a similarity between Bakhtin's and Tynyanov's approaches in the evaluation of genre as a fundamental concept of poetics. Genre is understood not as a set of norms, but as a function (*orientatsiia slovom* in Bakhtin and *rechevaya ustanovka* in Tynyanov). In Shaitanov's view, Bakhtin and the Formalists, approaching the problem of the genre from different angles, inevitably meet on the common ground of historical poetics. This poetics is now seen as a foundation of unity of the Russian philological school. To illustrate his point, Shaitanov selects literary material that is "equally foreign to both schools." He tries to reconstruct the imaginary analysis of an excerpt from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as it would have been performed first by the Formalists, and then by Bakhtin. This material is of special interest for the present study, the more so because Shaitanov uses Pasternak's translation of Shakespeare. In the quoted excerpt of Act IV of *Romeo and Juliet* where, instead of a lament for Juliet's staged death, there appears what Shaitanov

calls a discussion on the nature of poetic word: a play with metaphorical epithets. This metaphorical language leads to the tragedy acquiring some traits of the sonnet, represented at in the beginning of the play by the Prologue of the Chorus (which has the form of the sonnet but not its metaphorical quality) and throughout the play by various sonnet motives. Formalists would have seen in this a shift from allegory to metaphor, the tragedy borrowing its metaphoric language from the sonnet but transforming it completely. The sonnet's *rechevaya ustanovka* (verbal orientation) has come to be too narrow.

Further, Shaitanov offers his variant of analyzing the Shakespearean text through Bakhtin's genre theory. For Bakhtin, the genre had "an orientation towards completion" ("*ustanovka na zavershyonnyu tselostnost*"). This completion is achieved through a verbal exchange between the three participants in a literary dialogue: author, hero, and reader. Bakhtin's view is built on the notion that "every listener becomes the speaker."

After learning of Juliet's death, Romeo rejects the convention of the tragic motivation just as he earlier had rejected the sonnet convention. Fate is an unnecessary tragic motivation in a work where the freedom of choice, of action belongs to a hero. Tragedy has destroyed the sonnet, but the sonnet is also undermining the classical ancient roots of tragedy; new motivations are now emerge, recognizing which

will be the difficult task of Shakespearean heroes (Hamlet's path).

Perhaps this type of transformation of speech-forms present in Shakespeare's works which provided a starting point for Russian modernists to consider Shakespeare as a lyrical poet. Even those who do attempt to write dramatic works (Annensky, Gumilyov) hardly show any signs of influence of Shakespeare's dramaturgy. They develop Shakespeare's tradition not in the form of drama, but in the form of lyrical poetry, because Shakespeare has shown the end of epic tragedy. The Russian modernists feel that a change of genres was necessary in order to develop further what Shakespeare had started--a search for drama of an individual soul, in which the heroes carry the burden of choice.

Formalists, on the other hand, understand dialogue quite differently from Bakhtin. For them, as Shaitanov points out, "the other's word was an object at which to strike, and to refute" ("The Concept of the Generic Word" 249). Such a model does not appear to be applicable to the dialogue of Russian modernists with Shakespeare; they do not attempt to refute Shakespeare, but to develop further what they saw as the seed of lyricism already present in Shakespeare's own work. It should be noted that even Pushkin senses this potential in Shakespeare's work, trying his hand

at reworking *Measure for Measure* into a narrative poem rather than into a drama. "The other's" word--Shakespeare's word--was perceived as lyrical rather than dramatic brought into a new genre of lyrical poetry.

For Bakhtin, as Shaitanov argues, *Romeo and Juliet* represents a transformation of speech forms which leads to generic changes. Bakhtin would have gone further than the Formalists and made the conclusion of historical changes manifesting themselves through change of the genre: evolving speech forms lead to change in generic forms, provoking transformation at other level of the text, such as tragic motivation (Shaitanov online).

The only genre seen by Bakhtin as dialogical is the novel, the sole object of his study; all other genres are seen by him as rhetorical and therefore monological. However, according to Shaitanov, when Bakhtin speaks of the inevitable monological nature of the poetical language, he means not lyricism, but the Formalist theory of poetical language, which juxtaposed a word not to another word but to the subject it denoted; the connection to the subject may be preserved or faded and, in the latter case, is in need of a renewal.

Shaitanov's observation is important in the context of a larger discussion on Russian modernist poetics, outside of the

scope of the present work; such a discussion would start with an understanding of the poetical word of Russian modernists as a dialogical one.

The unique embodiment of Bakhtin's formula of three-sided dialogue in the context of Russian modernism gives us Shakespeare as "author," Shakespeare's characters as "heroes," and Russian modernist poets as "reader." Russian poets, who are also readers of Shakespeare, themselves become both authors and heroes in their own original work inspired by the initial dialogue with Shakespeare; thus the dialogue perpetuates generating on of new meanings of Shakespearean texts. The present study draws on Lotman's notion of dialogue, where the notion of "text" is introduced as the third participant of the dialogue, instead of Bakhtin's "hero," whereby the communicative capacities of the dialogue are greatly extended.

Lotman lists the following functions of the text: the communication between a transmitter and a recipient; the communication between an audience and a cultural tradition; the communication of a reader with himself; the communication between a reader and a text; the communication between a text and a cultural context. Within this framework, the text itself is capable of being viewed as an autonomous participant in the dialogue.

The Formalists, on the other hand, analyzing poetical genres, without rejecting the monological nature of the poetic word, focused on attempting to draw a parallel between literary reality and a corresponding social phenomenon, the everyday life or *byt*, a distinction relevant to the analysis of as "themes and images," or, interliterary exchange and communication.

Shaitanov points out:

What actually happens in *Romeo and Juliet*, in Bakhtin's terms, is a transformation of speech-forms, through which a change of chronotopes is made manifest, a change which is necessarily followed by generic changes. The tragic hero has begun to speak in the stylistic form of the sonnet, a fact which could not have failed to have far-reaching consequences, even though a traditional tragic motivation is retained throughout the greater part of the action. . . . The sonnet hero has entered Tragedy and made the fall of its epic world inevitable (*The Concept of the Generic Word* 247).

Thus Shakespeare's work became the focal point of the aesthetic discussion on psychological realism in literature.

The goal of the present study is to demonstrate the significance of this period as a critically new stage in the perception of Shakespeare, when all five functions of the Shakespearean texts have become activated. Many Shakespearean themes and images were deeply embedded in the Russian poetic language at a time when a literary experience was perceived as at least equal, and sometimes superior to, a real life experience. A quotation from Chekhov's *Steppes* given by Hutchings (79) well characterizes the Russian mentality of that age: "All down to the last man . . . referred to the present with contempt. Your Russian loves to remember but he doesn't enjoy the business of living". From this it is not very far to Tsvetaeva's categorical line: "Non-being is a convention" ("Небытие--условность"). The reconstructed past and the imagined future were only variations of the aesthetic experience invoked by a contact with a work of art.

Since in the preceding literary epoch Shakespeare's themes and images were primarily used to accentuate topical problems in society, the change in the reception of Shakespeare becomes an important indicator of changing literary tastes. Thus the problem of Shakespeare as seen through the prism of Russian modernism may be linked to the

problem of Russian modernism as reflected through the prism of Shakespeare.

Indeed, this period in Russian poetry was characterized by especially close ties to literatures and aesthetics of Western Europe: from Ruskin and Wilde to Verlaine, Mallarmé and Rimbaud (especially important for the first generation of symbolists) to Wagner and Nietzsche (in the case of the second generation symbolists). Classical works of previous epochs were also widely used. Russian poets of the period, to use a line from Mandelstam, "received a blissful inheritance: / The wandering dreams of foreign bards" ("Я получил блаженное наследство--Чужих певцов блуждающие сны"). In this poem by Mandelstam, the spiritual connection to foreign authors is referred to as a state of grace, yet in reality this connection was obviously dependent on self-conscious efforts by Russian authors. Addressing young poets, Balmont wrote:

The verse must be strong. And for this you must take yourself in hand. On a spring day, to be able to sit over a book of philosophy, an English dictionary, and a Spanish grammar. . . . To be able to read a hundred, and three hundred, and

three thousand books, among which many, so many are boring.

Стих должен быть крепким. А для этого нужно скрутить себя. Уметь в весенний день сидеть над философской книгой, и английским словарем, и испанской грамматикой. . . . прочесть и 100, и 300, и 3000 книг, среди которых много-много скучных (*Where is my home* 256).

Lotman's theory of textual functions will serve as a useful tool in the analysis of Shakespeare's reception in Russian literary modernism. Stressing the importance of text as generator of meaning, the theory of textual functions not only encompasses interaction between reader and text but shows the dynamism of this interaction in the specific events of intertextuality.

Despite differences in aesthetic theory and poetic practice, the poets of the various movements within Russian modernism share the "longing for world culture" and the impulse to escape the "badger hole" that Mandelstam considered to be characteristics of Acmeism, but which, as M. Gasparov justly points out, apply equally to all Russian modernist poetry. Thanks to the full actualization of

functions of the Shakespearean text in the work of Russian modernists, this imported text was able to become the carrier of what Lotman considers a dialogic capacity for cultural modeling. Therefore, reception of Shakespeare in Russia is a unique illustration of the process of cultural translation and literary innovation that transforms genre, poetic language and cultural self-identification.

CHAPTER 1**DYNAMIC MODEL OF RECEPTION AND APPROPRIATION OF SHAKESPEAREAN
TEXT IN RUSSIA**

Шекспир вошел в кровь и плоть русского общества. . . . Мы воспитывались на нем, он нам родной и во многом отразился на нашем развитии.

Shakespeare has become flesh and blood of the Russian society. . . . We have been raised with him, he is kin to us and has in many respects influenced our development.

F. Dostoyevsky, "Literature and literacy" 19: 17

"THE FEAST OF REVIVAL"

Different stages of perception of Shakespeare in Russian culture may be distinguished, starting with the

premise that functions of the Shakespearean text were becoming increasingly complex, with additional functions being actualized over time and with those functions already present also undergoing changes.

In his key article "The Semiotics of culture and the notion of a text" (1981), Lotman singles out five crucial elements in the social and communicative function of a text (1: 131-132). While Lotman did not specifically study the reception of Shakespeare in Russia, his theory of textual functions may be useful in describing historical stages of interaction of Shakespeare and Russian literature. This theory, to which Lotman would return again and again throughout his life, overcomes the limitations of the somewhat mechanistic early structural approach by focusing not on an isolated text but on a text placed in context, in relation to other texts and to the semiotic environment (1: 147). The full range of functions may be realized only in texts which cease being simply transmitters of a given message and, through interaction with other texts, readers, and cultural tradition, can condense new information and, in effect, develop a memory. Such texts are capable of displaying a quality that Heraclites once called "self-increasing Logos," which means that a text becomes an entity that creates meaning.

The theory of textual functions foresees a stage when the text becomes something more than a text, a "conversational partner in its own right . . . a generator of information endowed by traits of an individual intelligence" (Lotman 1: 132). The capacity of the Shakespearean text to generate new meanings was intuitively pointed to in a critical essay on *Hamlet* by the Russian poet Innokenty Annensky (1855-1909), whom many modernists considered to be their teacher. Annensky makes a paradoxical suggestion that Hamlet himself creates the artistic world of his play. Hamlet, for him, is an "artist" and an "extemporizing actor" to whom all other characters in the play are secondary: "He is as if playing with them; was it perhaps he who created them . . ." ("*Он точно играет ими: уж не он ли и создал их . . .*") (*Reflections* 79). Annensky even went as far as writing a whole monologue in voice of Hamlet, a stream of consciousness that includes, along with Hamlet's inner speech, some staging details and interaction with other theatre workers:

Я верил ей . . . Пойдите . . . здесь висел другой
 портрет, а здесь сидел другой человек. . . . Что это
 за бред? Кто же меня дурачит. . . . Нет, нет . . .
 переделать все это и живее . . . Разбить формы,

замазать холсты, а---главное---тетради, тетради
отберите у актеров: что за чепуху они там говорят?

I used to believe her . . . Wait . . . there used to be a different portrait hanging here, and a different person sitting here . . . What rubbish is this? Who is playing a trick on me? . . . No, no . . . change all of this, and move it . . . Break the forms, paint over the canvasses, and the main thing--the notebooks, take the notebooks away from the actors--what nonsense are they saying there?

(Book of Reflections 79)

Asserting Hamlet's creative capacities, Annensky at the same time says that all actors, members of the audience, and readers create their own *Hamlet*, thereby approaching the notion of a dialogue between text, audience, and cultural context. Annensky's artistic statement provides a good illustration of the meaning-generating capacities of the Shakespearean text.

The following chapters will present a review of each of the five primary functions of a text, describing how these functions may be applied to each period of Russian

literary reception of Shakespeare, from the eighteenth century (first exposure to Shakespeare's work) up to the period of Russian modernism, which is the focal point of the present study. Obviously, attribution of certain functions of text to particular epochs of Russian literary development is aimed at establishing major patterns rather than firmly fixed boundaries between epochs. As will be seen from the analysis below, certain functions virtually could not have become actualized until specific conditions have been met; other functions of text were present only as a potential and, though perhaps actualized for some individual readers, were not prominently active on the overall scale of Russian literary life. Just as certain major trends in Russian literature conventionally allow literary scholars to speak of Russian Classicism, Realism, etc., even though every given historical moment was a result of a complex interaction of multiple forces, major trends in the perception of the Shakespearean text allow us to propose a distinction of various stages of that perception, based on the functions of the Shakespearean text prominently active at the time.

1. The communication between a transmitter and a recipient. Within Lotman's theory, this primary function

refers to a text fulfilling the function of message directed from the carrier of information to the public.

This function of Shakespeare's text was the earliest to be actualized in Russian literature, emerging immediately with the first translations of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century. During this first stage of exposure to Shakespeare, a transmitter and a recipient were set apart not by one, but by two intermediaries--a Western European translator (normally, French or German) translating from the English original, sometimes with the help of an interlinear translation, and a Russian translator who worked from a non-English version. There is no positive evidence of any major author during the eighteenth century having read Shakespeare in the original. In early nineteenth century, often denoted as Pushkin's time, the message was first received directly, through an English-to-Russian translation or even via a reading of the original (as in the case of Pushkin himself). Therefore, during Pushkin's time a major change in this function of the Shakespearean text occurred.

This elementary function of communication between a transmitter and a recipient is realized in the text as soon as a reader gains access to a text, and the transmission of the message becomes possible. However, since the transmission of the message was peculiar due to the fact

that Shakespeare's texts were initially transmitted simultaneously with Western critical debates and judgements, a polemical element was introduced from the earliest stage on (in contrast, for example, to the reception of Homer). In Pushkin's time, an example of this may be found when Peter Pletnev, discussing *Boris Godunov* in a private letter to Pushkin, brings up the issue of the German Romantics' view of Shakespeare (*Writers ask for advice* 23). The importance of existing literary polemic for the reception of Shakespeare was later reflected in the influence of German Romantic interpretation of Shakespeare, for instance, on young the Tsvetaeva.

The function just reviewed is closely related to the second function of literary text, communication between the audience and the cultural tradition.

2. The communication between the audience and the cultural tradition. A text fulfills the function of a collective cultural memory. As such it demonstrates, on one side, a capacity to continuous accumulation, and, on the other side, to the actualization of some aspects of information contained in it and in temporary or complete oblivion of its other aspects.

It would appear that as soon as a foreign text is received by a new audience, it gains the capacity to

function as a collective cultural memory of its new audience. In the eighteenth-century Russia, Shakespearean texts were defined primarily by negation, as those lying outside the dominant literary tradition, which was more closely oriented towards the norms of French Classicism. In Lotman's view, a necessary precondition for a meaningful dialogue is self-determination and independence of the conversational partners. In such a gesture of independence, the Russian secular literary tradition was asserting and reinforcing its own identity.

In Pushkin's time, this capacity has started to be realized, which enabled Pushkin's character Lensky to imitate Hamlet. However, as Shakespeare's heritage has not yet been able to imprint itself firmly into the collective memory of the Russian audience, Pushkin still finds it necessary to insert a footnote in order to explain a quote from *Hamlet* in *Eugene Onegin*. Arguably, Pushkin might have expected his ideal reader to recognize the reference to Hamlet without turning to footnotes, but he certainly would have thought about the rest of the reading public--much as Leo Tolstoy will do later on by providing footnotes to his own translation of the French text within *War and Peace*.

Only towards the second half of the nineteenth century do Shakespeare's works become an integral part of the Russian

literary tradition. To develop further Lotman's notion of collective memory, it may be said that Shakespearean themes and images become a part of the operative memory rather than long-term memory, as had been the case before. Turgenev and his contemporaries reinforced Shakespeare's place in collective memory by using Shakespearean characters as stock metaphors.

If Turgenev operated with integral images of Shakespearean heroes, authors of Russian modernism were able to individual situations or to minor details from Shakespeare's plays, such as Hamlet's ungartered stockings mentioned by Akhmatova (*Poem Without a Hero* I: 1). Therefore, modernists utilized the full potential of this textual function by actualizing the hidden aspects of the text, thereby supplementing the collective memory with additional information.

3. The communication of reader with himself. During such a communication of the information's recipient with himself/herself, a text plays the role of a mediator helping to transform the personality of a reader, to change the structural self-orientation of such a personality and the degree to which it is connected to metacultural constructions. This function is of particular importance for a text like Shakespeare's because, as Lotman points out (1: 131),

traditional, canonical texts have an especially strong capacity for actualizing certain personality traits of the recipient himself. On the contrary, in texts that are not part of the canon this function is not actualized but is present merely as a potential.

Before Pushkin's time, Shakespeare's texts in Russian literature lacked the canonical status necessary to stimulate such an inner dialogue of the reader with himself or herself. Bloom in his *Western Canon* argues that it was Shakespeare's oeuvre which first introduced into the literature the new task of teaching readers to converse with themselves--an achievement that within the context of Russian literature could arguably be credited to Pushkin. This particular function of Shakespeare's work started to become actualized in Russian cultural life in the 1820s-1830s and reached its high point by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the canonization of Shakespeare's heritage in Russia could be considered apparent.

Another important characteristic of Pushkin's period is the appearance of a reading community capable of using a literary text to stimulate an inner dialogue. By the 1820s, as demonstrated at length in William Mills Todd's *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin*, an adequate reading public (i.e. the recipient of the text) had already been

formed. Pushkin's older contemporaries, Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1820) and Vasily Zhukovsky (1783-1852), devoted their efforts to educating such a reader and promoting the notion of secular literary language, as shall be seen in the chapter dedicated to historical outline of Shakespeare's reception in Russia.

The epoch following Pushkin's sees a quantitative and qualitative change in Russian readership. By that time, a mass reader has been formed, and Shakespeare's works have become available in modest editions oriented towards the general public. If in the early nineteenth century, publishers were concerned mainly with satisfying the reading tastes of aristocratic families, now the orientation has changed towards the mass reader. Social and political journalism gained an unprecedented importance. Literature was turned to for social, philosophical and political guidance, not for insights into the human psyche. A typical example is the case of the influential left-wing literary critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky who not only insisted on reality as the basis of the beautiful and the object of art in his program articles, but put his aesthetic ideas into practice by writing his own novel, *What is to be done?* This novel came to enjoy great influence because of the suggestions for political and social reforms expressed in

it; the novel's rather mediocre literary merits were simply not considered separately from its social message.

Russian modernism shunned this utilitarian approach towards literature, refusing to entrust art with immediate political tasks. At the turn of the twentieth century, the need for a text to provoke communication of the reader with himself this function of the text once again comes to the foreground and finds its most complete realization, as preoccupation with "conversing with oneself" was typical for that audience.

If the reader of the second half of the nineteenth century tended to judge works of art based on their degree of "realism," understood as faithfulness of everyday life depictions, the new reader of the modernist age followed Bryusov's famous slogan *a realibus ad realiora* [From the real to the more real], seeking in art a possibility for inner experience which opens the path towards a higher reality. This inner experience at times could be influenced by works of art to the same or greater degree than by real-world phenomena, allowing Tsvetaeva the boldness of her poetic statement: "Non-existence is but a convention" ("Небытие--условность").

4. The communication between reader and text. In Lotman's view, a highly organized text ceases to be a mere

intermediary in the act of communication and starts displaying some intellectual characteristics. It becomes an equal conversational partner with a high degree of autonomy. Both for its author and for the reader, a text can act as an independent intellectual formation playing an active and independent role in the dialogue. It would appear that, consciously or not, modernist poets have recognized this capacity of the text in their interactions with foreign works.

This function of the Shakespearean text became actualized in the period of Russian realism after Pushkin, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thanks to the growing familiarity of Russian public with Shakespeare's work and to Shakespeare's inclusion into the literary canon, his texts already possessed a greater degree of autonomy than previously. Therefore, the contact with the text no longer was limited to a simple transmission of information to the audience; the answers to questions provoked by the text were searched for in the same text. This two-way process of communication with the text was freed from temporal restrictions. Turgenev's essay "Hamlets and Don Quixotes" may serve as an example: in it Turgenev attempts to provide answers to the questions posed by the text of

Shakespearean play. The actualization of this function bore witness to the increased maturity of the Russian readership.

During the period of Russian modernism, this function of the Shakespearean text finds its full development as the text becomes an equal participant in the communication process.

Just as a real life conversation with a human being in which a response is in theory unpredictable (because every real language is capable of generating an unlimited number of utterances), communication with a text containing an infinite number of meanings is an open-ended process. Evoking a Shakespearean image in a modern work is not guaranteed to cause the same chain of associations envisaged by the author; since the number of interpretations of Shakespeare is unlimited, any of them may potentially be used to inform the modern text.

Russian modernist anticipated Bakhtin's statement "Text is not a thing" ("Текст--не вещь") in his 1979 article "Problem of the text" (229), where he stresses both the importance of the reader's role and the independent function of a text. (Years later, Lotman will apply almost the same words to Bakhtin's own texts, expressing concern about the fate of Bakhtin's manuscripts: "Bakhtin's manuscripts are not an armchair or a tea-service . . .") (*Letters* 558).

5. The communication between text and cultural context.

In this case, a text functions in the act of communication not as a message but as an equal participant of this communication, that is, either a source or a recipient of the information. The relation of the text to the cultural context may have a metaphorical character, when the text is perceived as replacing the entire context to which it is in a certain way equivalent, or metonymical character, when a text represents the context, just as to a part represents the whole.

This function can be singled out as the most important new aspect of Shakespeare's perception during the age of Russian modernism. In the new communicative situation that had been formed by the early twentieth century, not only was the Shakespearean text being received as information into different contexts, but different information was being brought in the Shakespearean text. To use Lotman's expression, the Shakespearean text started actualizing its formerly hidden aspects, superceding itself and gaining the characteristics of a cultural model, and at the same time exhibiting independent behavior. This explains the possibility of modernist literary experiments such as Tsvetaeva's attempt to "fill in the blank spaces" in

Hamlet, as if supplementing additional information omitted by Shakespeare.

"The text superseding itself" should not be taken as meaning that Russian modernists tried improving Shakespeare or making his allegedly simple works more complex; rather, this means that Russian poets were able to bring out different aspects of the Shakespearean text that could become manifest only through contact with a new cultural context. Lotman, who did not focus on Shakespeare in his scholarly work, nevertheless chose an example from Shakespeare to support his thesis of the text as accumulator of information:

. . . nowadays, *Hamlet* is not just a play by Shakespeare, but it is also the memory of all its interpretations, and what is more, it is also the memory of all these historical events which occurred outside the text but with which Shakespeare's text can evoke associations. We may have forgotten what Shakespeare and his spectators knew, but we cannot forget what we have learnt since their time. And this is what gives to text new meanings (*Universe of the mind* 18).

In Russian modernist poetry, the Shakespearean text is most active in generating new meanings and can be said to acquire the qualities of the "model of culture," in Lotman's terms. However, Lotman specifies that only texts that preserve their cultural activity can have a capacity for accumulating information. The task of the modernist poets consisted specifically in preserving the cultural activity of the Shakespearean text, which had been decreasing by the end of the nineteenth century, when Shakespeare's work ceased to attract the interest of broad circles of the reading public and was being relegated to the area of literary scholarship. By turning to Shakespearean themes and images (and even, in the case of Acmeists, by listing Shakespeare as one of their main reference points), Russian modernist authors revive the cultural activity of his texts. Shakespeare once again is brought into the epicenter of cultural and literary discourse. They successfully accomplish the task referred to by Bakhtin: "There is nothing absolutely dead: each meaning will have its own feast of revival"--"Нет ничего абсолютно мертвого: у каждого смысла будет свой праздник возрождения") ("On Methodology of Humanities", 1938-41?). This is why modernist authors may introduce lines or entire scenes not present in Shakespeare's original, which leads not to the destruction of the original but to an additional variant of

seeing the relationship between characters or the meaning of the scene.

In the works of Bakhtin, a dialogue is represented primarily as a philosophical problem, something that De Man refers to as "the radical experience of voiced otherness" (De Man 110), i.e. as a category that allows humans to enclose the totality of culture. Culture is therefore seen as space with fluid borders, including borders of chronological nature, because in time any significant cultural event brings forward new meanings, hitherto existing only as a potential. As a modern critic points out, "outside the problematic of the dialogue cultural studies become less and less possible, especially as we move closer to examining modern literature" (Zverev 24).

To sum up the above, additional functions of the Shakespearean text are being actualized at each consecutive stages of appropriation of Shakespeare by Russian literature so that the number of actualized textual functions is progressively increasing. Ultimately, during the age of modernism all five functions of the text are actualized. This change is not merely quantitative; it progresses from the simple introduction of a foreign text as a code to an active dialogue between two cultures. Interestingly, these dynamics form a parallel to the evolvment of Lotman's theoretical

approach to the study of text, whose focus, as Levchenko observes, shifts from a system of codes to text to culture to a semiosphere as a cultural model (Online). Lotman's notion of semiosphere is meant to expand the cultural model beyond the structuralist grid by conceptualizing "the semiotic space ("semioticheskoe prostranstvo") beyond which semiosis itself is impossible" (Lotman 1: 13). This organicist concept, prompted by Bakhtin's logosphere and Vernadsky's noosphere, may be seen as Lotman's response to Bakhtin's criticism of structuralism for being enclosed in a text (for a helpful review of the much-debated issue on Lotman's interaction with Bakhtin, see Amy Mandelker's article "Semiotizing the Sphere: Organicist Theory in Lotman, Bakhtin and Vernadsky".)

In his last work, *Culture and Explosion* (1992), Lotman provides a logical extension of his earlier studies of textual functions and semiosphere, taking as his basic reference point not an individual model but "semiotic space" which is multidimensional thanks to the myriad of possible relations between elements of meaning and which has both memory and presentiment of the future (267). On the other hand, Lotman introduces a dynamic cultural model based on the concept of "binary" and "ternary" cultural systems progressing through "explosions of meaning" of varying impact--ultimately unpredictable cultural turning points. Lotman is careful to

specify that he prefers to associate "explosion" not with deployment of a weapon of mass destruction but "with birth of a new living being or any other creative reshaping of life's structure" (23). In binary cultures, full destruction of the existing order is seen as ideal condition for instituting the new one, while ternary structures may preserve some values of the preceding epochs, transferring them from the periphery to the center of the system (259). Thus, if the modernist moment of Russian literature, with its typical "anxiety to be influenced," has to be interpreted in accordance to the theory of binary and ternary cultures, it would seem to be closer to the ternary model. Such a conclusion would necessary come into contradiction with Lotman's view of Russian culture in its entirety as being structured in a binary manner (corresponding to the Orthodox theological binary opposition of Heaven and Hell). In contrast, Lotman reserves the ternary cultural model for Western culture (as embodied by the ternary opposition of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory).

Nevertheless, Lotman's "dictum of a binary historical structure," which he makes an underlying principle of Russian cultural development in general (264) does not seem appropriate to describe the Russian modernists' approach to prior literary tradition, whether Russian or Western European, because this approach was not characterized by a "total and

unconditional destruction of the old and an apocalyptic birth of the new" (268).

Lotman's theory, meant primarily as a tool to describe metacultural exchanges and entire historical shifts rather than interaction between individual texts, appears to be sufficiently controversial and requiring additional evaluation (e.g. whether the Purgatory is indeed an appropriate symbol of an axiologically "neutral" space permitting growth and development of individual agency). Accepting Lotman's theory effectively implies accepting "objectification of consciousness, turning it into a function of impersonal unpredictable processes" (Amelin online).

It would seem that the interaction of Russian modernist poets with Shakespeare may be more accurately described in terms of the catalyst model referred to in Lotman's article "The Problem of Byzantine influence" (1989),

the most abrupt intrusions of texts from outside in general play the role of a catalyst: they do not change the inner dynamics of a culture, but free its inner potential from a state of dormant balance (i.e. entropy) (1: 128).

According to Lotman, an isolated text is incapable to generate meanings; like any dynamic generating system, a text requires input of outside information, which in this case implies an interaction within other texts and cultural environments (1: 146-147). Although the Shakespearean text obviously had a great semiotic potential throughout its existence, in Russia this potential was most fully realized only in modernist poetry. It was then that the Shakespearean text was able to reach a high point in its meaning-generating activity and to function as a catalyst of literary processes within the Russian cultural context. This corresponds to the notion that incursion of a foreign text into a different text leads to "an increased pool of unpredictable possibilities of future development" (*Culture and Explosion* 122). As applied to Shakespearean text in Russia, the intensity of this incursion could arguably be linked to actualization of social and communicative functions of the foreign text; the fuller the actualization of textual functions, the greater the impulse given by the foreign text. The result of this dialogue was the phenomenon pointed to by Lotman: "Incursion may be so energetic that it is not an individual element of text but an entire language that is brought in" (*Culture and Explosion* 206).

In Russian modernist poetry, Shakespearean themes images broke out beyond the constraints of the plot, gained a personal immediacy and reached a level of language capable of generating potentially endless meanings.

The striving towards full actualization of traditional texts, both native and foreign, was one of the ways through which Russian modernists were giving new life to poetry. At the end of her life, Akhmatova justly recognized the importance of this period for subsequent development of Russian literature, stressing the radical shift in views on poetry brought about by Russian modernists:

В нашей юности молодежь стихов не любила и не понимала. Толщу было ничем не пробить, не пробрать. Стихи были забыты, разлюблены, потому что наши отцы и матери, из-за писаревщины, считали их совершенным вздором, ни для какого употребления не годным . . . модернисты великое дело сделали для России. Этого нельзя забывать. Они сдали страну совсем в другом виде, чем приняли.

When we were growing up, young people did not love and did not understand poetry. You could not get through to the crowd whatever you try. Poetry

was forgotten, fallen out of love with, because our fathers and mothers, due to Pisarev's [a critic straightforwardly advocating the service of literature for the greater social good] efforts, thought it nonsense, good for nothing.

. . . modernists have accomplished an important thing for Russia. One should not forget that. They turned the country over in a completely different condition than that in which they had received it (Chukovskaya 1:135).

"ENCHANTED BY SHAKESPEARE'S RESOUNDING NAME"

Those major characteristics of the reception of Shakespeare's text which were common for all historical periods reviewed merit a special discussion. Undoubtedly, each stage of the Russian literature's development also had specific unique ways of approaching Shakespeare which led to actualization of various communicative functions of Shakespearean texts.

The perception of Shakespearean text was heavily influenced by European translation and critical thought, from French Classicism or German Romanticism.

The Russian public started getting acquainted with Shakespeare's works only some one hundred years after the author's death, via French and German sources rather than through a direct contact with the original. Thus, for example, the tragedy *King Richard III* was translated in 1783 from Le Tourneur's French version (the name of the Russian translator remained unknown, in line with the usual practice of that time); the translation of *Julius Caesar*, done by the renown author and historian Karamzin in 1787, was also done not from the original, but from a German translation by Eschenburg.

Therefore, the first acquaintance with Shakespeare was already filtered through the critical prism of French and German translators as well as critical articles which became known at the same time (such as Voltaire's sharp criticism of Shakespeare). Any translation is inevitably a form of critical interpretation, but in the eighteenth century translators were entitled, if not expected, to amend the original in accordance with the prevailing taste, as described by Pushkin later:

В переводных книгах, изданных в прошлом столетии, нельзя прочесть ни одного предисловия, где бы не находилась неизбежная фраза: мы думали угодить публике, а с тем вместе оказать услугу и нашему автору, исключив из его книги места, которые могли бы оскорбить образованный вкус французского читателя. Странно, когда подумаешь, кто, кого и перед кем извинял таким образом! . . . Наконец критика спохватилась. Стали подозревать, что г. Летурнер мог ошибочно судить о Шекспире и не совсем благоразумно поступил, переправляя на свой лад "Гамлета", "Ромео" и "Лира". От переводчиков стали требовать более верности, а менее щекотливости и усердия к публике.

In the translations published in the past [e.g. eighteenth] century, you can't find one foreword without an inevitable phrase: thinking to please our public and do a service to our author, we excluded from his book those parts which could have offended the sophisticated taste of the French reader! Isn't it strange when you think who was excusing whom and in front of whom in such a way!

. . . Finally, the critics came to their senses. They started suspecting that Mr. Le Tourneur could have misjudged Shakespeare and was not altogether right to correct *Hamlet*, *Romeo [and Juliet]* and *[King] Lear* according to his own taste! They started demanding from the translators more faithfulness, and less squeamishness and desire to please the public" (12: 137-138).

Throughout the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century Russia's cultural links with countries such as Holland, Germany and France were much stronger than those with England. Starting from the beginning of the nineteenth century, St. Petersburg had three theater companies: French, German and Russian. Pushkin's library contained more books in French than in any other language, including Russian. Books were routinely ordered for aristocratic Russian families from France and Germany; St. Petersburg had large French- and German-speaking colonies. Among the German immigrants in Russia were such renown people as, for instance, General von Klinger, the author of the play that was to give its name to the *Sturm und Drang* movement, who happened to be the head of the Page School in St. Petersburg.

Professional translations directly from the English original began to appear only in Pushkin's time. Pushkin, who learned English in order to read Shakespeare, turned to Shakespeare's works for inspiration, for a historical precedence of mixing the styles and enriching the poetical vocabulary from previously underutilized sources, such as folk language.

However, Shakespeare's language did not exercise direct influence on Russian poetry the way French works did. Discussing translations of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Nabokov points out Pushkin's reliance on French stock epithets. While Nabokov may exaggerate the degree of Pushkin's dependence on such epithets, nonetheless that Pushkin, following his older contemporaries Zhukovsky and Karamzin, transplanted into the Russian literary vocabulary many poetic expressions which had lacked an adequate Russian equivalent before him (133, 136).

A direct interchange on the level of vocabulary was absent in the case of contact with Shakespeare's works. Though every educated person was expected to know French, and many learned German or Italian in their childhood, English was typically a language learned later in life--often with the specific purpose of reading Shakespeare or other English authors in the original, not because of any utilitarian motivation that would make knowledge of English more wide-

spread. However, with the appearance of multiple Russian translations of almost all Shakespearean plays, the necessity of overcoming an additional barrier of a French or German translation was eliminated. Tolstoy first read Shakespeare's works in translation and became able to read Shakespeare in the original only years afterwards (*Shakespeare and Russian culture* 428).

Even during the Russian Silver Age, with its pointed interest in other languages and literatures, English did not have supremacy. Mandelstam, who was fluent in several European languages, did not know English; shortly before his arrest and death in the labor camp he had asked his wife to teach him English so that he could read Shakespeare (Mandelstam, Nadezhda *The Second Book* 194).

In the age of modernism, first-hand knowledge of English authors increased dramatically, although it was by no means widespread. Specifically, two poets in whose work the translations of Shakespeare played a major role, Valery Bryusov and Boris Pasternak, were English scholars. Bryusov, who translated extensively from Latin, French and German as well as from other languages, started his first attempts at translating Shakespeare by reworking already existing Russian translations. Pasternak translated from German (including Goethe's *Faust*), French, and English directly, and from other

languages using interlinear translations; his translations of Shakespearean plays are still used by Russian theaters today.

Nevertheless, Russian poetry's first-hand contact with the Shakespearean text must have come too late for provoking poetic competition. The threefold distance of time, space and language stimulated a more complex approach than that of determining Shakespeare's eligibility to serve as a literary model. While Shakespeare's experiments with different stylistic levels did inspire Russian poets in their task of shaping a new Russian poetical vocabulary, there are almost no instances in which a modernist poem may be said to be influenced by Shakespearean language as such. Rather, the images and themes of Shakespeare exercised a profound influence on Russian poetry and therefore have been chosen as the main focus of this work.

The mode of appropriation of foreign ideas changed by the modernist era: rather than seeking to adopt a particular theory, Russian modernists attempted to synthesize their own theories--hence the abundance of "literary manifestos" during the period in question.

Comparing the epoch of Shakespeare, the German *Sturm und Drang* movement and the age of Russian modernism, the Russian modernist poet Kuzmin referred not to similar aesthetics but rather to the similarities in the cultural

atmosphere in these periods of heightened intellectual and artistic fertility:

. . . две эпохи в литературе особенно теперь близки к нам. В обоих произведения даже меньшего поэтического достоинства овеяны таким стремлением к свободе, силе и действию, что кажутся неповторимым чудом. Это--эпоха славных предшественников, современников и продолжателей Шекспира и немецкая школа "бури и натиска" (Клингер, Ленц, Мюллер, Лейзевиц, молодой Гете и Шиллер).

. . . two literary epochs are particularly close to us now. In both of them even works of lesser artistic value are full of such a desire for freedom, power and action that they seem an inimitable miracle. This is an epoch of the predecessors, contemporaries and followers of Shakespeare and the German *Sturm und Drang* School (von Klinger, Lenz, Müller, Leisewitz, young Goethe and Schiller) (Kuzmin, *Conventions* 22).

Every age reinvented Shakespeare according its needs and aesthetics imperatives. No other foreign writer's name was so closely linked to so many controversial issues in Russian literary and social thought for more than two centuries as Shakespeare's. In the late eighteenth century, Shakespeare's works served as one of the catalysts in the reevaluation of French Classicism. In the 1820s-1830s, Pushkin turned to Shakespeare's works for support of his own vision of revitalizing Russian theatre and poetry in general.

Realist writers of the second half of the nineteenth century, when not rejecting Shakespeare for his alleged lack of verisimilitude, tried to read into Shakespeare's work an element of social criticism, (though that element clearly is marginal in Shakespeare's works even when compared to works of some of his own contemporaries). Turgenev and Tolstoy may be seen as embodiments of the two most common models of approaching Shakespeare: either interpreting Shakespeare's themes as topical social criticism (Turgenev) or rejecting Shakespeare altogether as "unrealistic" and elitist (Tolstoy). When Tolstoy at the end of his life came to question the conventions of traditional art (going as far as rejecting almost all of his own works), he chose Shakespeare as a major target of

his criticism, presumably because Shakespeare's works embodied for Tolstoy the "brain-spun, invented works" of the old, elitist art whose significance was primarily an aesthetic one (*What is art?* 113).

At the same time, Tolstoy's contemporary Druzhinin, a writer and later a translator, developed his own aesthetic theory of independent and free creation ("артистическая теория независимого и свободного творчества"), which he juxtaposed to the didacticism and preoccupation with topical social issues prevailing in Russian literature at that time. Though initially having rather tepid feelings about Shakespeare and saying that his ability to understand poetry is at odds with Shakespeare's poetry (*Shakespeare and Russian culture* 424), Druzhinin saw it necessary to cultivate a taste for Shakespeare's works and attempted to instill the habit of reading Shakespeare in the young Tolstoy as well. (Tolstoy at that time was already skeptical about Shakespeare's works, but did not yet dare to publish his negative views.) Moreover, Druzhinin undertook the translation of several plays by Shakespeare, starting with *King Lear*. Shakespeare was given a major role in Druzhinin's theory of art; Shakespeare's works were evidently used as an argument on both sides of the major Russian debate on the role of art: the demand for a clearly

defined social role of literature and the need for art to preserve its independence from topical issues.

In Gumilyov's manifesto of Acmeism as the new poetic movement of Russian twentieth-century modernism, Shakespeare stands for the "inner world of man," which had been now proclaimed the only true subject of art, and thus undeniably relevant for modern literature. In a 1916 article dedicated to the coming 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, Bryusov wrote that contemporary authors are better prepared to perceive the beauty of Shakespeare's lyric than the preceding generations, "which in their noble strive for simplicity forgot that there is beauty in complexity, too" (qtd. in Musatov 53).

In fact, Bryusov touched upon the key issue in the Russian aesthetics at the second half of the nineteenth century, that of art's ultimate aim and function and the society. As Lotman observes, Russian realistic literature of the late nineteenth century chose to forget Pushkin's notion of independent value of art:

. . . на рубеже XIX и XX в. русской культуре был дан гений, все творчество которого шло вразрез с "идейными" направлениями предшествующей эпохи и могло послужить великим предостережением. Это был

Чехов. Только Чехов, подобно Пушкину, полностью удержался от соблазна однозначных проповедей и от снижения искусства до роли служанки пропаганды. Но зато и не было в русской литературе более одинокого гения.. художественная позиция Чехова если и получила продолжение, то . . . оно прозвучало в поэзии.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Russian culture was given one genius whose entire work went against the "idea-centered" trends of the preceding epoch and could have served as a major warning. That genius was Chekhov. Only Chekhov, like Pushkin, was able to escape from the temptation of straightforward sermons and to avoid bringing art down to the level of propaganda's handmaiden. There was no genius more lonely in Russian culture . . . if Chekhov's approach to art was continued at all, then . . . it was continued in poetry (*On poets* 679-680).

This tradition indeed was continued in the works of Russian modernist poets, from Bryusov to Pasternak, who believed that literature fulfils its higher calling only

when freed from the necessity to serve topical political tasks.

Early twentieth-century authors used Shakespeare to challenge the belief that the main goal of literature was to represent social reality. In the Russian tradition, Shakespeare's work has long been associated with the artistic unification of contradictory and mutually exclusive psychological traits in the same character. The fusion of stereotypical traits was introduced from the mid-nineteenth century under the slogan of rejecting the very principle of stereotyping and made it possible to see in drama a reflection of contradictions present in real life. However, the method of contrasting these images before modernism was often rather mechanistic and superficial (in the twentieth century, this inept method was mockingly referred to as "kotzebyatina," because of the much-satirized plays by the minor German author Kotzebue who spent a number of years in St. Petersburg).

In Kagan-Kans' analysis of Turgenev's understanding of *Hamlet* (14-15), she refers to a line from *Faust*: "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meinen Brust / Die eine will sich von der andern trennen" ("Two souls live in my chest, / and one wants to separate from the other"). Showing this problem to be more complex, Lotman in his article "On Gogol's realism" warns against using Goethe's line as a

"romantic stereotype" (701). This dichotomy was sometimes interpreted too literally by Russian Romantics (e.g. Lermontov); however, in Pushkin's later works, such as *Boris Godunov* or *Eugene Onegin*, there is already a tendency to go beyond a dichotomy of contradictory impulses towards a synthetic combination of traits. Had Pushkin's life not been cut short, he would have been likely to continue his search in this direction since he valued the complexity of Shakespeare's characters:

Лица, созданные Шекспиром, не суть, как у Мольера, типы такой-то страсти, такого-то порока; но существа живые, исполненные многих страстей, многих пороков; обстоятельства развивают перед зрителем их разнообразные и многосторонние характеры.

Characters created by Shakespeare are not as in Molière, types of a certain passion, a certain vice, but live beings of many passions, many vices; the circumstances uncover before the spectator their manifold and diverse qualities (12: 159-160).

Pushkin contrasted the characters of Molière, who may be defined by a single phrase, with the characters of Shakespeare, who defy such easy classification. Shakespeare's complexity is in stark contrast to the rather mechanistic theories of his own time (e.g. the theory of four humors) offered as an explanation of the multifaceted nature of human character.

While the study of the inner world of man has been present, to a varying degree, during preceding periods of Russian literature, Russian modernist poetry was the first to turn specifically to Shakespeare in its search to express the conflicts of the human psyche. The literary hero of modernism often combined contradictory traits (culminating in Bryusov's "И Господа, и дьявола / Хочу прославить я"--"I want to glorify both God and devil"). The yearning for religion and the impossibility of experiencing a religious feeling, as Merezhkovsky wrote; a heightened feeling of individuality and a desire to merge with the historically significant masses, or with the universe (as Rilke will later say: "Zu dem gebrauchten sowohl, wie zu dumpfen und stummen / Vorrat der vollen Natur, den unsäglichen Summe, / zähle dich jubelnd hinzu und vernichte die Zahl"); a cry of loneliness and impossibility of a understanding between human beings--such

incompatible feelings determined the inner image of the new lyrical hero.

Authors of Russian modernism saw in Shakespeare, whose characters are unpredictable because their behavior cannot be reduced to a typological formula, a germ of their own search for expressing the unpredictability of the human experience at a time fraught with foreboding of future twentieth century catastrophes. It is therefore not surprising that Shakespeare was often seen as not simply historically relevant but as a "kindred spirit," to return to the quote from Dostoyevsky from the beginning of this chapter.

In 1896, planning to take a break from contemporary literature, over-saturated with ideology, Bryusov noted that he would keep of all books "only three--the Bible, Homer and Shakespeare" (*Diaries* 26). In 1849, Dostoyevsky already requested Shakespeare's works to be brought to his cell in the Sts. Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg. Similarly, Gumilyov in 1921 took a volume of Shakespeare with him to the Soviet prison "Kresty" in Leningrad (from where he would go to his execution on unconfirmed charges of planning an Anti-Soviet coup).

The absorption of Shakespeare into the Russian literary canon effectively changed the notion of the canon and the

canonical. Shakespeare's acceptance into the canon was a gradual and ambivalent process, unlike the case of many other European writers. The metaphorical use of Shakespeare's images became conceivable only after Shakespeare's works had entered the Russian literary canon. Pushkin was the first Russian author to use the name of a Shakespearean character (Hamlet) metaphorically, signifying the changing status of Shakespeare within the Russian canon.

Starting with the middle of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare was recognized as belonging to the canon, yet his precise place in the literary canon was never fully defined. In fact, it soon became clear that the attribution of a specific place to Shakespeare's work in the Russian literary canon affected the very principles on which this canon was based. When in the eighteenth century Sumarokov listed Shakespeare among the other classical poets ("Milton and Shakespeare, the later, tho' unschooled"), that statement challenged the hitherto unquestionable authority of French Classicism and suggested new criteria for evaluating a literary work. Karamzin, who translated *Julius Caesar* and planned to translate Shakespeare's entire oeuvre into Russian, wrote in 1787 that it would be absurd to judge Shakespeare according to the prescriptions of contemporary theatre, because he followed only "nature": "The true cause of this was

his [Shakespeare's] vivid imagination that would not submit itself to any rules" (*Julius Caesar* 5-6).

Imagination, a concept that will be important for the aesthetics of Romanticism is introduced here through the example of Shakespeare's works. Thus even without being included into the canon Shakespeare influenced its creation. Shakespeare played the role of that stranger whose intrusion, in Lotman's words, "creates a typically Russian phenomenon that is difficult to translate into languages of other cultures" (*Culture and Explosion* 130).

The 1840s saw a surge of interest in Shakespeare and even an intense though brief cult of *Hamlet* and its creator, the first signs of which could be seen already in Pushkin's *Lensky*. In the years immediately following Pushkin's death, many new translations of Shakespeare were published and new productions of Shakespearean plays emerged in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In 1842, a journalist from the St. Petersburgian newspaper *Northern Bee* admits that "with us, the obsession with Shakespeare grows into a mania, but from all possible manias this is the one most easily excused" (qtd. in *Shakespeare and Russian Culture* 317).

The atmosphere of the time is well expressed in a later (1854) poem by Apollon Grigoryev, who used a quotation from Polevoy

Ему мы верили; одним
 С ним жили чувством, дети века
 И было нам за человека,
 За человека страшно с ним!

(We believed him
 We shared the same feeling, children of our age,
 And we were afraid,
 Together with him afraid for the human soul!)

By the end of the nineteenth century, the evaluation of Shakespeare's work became a matter of ideology rather than simple individual taste, derived from the thesis that art should be a reflection of social reality. Nikolai Chernyshevsky made the protagonist of his novel *What is To Be Done* explain: "Why is Shakespeare the greatest? Because he has more of life's truth, less fiction than with other poets." When Shakespeare became the target of a critical attack, it was precisely because he was undeniably a part of the canon reevaluated in its totality; the most famous

of those attacks, coming from Tolstoy, comprised a part of Tolstoy's radical rejection of many literary works of the past, including his own.

By the modernist moment, Shakespeare had been part of the Russian literary canon long enough to come to be seen as a revered but distant figure. Russian modernist poets whose work is analyzed in the present thesis were able to demonstrate the relevance of Shakespeare's heritage for the twentieth century, not by disguising Shakespeare's characters in modern clothes or reading the latest political ideas into the Shakespearean text but by bringing Shakespeare's text closer to the reader. Thanks to their more profound and often intimate look at Shakespeare's works, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak and other poets of Russian modernism gave to the reader a fresh look at the themes and images that were already at risk of becoming trite and meaningless. In the perception of the Russian modernists, Shakespeare's works were no longer oracular utterances but anguished reflections of a vulnerable mortal, and therefore all the more convincing for the twentieth-century reader. Through actualization of all functions of Shakespearean text, modernists succeeded in continuing its life as a generator of new meanings. Their

accomplishment consisted not in opposing the canon but in reviving it and giving it a new vital charge.

Joseph Brodsky in his Nobel Prize speech very precisely defined this capacity of poetical language:

Существует, как мы знаем, три метода познания: аналитический, интуитивный и метод, которым пользовались библейские пророки, -- посредством откровения. Отличие поэзии от прочих форм литературы в том, что она пользуется сразу всеми тремя (тяготея преимущественно ко второму и третьему), ибо все три даны в языке; и порой с помощью одного слова, одной рифмы пишущему стихотворение удается оказаться там, где до него никто не бывал.

There are, as we know, three types of cognition: analytical, intuitive, and the mode that was known to the Biblical prophets, revelation. What distinguishes poetry from other forms of literature is that it uses all three of them at once (gravitating primarily towards the second and the third). For all three of them are given in the language; and there are times when, by means of a

single word, a single rhyme, the writer of a poem manages to find himself where no one has ever been before him (*The Form of Time 2*: 461).

The notion of cognitive capacities present in the language itself prompted Gershom Scholem to continue the ideas of his friend Walter Benjamin on the widening of the meaning of a text as the task of the literary criticism (Yampolsky online). Scholem raised the question of interpretation within the context of sacred texts. According to Rabbinical exegetical tradition, the revelation received by Moses on Mount Sinai encompassed an endless meaning and eternal truth. However, this fullness of meaning and its truthfulness were to a large extent lost when the revelation took the shape of a literary text--the Torah. Therefore, the tradition of commentary is aimed towards restoring the initial meaning which was imperfectly rendered in the written text. This means, that after two and half thousand years of interpretation of Torah humanity is closer to the true understanding of its meaning than in the very beginning of the interpretation process, immediately after revelation was fixed in written form. The presence of an intermediary agent is, of course, a prerequisite for revelation in many

traditions. Commentary thus extends the meaning of the primary text, making it canonical.

If this approach is applied to any traditional literary text (thereby resolving the necessity of determining the exact degree of its initial perfection), the conclusion may be reached that canonization of text is achieved through its ongoing interpretation, which, furthermore, allows for the generation of new meanings in its turn elevating the status of the text, further stimulating the continuation of interpretations.

This model can be used to explain of the approach of Russian modernist poets, from Blok to Pasternak, to Shakespeare; their distinctive interpretations of Shakespeare's work strengthened the latter's position within the Russian literary canon and promoted further interpretation. The Russian modernist approach to tradition seems to correspond to Scholem's view that "only one who submits himself to the continuity of tradition of interpretive history gains the freedom and legitimacy to creatively interpret" (Handelman 207).

It should be noted that, within Scholem's paradigm of textual interpretation, any "misreading" of a canonical text in Harold Bloom's sense becomes impossible. In fact, it is possible to envisage a number of possible

interpretations that corresponds to the number of interpreters (Scholem 172). To continue this train of thought, it may be said that any text for which an "incorrect" interpretation is possible presupposes the necessity for a single "correct" meaning, which would effectively mean reducing such a canonical text to the level of a traffic sign. As Yampolsky suggests in his article "The literary canon and the theory of a "strong" author" the anxiety caused by a canonical work is due not to the fear of influence but rather to the potentially endless widening of its semantic field, which, like all infinite objects, is capable of producing fear and anxiety (Online).

Russian modernist authors were clearly aware of the complexity of their appropriation of canonical texts. In an article relaying her conversations with Natalia Goncharova, a contemporary painter, Tsvetaeva discusses the problem of artistic influence:

If you read Shakespeare and love him, is it possible for you to forget him when writing your own *Hamlet*, for example? You will not be able to do this, it is in you, it became a part of you, like a landscape

you once saw or a road you once took, like an event in your life.

Если Вы читаете Шекспира и Шекспира любите, неужели Вы его забудете, сядя за своего Гамлета, например? Вы этого сделать не сможете, он в вас, он стал частью вас, как вид, на который Вы смотрели, дорога, по которой Вы шли, как случай собственной жизни (*On art 170*).

Tsvetaeva clearly agrees with this point of view, adding from herself:

. . . influence, influence on. Rubbish. Only pressure can be on, influence is always into, like one river merging with another. . . . And also, the word of Goethe--strangely enough, also about Shakespeare: "everything that precedes me is mine".

. . . влияние, влияние на. Вздор. Это давление на, влияние--в, как река в реку. . . . И еще, слово Гете - странно, по поводу того же Шекспира: "Все, что до меня,--мое" (*On art 170*).

In contrast to Bloom's "strong poets," Tsvetaeva, along with other Russian modernists, readily acknowledged her connection to the preceding literary figures, finding it impossible to draw a line between an aesthetic experience and a real-life event from the viewpoint of their relative importance for the creative act. Recognizing tradition, for Russian modernist poets, meant not becoming susceptible to outside influences but enriching both one's own artistic world and the understanding of traditional work. As Morson and Emerson aptly observe in their discussion of Bakhtin's dialogism, "The result of this dialogues is to enrich both the text and this interpreter. . . . The text contains the potential for the new meanings, but the specific meanings revealed also require the special contribution of the interpreter and his or her unrepeatable experience" (289).

CHAPTER 2**FROM THE TRAGIC TO THE LYRIC: SHAKESPEARE, PUSHKIN AND
RUSSIAN MODERNISTS**

Недостаточно иметь только местные
чувства, есть мысли и чувства всеобщие,
всемирные.

It is insufficient to have only local
feelings; there are thoughts and
feelings which are universal, global.

A. Pushkin

. . . нет поэта с такой всемирной
отзывчивостью, как наш Пушкин, и не в
одной только отзывчивости тут дело, а в
изумляющей глубине ее, в перевоплощении
своего духа в дух чужих народов,
перевоплощении почти совершенном, а
потому и чудесном, потому что нигде, ни

в каком поэте целого мира такого явления не повторилось.

. . . there is no other poet with such global responsiveness as our Pushkin; and the matter here is not only in the responsiveness itself, but in its amazing profoundness, in [Pushkin's] capacity to transform his spirit into a spirit of other peoples, a transformation which is almost perfect and therefore miraculous, because this phenomenon has not repeated itself anywhere else, with any other poet.

Dostoyevsky, "The Pushkin Speech"

RETHINKING PUSHKIN

In Russian modernism, Shakespeare's work was closely linked to the heritage of Pushkin. In contrast to the authors of ancient Greece and Rome or the French Classicists, Shakespeare was the literary figure whose presence in Russian literature was first assured by

Pushkin's interest in his heritage, just as in Germany this presence is largely due to Goethe's vision.

As the understanding of Pushkin's heritage evolved, his own literary interests and preferences were also reevaluated. By tracing the evolution of modernist views on Pushkin, the changing views on Shakespeare may be better approached. Just as Bryusov attempted a daring literary experiment--completing Pushkin's unfinished (by choice or by chance) *Egyptian Nights* written under the influence of Shakespeare--Russian modernists attempted to develop further the contact between Shakespeare and Russian lyric initiated by Pushkin. It is known that Pushkin tried different approaches to Shakespearean themes and characters. One of these approaches was formal experimentation. In some works, such as Pushkin's narrative poem *Angelo* based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, a theme already explored and realized by Shakespeare was transferred by Pushkin into a different poetical form--the lyrical genre. By contrast, Pushkin's *Little Tragedies* do not involve specific characters from Shakespeare's plays but rather offer interpretations which Pushkin may have believed to be Shakespearean: these are not Shakespeare's characters but characters acting as they could have done in Shakespeare's plays. However, *Little Tragedies*, with their

small self-contained form and focus on one conflict, do witness Pushkin's leaning toward the lyrical genre. *Egyptian Nights* represent yet another way of Pushkin's work with the Shakespearean text: Pushkin took a theme from Shakespeare and attempted to develop it through his own lyrical prism. Pushkin no longer takes into consideration Shakespeare's interpretation; characters are developed independently of what might have happened to them in Shakespeare's play. In a related prose fragment, "Guests were assembling at the datcha . . ." ("Гости съезжались на дачу . . ."), Pushkin once again returns to theme of Cleopatra, briefly hinting at the possibility of recreating the mythological situation in modern society. Modernist poets, following in Pushkin's footsteps, will further explore this trend, bringing together a character from Shakespeare and their lyrical heroes.

As observed earlier, the modernist perception of Pushkin did not remain unchanged. When the modernist movement was just emerging, Pushkin was seen as a perfect example of the literary past, as a figure whose accomplishments exhaust the historical task of nineteenth-century literature. In 1893, the youthful Bryusov wrote in his diary:

Что если бы я вздумал на гомеровском языке писать трактат по спектральному анализу? У меня не хватило бы слов и выражений. То же самое, если я вздумаю на языке Пушкина выразить ощущение "fin de siècle."

What if I wanted to use Homeric language for writing an article on spectral analysis? I would not have enough idioms and expressions. The same would happen if I decided to use Pushkin's language to express the *fin de siècle* feeling.

(qtd. in Ashukin 52)

Severyanin, an equivocal figure in the history of Russian modernism (his reputation balanced on a thin line between that of a poet and that of a poetaster), haughtily exclaimed: "For us, Pushkin became a Derzhavin" ("Для нас Державиным стал Пушкин") comparing the contemporary perception of Pushkin to Pushkin's own perception of his most famous predecessor whose name came to embody poetry of the eighteenth century. It is noteworthy that Severyanin's outburst is based on the understanding that for Pushkin, Derzhavin was an irrevocably closed chapter of Russian

poetry. Such a view had to be widely shared, or Severyanin's bravado would not have had an effect. The Russian reading public's view would clearly conflict with Bethea's thesis that Pushkin throughout his mature life struggled with Derzhavin's influence (137-199). While recognizing that Pushkin had "no linguistic anxiety towards his precursors"--not least because there was no Russian Shakespeare or Milton in Pushkin's path (148), Bethea seems to believe that Pushkin's anxiety was produced by the attempt to match Derzhavin's lifetime achievement as a statesman and poet "laureate."

Derzhavin's influence does not, in fact, appear to be the major undercurrent of Pushkin's work. Rather, Derzhavin's heritage was treated by Pushkin as part of prior literary history and therefore potentially a part of Pushkin's own creative experience. Such a view is in line with Pushkin's life-long insistence on viewing literature as a profession. (It is worth remembering that the sentimental legend about Derzhavin passing on the torch of poetry to the youthful Pushkin during the latter's graduation exercises was not being proliferated by Pushkin himself). Moreover, this is a surprisingly modern view on Derzhavin, which could be shared by a twentieth-century reader, for

whom Derzhavin is simply not enough of a looming authority figure to merit any type of psychological complex.

Severyanin himself, whether realizing the extent of his exaggeration or simply afraid of having broken a taboo, soon backs away from his position and explains: "Yes, Pushkin is too old for our age, / but Pushkin is great in his Pushkinness" ("Да, Пушкин стар для современья, / но Пушкин Пушкински велик"). It seems, however, that Severyanin, with his typical lack of restraint, inadvertently expresses a thought that was not too far from the mind of other poets, such as Bely, with a more profound view on Pushkin. In the early 1900s, Pushkin was often seen as a venerated figure of the past. The perception of the distance between his poetical heritage and modern poetry was that of a painfully irrevocable historical change.

Such an interpretation of Pushkin is linked to the Symbolist aesthetics and thereby to Nietzsche's philosophy of tragedy, which had an important place in Russian Symbolist thought. Nietzsche spoke of an "Apollonian" vision of the world fails to account for the inner mysterious nature of the world (1: 40). When this aesthetic myth of Pushkin is articulated according to Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy, the universality of Pushkin's genius is suddenly limited to the visible world.

Pushkin was thus seen as a poet who depicts nature perfectly, but chooses to avoid facing the irrational or otherworldly. As Andrei Bely wrote in 1905: "Pushkin's wholeness lacks depth" ("Пушкинской цельности не хватает глубины") (*Green Meadow* 232).

Paradoxically, bringing the discussion on Pushkin within the context of the Nietzschean notion of tragedy eventually results in reevaluation of earlier views of Pushkin as a conflict-free author. As Vyacheslav Ivanov already recognized it in his article "The Gypsies": "At times, this clarity of Pushkin's makes one feel somehow uneasy" ("И подчас как-то жутко становится от пушкинской ясности") (*Gypsies* 231).

The modernist period creates an understanding of Pushkin as a poet who succeeds in concealing more than he reveals of his personality and his creative potential. The logical development of the "Apollonian" poet thesis leads to an unresolved difficulty. According to Nietzsche, a true poet must combine the Apollonian and the Dionysian tendencies in his creative art. Thus it became clear that interpretation of Pushkin as a strictly "Apollonian" poet leads to a contradiction in terms.

Merezhkovsky attempts to solve this contradiction by highlighting the dualistic nature of Pushkin's work:

Необходимым условием всякого творчества, которому суждено иметь всемирно-историческое значение, является присутствие и, в различных степенях гармонии, взаимодействие двух начал—нового мистицизма, как отречения от своего Я в Боге, и язычества, как обожествления своего Я в героизме.

The essential condition of all creativity destined to have universal-historical significance is the presence and interaction, in varying degrees of harmony, of two poles: the new mysticism, the denial of one's ego in God, and paganism, the apotheosis of one's ego in heroic acts

(*Pushkin* 72).

Such an approach sees Pushkin as a precursor of modernist poetry--a view embraced by many Symbolist critics, such as Merezhkovsky. As Clowe explains, on the pinnacle of Merezhkovsky's literary pyramid stands the national genius, Pushkin, whom the *Narodniki* and particularly the Nihilists of the 1860s had dethroned: "Pushkin clearly possesses the ability of the "higher man" to harmonize and synthesize in

his works warring valuations of the pagan and the Christian, the Flesh and the Spirit, the earthly and the eternal. He is a prefiguration of the coming Russian Renaissance" (133).

Some later critics, such as Bryusov and Sologub, recognize that Pushkin must have known spiritual torments similar to those of Lermontov and Tyutchev, but decide that Pushkin conscientiously attempted to subdue such moods-- whether in order to preserve his predominantly harmonious view of the world (Bryusov's approach; see Bryusov 6:98-99) or to engage in an ironic play with the reader (Sologub's approach; see Veresaev 445, Musatov 35). Modernist critics, from Khodasevich to Alexander Benois, stress that the enigma of Pushkin remains unsolved (Musatov 33), as if recalling Dostoyevsky's words that Pushkin "died at the high point of his creativity and no doubt took to his grave some great mystery" (Dostoyevsky 26: 49).

Russian Symbolists attempt to solve this mystery using their twentieth-century spiritual experience and vision of the world. This leads to the desire to perceive Pushkin as a deeply dramatic figure, full of inner conflicts and contradictions, rather than an epic, harmonious one. Harmony no longer seems compatible with an analytical view of the world; in order to be able to recognize Pushkin's relevance in the early twentieth century, modern authors

sought in Pushkin's works traces of the same spiritual torments which they were experiencing themselves. Therefore, the modernist views on Pushkin oscillated between "Nothing" and "Everything." Yury Eichenwald, noting that Pushkin "loses his own expression" ("теряет собственное лицо") in his search for universality, adds paradoxically: "But God does not have an expression, either" ("Но Бог тоже не имеет лица") (*Pushkin 2*). Such a view is not exceptional for the Russian modernist critics, who now tended to see Pushkin as inexplicably combining in his work "normalcy," "accessibility," "wholesomeness," with some irrational remainder. (This view is surprisingly close to Carlyle's judgement about Goethe: "This sunny-looking courtly Goethe held veiled in him a Prophetic sorrow deep as Dante's").

As the modernist views on Pushkin were not always consistent, there is no final claim to have solved Pushkin's enigma. In 1926, Mikhail Gershenson noted that "there are places in Pushkin where no one has yet dared to tread" ("Есть места в Пушкине, куда не ступала ещё нога человеческая") (Gershenson 17). Yet even Khodasevich, who tends to prefer the more openly philosophical lyric of Lermontov and Tyutchev, eventually comes to the conclusion that Pushkin is the forerunner of all Symbolist poetry.

This interest in Pushkin, typical for modernist authors, encompasses different aspects of Pushkin's heritage, not limited to borrowing themes and expressions. So, Gifford points out that Pasternak's "orderliness, clarity, and precision [in translating Shakespeare] derive conceivably from their [Schlegel-Tieck's] example, but more certainly from that of Pushkin, which anyone writing blank-verse drama in the Russian language cannot avoid" (*Pasternak* 158). Obviously, Pasternak simply could not be unaware of Pushkin's blank-verse drama, the first successful use of this form in Russia. Yet the connection of Pasternak's translations to Pushkin's dramas (*Boris Godunov* and *Little Tragedies*) appears to be even deeper. Academician Zhirmunsky acknowledges that the world of Pasternak's poetry was unfamiliar and strange to him in spite of the fact that he was "brought up on sophisticated literature" ("я в поэтической системе Пастернака часто путаюсь, несмотря на то, что воспитан на всяких изысках литературы . . . не могу воспринять его до конца") (4). This could reflect Zhirmunsky's sense that Pasternak's poetry did not display traces of straightforward influences and revealed itself not in imitating Pushkin's form but in taking over Pushkin's self-appointed task: the attempt to expand the limits of poetical language. Pasternak the

translator turned to Pushkin's dramas not because they were composed in the blank verse, but rather because they were written after Pushkin had read Shakespeare and was consciously . adopting the method of "our Father Shakespeare."

The changes in Shakespeare's reception is comparable to the evolution in modernist approaches to Pushkin's heritage, both because of the historical connections outlined earlier and because Pushkin was considered the ultimate canonical author within Russian literature. While Russian modernists never disputed the historical significance of Shakespeare, their views on his specific role in contemporary literature also evolved over time. Bryusov's characterization of Shakespeare, typical for the first generation of Symbolists, is "Orpheus of all ages." In an early poem by Bryusov, Shakespeare is dismissed as a writer of old-age harmony to whom the modern tormented soul is no longer able to respond adequately:

С тех пор как я долго в немом ожидании,
 В тихом веселии,
 Качался над пропастью смерти, --
 Мне стали мучительны повествования
 О невинной Офелии,

О честном Лаэрте,
 И много таких же золотоволосых историй
 О любви и о горе.

Since I've been silently waiting
 In quiet joy,
 Swinging over the abyss of death
 I can hardly bear
 The tales of innocent Ophelia,
 Of the honest Laertes,
 And all those golden-haired stories
 Of love and of grief.

The very names of the stories ("of the honest Laertes") evoke medieval ballads, and the "golden-haired stories" bring to mind the golden age. Shakespeare is seen as the author of a better age, now irrevocably lost.

A similar reference, free from the weight of analytical interpretation, is contained in Kuzmin's long poem, *The trout breaks the ice* (*Форель разбивает лед*), where Shakespeare is mentioned in a scene describing an encounter of two lovers--a context similar to that which in youthful Pushkin would have been the mention of Parny, an eighteenth-century French author of elegant amorous verse:

Вы только что ушли, Шекспир
 Открыт, дымится папироса . . .
 Сонеты!!" Как несложен мир
 Под мартовский напев вопроса!

You have just left, the Shakespeare
 Is [wide] open, the cigarette smoking . . .
The Sonnets!! How uncomplicated the world is
 In March, under the tune of a question.

Here, again Shakespeare embodies the untroubled vision of an "uncomplicated world" that is accessible to the modern author only as a nostalgic reflection. This nostalgic view of Shakespeare was not universal, however, and it was eventually replaced by a more complex approach. Just as Pushkin is believed to have hidden more than he has said, Shakespeare also seems to have kept some inner mystery. Acknowledgement of the existence of this mystery may be found, for example, in Gumilyov's "Theatre," where Shakespearean stories are not at all "golden-haired"; their somber character brings them close to the stories of the Old Testament. Characteristically, Gumilyov mentions Hamlet and Cain in the same breath: "Жаль, если Каин рыдает, /

Гамлет изведает счастье!" ("It would be too bad if Cain should weep / And Hamlet know happiness!").

The poem opens with a direct allusion to Shakespeare's all world is a stage: "Все мы--смешные актёры / в театре Господа Бора" ("All of us are ridiculous actors / In the. The theatre of God"). Shakespearean allusion leads not to an impassive philosophical reflection, as might have been expected within the previous literary tradition, but to an embittered protest against the cruel and unjust world and its creator: "Боли, глухому титану, / Вверил он ход представления" ("To pain, a deaf Titan, / has he [God] entrusted the staging"). Shakespeare's thought is perceived not as contradictory to modern experience, but as supporting the world vision of a twentieth-century poet. The desire to see Shakespeare as the idolized author of glorious past, who, to use a line from Balmont, "built a high nest which was an eagle's" ("Он взнес гнездо, которое орлино") yields to the attempt to find in Shakespeare's works and even in his personality some signs of conflicts similar to those experienced by a twentieth-century author.

In this respect, Pasternak's poem "Shakespeare" (1919) is of particular interest. In it, Pasternak describes a priori imaginary scene from the life of Shakespeare: the Bard enters a tavern and has a dialogue with the sonnet

written the previous night. The sonnet reproaches its author for choosing such a lowly place and suggests at least transferring the discussion to the billiard parlor-- "Чем Вам не успех популярность в бильярдной?" ("How is that popularity in a billiard parlor is not a success for you?").

Unfortunately, A. Kay France's otherwise well-informed book on Pasternak's translations overlooks this important change in Russian approach to Shakespeare. France believes that Pasternak's poem describes Shakespeare as a "rather Falstaffian figure" and that the argument of the sonnet "tends to draw its author to a higher level of existence" (143-145). The comparison with Falstaff is based on the use of the word "обрюзгший" meaning "flaccid, grown fat and flabby," as well as on the fact that the conversation is taking place in a tavern. When the syntax of the sentence is carefully examined, it becomes clear that the word "обрюзгший" refers not to Shakespeare, but to the snow, which is "starting to come down heavily" ("Он, обрюзгший . . . пошёл валить"). Perhaps France suggests that a description applied to snow might be projected onto the image of Shakespeare. While Pasternak often uses "human" adjectives when referring to non-animated objects ("surprised plants," etc.), this device does not

necessarily mean a simple reversal of qualities between human and non-human elements or a masked description of the lyrical "I." More specifically, the image of snow in Pasternak is generally to implicate an objective reality existing outside of the human psyche. "Snow is falling" ("Снег идёт") where the snow falling "thickly, thickly" is openly compared to the passing of time. The heavy wet snow falling "like an abdominal band" (as protection from cold or while fencing) that slips down ("как сползший набрюшник") may possibly be seen as the image of a gloomy oppressive epoch. Furthermore, Shakespeare in Pasternak's poem "loses the desire to be witty" ("У Шекспира острить пропадает охота"). The poet does not seem to fit into the banal misery of his environment. Pasternak also provides a precise description of his character's tavern bill: half a pint of beer--hardly a Falstaffian indulgence.

There is an irony, apparently unnoticed by France, in suggesting a billiard room to replace the tavern as a worthy place for giving its due to a sonnet which "takes after a lightning" ("весь в молнию я"). Pasternak seems to ridicule the well-meant attempts of the philistine public to "elevate" a poet out of his environment onto a more appropriate level. Society gives to the poet only an illusory choice between a tavern and a billiard room; the

only escape is therefore to avoid seeking popular acclaim. Pasternak depicts Shakespeare as an artist-craftsman who is aware of his life task, not as a Platonic poet serving as the passive receptor of heavenly inspiration. Such an image of Shakespeare is in harmony with Pasternak's idea of Pushkin as the ultimate Russian poet; as well, it relates to his own view of his life's task as an author and translator. It is worth noting that when sending a handwritten copy of this poem to Bryusov, Pasternak added to it an epigraph taken from Pushkin's "To a poet" ("Поэту"): "Ты царь--живи один." ("You are the tsar--live in solitude.") This is an image of Pushkin and Shakespeare as embodying the figure of the Poet, but also an evaluation of a real historical person known as Shakespeare.

In his essay on translations from Shakespeare, Pasternak defines Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a "play of high destiny, the drama of a vocation" and says the lines of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy are lifted by their power of emotion "to the heights of bitter suffering worthy of Gethsemane." This understanding of Shakespeare is evident in Pasternak's poem "Hamlet," where the image of a contemporary artist playing Hamlet is projected onto the image of Christ in Gethsemane, a symbol of the ultimate sacrifice for Pasternak.

На меня наставлен сумрак ночи
 Тысячью биноклей на оси.
 Если только можно, Авва Отче,
 Чашу эту мимо пронеси.

.

Но продуман распорядок действий
 И неотвратим конец пути.
 Я--один. Всё тонет в фарисействе.
 Жизнь прожить--не поле перейти.

(The nocturnal darkness with a thousand
 Binoculars is focused onto me.
 Take away this cup, O Abba, Father,
 Everything is possible to Thee.

.

But the plan of action is determined,
 And the end irrevocably sealed.
 I am alone: all around me drowns in falsehood:
 Life is not a walk across a field.)
 (Translated by Lydia Pasternak-Slater)

It needs to be kept in mind that for Pasternak, a profoundly religious person, the prayer in the garden of Gethsemane was a real historical event. Within Pasternak's

artistic world, the tragedy of Hamlet is being elevated to the same level of reality, because it reflects the very tangible suffering of the poet himself. For Pasternak, self-negation and the recognition of a higher goal to be served was the essence of an artist's destiny. The link to Hamlet is not accidental for the Russian poet: "The will of chance selects Hamlet to be the judge of his times and to be the servant of time more remote," writes Pasternak in his critical essay on Shakespeare (" . . . волею случая Гамлет избирается в судьи своего времени и в слуги более отдаленного") (4: 416). This is echoed in a late poem by Pasternak, "Night," addressed to a poet: "Ты вечности заложник--У времени в плену!" ("Immortal hostage you--a prisoner of time!").

Another telling example of viewing Shakespeare as a lyrical poet may be found in a poem by Tsvetaeva, where she sees in her lover Sofia Parnok "all heroines of Shakespearean tragedies" ("всех героинь шекспировских трагедий / Я вижу в Вас"). Tsvetaeva's use of the formal second personal pronoun--"vy"--in a poem addressed to her lover is contrary to the common Russian practice. She was also known to address her husband with the formal pronoun, while when writing in German to Rilke, whom she never met in person, she used the informal "Du." Perhaps Tsvetaeva's

idiosyncratic perception of "ty" is more abstract and elevated, like "thou" in Modern English, reserved mainly for liturgical use. This, however, is a subject that merits further investigation. What made it possible for Tsvetaeva to refer to Shakespearean images in a most intimate lyrical poem addressed to a real human being? Obviously, the actual biography of Parnok could hardly have contained parallels to all the plots of Shakespearean tragedies. Tsvetaeva is clearly not interested in the socio-historical details and in plot twists, with the exception of the anticipated future parallel she points out: "Вас, юная трагическая лэди, / Никто не спас" ("No one saved you, / oh my young tragic lady"). Tsvetaeva prophesies a tragic fate for her lover, as there is indeed no salvation and no escape for the female protagonists in Shakespeare's tragedies. At that time, nothing in Parnok's external circumstances suggested a tragic end. Tsvetaeva is not able to decide the degree to which Parnok will be active in constructing her destiny, whether she will perish as a victim or a victor and whether her future sacrifice will be consciously chosen by her (as is the case with Pasternak's lyrical hero, for example). This ambiguity in her relation to Parnok can be traced in other poems of Tsvetaeva as well. Tsvetaeva does not elevate Parnok to the pedestal fit

for a heroine of Ancient Greek tragedy, but creates a more earthly image allowing for incongruities and contradictions as well as for a greater freedom of individual choice. Such a view of Shakespeare follows Goethe's--whose works were one of Tsvetaeva's literary obsessions since childhood--who sees Shakespeare's plays as a tragedy of a personal will, *das Wollen*. Here, Tsvetaeva's subjective perception of Shakespearean heroines not only comes to the foreground but enters into a complex relationship with the construction of her world-view. This claim on a degree of intimacy with the creations of Shakespeare, unthinkable in any of the previous epochs, signifies a profound integration of Shakespearean themes and images into the fabric of the Russian poetical text.

In conclusion, this evolution of views of Shakespeare reflects changes in the Russian literary canon and the evolving demands made on the "ideal" writer. During every epoch in Russian literature, authors and critics tried to find in Shakespeare those qualities which they considered to be essential. To a varying degree, each generation aspired to create a Shakespeare in its own image. So, for instance, in the socially oriented Russian literary criticism of the 1860s, Shakespeare was extolled for the very same qualities expected from a contemporary writer

(social consciousness, democratic spirit, psychology understood primarily as knowledge of social behavior, etc). The actual presence of these qualities in Shakespeare was not immediately convincing to many, including Tolstoy; yet the existence of these qualities was needed in order to justify Shakespeare's place in the literary canon.

"OUR FATHER SHAKESPEARE"

The shift from tragic to lyric, in addition to the aesthetic imperatives of each age, the representation of character transition from "type" to persona follows a parallel course. In the depiction of individual character according to Shakespearean model, Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* is a major example. In the early nineteenth century Shakespeare's works were critically processed by Pushkin, arguably the first major figure in Russian literature to recognize Shakespeare not simply as an important author of the past, but as an author whose works remain relevant for generations to come. Pushkin acknowledged his attempt to imbue his own historical plays (e.g. *Boris Godunov*) with the "spirit of Shakespeare." It has been commonly accepted that one of the sources of inspiration for Pushkin's

dramas, next to the Old Russian annals and Karamzin's *History of the Russian State*, were the plays of Shakespeare. (Evdokimova points to Pushkin's interest in doing a study of Peter the Great "according to Shakespearean model" [235]). This resulted in a historical view of reality characteristic of Pushkin's mature philosophy, traces of which can be discerned already in *Eugene Onegin*. Important here is not simply the fact that Lensky models himself after Hamlet and at times constructs his environment according to the images and plots of Shakespearean dramas (as, for instance, in the scene of Lensky visiting old Larin's tomb); also significant is a new concept of a literary character.

The notion of a literary character as a dynamic union of contradictory qualities subjectively united into one structural element is not common to all types of literary generalization. In the Western European tradition, this view is usually connected with the names of Shakespeare and Cervantes, and in the Russian tradition it has its inception with Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. By destroying the continuity of his character's story as well as the unity of his personality, Pushkin brings into a literary text his immediate reflections of real human personalities. This

multifaceted nature of a literary character is one of the qualities that Pushkin values most in Shakespeare:

У Мольера скупой скуп--и только; у Шекспира Шайлок скуп, сметлив, мстителен, чадолюбив, остроумен.

In Molière, the Miser is miserly--and that's all; in Shakespeare Shylock is miserly, acute, vindictive, philoprogenitive, witty, and so on. (12: 159-60).

Emerson justly observes that, in *Boris Godunov*, Pushkin succeeds in creating multi-faceted yet integral characters:

. . . Pushkin does not play with identity; his identity crises are for real. . . . The utterance becomes complex, unpredictable, internally at odds with itself (112).

Pushkin thought of his *Boris Godunov* as a historical tragedy of the same genre as the Shakespearean *Chronicles*, which would break with the commonly accepted notion of

Classicist tragedy. This connection was recognized, though with disapproval, by Tolstoy, who thought that Pushkin wrote his *Boris Godunov* "under the influence of false criticism extolling Shakespeare" (*What is Art?* 113). As a historical drama, *Boris Godunov* was juxtaposed to Romantic tragedy in which characters are the author's spokespersons and the past is seen as a clear allusion to modern events. Pushkin's open-ended approach towards his historical play as to an experiment rather than an illustration for an already known answer prompts Evdokimova to suggest that Boris and Pretender exemplify two different attitudes towards history--predestination and chance, respectively (56). As a political tragedy, *Boris Godunov* deals with contemporary issues: that of the role of the masses in history and the nature of tyranny--an issue that was bound to remain topical in Russian literature through the age of modernism.

As a result of this contact, Pushkin's works acquired new characteristics, many of which may be traced beyond him to works of later authors in the nineteenth century: new understanding of literary character as a dynamic interplay of contradictory qualities; introduction of new dramatic laws, opposed to both the Romantic and the classicist traditions; tendency towards approaching popular language;

new principles of organizing textual structure. This was no mere emulation, as practiced by certain eighteenth century writers, but the result of a conscious selection and processing that enabled Pushkin to enrich his arsenal of poetical tools. Valery Bryusov even suggested that the influence of Shakespeare on *Boris Godunov* was too great for the play to be considered original within Pushkin's individual oeuvre, though it was original from the perspective of Russian literature. The Polish writer Mickiewicz once greeted Pushkin with a changed quote from the *Aeneid*: "Tu Scheakespearus est, si fata sinant" ("You will be a Shakespeare if the fate allows"). Bryusov found this compliment equivocal: "Pushkin has to be Pushkin, and not Shakespeare," and noted that *Little Tragedies* display a greater originality and artistic independence than *Boris Godunov* (7: 101).

This view of Pushkin as a competitor of Shakespeare in our time was taken even further by David Bethea, who argues that Pushkin, "realizing that, to the French, he too will always be a "northern barbarian," saw a kind of Shakespearean challenge in them [Guizot's condescending remarks on Shakespeare]" (87). Bethea straightforwardly claims that " . . . what Pushkin wanted to become was not a Slavic Voltaire or Racine but precisely the Shakespeare of

Russian culture" (41). On the personal level, it is unlikely that a poet from cosmopolitan Petersburg whose upper class was bilingual in Russian and French (even on his deathbed, Pushkin uttered a sentence in French before his two very last words in Russian), suffered from any "cultural inferiority complex"; certainly scholars have not been able to find any evidence of such a conflict in his poetical or private writings, though other areas where Pushkin felt his pride hurt seem to be well known). More importantly, there are some broader considerations that speak against Bethea's suggestions.

Prior to Pushkin's enthusiastic attempts to popularize Shakespeare in literary circles, Shakespeare simply did not have enough of a presence in Russian culture as to make anyone want to become a "Russian Shakespeare." It required a literary authority of Pushkin's significance, just as it had required a Goethe in Germany, to bring Shakespeare's work into the center of literary discourse. It is also unlikely that Pushkin, already well recognized, would suddenly want to change his already famous name for another one and become a Russified version of any foreign author. Besides, there were already some who attempted to be "Russian Voltaires"; Pushkin already saw that their place

in Russian literature was marginal, and their works were to become a mere historical curiosity.

Voltaire и великаны не имеют ни одного последователя в России; но бездарные пигмеи, грибы, выросшие у корня дубов . . . овладевают русской словесностью.

Voltaire and the giants do not have a single follower in Russia, but his talentless pygmies, like mushrooms that grow at the roots of oaks . . . are taking over Russian literature (7: 494).

The difference between genuine followers and mere imitators seems to be quite clear in Pushkin's mind; evidently he would not want to be part of the latter group. Finally, while one could disagree with the French critics (which Pushkin did), it was impossible to pretend that their arguments had not been heard, or to attempt writing as if European literature stood still after the 1600s.

When Pushkin discussed with his friend Pletnev the preface to be written for the first publication of Boris Godunov, Pletnev recommended: "It would be better for you

to criticize properly the German Romantics because they understood neither the Spanish Romantics nor Shakespeare. It is unseemly for you to preach about French Classicists when anybody can now read about it even in the *Severnaya Pchela*--*Northern Bee* (*Writers ask for advice* 23). (*Northern Bee* was a newspaper run by Pushkin's literary adversaries at that time). Pletnev's remark seems to be a convincing proof that Pushkin's circle in the 1830s did not think disproving theoreticians of French classicism worth the effort.

Analyzing Pushkin's remarks about dramatic art, Musatov argues that

The stream of Pushkin's unsystematized thoughts in French was on that side of the European watershed which divided him from the French soil and brought him closer to the German soul, where aesthetics has been developed with such clarity since Kant and Lessing (Musatov 128).

Pushkin was a contemporary of Goethe, whom he once called "the great Goethe . . . our German patriarch." This tongue-in-cheek reference to Goethe brings to mind Pushkin's earlier mention of Shakespeare as if he were a

saint from the Russian Orthodox Calendar "I . . . created my tragedy according to the System of Our Father Shakespeare, and brought to his altar two of the classical unities, just barely preserving the last one." ("Я расположил свою трагедию по системе Отца нашего--Шекспира и принес ему в жертву пред его алтарь два классические единства, едва сохранив последнее") (11: 66). In order to revive the outdated forms of the Russian theater, Pushkin, as Goethe had done with German theater, turned to Shakespeare.

In *Boris Godunov*, Pushkin went against both notions of Classical theatre and Romantic drama. This variety of characters and historical episodes was not purely ornamental, as in Romanticism. Pushkin rejected basing a play on an uncontroversial and well-developed idea that needed only some historical "embellishments." *Boris Godunov* started as an open-ended literary experiment. The purpose of literary work was now seen in the profundity of the questions asked instead of in the indisputable truth of the answers. This philosophy of literary work as an experiment, as a cognitive process will be later embraced and developed by the modernist poets.

Fifty years before Pushkin's stay in Mikhailovsk, in Strasbourg, the young Goethe and Herder were already

reading Shakespeare and noting that Shakespeare differed from ancient authors and certainly from the French classicists in the wide scope of his historical vision, in which "world history seems to follow an unseen path in front of our eyes" (Goethe, *On art* 337). This pronouncement emerges from an understanding of world history as encompassing a clear perception of one's national past and present. The theme of world history and of modern life as being beyond history is combined in *Boris Godunov* and in *Little Tragedies*.

After the fatal year 1825, which saw the failed uprising of the Decembrists, Pushkin developed a profound interest for history. The immediate result of December 14 for Pushkin was a strong desire to rise above subjective personal preferences in his interpretation of historical events. "I am firmly convinced that the popular laws of Shakespearean drama are appropriate for our theater, too . . . The spirit of the time requires important changes on the podium as well" ("Я твердо уверен, что нашему театру приличны народные законы драмы Шекспировой. . . . Дух века требует важных перемен и на сцене драматической") (8: 141). In a letter to his friend Delvig, Pushkin called: "Let us not be superstitious or one-sided--like French tragedians: let us look at the tragedy [of the Decembrists] through

Shakespeare's eyes" ("Не будем ни суеверны, ни односторонни, как французские трагики; но взглянем на трагедию взглядом Шекспира") (13: 259).

Pushkin is generally credited with having introduced themes and images from Western European poetry into multiple stylistic layers of the Russian literary tradition. Shakespeare belonged to those authors whose work Pushkin turned to at a time when his poetry was gaining new maturity (*Eugene Onegin* and the philosophical poetry of Pushkin's last years may serve as an example). Pushkin's experiment with semantic and syntax structures, partially inspired by Shakespeare, eventually led to a major renewal of the Russian literary language, the creation of a new poetical vocabulary freed of the dominance of Slavonicisms and closer to everyday speech. Referring to the language of *Boris Godunov*, Raevsky said to Pushkin: "Vous acheverez de faire descendre la poésie de ses échasses" ("You will bring poetry down off its stilts") (Pushkin 13: 172).

When, more than one hundred and fifty years later, Russian poetry faces a new transformation of comparable significance initiated by modernist poets, particularly Pasternak, this global transformation of the literary vocabulary can again be credited to the influence of Shakespeare.

While Pushkin acknowledged learning from Shakespeare's method, specific textual references to Shakespearean characters in Pushkin's work are scant. In a mock poem written in 1827 for Pushkin's close friend Delvig, Pushkin gives the name of Hamlet to Baratynsky, their common acquaintance and a well-known poet in his own right. In a note containing both prose and verse that Pushkin pretends to be enclosing with the imaginary gift of a skull, Pushkin suggests that Delvig may spend some contemplative hours gazing at the skull, which "can substitute a conversational partner for a learned man."

Или как Гамлет-Баратынский
 Над ним задумчиво мечтай:
 О жизни мёртвый проповедник

 Для мудреца, как собеседник,
 Он стоит головы живой.

Or like Hamlet-Baratynsky
 You may be lost in reverie over it:
 The dead preacher on life

 For a wise man

It is worth [getting] a live head for a conversational partner.

The playful tone of the poem, the fairy-tale like explanations about the means by which the skull had been obtained, the description of Delvig as "wearing a myrtle wreath and eyeglasses, with a lyre in his hand" (a send-up of the romantically elevated image of the poet)--all this indicates that the poem should be seen as a private joke rather than a programmatic statement. In this "domesticated" context, it is particularly interesting to see a reference to Hamlet, already the object of satire, which presupposes familiarity with the Shakespearean reference.

Another reference is found in the beginning of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Lensky, an 18-year old poet just arrived from "misty Germany" with a "truly Goettingenian soul," visits the tomb of his neighbor and his fiancée's father, whom the reader knows from earlier descriptions as a harmless but undistinguished officer and family head. In a heartfelt melancholic gesture, Lensky exclaims: "Poor Yorick!" Pushkin himself adds a note in which he explains: "Hamlet's exclamation over the skull of the fool (See Shakespeare and Sterne)." It is significant that Pushkin still finds it necessary to indicate his source for the

reading public; authors of the later epochs will be able to count on the reader's recognition of many Shakespearean allusions. Pushkin's annotation, as usual, combines his a genuine attempt to educate the Russian public with an element of irony. For Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*, "Poor Yorick" has become trite, but this was not necessarily the case for the majority of Pushkin's readership; otherwise there would hardly be need in inserting the annotation. Referring the reader to both Shakespeare and Sterne, Pushkin achieves two goals: to indicate the source of the quote to that part of the public for which it is still unclear and to share with the more advanced public the contemporary perception of that image in English literature through referring to Sterne (who was rather widely read in Russia at the time).

Pushkin's 1836 poem known as "From Pindemonte," expressing grave disappointment with the political and intellectual life in Russia and proclaiming the inner freedom of the artist, also contains a reference to *Hamlet*: "All this, you see, is *words, words, words.*"

И мало горя мне, свободно ли печать
 Морочит олужов, иль чуткая цензура
 В журнальных замыслах стесняет балагура.

Всё это, видите, *слова, слова, слова.*

Иные, лучшие мне дороги права.

Иная, лучшая потребна мне свобода.

And I do not care if the press is free
 To fool those weak of mind, or if the vigilant
 censorship
 Limits the journalistic projects of some windbag.
 All of this, you see, is but words, words, words.
 Other, higher rights are dear to me.
 Other, higher freedoms are necessary to me.

Significantly, this allusion is taken from the scene between Hamlet and Polonius, in which Hamlet calls Denmark "a prison."

The quotation from Shakespeare is then followed by what in the Russian tradition are some of the most famous words of Pushkin:

Зависеть от царя, зависеть от народа--

Не всё ли нам равно?

Whether to depend on the tsar or on the mob--

Is it not the same to us?

In manuscript, "From Pindemonte" was titled "From Alfred Musset," giving the appearance that it is linked to a poem by de Musset. However, the references to Pindemonte and Musset are now taken to be a literary mystification Pushkin resorted to in order to appease censorship (III, 336) In addition, Pushkin again makes a laconic footnote: "*Hamlet*."

Eleanor Rowe argues that the few instances known of Shakespearean allusions in Pushkin (excluding the "Letter to Delvig," which she does not review) give sufficient ground to say that Pushkin protested against the prevailing German Romantic interpretation of *Hamlet* (33). Unfortunately for the historians, Pushkin did not completely follow the advice of his friend Pletnev quoted earlier in this work and did not include his views on German criticism in the preface to *Boris Godunov*. Was this perhaps a matter of greater concern to Pletnev than to Pushkin himself? It would appear that the information available is insufficient to conclude that Pushkin actively protested against the German Romantics or that he was not at all interested in *Hamlet*. None of the poems quoted earlier can be enlisted to confirm such an opinion.

In the "Letter to Delvig," the playful energy is not directed towards Shakespeare. The humor is in the situation

itself: Pushkin and his friends trying on literary masks of various epochs. Baratynsky, on whom Pushkin jokingly bestows the name of Hamlet, is a fellow poet of whom Pushkin thought highly, saying that he "ranks with the very best of our poets. . . . his thinking is correct and independent, while his emotions run strong and deep." ("принадлежит к числу отличных наших поэтов. . . . мыслит по-своему, правильно и независимо, между тем как чувствует сильно и глубоко") (7: 153). From other works, (most importantly, from *Eugene Onegin*) it becomes clear that Pushkin could allow himself at times not to be serious about anything, from familial love to the rules of Russian grammar, but if all such ironic statements were to be taken at face value, the modern notion of Pushkin's philosophy would hardly be accurate.

In *Eugene Onegin* (written between 1821-1831), Lensky is treated with subtle irony, but without sarcasm, which is why his death is perceived by the reader as tragic. The character of Lensky is on a different plane from the marginally drawn comical characters of the Larins' neighbors; Lensky has been said to embody, at least to a certain extent, Pushkin's own ideals and inspiration in his youth, which the poet now regards from a distance. There is the same gentle irony towards Tatyana, who eventually

starts wondering if Onegin is "a Muscovite in Childe Harold's cloak" and "a parody." The cemetery scene is followed by Pushkin's explanation that Lensky was "full of sincere sadness" and by three full strophes written in the narrator's voice. Yet Pushkin's farewell to youthful exaltation and emotional excesses does not mean that the association with Hamlet is supposed to characterize Lensky negatively.

Finally, in "From Pindemonte," Pushkin changes from humor and good-natured irony to bitter sarcasm. The quotation is aimed against the shallowness of Russian public life, stifled as it is by the strict control of the state, on one side, and by the backwardness of public conscience and philistinism of popular and bourgeois society, on the other. He sides with Hamlet.

Therefore it is hard to agree on this point with Rowe or with the 1964 Soviet article she cites in support of her ideas: "[Pushkin] was not attracted by the torments of thought, of thought which doubts everything" (Rowe 35). Yet Pushkin's poem "Remembrance" (1828) dates from the same period:

Мечты кипят: в уме, подавленном тоской,
Теснится тяжких дум избыток.

Dejection seizes me and clouds my spirit whole.

Thoughts crowd my brain, dreams in me riot.

(Tr. By I. Zheleznova)

Two years later, in the same year as *Little Tragedies*, Pushkin wrote two of his major philosophical poems: "Life, vain gift of chance" ("Дар напрасный, дар случайный . . .") and "Elegy" ("Элегия"), where the first definition of life is "to suffer and to think."

It is not surprising that official Soviet criticism, ever suspicious of any internal conflicts or ideological inconsistencies, prefers seeing in Pushkin a robust, wholesome nature with a clear awareness of his goals, his ideals, and his political sympathies. Such a view, in a somewhat more sophisticated and less politicized form, was not uncommon at the beginning of the modernist period, either. However, this interpretation of Pushkin's oeuvre was soon found unsatisfactory, while the attitudes of modernist poets toward Shakespeare similarly evolve. In the following chapters, this topic will be dealt with in greater detail; what is important to note now is that the modernists' approach to Shakespeare is similar to their approach to Pushkin.

The Shakespearean cultural model afforded Pushkin the type of text in which he was able to express his own thoughts and opinions as well as popular beliefs, fusing them into a contradictory and at the same time harmonious whole. Pushkin's dialogue with the Shakespearean text not simply resulted in the introduction of new poetic structures (e.g. the five-foot iamb used since Pushkin in translation of Shakespeare's plays), but contributed to the development of Pushkin's complex, polyphonic vision of the world. It may only be surmised how this would have continued had Pushkin's life not been cut short in 1837. The movement towards a synthesis between the national tradition and world tradition, between historical views and a focus on the individual, initiated by Pushkin, was to come to its full realization in the literature of modernism. It was this achievement that allowed Pushkin, to use Bryusov's 1905 expression from his *Sacred Offering*, ". . . to divine, with his perceptive ear, the future tremor of our modern soul" (" . . . так часто чутким слухом предугадывал будущую дрожь нашей современной души") (6: 95).

CHAPTER 3**FROM THE SOCIAL TO THE PERSONAL: RUSSIAN CLASSICISM AND REALISM**

. . . У тех Гамлеты, а у нас еще
пока Карамазовы.

. . . over there they have Hamlets, but we
still have Karamazovs.

F. Dostoyevsky, *The Karamazov Brothers*

"TO SHOW SHAKESPEARE TO RUSSIA"

Almost like the works of Pushkin, Russia's national poet, the works of Shakespeare have been given a wide range of interpretations, sometimes mutually exclusive ones, in line with the changing aesthetic and social values. In Shakespeare's case, the situation was further complicated by the fact that, until the mid-nineteenth century, the Russian reading public knew Shakespeare indirectly, only through adaptation, which allowed for a greater liberty of assigning

to Shakespeare's oeuvre the qualities found desirable in a canonical work.

In Sumarokov's time, when a poet's mission was defined according to the *dulce et utile* precept, the goal being the education of the reader, Shakespeare was turned to for images of exemplary behavior demonstrated by model rulers. Pushkin's contemporaries, Kyukhelbecker and Gnedich, stressed the importance of the fantastical elements in Shakespeare, seeing in them a link to folk art and a proof of the democratic character ["народность"] of Shakespeare's work. This socially-minded view will be taken to the extreme during the high point of Russian realism, when the followers of Tolstoy will write quasi-folkloric Russified adaptations of Shakespearean plays (*Hamlet* will become "Гаврила--нутряной человек," "Gavrila the inward man," etc.). In Russian modernist poetry, the Romantic theme of the tragic split between the artist and society is once again brought to the foreground, culminating in Pasternak's poem "Hamlet," where the image of a Shakespearean character is woven into the representation of the poet's mission.

Though these metamorphoses may look surprising, they are not wholly unpredictable; rather, the changes in the perception of Shakespeare were predetermined by the inner dynamics of Russian literature's development. While the

changes in literary aesthetics clearly affected the perception of other authors as well, Shakespeare's works present a particularly rich material for analysis because Russian secular literature, in the course of over two centuries kept returning to the reevaluation and appropriation of Shakespeare's heritage.

The Russian reading public was exposed to Shakespeare in the early eighteenth century, much later than other European countries. Because of the suspicion with which the official Church treated secular performances, (an attitude Russian Orthodox Church inherited from its Byzantine predecessors), literary theatre was virtually non-existent until the seventeenth century. *Skomorokhi*, the wandering artists who offered diverse popular entertainment by performing songs, acrobatic shows and sometimes short comical scenes, had been documented since eleventh century but became increasingly popular in the fifteenth--early seventeenth century. However, *skomorokhi* were looked down upon and often persecuted by secular and church authorities; there was no officially sanctioned form of theater, such as religious mystery plays in Western European countries. The first officially permitted performances of plays on Biblical themes were given at the court of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovitch, the father of Peter the Great. Tsarevna Natalia Alekseevna, Peter the Great's younger

sister, already had a theatre of her own, the first theatre in the newly founded St. Petersburg, which had replaced Moscow as Russia's capital. She was even known to author plays herself. The anonymous author of a historical survey done much later, in 1853, even stated that Natalia Alekseevna's plays showed some influence of Shakespeare. Unfortunately, the texts of her plays have not been preserved; yet the very fact of their existence tells of Russia's growing contact with European literatures. With the emergence of public theater during Peter the Great's sweeping reforms aimed at secularization of Russian public life, the first Russian translations of Shakespeare appeared.

A. W. Schlegel in his well-known article "On William Shakespeare in connection to *Wilhelm Meister*" called for a greater precision in translations, based on respect for the original text. Russian translators of the eighteenth century, like other European translators almost one hundred years before Schlegel's article, were in a different position. In addition, the Russian literary language was only gradually freeing itself from the excessive influence of Church Slavonic and gaining independent value as a literary language. The Russian language of the drama had not yet reached a stage at which a translation that would

have an independent value was possible. This would become possible only after the age of Pushkin.

The first Russian translations were usually done not from the original, but from French versions, which often had been previously "perfected" in accordance with notions of French Classicism, such as requirements for the unities of time, space, and action. The treatment which the original text of plays received during that time may be imagined thanks to an anecdote, according to which, Peter I once ordered to play the next day "a play with no more than three acts, without any love intrigues and neither too sad, nor too serious, nor too funny" (*History of Russian literary translation* 2: 20).

By the middle of the eighteenth century, more accurate translations had been published, and Shakespeare became well known in educated circles. In his "Epistles," Sumarokov listed Shakespeare among the other classical poets: "Milton and Shakespeare, the later, tho' unschooled" (123). The historical task of Russian poetry of the Sumarokov period, which had to encompass the European Baroque and Classicism almost simultaneously, may be compared to the Russian poetry at the turn of the twentieth century and its accelerated appropriation of two schools of the late nineteenth century, the French Parnassian school and Symbolism.

The first attempt at a scholarly analysis of Shakespeare was the result of a literary scandal of the day when Sumarokov, already a well-known poet, wrote a play loosely based on *Hamlet* (1747). Trediakovsky, another prominent poet and a long-time adversary of Sumarokov, accused the latter of plagiarism: "*Hamlet*, as learned people say, was translated into prose from Shakespeare's English, and then our author [Sumarokov] put it into verse." Sumarokov indeed used a prosaic translation done by La Place from the English into French in 1745. Sumarokov, already known by that time as a prominent author of Russian classicism, could hardly have been guided by this prosaic translation, which most likely was of mediocre literary merit. Sumarokov seems to have accepted Voltaire's view of Shakespeare as a talented writer whose works are powerful, but who was lacking good taste and knowledge of literary rules. Most evaluations of Shakespeare which reached Russia were influenced by the French Classicist aesthetics, even if the degree of appreciation of Shakespeare varied among French critics, and their views were not always expressed in as sharply negative manner as is sometimes found in Voltaire. This influence of French criticism is quite apparent in Sumarokov's work. Pushkin's friend Kyukhelbecker will write on Sumarokov's *Hamlet*:

Конечно, от старика Александра Петровича, воспитанного во всех предрассудках французской *старой* школы, никто и ожидать не станет, чтобы он передал хоть тень настоящего шекспировского Гамлета. Однако уж и то хорошо, что его действующие лица не совсем мертвые куклы, что тут есть что-то похожее на страсти.

Of course, no one will expect from the old Aleksander Petrovich [Sumarokov], brought up on all prejudices of the *old* French school, to recreate at least a shade of the real Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. However, it is already good enough that his characters are not altogether lifeless dolls, that there is something not unlike passion here (*The Decembrists and Their Time* 63).

Further, Sumarokov's play not only follows the formal requirements of Classicism, but also focuses on the typical conflict of passion vs. duty, expressed in Hamlet's desire to take revenge for his father death and in his love for Ophelia, daughter of Polonius, who is presented as an accomplice of Claudius. The play ends with Hamlet taking his rightful place on the throne, Polonius committing suicide in

prison and Gertrude retiring into a convent. The Danish people finally receive a monarch, and all impediments to the marriage of the young protagonists are removed. In his treatment of Shakespeare, Sumarokov overlooks everything which will become essential for the interpretation of *Hamlet* in the twentieth century: the reflection on the purpose of human existence and on usefulness or futility of action. This is why it becomes necessary to Sumarokov to stress that Hamlet's love for Ophelia is hindered by an external circumstance--the fact that she is a daughter of his political adversary; otherwise, Hamlet's torments could not be justified. In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1873), Nietzsche describes *Hamlet* as a tragedy in which action is *a priori* impossible, saying that Hamlet "could not change anything in the eternal nature of things; they [the Dionysian man and Hamlet] feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veil of illusion: that is the doctrine of Hamlet." It shall be shown later on that, while this view will not be fully embraced by all Russian modernists, the posing of this problem will have a prominent place in interpretation of *Hamlet*. For Sumarokov, however, the very possibility of improving the world by action is not subjected to question; in fact,

literary work is seen as an example of such action. Sumarokov's characters do not always win their battles, just as Sumarokov's own works did not always enjoy the recognition Sumarokov felt they deserved; yet this could not detract from the meaningfulness and importance of the task undertaken.

The modern reader thus tends to agree with Sumarokov, who, when deeply hurt by accusations of plagiarism, pointed out that his play shared few similarities with that of Shakespeare, "except for the monologue at the end of the third act and for the kneeling Claudius" (95). In fact, Hamlet's soliloquy is the only recognizably Shakespearean scene in Sumarokov's obtuse verse, full of Slavonicisms and obsolete syntax constructions. Finding in Shakespeare "many things that are very good and many that are very bad," Sumarokov apparently felt it as much his duty to protect the public from exposure to bad things as it was his obligation to show the good ones. Such an attitude to translation was typical for classicism: a translator believed it was his right, if not his responsibility, to improve on the original work as he saw fit. Changing plays for use on the scenes of domestic theatres seemed particularly justified because "here you should worry less about showing the beauty and power of a foreign author than about fighting against vices"

(*History of Russian Literary Translation* 35). After all, Voltaire, whose authority was important for Sumarokov, thought it possible to rewrite some of Shakespeare's works, such as *Julius Caesar*.

There have been other plays using Shakespearean characters and scenes, including three plays written by Catherine the Great herself. Catherine signed up for the new collected works of Shakespeare in French translation by Le Tourneur in 1776, and later read Shakespeare in her native German, in a version by Eschenburg. The first play performed on Russian scene and credited to Shakespeare was Catherine the Great's free translation of *Merry Wives of Windsor*, under the title *This is What Comes of Having a Basket and Some Linen* (a reference to a line from Scene V, Act III of Shakespeare's play, *This't to have linen and buck-baskets*). In addition, Catherine II wrote two imitations of the history plays under the title *An imitation of Shakespeare, a historical play without adherence to the usual theatrical rules, from the life of Rurik and The beginning of Oleg's rule, an imitation of Shakespeare without adherence to the usual theatrical rules*. Finally, Catherine wrote a comedy *Spendthrift* (A free imitation of Shakespeare), a Russified version of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, in which the

protagonist was given the telling name of *Tratava* (from the verb "тратить" ["tratit'"]--"to spend").

In these plays, Catherine II went against the literary norms of her day, contributing to the creation of a literary language close to everyday speech of the educated classes. It is not far-fetched to say that Catherine's choice of a literary source must have been at least partially determined by the fact that Shakespeare's work was known only in translation and his reputation remained equivocal. Had Catherine the Great tried to imitate French Classicists, whose works were very familiar to the Russian educated public and usually held up as a standard, her shortcomings as a writer would be too painfully apparent to the educated Russian public. Shakespeare, on the other hand, would probably be seen not as a literary rival, but as a source. Nevertheless, the fact that Catherine deemed it possible to use Shakespeare as her reference point facilitated the inclusion of Shakespeare's work into the Russian literary canon. Catherine's literary exercises reveal her desire to establish herself as a Russian author; as a foreigner on the Russian throne, she constantly felt the need to prove her deep involvement with the Russian culture. Perhaps Catherine the Great's literary experiments in Russian were motivated not simply by her personal ambitions, but also by her desire to establish an independent cultural

identity for Russia within the European context. Catherine's imitations of Shakespeare, while of limited independent literary value, had a long-range effect on Russian literary development by providing an official sanction to break away with the rules of Classicism and by encouraging independent interpretation of foreign authors without having to rely on the latest critical writings from France.

Zhukovsky, whom Pushkin considered to be one of his teachers, and who is regarded as the father of literary translation in Russia, did not pay particular attention to Shakespeare, as he himself acknowledged. In a conversation with Ludwig Tieck, Zhukovsky admits that Shakespeare's masterpiece *Hamlet* seems a "monster" to him. For Zhukovsky, those who find a deep meaning in *Hamlet* prove more their own richness of thought and imagination than the excellence of *Hamlet* itself (qtd. in Levin, *Russian Poets* 212).

On the other hand, Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1820), whom Terras justly describes as the single most influential eighteenth-century Russian prose writer, appreciated Shakespeare and defended his works against the attacks of Voltaire. Karamzin did not find anything wrong in propagating work which would challenge a reader's imagination. He saw a lack of finished form as a challenge which forced the reader to take an active part in the

interpretation of the work, to "communicate with the text," to use an expression often utilized by Lotman (1: 131-132). Zhukovsky, following the tradition established by Karamzin, saw his potential reader primarily as women of the educated class. Development of language and literature, refinement of artistic taste and of the readers' inner world were seen as the main steps towards progress.

Ladies' taste became the supreme judge of literature, and an educated, outwardly and inwardly gracious woman who is familiar with the great works of art was seen as the educator of future generations of enlightened Russians (Lotman 2: 360).

In this, Russian authors followed the example of the German Romantics: one of Hölderlin's most dearly held projects was the publication of a monthly Journal under the title *Iduna*, "a journal for the ladies, of aesthetic content" that would publish new poems as well as essays on literary history and criticism (Hölderlin 4: 220). The project was never realized due to external pressures, but the intention is no less remarkable. This open-ended nature of a work, enabling multiple interpretations, is the

feature of Shakespeare most appreciated by the modernists, just as it had been valued by Karamzin.

Discussing his work on translating Homer into Russian, Zhukovsky said that his best reader and advisor might have been his wife, with her "poetic soul and intuition" (*Writers ask for advice* 18). Regrettably, he had not yet taught her Russian (his wife was German). This typical anecdote summarizes what Zhukovsky valued in his reader: a "poetic soul," a refined perception, an ability to appreciate the perfection of a poetic work. By contrast, Karamzin's ideal reader took a more active stand. Karamzin was known for going so far as to distribute his own works--disguised as works by some mysterious "Parisian lady"--to encourage Russian noblewomen to take up the pen themselves. (Lotman, *Karamzin* 264). The notion of the active participation of the reader is also invoked again, on a rather amplified scale, during the modernist period. For instance, Mayakovsky declares his own works open for improvement and additions to be made by his readers. For example, in the 1921 foreword to his play *Mystery-Bouffe* he invites the reader to revise and improve the play: "In the future, all persons performing, presenting, reading, or publishing *Mystery-Bouffe* should change the content, making

it contemporary, immediate, up-to-the minute" (*Complete Plays* 39).

As early as 1797, Karamzin wrote that Shakespeare's violation of classical rules was a virtue and an inevitable consequence of his genius. It took time for these words to be heard, however: alterations of Shakespeare in the direction of neoclassical taste were to continue for another quarter of a century. During this period, Russian poets did not yet actively rework Shakespearean images and themes in their own writings. Adaptations and imitations were the only way of approaching foreign texts. Not accidentally, Sumarokov's vague attempt to depict "his own" Hamlet was immediately labeled plagiarism and ultimately became an artistic failure. However, Shakespeare was gradually being freed from the stigma of a "Barbaric" or "unschooled" writer and his works started being accepted within the literary canon.

HAMLETS OF OUR DISTRICT

The readers' involvement with plays of Shakespeare increased by the 1840s, when the interest in Shakespeare reached its peak. Shakespeare's plays started to be staged in amateur performances in upper-class households. The

infatuation with Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, particularly with *Hamlet*, almost reached the proportions of a cult, a fact which witnesses a growing familiarity with Shakespeare's work. In her monograph on *Boris Godunov*, Emerson justly points out that during Pushkin's lifetime, "Shakespeare in Russia was less available as an independent art, read for its own beauty and on its own terms, than as a tool to be used by progressive romantics against the conservatives" (*Boris Godunov: Transpositions on a Russian theme* 110). Indeed, before the 1840s, only 10 of Shakespeare's plays had been translated, and not fully. By 1855, the situation improves: of the 37 canonical plays, only six (*Love's Labor Lost*, *Winter Tale*, *As You Like It*, *Pericles*, and *Titus Andronicus*) had not been translated.

As German criticism and philosophy gained ascendance, the mid-century, the Russian reading public became more widely acquainted with the interpretation of Shakespeare by the German critics, most importantly by Goethe and August Schlegel. It may be assumed that the discussion of Shakespeare in German criticism, though with some delay, eventually became known in Russia by the mid-nineteenth century).

Hamlet's character is now explained within the framework of a contradiction between the strength of thought and

weakness of will, "the battle of a weak human will with a formidable, merciless duty . . . but this is Jacob wrestling with the angel" (*Shakespeare and Russian Culture* 270). The scenes relating to action--such as Hamlet's revenge on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern--are declared "unsubstantial." The predominant interpretation is shaped by Goethe's view on *Hamlet*:

Ein schönes, reines, edles, höchst moralisches Wesen ohne die sinnliche Stärke, die den Helden macht, geht unter einen Last zugrunde, die er weder tragen noch abwerfen kann; jede Pflicht ist ihm heilig, diese zu schwer. Das Unmögliche wird von ihm gefordert, nicht das Unmögliche an sich, sondern das, was ihm unmöglich ist (*Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, chapter XIII).

This view, widely shared in European Romanticism (e.g. by A. Schlegel), becomes known in Russia as well. By the twentieth century, Pasternak will speak of Hamlet using some of the same expressions of an inordinate burden, explaining Hamlet's lack of action not by an innate deficiency, but by a deliberate refusal to participate in the perpetuation of violence.

German writers and critics frequently associate Hamlet and their country. "Hamlet is Germany" ("Hamlet ist Deutschland!"), writes Freiligrath in 1848 (qtd. in Kozintsev 183). Ludwig Börne in his article writes that it would be easy for a German to have written *Hamlet*: a German would just need to copy himself in a neat handwriting, and *Hamlet* would be ready (1: 394). Such a claim was not unique to Germany, however: other nations also address parallels between the torments of the Shakespearean character and the conflicts in the intellectual life of their countrymen. Alexander Herzen was called "a northern Hamlet" by his French friends in 1867, who told him that he "had the soul of a Hamlet and that this was very Slavonic" (2: 511).

The words of Alfred de Musset, written in 1836, one year before Pushkin's death, express a feeling of hopelessness and doom that already started spreading among the European cultural elite:

Quand les idées anglaises et allemandes passèrent ainsi sur nos têtes, ce fut comme un dégoût morne et silencieux, suivi d'une convulsion terrible. . . . Ce fut comme une dénégation de toutes choses du ciel et de la terre, qu'on peut nommer désenchantement, ou, si l'on veut, *désespérance*; comme si l'humanité

en léthargie avait été cure morte par ceux qui lui tâtaient le pouls (25).

This feeling of despair will be amplified in twentieth century modernism when this aspect of Shakespeare's works will be again stressed (e.g. in Blok's cycle of poems on *Hamlet*).

As early as 1827 Pushkin wrote about "Hamlet-Baratynsky," for the first time using Hamlet's name in Russia as a common noun. It was already during Pushkin's epoch, in 1830s, that Hamlet first started to speak to the Russians about their own woes. In Polevoy's 1837 translation, when comparing the portraits of two kings in his mother's bedchamber, Hamlet finishes his monologue with words which have no direct parallel in the original: "I am afraid, afraid for the human soul!" Hamlet's melancholy and despair are brought to the foreground by a generation that feels bitterly disappointed by the unfulfilled promises of Enlightenment as well as by the growing pressure of state control over social life in Russia after the defeat of the Decembrists in 1825. Ironically, as Lotman has demonstrated the poem written by Lermontov on Pushkin's untimely death also contained a Shakespearean allusion: Lermontov's reference to the Divine judgement that is beyond the all-corrupting power of gold

("Но есть и божий суд, / Наперсники разврата! Есть грозный суд: он ждёт; / Он не доступен звону злата"--"But there's God's judgement, which fears not to wait; / A dreadful Judgement that's not bought nor sold. / It knows your inmost thoughts, ye panders reprobate, / It does not even hear the clink of gold."--tr. by A. Pyman) can be fully understood only when compared with the soliloquy of Claudius in Act III, scene III of *Hamlet* (Lermontov 281-282).

Some features of a "Russian Hamlet" may be found in Pushkin's *Onegin*, in Lermontov's *Pechorin*, and, in a comically downplayed version, even in Gogol's *Podkolesin* and Goncharov's *Oblomov*. Lotman believes that even the prose of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky was susceptible to Shakespeare's influence; he finds signs of Russian Hamletism in Prince Andrew from *War and Peace* as in Raskolnikov from *Crime and Punishment* (*Realism in Russian literature of the 1860s* 23).

Russian Hamletism has its peak during the 1880-1890s. Literary and critical works of that time are full of allusions to Shakespeare. Hamlet's reflection and inner struggle come to the foreground as qualities with which certain parts of the Russian intelligentsia identified. Hamlet's inability to act is seen as a parallel to the Russian intelligentsia's inability to bring forward social change. Thus Shakespeare's characters were placed in the

middle of the discussion of the topical social ills. It was then the very notion of "Hamletism" appears (Levin, *Shakespeare and Russian Literature of the XIX century* 160), soon to acquire an equivocal or even a negative meaning.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, a series of works alluding to Shakespearean characters appear: Turgenev's (*Hamlet of the Shigri District* (1849), *King Lear of the Steppes*), Leskov's (*Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk district*, which initially had an even more telling title, *Lady Macbeth of our district*) and *The village King Lear* (1880) by N. N. Slatovratsky (1845-1911). The realistic social motivation present in these short stories introduces Shakespearean plots and characters into the circle of problems typical for the period. Of particular interest is the linkage between the image of Hamlet and the notion of "a superfluous man," a term coined by Turgenev in 1850 and applied retrospectively to Pushkin's Onegin and Lermontov's Pechorin, as well as to Goncharov's Oblomov and to some of Turgenev's own characters. Isaiah Berlin summarizes the notion of a superfluous man as "a member of the tiny minority of educated and morally sensitive men, who, unable to find a place in his native land, and driven upon himself, is liable to escape either into fantasies or

illusions, or into cynicism or despair, ending, more often than not, in self-destruction or surrender" (40).

According to Natalia Diakonova (103), however, the Hamlet myth is introduced merely to serve as the ground for the Russian drama of superfluous people. Hamlet's personality is used both as contrast and as a parallel to the uninspired existence of an impoverished member of the Russian gentry. Shakespeare's Hamlet is Prince of Denmark; Hamlet of the Shigri District, for instance, is what in Russian literature is known as a "little man" ("маленький человек"), one of the many Hamlets of a small provincial district. While Shakespeare's Hamlet has kingdoms to strive for, Turgenev's Hamlet is constantly humiliated by the pettiness and triviality of his confrontations with life. These petty things prevent him from becoming what he had it in him to become--a man of deeds directed to a fine patriotic purpose. The frustration of the Russian Hamlet is caused both by general reasons, making a seriocomical parallel to those event that prove the undoing of the real Hamlet, and by facts distinctly social, his humiliating poverty dooming to failure any attempt to command the respect needed for any decisive action. This realistic social motivation brings Turgenev's story into an artistic system that has very little to do with Shakespeare's and

makes it a specimen of nineteenth-century realism at its best.

Turgenev attempts to put an end to the cult of Hamlet which is already degenerating into its own parody with his speech of 1860, subsequently published as "Hamlet and Don Quixote":

Сомневаясь во всем, Гамлет, разумеется, не щадит и самого себя; ум его слишком развит, чтобы удовлетвориться тем, что он в себе находит: он сознает свою слабость, но всякое самосознание есть сила; отсюда истекает его ирония, противоположность энтузиазму Дон-Кихота. . . .
Что же представляет собою Гамлет? . . . Анализ прежде всего и эгоизм, а потому безверье. Он весь живет для самого себя . . . он скептик--и вечно возится и носится с самим собою; он постоянно занят не своей обязанностью, а своим положением.
. . . А Гамлеты ничего не находят, ничего не изобретают и не оставляют следа за собою, кроме следа собственной личности, не оставляют за собою дела. . . . они одиноки, и потому бесплодны.

In doubting everything . . . Hamlet, naturally does not spare himself; his intelligence is too vivid to be self-satisfied; it realizes its own weakness, but all self-realization is power--thence his irony,--a contrast to Don Quixote's enthusiasm. So what is Hamlet? . . . Analysis and egotism, and therefore lack of faith. He lives for himself alone. . . . He is a skeptic--always reflecting and brooding upon his own self; always concerned with his situation and never with his responsibilities. . . . Hamlets discover nothing, invent nothing, and leave nothing behind them except their own personalities; they leave no actions behind . . . they are alone, and thus fruitless.

Many modernist poets will strongly disagree with Turgenev's approach; in Pasternak's view, for example, Hamlet's primary concern is with his responsibility and his historical mission.

Diakonova points out that Turgenev's attack on Russian Hamletism is partly to be attributed to self-criticism:

". . . both he [Turgenev] himself and his contemporaries compared him to Hamlet and deplored his lack of resolution

and consistency" (100). It may be added that, to an extent, such self-criticism may perhaps be explained by Turgenev's doubts regarding the capacity of literature to bring about improvements in society. Authors of Russian modernism go through their own spiritual torments, but rarely not question the ultimate meaningfulness of their literary task.

In the Russian context of high ideas of the greater social good, paying close attention to one's own inner struggles could often be condemned as self-indulgent and irresponsible. For example, the protagonist of Chekhov's play *Ivanov* (1887) protests against being compared to "superfluous people" and to Hamlet, but in reality experiences the same psychological crisis:

Я умираю от стыда от мысли, что я, здоровый, сильный человек, обратился не то в Гамлета, не то в Манфреда, не то в лишние люди. . . . Есть жалкие люди, которым льстит, когда их называют Гамлетами или лишними, но для меня это--позор.

I nearly die of shame when I think what a strong, healthy man like myself has become--heaven only knows what--a Hamlet or a Manfred, or some sort of

superfluous man . . . There are some miserable creatures who feel flattered when people call them Hamlets or "superfluous," but to me that is an insult.

Chekhov, always disapproving of exaggerated affectation both in literature and in his private life, was sensitive enough to see the difference between feigned "beautiful" melancholy and the real shattering of his protagonist's life. This clear distinction already be seen in an early short story by Chekhov, *The Baron*, written in 1882, in which an aging prompter, no longer able to tolerate the pretentious manners of the leading actor playing Hamlet, suddenly starts reading Hamlet's part aloud. The prompter's voice is thin and the impression he makes is a wretched one, yet Chekhov remarks: "This could have been the voice of a real Hamlet . . . had there been no old age on earth." Chekhov's modern hero has no kingdoms at stake; his greatest aspiration could have been to become a leading actor in a provincial playhouse. Unlike the protagonists in Shakespeare's tragedies, the aging prompter in Chekhov's story is not above the public's ridicule. Nevertheless, Chekhov's deep sympathy for this unfulfilled human life penetrates all of Chekhov's work. Thus, when Chekhov's Ivanov is nearly insulted by being

likened to Hamlet, the offensive nature of this comparison arises not from the parallel to a Shakespearean character as such, but from the underlying implication that Ivanov is assuming a fashionable pose, in covering up spiritual emptiness by lofty words. By Chekhov's time, words no longer were trusted in Russian society: any rhetoric is suspicious, fraught with insincerity and pretense. For example, Turgenev's Bazarov frequently says: "Stop speaking beautifully," summing up a whole aesthetic program of emotional and rhetorical austerity that replaces the lofty phraseology of romanticism and that is itself displaced by the modernist recuperation of belief in the power of the word.

Bloom in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* remarks: "You can prefer Don Quixote to Hamlet, as Auden also does, if you wish to follow Kierkegaard's choice of the apostle over the genius" (403). It is my belief that this choice becomes even more complex in the Russian context as Russian writers have always expected themselves to be both apostles and geniuses. The greater their creative powers, the stronger their sense of responsibility before society. At times, like Turgenev, they blamed themselves for failing in their role, or felt themselves to be overwhelmed by their task, like the sleeping apostles of Christ in the garden of

Gethsemane, but the idealistic notion nevertheless persisted. (A useful outline of major discussions on of intelligentsia viewing itself and its mission may be found in Likhachyov's book *On intelligentsia*).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the question of mission could not be avoided. Some might have rejected the apostle mission on principle as did, for example, the "Old" Russian Symbolists, for whom art in itself was the highest goal and the ultimate service they could give to humanity; in effect, this simply transformed apostles of social progress to apostles of art.

Kagan-Kans correctly observes that Turgenev the Hamlet/Don Quixote dichotomy by Turgenev not to demand a choice, but to represent his own inner conflict that was typical for Russian intellectuals of his generation (12-13). "Both sides of human nature are necessary, and Turgenev, like the German philosophers, hoped for the perfect union between them" (15).

This issue is less to do with Shakespeare and more with rather to a contemporary trend that takes the figure Hamlet as its emblem and thereby signifies the crisis of a whole circle of problems confronted by the Russian intelligentsia. If the poets of the early nineteenth century saw Hamlet

primarily as a thinker, the late-nineteenth century literary version of Hamlet is simply a person of weak will.

Hamlet and its creator thus come under attack from socially-minded critics calling for literature to provide models of active contribution of society instead of "mere" reflection and similar individualistic pursuits. While Turgenev recognized the importance of Shakespeare and spared no efforts in attempts to popularize Shakespeare's works, some of the more radical writers and critics, notably Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov found Shakespeare's works to be hopelessly old-fashioned and disconnected from the concerns of the modern democratic reader. Shakespeare was labeled an "art for art's sake" writer--still an indisputably negative characteristic in the pre-modernist period. Realist critics saw the task of literature as being true to reality and assigned to literature an only role as a catalyst of social progress (with somewhat varying degrees of importance granted to this invariably auxiliary role).

In line with his contemporary anti-Kantian thought, Chernyshevsky, a leading democratic critic, insisted on reality as the basis of the beautiful and the object of art. For Chernyshevsky, the only acceptable object of art is social reality: "Let Art be satisfied with its exalted and

beautiful calling: to server, in the absence of reality, as a substitute of the same, and to be for man a textbook of life" (2: 90). Chernyshevsky's work provides a theoretical base for the growing "Gogolian" trend in literature, which is opposed to "Pushkinian" trend. While Gogol's work is interpreted as a call for social progress (without regard to the painful and complex evolution of Gogol's own philosophy), Pushkin is seen as a talented poet whose works have "little live connection with society, they remained fruitless for society as well as for literature" (Chernyshevsky 2: 515). Shakespeare was most often named together with Pushkin as an author whose works hold "merely" an aesthetic value.

There is, however, an attempt at a compromise solution offered by another well-known critic, Dobrolyubov. Though sharing Chernyshevsky's belief in naturalism in art and in art's specific social mission, Dobrolyubov does concede that, in exceptional cases, art can intuitively express the reality of life. Notably, Dobrolyubov lists Shakespeare among those authors who were able to "rise above the ancillary role of literature and joined the ranks of historical personages who helped mankind to grasp its own powers and natural strivings more clearly" (2: 325).

In Soviet times, the sensitive issue of criticism of such canonical writers as Pushkin and Shakespeare by

"progressive" critics will be avoided altogether. Once admitted to the canon, writers could no longer be suspect of insufficient interest in social problems; they were automatically assumed to be siding with the "progressive historical forces" in their respective societies. Therefore, criticism of Shakespeare tended to be omitted from reviews and anthologies.

Dostoyevsky had a right to his bitter reproach of Russian liberal critics' lack of interest in art, while exploiting art for their political ends (19: 67). Dostoyevsky rejects understanding art as a surrogate of reality; for him, art cannot depict reality such as it is: "Such a reality does not exist and never existed on earth." Reality is an enigma which is present as "the still unspoken future Word," and an artist is a "prophet sent by God to declare to us the mystery of man, of the human soul." Artistic comprehension of this mystery is the real purpose and social significance of art. Within this system of aesthetics, Pushkin and Shakespeare ceases to be seen as talented poets whose external circumstances or their own weak will had prevented them from creating socially significant works; on the contrary, they are elevated to the level of prophets.

Dostoyevsky's philosophy is further developed by Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900), a philosopher and poet who exerted

influence on V. Ivanov and Blok (e.g. through works such as "Lecture on Godmanhood" (1887), "The General Purpose of Art" (1890), "Three Speeches in Memoriam of Dostoyevsky" (1891-1893). Like Dostoyevsky, Solovyov focuses on such categories as Beauty, Harmony, Good. For Solovyov, the sublime overlaps with the beautiful as the union of the moral and the aesthetic, as an embodiment of ideal nature, achieving which is seen the goal of human spiritual activity, made possible only through art. The central notions in Solovyov's aesthetics are the realization of a comprehended truth, embodiment of a recognized ideal and achievement of an established ideal. As Cassedy observes, for Solovyov "beauty in nature and beauty in art are not different in kind . . . Art is not an imitation of nature or even a mere duplication of nature's work; it is rather a continuation of what is begun by nature" (101). Protesting against the utilitarian approach to art, Solovyov nevertheless sees in modern art a promise for the future:

Требования современной реальности и прямой пользы от искусства, бессмысленные в своем теперешнем грубом и темном применении, намекают, однако, на такую возвышенную и глубоко истинную идею художества . . . современные художники хотят более или . . . менее сознательно, чтобы искусство было

реальной силой, просветляющей и перерождающей весь человеческий мир. . . . Если в современном реалистическом искусстве мы видим как бы предсказание нового религиозного искусства, то это предсказание уже начинает сбываться.

The demands on art to show modern reality and to serve a direct purpose, useless in their contemporary rough and unenlightened application, do hint, however, at an elevated and profoundly true idea of art . . . Modern authors desire more or less consciously that art be a real force, bringing light and transformation to the human world . . . If in modern realistic art we see something of a prophecy of a new religious art, this prophecy starts becoming reality (2: 293-294).

The "new" modernist art envisaged by Solovyov will indeed shift away from the "rough" understanding of art's mission, though the acceptance of this new aesthetic program by mainstream criticism will be a complex and equivocal process.

Russian polemics on the role of art again focused on Shakespeare when Leo Tolstoy ventured into the most

pronounced attack on Shakespeare in Russian literary history. Tolstoy's attitudes towards Shakespeare are expressed at length in his article "On Shakespeare and the Drama," written in 1903 and published in 1906 (Levin, *Shakespeare and Russian Literature of the Nineteenth Century* 225); similar ideas are also recorded in private conversations and correspondence of that period. Unlike Turgenev, Tolstoy finds himself at too great a distance from Shakespeare's characters; unable to find parallels for them in the Russian society of the late nineteenth century he ends up by denying to Shakespeare's work any merits whatsoever. As Terras observes, many of Tolstoy's arguments against Shakespeare had been already anticipated by Chernyshevsky (*Belinsky and Russian Literary Criticism* 239). One of Tolstoy's main claims is that the characters in Shakespeare's plays lack sufficient historical and socio-cultural distinction since Shakespeare has them speak in an elaborate, affected language full of images, metaphors and hyperbolae--a language Tolstoy cannot imagine a living person in any epoch having used. Later on, the modernist writers will turn to Shakespeare precisely because of this trait: their characters are often even less likely to be linguistically limited by their concrete environment. What Tolstoy indicts as a mere lack of

literary mastery, is transformed into a virtue by modernist poets. Even everyday modern objects will find their place within scenes reminiscent of Shakespeare, without creating an anachronistic effect; one example is that of theater binoculars, which appear not only in the ostentatiously cynical "Theater" by Gumilyov but also in the Pasternak's somberly profound "Hamlet."

It is possible that Tolstoy's strongly negative reaction to Shakespeare is in part provoked by the inadequate criticism of the time which overlooks some of Shakespeare's truly important qualities to insist on other, less obvious ones. Looking for the much praised "characterization" and "realistic descriptions" in Shakespeare, Tolstoy is inevitably disappointed and ends up by rejecting Shakespeare altogether. Modernist poets accept Goethe's explanation (in *"Shakespeare und kein Ende"*) that Shakespeare disregards the material costume but thoroughly knows the inner human costume. Pasternak later echoes it in his notes stressing that Shakespeare's realism lies beyond documentary details and descriptions). For Tolstoy, such an explanation would be unsatisfactory: without outer details there can be no inner truth, either.

Perhaps Tolstoy has more in common with Shakespeare than he himself was ready to acknowledge. Pasternak points out to his connection in one of his critical essays:

Речь "Ромео и Джульетты" . . . это будущая прелесть . . . "Войны и мира" и та же чарующая чистота и непревосхитимость. . . . "Юлий Цезарь" и в особенности "Антоний и Клеопатра" написаны не из любви к искусству, не ради поэзии. Это плоды изучения неприукрашенной повседневности. . . . Это изучение привело к "физиологическому роману" девятнадцатого столетия и составило еще более бесспорную прелесть Чехова, Флобера и Льва Толстого.

The language of *Romeo and Juliet* . . . [is a] captivating language we are to find later in . . . *War and Peace* possessing the same enchantingly unique freshness and unpredictability . . . *Julius Caesar* and in particular *Anthony and Cleopatra* were written not from a love of art, not for the sake of poetry. They were the fruits of Shakespeare's study of unembellished day-to-day reality. . . . This study gave rise to the "physiological novel" of the

nineteenth century and still more unquestionably constitutes the attraction of what Chekhov, Flaubert and Lev Tolstoy were to write ("Notes on translations from Shakespeare").

Tolstoy dismisses Shakespeare's self-conscious style with the same conviction as all that is "fictional" has been rejected many centuries before by Old Russian literature, seeing all that is "fiction" as an offense against Truth and God-ordained order. Tolstoy refused to see that, as G. Wilson Knight puts it: "Shakespeare's persons make utterances from a height where all men speak alike: the height of universal experience, refracted then in human terms, voiceless save by poetry." Indeed, in his analysis of Shakespeare Tolstoy consciously adopts an attitude not unlike that of Natasha Rostova's artless reaction to an opera performance: not being able to accept the theatrical conventions (e.g. painted boards instead of a real forest), to see past the "unnatural" behavior of characters (e.g. addressing the audience while supposedly in danger) and to recognize in this form of art some element of witnessing human experience. It is clear that rejecting Shakespeare on these premises is logically extendable to the denial of

traditional art as such. This attitude derives from Tolstoy's ideas on art and its tasks, expressed in "What is art?" in 1897. Tolstoy hopes that the future artist "will be free from all the perversion of technical improvements hiding the absence of subject matter" (179); for him, Shakespeare must have, to an extent, epitomized the "cold . . . brain-spun, invented works" of the past (113). In a typical reaction, Chekhov provided a sobering commentary in a letter to Suvorin in 1898 (referring to *What is art?*):

All of this has been seen before. To say that art has outlived its age, that it has reached a dead end, that it is not what it should be, etc, etc. --it is the same as saying that the desire to eat and drink is old, obsolete, and unnecessary (1: 179).

Tolstoy's outright rejection of Shakespeare widely attracted attention of his contemporaries. Blok in his article "On Drama" (1907) reviews this problem at length. He stresses that "playwrights of all countries, including the very recent ones, studied from Shakespeare (even those contradictory to each other, like Ibsen and Maeterlink)" [" . . . драматурги всех стран, до самых последних

включительно, учились на Шекспире (хотя бы такие противоположные, как Ибсен и Метерлинк)]" (5: 153).
 Rejecting Tolstoy's view of the role of Shakespeare, Blok in amazement quotes Tolstoy's own description of his attempts

. . . during fifty years . . . to test himself, to read Shakespeare in all possible versions: in Russian, in English, and German, and in Schlegel's translations . . . and invariably felt the same: disgust, boredom, and bewilderment.

Blok is particularly concerned by Tolstoy's demand that art, and particularly drama as its highest form, should have a religious content, which Tolstoy understood as a "way of seeing the world, which, serving as an impulse to creating the drama, enters the works without the author's awareness." Coming to the defense of Shakespeare, Blok at the same time avoids dealing with the essence of the discussion. He says that it is impossible for the modern reader "to forget either *Macbeth* or *Anna Karenina*" and that it is impossible find an answer to the question of Shakespeare and Tolstoy: "Let tragedy grow ripe in a heart that is capable of sustaining the

battle of these two elements."--"Пусть созревает трагедия в том сердце, которое выдержит борьбу этих двух стихий" (5: 154).

While Tolstoy's rejects Shakespeare in rather uncommonly strong terms, his sentiments are shared by many in the literary generation which took as its motto the lines from Nekrasov's poem "Poet and Citizen": "A poet you need not be, / But a citizen you must" ("Поэтом можешь ты не быть, / Но гражданином быть обязан"). When the young Blok tried to submit his early verses to a journal, he was rejected with the words: "Aren't you ashamed, young man, to write poems, when at the University God knows what is going on?" (Blok 6: 94).

The realistic tradition of the second half of the nineteenth century took only one aspect of Pushkin's perception of Shakespeare and used it in a hypertrophied fashion. Shakespearean images and characters were used to encode the social phenomena of everyday life. Thus Shakespearean images were freed from the lofty romantic aura of the early nineteenth century and became "domesticated" and "understated." New translations aimed at the general public appeared; Shakespeare's plays became a staple in the repertoire of many provincial theaters. This stage produced the wide-spread introduction of characters and scenes from Shakespeare, which provided the public

knowledge needed to serve as the base modernist writers were to build on later. Authors of that time, however, lacked Pushkin's emotional involvement and his readiness to make foreign elements an organic part of their own work.

Obviously, the notion that literature has to serve the greater good of society and directly influence social progress survived well into the twentieth century. It is well known that modernist poetry comprised only a small part of literary works published in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. The influence of modernist aesthetics, however, continued to grow steadily.

Ironically, when, about a quarter of a century later, the discussions of the purpose of literature were once and for all silenced by the categorical demand that literature (like all forms of art) serve a very specific purpose and a very specific group of people, Shakespeare began to be praised for the very qualities which Tolstoy had denied him:

Родившееся в период перехода от феодального общества к буржуазному . . . творчество Шекспира с его могучим реализмом, его титаническими характерами и конфликтами оказалось очень близким идеалам . . . литературы, запечатлевшей великую историческую ломку капиталистической формации и

созидание идущего ей на смену нового общественного строя. . . . В отличие от многих идеалистических зарубежных толкователей творчества Шекспира Горький и Луначарский, . . . исходили из тех же позиций в оценке Шекспира, из которых исходили основоположники марксизма и русские революционные демократы. Для них Шекспир всегда оставался гениальным художником--реалистом, правдиво отразившем целую эпоху.

Shakespeare's art, created in the period of change from a feudal society to a bourgeois one, . . . Shakespeare's art, with its powerful realism, its titanic characters and conflicts proved to be very close to the ideals . . . of a literature that witnessed the great historical destruction of capitalism and the creation of a new social order replacing it. . . . In contrast to many foreign idealistic interpretations of Shakespeare's work, Gorky and Lunacharsky [the first Soviet Commissar of Education] . . . used the same approach towards Shakespeare as the founders of Marxism and Russian revolutionary democrats. For them, Shakespeare always remained

a genial realistic author who has truthfully depicted an entire epoch.

(*Shakespeare in World Literature* 8-10).

Shakespeare is once again championed for his "life-like characters" and "realistic observations"--the claims that had once so irritated Tolstoy, but were not voiced by any modernist poet. The presence of low-profile characters such as the Porter and the use of coarse expressions were interpreted as closeness to the "working people."

By such reasoning, *Hamlet* would be considered to foretell the coming social upheavals and even the French Revolution: Laertes would be seen as a future revolutionary, and Hamlet himself as the embodiment of the vanishing aristocracy. Shakespeare received the official stamp of compatibility with "realism" and, therefore, with that complex hypocritical genre which was known in Soviet theoretical literature as "Socialist Realism" but which, like all totalitarian propagandist art, had very little in common with realism of Tolstoy or Chekhov.

Clinging on a quotation from a Marx, who once called for reading Shakespeare next to Schiller, the Soviet critics saw Shakespeare as the embodiment of the realistic principle and an antithesis to Romanticism (which was supposed to be

represented by Schiller). This was a paradoxical reversal of the predominant nineteenth-century interpretations of Shakespeare, who was identified with Romanticism in opposition to Classicism. (A character in Byron's satirical poem "The Blues" extols Shakespeare and rebels against Aristotle, for example). This is German Romantic interpretation of Shakespeare that carries over into Russian modernism - most notably, for Tsvetaeva and Blok. Blok wrote: "Romanticism . . . is the insatiable desire to live a life amplified ten times . . . romanticism is in Shakespeare and Cervantes"--"Романтизм . . . есть жадное стремление жить удесяттеренной жизнью . . . он--в Шекспире и Сервантесе" (5: 481).

In his 1932 article "On Socialist Realism," Alexander Fadeev (soon-to-be member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Chair of the Writer's Union) praised Shakespeare along with some of the same authors who not that long ago were on Tolstoy's list of authors with exaggerated reputations:

В понимании марксизма-ленинизма, величайшими реалистами были художники могучего размаха и разнообразия, внешне крайне друг на друга не похожие: Гомер, несмотря на мифологическую

оболочку его вечно живущих творений; *Данте*, хотя он посылал своего героя в ад и чистилище; . . . *Шекспир*, хотя он--страшно подумать!--верил в привидения. . . . Эти художники . . . приближались к объективной исторической правде.

From the point of view of Marxism-Leninism the greatest *realists* of past centuries were authors of great talent and variety, though very different from each other: *Homer*, in spite of the mythological packaging of his eternal work; *Dante*, even though he sent his character to Hell and Purgatory . . . *Shakespeare*, even though he--just imagine!--believed in ghosts. . . . These authors . . . came close to the objective historical truth (4: 87-88).

One can imagine the satisfaction with which Tolstoy would probably have read the Soviet propaganda praising Shakespeare. Tolstoy would have likely found this to be a confirmation of his opinion: Shakespeare is so completely devoid of meaning, morality and truthfulness that his works can be easily used as agit-prop!

Inevitably, the authors of Russian modernism also attempted to find in Shakespeare's work some resonance to their own ideas. Their approach, however, was marked by an admission of the possibility of further interpretations and therefore broadened the reader's vision of Shakespeare rather than limiting it as it was done in Soviet times.

CHAPTER 4

FROM THE PLOT TO THE WORD: POETICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN
SHAKESPEARE AND RUSSIAN MODERNISTS

Прекрасные стихотворения, как живые
существа, входят в круг нашей жизни.

Beautiful poems, like living beings, enter
the circle of our life.

N. Gumilyov, "Life of Verse"

"A QUOTE IS A CICADA"

Vladimir Nabokov, discussing the reception of literary texts, in his *Lectures on Russian literature*, stresses that a genuine understanding of literature is possible only through a close attention to the individual elements of a text:

Literature, real literature, must not be gulped down like some potion which may be good for the heart or good for the brain--the brain, that stomach of the soul. Literature must be taken and broken to bits pulled apart, squashed--then its lovely reek will be smelt in the hollow of the palm, it will be munched and rolled upon the tongue with relish; then, and only then, its rare flavor will be appreciated at its true worth and the broken and crushed parts will again come together in your mind and disclose the beauty of a unity to which you have contributed something of your own blood (105).

Shakespearean themes and images were not "gulped down" in Russian modernism (the way it often happened to literary works during the age of Russian realism) but taken apart and experienced anew in the fullness of their expression, in order to be assembled together through the modern poets' "own blood"--their own vision of the world.

Shakespeare's themes and images occur at different levels of usage, from single metaphors to images connected and used as a signifying system of single metaphors, superimposed images and innovation of meaning.

An example of the single metaphor occurs in Pasternak's *Georgiy Shengeli*:

Но упивайтесь кровью поскорей:
Уже гремят у брошенных дверей
Железные ботфорты Фортинбраса.

So get drunk with blood while you still can:
Next to the forsaken doorpost are already
clanking the iron jack-boots of Fortinbras.

In such cases, the images of Shakespeare have to correspond to their commonly accepted meaning (Makurenkova 192). If a classical image, though transformed, preserves its original significance, it is considered to present a variation of the image. In cases when individual modification of a known creative approach transcends its established meaning, the Shakespearean image gains a new quality.

Another approach is the use of an allusion to create a complex multidimensional character or scene. In modernist aesthetics the word gains a new meaning created by the context and usually more vague, sometimes appropriate only for a given time. An example of such usage is can be found in

Akhmatova's draft version of *Poem Without a hero*:
 "Институтка, кузина, Джульетта" ("Student, cousin, Juliet!").
 In that poem, the name of Shakespeare's heroine appears as
 one of several distinct archetypal descriptions of a young
 woman, the succession of which gradually highlight varied new
 aspects of her personality:

Институтка, кузина, Джульетта!..

Не дожидаться тебе корнета,

В монастырь ты уйдешь тайком.

Нем твой бубен, моя цыганка,

И уже почернела ранка

У тебя под левым соском.

Student, cousin, Juliet!

You won't wait long enough for the cornet,

You will leave for the convent in secret.

Your tambourine is mute, my gypsy,

And already blackened is the wound

Under your left nipple.

(Tr. by J. Hemschemeyer)

Finally, the use of the linguistic material as a
 "generator of meaning" occurs in Russian modernist poetry

communicatively, to use an expression of Lotman. Russian modernists "communicate" ("общаются") with Shakespearean texts, whereby this communication loses its "transitory and finite character, approaching a communication between two autonomous personalities" (1: 132). When the content of a metaphor is so complex that it cannot be easily reduced to a single meaning, a metaphor gives occasion to the creation of a new work and serves as a measure of its content.

Akhmatova herself points to this condensation of meaning in modernist poetry while describing her own *Poem Without a Hero*:

Работает подтекст. . . . Ничего не сказано в лоб. Сложные и глубокие вещи изложены не на десятках страниц, как они привычны, а в двух строках, но для всех понятных.

The text between the lines is what is at work here. . . . Nothing is said directly. Complex and deep things are expressed not on dozens of pages, as usual, but in two lines, clear to everybody (*Poetry* 518).

Probably the most striking and the most concise example of a Shakespearean image serving the entire work metonymically is a two-line poem found in Tsvetaeva's notebooks (*Unpublished works* 124):

дело

Дитя--не в Гамлете!

The matter,

Child, is not about Hamlet!

In this poem, Tsvetaeva simultaneously refers to Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, to the protagonist of that play and to the circle of questions faced by that protagonist. Paradoxically, this extremely economical way of conveying a complex message to the reader leaves open the possibility of the reader's bringing in his or her own allusions and emotional reactions evoked by the reference to *Hamlet/Hamlet*.

In poetry of Russian modernism, the Shakespearean poetic word gains independence from plot of the play from which it is taken; the semantic weight of each word is increased through a complex system of interpolating meanings. Adopting Shakespearean images as part of their

own poetic language allows Russian poets to bring their lyrical heroes closer to the characters of Shakespeare while bypassing plot parallels and focusing on inner experience.

"I AM HAMLET. MY BLOOD GROWS COLD . . ." (APPROXIMATION OF THE LYRICAL HERO AND A CHARACTER FROM SHAKESPEARE).

One of the completely new aspects of the modernist interpretation of Shakespeare is the relation between the lyrical hero and the Shakespearean character. Poems with Shakespearean themes and images may be grouped around one of the two poles of lyric and history. For Russian modernism, personal experience is closely related to historical experience, to the search for meaning of historical existence of humanity. This does not mean a straightforward rendering of contemporary events in the poems, but a philosophical reflection on the laws of historical development. Pasternak writes in 1916 in his article "A black goblet":

. . . действительность разлагается. Разлагаясь, она собирается у двух противоположных полюсов: Лирики и Истории. Оба равно априорны и абсолютны.

. . . the reality is falling apart. By falling apart, it condenses at two poles: that of Lyric and that of History. Both are a priori equal and absolute (4: 358).

Therefore, modern art has to determine "how life should take shape so that it could be endured by the heart of a lyric, that container of figurative sense, with a sign of a black goblet and a stamp: "Caution. Top of the box." (" . . . как должна сложиться жизнь, чтобы перенесло ее сердце лирика, это вместилище переносного смысла, со знаком черного бокала и с надписью: «Осторожно. Верх» ") (4: 359).

First, a review of those poems of Russian modernism that seem to be "condensing" at the lyrical pole will be presented, after which the discussion will proceed to the analysis of poems gravitating towards the historical pole. While this division, like all literary classification, is by no means absolute, Pasternak's image is useful in order to focus on those aspects which are dominant in a

particular poem to show how Shakespearean themes and images function at each of these poles.

It is important to stress that the dialogue of Russian modernists with Shakespeare cannot be reduced to a typology of characters, since interpretations of Shakespearean characters by different authors were often conflicting. In accordance with the overall trend in modernist poetry, authors were less dependent on plot lines. So, for instance, Blok sees Ophelia as a virgin martyr of the early Christian tradition, while for Tsvetaeva, this heroine is the victim of a pronouncedly sensual passion. Thus Shakespeare is interpreted through each poet's lyrical hero rather than according to any predetermined pattern.

The lyrical hero is not simply likened to Hamlet, Desdemona or Cleopatra, but is transformed into a Shakespearean character, as in Pasternak's "Hamlet". To visualize this multiple perspectives contributing to the same image, one may think of the tradition of self-portraiture as a saint or a mythological figure in Flemish painting, such as Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul*, where the line between the assumed individual characteristics and an external reference point is a very thin one. This tendency, taking its origins in poetry of the Pushkin age, in modernist poetry culminates in a

complex intertwining of the poet's own lyrical persona and a character from Shakespeare. From Pushkin's Lensky who emulates Hamlet to Bryusov's Anthony who is, in this poem, indistinguishable from Bryusov's lyrical hero--such is the evolution of this literary synthesis.

In pre-modernist literature, the appearance of characters borrowed from Shakespeare typically lacked a cognitive function: the reference to a character was merely stating a fact which did not reach the level of a new artistic creation. Only in the modernist tradition did the use of poetic allusion fully reach its artistic and philosophical potential. Such an allusion brings together several layers of meaning which, by being combined in a single image, gain a new meaning that supersedes a mere sum of the elements combined. This process repeats itself within the text, creating an effect that Mandelstam referred to in his article "Conversations on Dante," where he said: "A quotation is a cicada: going on and on." ("Цитата есть цикада: она неумолкаема") (2: 218). In "Text Within Text," Lotman stresses that a text capable of generation of meaning requires a minimum of two languages (2: 151). The introduction of Shakespearean poetic language into Russian poetry thus allows the new text to function as a working semiotic structure.

Since Shakespearean themes and images were widely present in Russian modernist poetry, differences in approaches to Shakespeare by different schools and individual authors are a reflection on the differences in their views on classical heritage and on history. For instance, turning to Shakespearean images allows us to support the statement of Sergei Gorodetsky, according to which "symbolists . . . seek in each moment a glimpse towards eternity" or "acmeists . . . find those moments in art which may be eternal" ("*Символисты . . . ищут в каждом мгновении просвета в вечность. . . . Акмеисты . . . берут в искусстве те мгновения, которые могут быть вечными*") (47). An illustration of the first principle may be found in a poem by the major Russian symbolist poet Alexander Blok ("Ophelia in flowers, adorned . . ."), in which the image of Ophelia is interpreted philosophically, reflecting the influence of V. Solovyov's teaching on the Eternal Feminine. A concrete image from classical literature is only the starting point for Blok's attempt to break through beyond a high level of abstraction to the eternal Truth.

On the other hand, in a poem by Akhmatova, whose name is immediately associated with the Acmeist school, "Reading Hamlet," Ophelia appears not as a representation of a philosophical ideal, but as a real woman. This is stressed

by the fact that Ophelia is given the voice of the lyrical "I." It is dust that surrounds her, not May roses, as in Blok's poem. Unexpectedly, Akhmatova's poem ends by Ophelia wishing for Hamlet's words to "flow like an ermine mantle from your [Hamlet's] shoulders / For hundreds and hundreds of years." ("Пусть струится она сто веков подряд / Горностаевой мантией с плеч"). "The moment in art which may be eternal" that Gorodetsky refers to has been found.

In many instances, an image from a particular play may not necessarily be directly related to the central theme of that play. For example, Blok's reference to "earth bubbles" in a lyrical poem "She came in from the cold . . ." ("Она пришла с мороза . . .") does not allude to the main problematic of *Macbeth*, but is used to express awe before the mysteries of the universe.

"I AM ALONE, ALL SINKS TO THE PHARISEE" (HAMLET AND OPHELIA)

Most references in Russian modernist poetry are to Shakespeare's tragic heroes; there is no phenomenon parallel, for example, to the interest in Falstaff displayed by Bloom. *Macbeth, Anthony and Cleopatra,*

Othello, and *King Lear* have produced the largest number of Shakespearean allusions. The most prominent place, however, belongs to *Hamlet*, a play that has profoundly affected Russian literary and social consciousness, as shown in the previous chapters. In modernism, "Hamletism" took a new turn--it is now seen less as an affliction of an exceptionally perceptive soul and more as an image embodying human condition as such.

One of the major authors of Russian modernism who returned to the theme of *Hamlet* throughout his creative life, was Alexander Blok. After World War II, drafting an article on Blok, Pasternak stresses the theme of "Hamletism" in Blok's lyric, noting that "In Blok's art, this differentiated Hamletism leads to the dramatization of all Blok's realistic writings" ("творчески этот дифференцирующийся гамлетизм ведет к драматизации всего блоковского реалистического письма") (4: 703). Blok's understanding of the Shakespearean hero may be judged by the way Blok described Apollon Grigoriev, a Russian poet active in the 1840s: "Григорьева называли иногда (метко и неметко) Гамлетом . . . но были все-таки в Григорьеве гамлетовские черты: он ничего не предал, ничему не изменил; он никого и ничего не увлек за собой, погибая." ("Grigoriev was sometimes called Hamlet, both justly and unjustly . . .

yet there was all the same something of Hamlet in him: he did not betray anybody, did not bring anything down with him when he perished") (5: 383).

Such an understanding is a departure from Goethe's view of Hamlet as a character whose weakness of will in the face of a duty is fatal. As well, this new perception of Hamlet differs from the typical view of Russian liberal criticism summarized in Belinsky's words on Hamlet as "a poetic apotheosis of reflection."

However, Blok's vision of Hamlet significantly evolved over time. In Blok's early verse, many of the conflicts of the Shakespearean character remain unspoken: despair and tragic love come to the forefront. In his youth, Blok participated in an amateur staging of Hamlet, where he played the Danish prince and his future wife Lyubov' Dmitrievna Mendeleeva played Ophelia (Gorbynov 18). Some scholars overstress the importance of the tragic love motive in Blok's early poems on Hamlet, interpreting Blok's Hamlet as a romantic hero for whom the name of the Danish prince serves merely as an embellishment, as a way to assume a beautiful pose: "While Blok quotes the Shakespearean character here, he remains first and foremost an admirer of his Fair Lady, and Hamlet's words are as if borrowed" (Avramenko 151-152).

Yet there appears to be no clear indication in Shakespeare whether or not Hamlet is in love with Ophelia; in any case, being in love is not a characteristic of Hamlet, as jealousy is for Othello, for instance. Blok could have easily picked another literary character had he intended to limit himself to the theme of romantic love. Hamlet's affection for Ophelia is his last attempt to reconcile to this world--a hope that is to be shattered, whether by Hamlet's own doubts or by Ophelia's treason.

Naming his character "Hamlet," Blok is free to focus on his character's love relationship. There is no necessity for Blok to quote directly from the "To be or not to be" soliloquy or to refer unambiguously to the deeper philosophical problematic of the play: Blok's readers were fully aware of the presence of this problem in a deeper layer of the poem. After two centuries of translations from Shakespeare and after going through Russian Hamletism, Russian readers no longer needed additional explanation as to what other questions are raised in *Hamlet*. What is new for the reader is the connection made by Blok between the existential problems and the theme of love, which was in itself a serious topic in Russian philosophy of the time. In the poetry of preceding periods, the statement "I am Hamlet" immediately evokes a specific set of qualities of

the lyrical hero; now this utterance creates new unexpected associations. Blok places a canonical text within the contemporary cultural context, actualizing this function of the text. The process of interpretation of the Shakespearean text has been re-opened.

In the poem "Unfading radiance of the days past" ("Проедших дней немеркнущим сияньем"), Blok introduces a direct quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remember'd" (in Kronenberg's translation: "Мои грехи в своих святых молитвах, / Офелия, о нимфа, помяни"). Use of a Shakespearean quotation as direct speech is not typical for Blok: normally, Shakespearean quotes are introduced as epigraphs, thus encoding them as a framework to his poems. As Lotman observes regarding this device of deliberately including other literary fragments within the main text, "it is expected that the reader will unfold the germs of this structural constructions [quotations, epigraphs, etc] into texts" (2: 159). In this poem, Blok attempts to provide a key to the theme of Hamlet through the theme of Ophelia. The beautiful remembrance refers to earlier days when the lyrical hero was not yet aware of his burden and impending death.

Yet the 1914 poem, "I'm Hamlet, and my blood runs cold", which happens to be the poem with which Blok closed his last public reading immediately before his death in 1921, is different from the languid images of his early poems. In this late poem, love becomes a part of the tragedy of the protagonist who is perishing "in the cold life of his native land," caught in a deadly "net of perfidy":

Я--Гамлет. Холодеет кровь,
 Когда плетет коварство сети,
 И в сердце--первая любовь
 Жива--к единственной на свете.

Тебя, Офелию мою
 Увёл далеко жизни холод,
 И гибну, принц, в родном краю,
 Клинком отравленным заколот.

I'm Hamlet, and my blood runs cold
 When intrigue works its deadly art.
 First love for her, my one and only
 On earth, still lives within my heart.
 Life's cold has borne you, my Ophelia,

Somewhere a long, long way from here.

I die, a prince in my own country,

Stabbed by a poisoned rapier.

(Tr. by Alex Miller)

Blok's "life's cold" is a direct allusion to the "chill of life" from Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (XXXVIII), where Pushkin offers a candid reflection on human fate, stripped of romantic embellishments.

Blok's approach to the topic of Hamlet has been further developed by Pasternak. The beginning of Pasternak's "Hamlet" the first version of which was written some twenty years later, is reminiscent of Blok's poem in its subdued expression of disenchantment and hopelessness. In the later (1955) version of "Hamlet," now published as one of the so-called Yuri Zhivago poems, Pasternak introduces a crucial change to the image of the Danish prince: his Hamlet conscientiously takes on his burden, his cross. In Chekhov's time, the claim to be "a Moscow Hamlet" could still be perceived as comical, because this was the time at which the mask of suffering was eagerly appropriated by those who found it a convenient cover-up for the shallowness and futility of their lives. Pasternak's Hamlet does not seek suffering for its own

sake: he prays, like Christ in Gethsemane, that this cup be passed from him, yet ultimately accepts his fate as a historical necessity. This is how Pasternak understands Shakespeare's Hamlet and uses the figure of Hamlet to engage previous critical and aesthetic views, in particular Goethe's/German Romantic view of a noble but weak-willed soul. This is a Hamlet that can be linked to Pasternak's lyrical "I". In his "Notes on Translations from Shakespeare," Pasternak wrote:

Безволие было неизвестно в шекспировское время. Этим не интересовались. . . . Мысли Шекспира, Гамлет--принц крови, ни на минуту не забывающий о своих правах на престол, баловень старого двора и самонадеянный вследствие своей большой одаренности самородок. . . . Скорее напротив, зрителю предоставляется судить, как велика жертва Гамлета, если при таких видах на будущее он поступает своими выгодами ради высшей цели. . . . "Гамлет" не драма бесхарактерности, но драма долга и самоотречения. . . . Гамлет избирается в судьи своего времени и в слуги более

отдаленного. "Гамлет"--драма высокого жребия, заповеданного подвига, вверенного предназначения.

Weak will was a phenomenon unknown in Shakespeare's day. It was of no interest.

. . . In Shakespeare's eyes Hamlet is a prince of the blood, who never for the moment forgets his right to the throne, had been the favorite of the old Court and is a man overconfident on account of his natural innate talents. . . . The audience is called upon rather to judge how great is Hamlet's sacrifice, if, given his future prospects, he forgoes his advantages for the sake of the supreme goal. . . . Hamlet is not a drama about lack of character but about the indebtedness and self-renunciation. . . . the will of chance selects Hamlet to be the judge of his times and to be the servant of time more remote. *Hamlet* is a drama about high destiny and preordained feats (*Selected writings and letters* 227).

This view of Hamlet is reflected in Pasternak's translation of the Shakespearean play, determining those aspects which Pasternak chooses to highlight in the translation by a careful selection of words in each individual scene. So, for instance in the bedchamber scene, ("To live / In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, / Stew's in corruption, honeying and making love / Over the nasty sty"), Pasternak replaces his early version of the last line "Целоваться / Среди навоза" ("To kiss / Among the dung") by the more abstract "Любоваться / Своим паденьем" ("To enjoy looking / At your own downfall"). It has to be noted that Pasternak does not generally exhibit a Victorian squeamishness: for example, he uses the word "навоз" in a lyrical poem about spring. The change in translation is made because this tone does not suit Hamlet as Pasternak saw him; furthermore, Pasternak underlines Gertrude's overall moral degradation rather than focusing on her alleged sexual promiscuity as a specific manifestation of her downfall.

Even the famous: "Frailty, thy name is woman!" Pasternak translates as "О женщины, вам имя--вероломство!" ("O women, your name is treachery!"), interpreting frailty as weakness of the spirit rather than of the flesh and relating the conflict to the circle of problems topical for

Soviet society and important for Pasternak himself. Pasternak this raises the discussion of the conflict in Shakespeare's play to an existential level, distancing the Shakespearean hero from those circumstances which Pasternak considers accidental or non-essential. There is no doubt that the modernist tradition influences Pasternak's later translation of *Hamlet*, which in its turn contributes to the shaping of image of Hamlet in Pasternak's own late poetry. This process is a good illustration of the Shakespearean text as an ongoing generator of meaning within the Russian poetical tradition.

This evolution allows Pasternak in his own poem "Hamlet," to identify his lyrical "I" with Shakespeare's Hamlet. While the tragic fate of Blok's Hamlet is not only cruel, but meaningless, Hamlet in Pasternak's poem "serves a time more remote." Pasternak distances himself from Goethe's view of Hamlet's burden as being within human capacity but unsuitable for Hamlet: such a burden as Pasternak envisages is inordinate for any human being. Unlike Blok's early poems, the lyrical hero of Pasternak's "Hamlet" rises to the level of high abstraction without losing his concrete individual identity. Pasternak's lyrical character does not suffer passively; he makes a deliberate choice, whereby his suffering gains a purpose.

This stress on the necessity of individual choice, characteristic of Pasternak's philosophy is reminiscent of Kierkegaard:

An ethical person knows that the entire life is a stage, and every person is meant to play his role in it; it depends only on himself to make it just as significant and serious in the spiritual sense as life of those who have been allotted a place in history (*Pleasure and Duty* 332).

In this connection, Pasternak's Hamlet might have been also triggered by an early poem of Gumilyov's under the title "Theatre." Since Pasternak was familiar with contemporary writing and was especially close to the circle of Acmeists, where Gumilyov belonged, it is quite plausible that Pasternak recalled this early poem of Gumilyov's when writing his "Hamlet" much later. In Gumilyov's poem, marked by a youthful fatalism, God looks down on earth through binoculars, as if onto a theater stage, making sure that people do not swerve from their parts. Hamlet is doomed from the beginning. In Gumilyov's poem "Theatre," the rather simplistic human rebellion against the Creator of an unjust world is reminiscent of Robert Browning's "Caliban

upon Setebos." Shakespeare's metaphor of the world as a theater is transformed to show life on earth as doomed to be unjust. The universe is depicted as a cruel show with firmly prescribed parts, where Cain is not expected to have remorse and Hamlet is not supposed to know happiness: "Hamlet? He must be pale. Cain? He must be rough" ("Гамлет? Он должен быть бледным. Каин? Тот должен быть грубым"). Just as Shakespeare's "Mousetrap play" within "Hamlet" introduces metatextual elements within the text (Lotman 1: 156), Gumilyov's "Theatre" shows us a staging a process.

But if in Shakespeare the stage director is Hamlet himself, in Gumilyov's poem the stage directing is a prerogative of a higher power, for which both literary characters and the public itself are part of a larger play of human life. What is striking here is the juxtaposition of Cain, the Biblical character known as the first man to commit murder (Genesis 4), and Hamlet, who is therefore presented as Cain's archetypal opposite, as someone who ultimately rejects murder. The very possibility of giving to Hamlet the same universal significance as the Biblical character of Cain, hardly imaginable a century earlier, shows that Shakespearean character has already become widely known by the turn of the twentieth century.

In Pasternak's poem "Hamlet," the focus is on the actor in the role of Hamlet, feeling the binoculars of the audience focused onto him. This Hamlet, indistinguishable from Pasternak's poetical "I," is projected onto the image of Christ. While Gumilyov presents pain and suffering as the means of enforcing the prescribed order of things, Pasternak introduces another crucial element: human will. Yes, ". . . the plan of action is determined, / And the end irrevocably sealed" [tr. by L. Pasternak-Slater] ("Но продуман распорядок действий, / И неотвратим конец пути"), but Pasternak's Hamlet, like Christ, knowingly prepares for his sacrifice in full awareness of its meaning.

Pasternak's poem also echoes a 1901 sonnet by Bryusov, in which destiny is called "a skillful playwright" and the lyrical hero claims to appreciate the beauty of the scene in which he is to be slain. While Bryusov's poem does not contain the idea of a deliberate sacrifice but of acceptance of destiny that is constructed as a parallel to the inner logic of a play: "The end is unpredictable--and unavoidable" ("Конец негаданный, а неизбежен он"). Bryusov's poem ends with a slightly rephrased quotation from Shakespeare: "All life's a play" (from Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage").

"Вся жизнь игра". Я мудр и это признаю,
 Одно желание во мне, в пыли простертом,
 Узнать, как пятый акт развяжется с четвертым.

"All life's a play." Being wise, I acknowledge this.
 One wish I, stretched out in dust, still have
 Is to learn how Act Five will finish off Act Four.

In 1894, Bryusov planned to write a play on the subject of *Hamlet*, and in 1898 he was working on some dark places in the text of Shakespearean tragedy (*Amidst poems* 134-137).

The theme of Ophelia, addressed by almost all Russian modernist poets, has an especially important place in the poetry of Blok. Following V. Solovyov, Blok appeared as the poet of the Eternal Feminine, or the principle of Wisdom the Divine Sophia. In the poem "I dreamt of you again" ("Мне снилась снова ты, в цветах, на шумной сцене"), the remembrance of a biographical event (Lyubov' Mendeleeva, Blok's future wife, playing Ophelia in an amateur performance in which Blok himself was playing Hamlet) is developed not simply as a lyrical poem but as a philosophical vision: "Ты умерла, вся в розовом сияньи".

You died, surrounded by a rosy radiance"). The image of a concrete woman transcends reality, evolving into a symbol.

An early "Song of Ophelia" (1899) by Blok is reminiscent both of a Romantic ballad, known to the Russian reader through the translations of Zhukovsky, whose mysticism strongly influenced the young Blok. Within the context of the play, the unexpected expression, "Happy Denmark," reminds us of folk songs, in which the idealized home country is juxtaposed to the hostile foreign lands. The "black feather" on Hamlet's helm, on the other hand, is clearly a stock image from Romantic poetry, as is the motif of wandering.

A different vision of Shakespeare's heroine can be found in Blok's later poem with the same title "Song of Ophelia" (1902), where Ophelia starts speaking of herself in the third person. The erosion of Ophelia's personality by insanity leads to an infantile inability to distinguish the self: "I was spoken to, I was, / And I was kissed" ("Со мною, со мною / Говорили - и меня целовали . . .").

This innocence and extreme passivity will come in sharp contrast to Tsvetaeva's passionate Ophelia. Ophelia's child-like innocence is again referred to in Blok's poem "In the gloom, I went towards cares and gaiety" ("Я шел во тьме к заботам и веселью . . .") which has an epigraph

taken from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "Тоску и грусть страдания, Самый ад, Всё в красоту она преобразила." (Kronenberg's translation of Shakespeare's "Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself, / She turns to favour and to prettiness" in *Hamlet* IV, v.). The poem, written in the first person, ends with a direct question: "Why is it that my Ophelia is [but] a child?" ("Зачем дитя Офелия моя?") probably meaning her incapacity to carry the burden of life that he, Hamlet, is perceiving so sharply. This poem had an earlier version, dedicated to Blok's then fiancée Lyubov' Mendeleeva, in which Blok referred to himself as to "poor Hamlet":

And . . . poor Hamlet . . . I was spellbound
Awaiting the longed for sweet answer.

И . . . бедный Гамлет. . . я был очарован,
Я ждал желанный сладостный ответ . . .

In the 1898 poem, "Ophelia in flowers, adorned" ("Офелия в цветах, в уборе"), May roses, a common symbol of youth and beauty, are combined in Ophelia's wreath with water lilies, the symbol of her impending tragic death. To stress the latter connection, Blok uses the unusual term "water nymph" ("речная нимфа") instead of more common

Russian names for "water lily" (the name of that plant in Latin is *Nymphaea*). The usage suggests the English version, where Hamlet is addressing Ophelia as a "nymph." Within the world of Shakespeare's play, it was impossible for Hamlet to be at the river immediately after Ophelia had drowned, which is the only point where her veil could be seen in the waters. Blok does not attempt to provide an "illustration" to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; the future and the past are presented simultaneously, like sequences of a historical narrative on a medieval icon.

In Bryusov's poem "Ophelia", which opens with a quotation from Afanasy Fet's (1820-1892) "Офелия гибла и пела, / И пела, сплетая венки, / С цветами, венками и песнью / На дно опустилась реки" ("Ophelia was dying and singing / And singing, weaving [her] wreaths, / With flowers, wreaths and songs / She sank to the river's bottom"), Ophelia is taken as the embodiment of an innocent victim, brought to her death by the indifferent neglect of the modern society. Bryusov describes a young woman, probably in modest circumstances, who commits suicide by jumping out of the window, and the asphalt on which her body lies is compared to the river's bottom. Stressing the unromantic nature of his modern heroine's death, Bryusov writes "You did not weave the wreaths of an Ophelia, / You

did not hold fresh flowers in your hands" ("Ты не сплетала венков Офелии, / В руках не держала свежих цветов").

Yet the asphalt on which the young woman's body lies is compared to the river's bottom: "What was that, long desired, / that you searched for with your roving glance, there, on the bottom?" ("Чего ж ты искала, давно желанного, / Блуждающим взором, внизу, на дне?"). The title of the poem and its epigraph taken from a nineteenth-century poem by Fet on Shakespeare's Ophelia makes it clear that while some outward signs have changed, the essence of tragedy has remained the same. This notion of Shakespeare's heroine as a victim of the cruel world is a traditional one, although it will be challenged by both Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva. Blok had once said that Ophelia, along with Sophia [the heroine of Griboedov's *Woe from Wit*] can remain "nobly silent" ("благородно молчаливы"), but Hamlet is forced to speak too much (Beketova 176). In Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva, Ophelia is no longer choose to remain restrained; the two female poets give voice to both Ophelia and Hamlet.

Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva were the first female modernist authors in Russia whose lyrical character could bear comparison with Hamlet. For almost the first time in Russian literature, the existential problems lie heavily on women's shoulders. Many generations of critics have

considered Onegin and Pechorin to be literary embodiments of "superfluous men," but Pushkin's Tatyana or Lermontov's Princess Mary were never suggested for that role, though the Russian term "лишний человек" can be applied to either gender.

V. Solovyov noted that if Hamlet had resigned to his situation or considered revenge as such unacceptable, there would be no tragedy, regardless of the scale of that sorrow and the talent of the writer (2: 599). If Hamlet were able to fulfill his task, this would be Hamlet according to Sumarokov, with justice restored at the end. For Solovyov, Hamlet's tragedy is born out of the contradiction between an acutely perceived duty, a feeling of necessity of action and the impossibility of fulfilling that duty; the question of whether revenge is impossible due to Hamlet's inner failings or to external circumstances seems to be irrelevant to Solovyov in this context as he does not raise it.

This view is close to many of the dilemmas of modernism, such as the conflict between the need for religion and the perceived impossibility of religious feeling in modern man (see Emelianov B., and A. Novikov , *Russian Philosophy of the Silver Age*). Thus, following Solovyov's logic, it is only when a woman was recognized as

having a duty--not merely a social one, a duty to the family but as Ibsen's Nora's says, other duties just as sacred--a duty to herself, meaning the need for a philosophical justification of her life, that female authors began to identify themselves with Hamlet.

There are two short poems by Akhmatova united under the common title of "Reading Hamlet." One is "recoded" in the Russian poetic vocabulary of the nineteenth century. It starts with a word play not possible in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: Ophelia breaks with established etiquette, addressing Hamlet in the informal second personal pronoun. The subtle play between the choice of formal or informal second person pronoun has been described since Pushkin; by Tolstoy's time it could be revoked as a cliché. The introduction of this theme into a poem connected to a play by Shakespeare clearly signals to the reader the beginning of a literary experiment.

Many expressions employed by Akhmatova ("shadow of a smile," "dear features," "a gaze lightning up") belong to the Russian Romantic vocabulary reminiscent of Fet. It is perhaps this choice of vocabulary that causes the entire poem to be misinterpreted as a traditional portrayal of Ophelia, with stress on maidenly modesty and sensitivity of feeling bordering on sentimentality. A closer analysis of

the text, however, will show that Akhmatova has set herself a more challenging task. Ophelia admits that she addressed Hamlet in the familiar form "as if by mistake," meaning not by mistake, but on purpose ("И как будто по ошибке, / Я сказала «ты»"). This causes only a "shadow of a smile" ("тень улыбки") on Hamlet's face. The desired response has not been received: Hamlet rejects her feeling. Ophelia retreats, reverting to the safety of a sisterly affection, free of erotic undertones: "I love you like forty tender sisters" ("Я люблю тебя, как сорок / Ласковых сестер"). Similarly Tsvetaeva's description of sister as absence of suffering--not that she does not suffer, but she does not *cause* suffering. Yet the heroine comes out undefeated, for she is somehow endowed with Akhmatova's power of abstraction. The mention of sisterly love may be a way of preserving her dignity, acting as if there had been no disgrace of a rejected feeling; it may also be reassurance for Hamlet to remove the element of threat. Knowing Akhmatova's love for literary inversions this can be seen, hypothetically, as Akhmatova's "reconstitution" of a scene presumably omitted in Shakespeare to which Hamlet's "forty thousand brothers / Could not, with all their quantity of love, / Make up my sum" in the scene of Ophelia's burial could be a response, a recollection. By his own account,

Hamlet notably did not know how to write love poetry. When challenging Laertes to describe his feelings for his lost sister, Hamlet is at loss for words himself, coming up only with inadequate suggestions as "eat a crocodile." Hamlet's quantitative expression of love (viewed as a sign of his emotional adequacy e.g. by Pasternak and Tsvetaeva) could be a recollection of the words once said by Ophelia. Hamlet rejects Ophelia's love, losing his last chance of maintaining a link with the outside world, his last opportunity to trust someone. Mandelstam once compared literary work to Brussels lace, "its essence being that which supports the pattern: the air, the holes, the gaps." Akhmatova charts out those empty spaces, identifying for the reader the gaps she was able to discover in Shakespeare's work.

The theme of Hamlet reappears in Akhmatova's *Poem Without a Hero*, a narrative poem started in 1943 and revised over the years, almost until the poet's death in 1966. Yet the very fact that Akhmatova returns to Shakespearean images in a poem that means so much to her, seems to indicate that the connection to Shakespeare's heritage is never severed. A reference to *Hamlet* appears in a rather unexpected context in Part II. 5. of the *Poem Without a Hero*:

from the idea of sleep as a fantasy realm to a parallel reality in the other world, the final sleep of Hamlet's "To be or not be." Real events, subconscious emotions, literary experiences and reflection on a non-physical realm all merge together to express the inner state of Akhmatova's lyrical hero.

In the *Poem Without a Hero*, Akhmatova makes another unusual reference to *Hamlet* within her fantastical description of the New Year's eve in 1913: "Что мне Гамлетовы подвязки, / Что мне вихрь Соломеиной пляски, / Что мне поступь Железной маски, / Я еще пожелезней тех" ("What to me are Hamlet's garters! / What to me the whirlwind of Salomé's dance, / What to me the tread of the Man in the / Iron Mask! / I am more iron than they") [Tr. by Hemschemeyer]. The reference to Hamlet's garters must have been taken from Ophelia's description of Hamlet appearing at her door immediately after the encounter with the Ghost: ". . . his stockings foul'd / Ungartered, and down-gyved to his ankle" (II, i.).

Akhmatova makes this detail a powerful symbol of the cycle of violence and destruction that is about to begin. She dates the events in this part of the poem back to 1913, just before the First World War and, subsequently, the October revolution; from Akhmatova's perspective some

thirty years later, time will be "out of joint" for Russia very soon. Yet this is more than a comment on contemporary events: As Akhmatova shows us Hamlet through Ophelia's eyes, the reader is now able to consider it believable that Ophelia saw in Hamlet's disorderly dress not only a shocking breach of the court etiquette or even a sign of Hamlet unstable emotions, but the beginning of a catastrophe. The omniscience of the author is communicated to her heroine, just as it happened in an earlier poem "Reading Hamlet": "You said to me: Well then, get thee to a nunnery / Or go marry a fool" ("Ты сказал мне: "Ну что ж. Иди в монастырь / Или замуж за дурака . . ."). In response, the heroine transcends the limits set for her by the play, giving her reply from the position of a greater experience: "Princes always say only things like these" ("Принцы только такое всегда говорят").

Lidia Chukòvskaya once said that Akhmatova always emerges undefeated in her poem (3: 146-47). The female protagonist may be defeated, but Akhmatova's lyrical hero is undefeated at least by virtue of being capable of removing herself from the situation, to analyze it from a distance.

Another unexpected mention of Ophelia may be found in one of Akhmatova's latest poems, "An elegy before spring"

(1963): "Но, пьяная и без вина, / Там, словно Офелия, пела / Всю ночь нам сама тишина" ("But, intoxicated without wine, / There, like Ophelia, / silence itself sang for us all night long"). The silence is paradoxically compared to a song. Ophelia's singing is devoid of meaning, it is no longer a purposeful speech with various elements of meaning. The impact of Ophelia's song on us does not rely on semantics; it is only communication of pure emotion, not thought. This primeval quality links silence with the mad song, both of which serve as a premonition of a tragic end.

Tsvetaeva also turns to the theme of Hamlet and Ophelia more than to any other Shakespearean theme. She always stresses the importance of *Hamlet* to her: "When Hamlet's "To be or not to be" is pronounced ironically, I choke from disdain"--"я чувствую задохновение презрения" (*Unpublished* 274).

For Tsvetaeva, Shakespeare was always associated with earthly passions. "I am frightened that all of Racine and all of Shakespeare will not suffice for such a grief" ("Боюсь, что мало для такой беды всего Расина и всего Шекспира!"). Here, Shakespeare represents the lyrical principle, the emotional charge of individual tragedy. Akhmatova, too, similarly juxtaposes Sophocles and Shakespeare in her *Poem Without a Hero*, where Sophocles

stands for the fate of her country, and Shakespeare for her personal suffering: "Soon I will need a lyre, / But that of Sophocles, not Shakespeare. / At the threshold stands-- Destiny" (tr. by Hemschemeyer). (Скоро мне нужна будет лира, / Но Софокла уже, не Шекспира, / На пороге стоит-- Судьба.)

One of the first gifts of Tsvetaeva to her husband was a volume of Shakespeare; later in her works she will compare Sofia Parnok, whom she considered to be one of great loves of her life, to all the heroines of Shakespeare's tragedies. Anna Saakiantz in her monograph on Tsvetaeva, *Marina Tsvetaeva. Her Work and Art*, uses the expression "Shakespearean passions," "Shakespearean nature" more than ten times when referring Tsvetaeva's own life. It seems likely that Tsvetaeva would not have been displeased by such a comparison.

It is traditionally assumed that Tsvetaeva identified herself with Ophelia (e.g. Saakiantz, Makin). This would be an oversimplified, if not an inaccurate, approach to the theme of Hamlet and Ophelia in Tsvetaeva's work. Both Tsvetaeva's private life and her lyrical poetry are characterized by an exploration of both a male and a female point of view (see a detailed outline of this issue e.g. in Poliakova's *Days of Twilight*).

In Tsvetaeva's poems about Hamlet, these two perspectives meet without necessarily clashing; the two figures sides of the poet's personality, engaging in an inner dialogue. Tsvetaeva once defined Hamlet as a "philosopher, and not a poet, that is a man of questions, and not of answers" ("Гамлет--философ, а не поэт, то есть человек вопросов, а не ответов") (*Unpublished* 474). In her poems on Hamlet, while speaking sometimes in Ophelia's and sometimes in Hamlet's voice, Tsvetaeva essentially takes upon herself Hamlet's task of asking questions to which there can be no answer. Two poems "Ophelia--to Hamlet" ("Офелия--Гамлету" and "Ophelia--in defense of the Queen" ("Офелия--в защиту королевы") are written in the voice of Ophelia, who is entrusted with all the sensual longings of Tsvetaeva's lyrical heroine, in contrast to the ephemeral Ophelia of Russian symbolist poetry. Addressing Hamlet, Tsvetaeva's Ophelia stresses the value of earthly life, unexpectedly sharpening the "to be or not to be" contradiction. Ophelia compares Hamlet to a decaying book; other grim images of decay abound (bones, dust, lime, wormy soil).

For Tsvetaeva, romantic love embodies the freedom of an individual choice, the connection to the world; therefore, Gertrude's very capacity to love justifies her

existence. Hamlet's insistence that Gertrude should prefer a "good" statesman to a "bad" one are based on the premises that exclude an understanding of such love. Claudius is incapable of love, and Hamlet himself ends up rejecting love. Tsvetaeva's Ophelia rejects this false logic: "It is not your mind's business / To judge inflamed blood" ("Не Вашего разума дело / Судить воспаленную кровь").

As in Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva's Ophelia clearly oversteps the limits set for the Shakespearean heroine within the play. The Russian word "разум" can mean both "mind" and "reason": thus, according to Tsvetaeva, it is not the business of reason to judge passion. Hamlet repeats the mistake of applying mathematical logic inappropriately when speaking of his love for Ophelia as stronger than the love of forty thousand brothers. Passion is not measured by mathematical quantities as Tsvetaeva will again stress in "Hamlet's dialogue with his conscience": "--But I loved her / like forty thousand.. /--Still/Less than one lover" ("Но я ее любил, / Как сорок тысяч . . .--Меньше/ Все ж, чем один любовник").

The conflict between ideal and real love always has a prominent place in Tsvetaeva's work, as may be seen in Part II ("Letter") of her *Phaedra*: "Quench my soul--thus, quench my lips!" ("Утоли мою душу--итак, утоли уста!") as well as

from her letters and diaries which permit reconstructing Tsvetaeva's personal struggles. Thus Tsvetaeva entrusts to Hamlet one of the philosophical problems that is so painful for her as a poet and a human being. Even in *Phaedra*, she originally planned to give to Hippolytus some Hamletian features (Saakiantz 486).

Although Tsvetaeva eventually rejects the idea of making her Hippolytus resemble Hamlet the fact that she considered this possibility shows that, in Tsvetaeva's mind, Hamlet is connected to the problem of spirit and passion,--a problem that Tsvetaeva incessantly struggle with. Indeed, a reference to Phaedra appears in Tsvetava's "Ophelia--in defense of the Queen": "Still greater was the guilt of Phaedra; / They sing of her until this day" ("Тяжеле виновная--Федра: / О ней и поныне поют").

While these lines are ascribed to Ophelia, it is clear that the daughter of Polonius would hardly been able to utter them, even if we admit the possibility of Ophelia's familiarity with Euripides; besides, Racine's *Phèdre*, a major source for Tsvetaeva, was written after Shakespeare's death. Tsvetaeva's lyrical hero does not simply voice Ophelia's reproaches to Hamlet, but also faces those reproaches and attempts to grasp them. The poem ends with Ophelia suddenly shuddering at the thought of another

explanation of Hamlet's behavior that seems plausible to her: perhaps it is not the triumph of cold reason, but the triumph of an illegitimate passion that Hamlet is trying to suppress, his incestual attraction to Gertrude that explains his rejection of Ophelia, and, with her, of life. Instead of an answer, the poet has presented us with a new question.

"Ophelia--to Hamlet" and "Ophelia--in defense of the Queen" has been followed by a poem under the title "Hamlet's dialogue with his conscience." This latter poem transforms the discussion from the Hamlet-Ophelia dialogue to an internal dialogue. Ophelia is no longer alive, yet, as she herself had predicted in the earlier poem, "Ophelia--to Hamlet," her death makes Hamlet question his former beliefs. The theme is not exhausted simply by giving a voice to Ophelia's complaint. Martin Buber speaks of love as a move from the impersonal "to have" to the individual "to be" (qtd. in Averintsev 120); Tsvetaeva seems to adopt a similar view, linking Hamlet's rejection of life to rejection of existence.

Both Tsvetaeva's literary works and her private notes demonstrate her ability to defend with the same conviction both sides of the passion/spirit dilemma. In a letter to

R. Gul' from June 27, 1928, Tsvetaeva insists on the irrelevance of earthly passions in the face of art:

Основа творчества--дух. Дух, это не пол, вне пола
 . . . "Божественная комедия"--пол? . . . Фауст--
 пол? . . . Пол, это то, что должно быть
 переборото, плоть, это то, что я отрясаю.

The basis of creation is spirit. Spirit is that
 which is not gender, it is beyond gender . . .
 The *Divine Comedy*--is it about gender? *Faust*--
 gender? . . . Gender is that which should be
 overcome; flesh is that which I dust off my feet
 (Saakiantz 352).

Furthermore, the conflict of ideal and real love leads to the general reflection on the human condition, which was central in all modernist writings. This tragic duality, so sharply perceived in modernist literature, may be illustrated through Kafka's image (in his *Oktavheften*) of a man attached by a chain to both earth and heaven, unable to break free from either of them and hesitant to explain his situation simply by calling his attachment to earth a mistake:

Er ist ein freier und gesicherter Bürger der Erde, denn er ist an eine Kette gelegt, die lang genug ist, um ihm alle irdischen Räume freizugeben, und doch nur so lang, daß nichts ihn über die Grenzen der Erde reißen kann. Gleichzeitig aber ist er auch ein freier und gesicherter Bürger des Himmels, denn er ist auch an eine ähnlich berechnete Himmelskette gelegt. Will er nun auf die Erde, drosselt ihn das Halsband des Himmels, will er in den Himmel, jenes der Erde. Und trotzdem hat er alle Möglichkeiten und fühlt es; ja, er weigert sich sogar, das Ganze auf einen Fehler bei der ersten Fesselung zurückzuführen (1: 380).

Summarizing Tsvetaeva's view on Hamlet and Ophelia, Saakiantz writes:

[Tsvetaeva's lyrical heroine], transformed into the mad Ophelia, receives a gift of sight and starts despising that "virgin [Hamlet] . . . who chose the dead over the living love. Moreover, Tsvetaeva's Ophelia defends Gertrude, justifies

her and because of that despises the Danish prince with his fruitless musings even further" (339).

While Saakiant's observations are just, it is not possible to believe that the dilemma is solved for Tsvetaeva once and for all. Insistence on "fruitless musings" and yearning for a pure "bridge between two souls" occupy an equal space in Tsvetaeva's work with a defense of earthly passions. These two aspects of her lyrical heroine, rather like Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund*, lead to a deeper understanding of Tsvetaeva's open-ended interpretation of Shakespeare's work.

"THE BLOOD-SMEARED HONOR OF A BREAK-UP" (OTHELLO AND
DESDEMONA)

The theme of Othello and Desdemona, though not developed in the same depth as that of Hamlet, has inspired several noteworthy poetic experiments. One of the most untraditional treatments of the theme of Othello and Desdemona is given in Gumilyov's "Morning chat" ("Утренняя болтовня") (1912?). The title itself warns us that we are dealing with an interpretation of a dream. Indeed, the female protagonist is retelling her dream in which she is

projected into the world of Shakespeare's *Othello* and is both able to observe Shakespeare's characters from a distance and identifies herself with Desdemona.

The details are not only unrealistic; they contradict even the conventions established within Shakespearean tragedy. So, for instance, there is a description of secret meetings by moonlight, an opportunity which Shakespeare never granted to his Othello and Desdemona: "River bank, willows / In the moonlight . . . One does not come to the river at night / Without love" ("Берег, ивы / При луне. . . К ночному склону / Не приходят, не любя"). Othello in Gumilyov's poem does not bear sufficient resemblance to Shakespeare's Othello: "Othello was there. / He is handsome" ("Был Отелло / Он красив). Within the decidedly subjective world of Shakespeare's play, we never see a description of Othello as handsome. Perhaps he could be perceived as such only in the eyes of Desdemona, though her inclination towards someone not "of her own clime, complexion, and degree" (III, iii.) provokes suspicion of intemperance.

The unexpected question recognizing the duality of the heroine and her dreamlike projection into Ophelia, "Was he worthy of the two of you? / Was he resembling the moonlight?" ("Был ли он вас двух достоин? / Был ли он как

лунный свет?") prompts a seemingly irrelevant response: "Yes, he is a warrior / and a poet" ("Да, он воин / и поэт"). Shakespeare's text, however, does not contain any indication that Othello is a poet. Perhaps this paradoxical statement is taken from the information that he won Desdemona over by telling her of his woes:

And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her; Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had past;
And I loved her that she did pity them (I, iii.)

However, it remains unclear whether the effect that Othello's stories have on Desdemona can be credited to their artistic presentation rather than to the dramatic nature of his experiences as such. Even if Othello's own acknowledgment--"Rude am I in my speech" (I, iii.)--is to be taken as a decorous exaggeration, any reference to Othello having any special poetic gift would still be missing. Therefore, the poem cannot be seen an illustration to Shakespeare's play: the image of Othello is approximated to the lyrical persona of Gumilyov, and his female conversational partner attempts to fit their relationship

into the paradigm of the Shakespearean text--an attempt that she herself briskly rejects at the end of the poem, as if in recognition that this paradigm may be applied only in the "mirror" reality of a dream.

Tsvetaeva's "Poem of the end" ("Поэма конца"), 1924, dedicated to a real-life break-up with her lover, contains a highly original reference to Shakespeare. In the poem, Tsvetaeva's lyrical heroine declines her lover's courteous yet insincere attempt to ascribe to her the initiative for ending the relationship; for Tsvetaeva, this cunning misrepresentation of the facts is no less painful than the break-up itself:

. . . итак--простимся,
Сказали вы? (Как платок,
В час сладостного бесчинства
Уроненный . . .)

So--farewell,
you said? (--Like that handkerchief,
Lost in the moment
of a sweet shamelessness . . .)

Tsvetaeva's sarcasm relies on the reader's understanding that the loss of Desdemona's handkerchief during a forbidden encounter is a non-event, an artificial construction created with a malicious purpose. The poet contrasts the handkerchief as a common real life object and as symbolic object, which, for Othello, comes to embody Desdemona's unfaithfulness and with it the destruction of his ideal. The clash of the literal and symbolic values over an ordinary object proves deadly for Shakespeare's heroine; Tsvetaeva leads us to a realization that, because the protagonists of her poem also lack a common referent, their dialogue inevitably leads to a tragedy. The reader is meant not simply to decipher a code provided by Tsvetaeva through an allusion from Shakespeare, but to bring into Tsvetaeva's text multiple layers of connotations. Moreover, by seeing Shakespearean characters against the background of a modern drama, the reader gains the experience of yet another reading of Shakespeare.

"AND LOVE HAS OUTWEIGHTED ALL" (ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA)

Although references to Cleopatra are not infrequent in Russian modernist poetry, Akhmatova's "Cleopatra"

("Клеопатра") (1940) may be the most telling example as it develops the theme more fully than in most other cases, It is apparent Akhmatova's "Cleopatra" is influenced by Shakespeare (both by the original version and by Pushkin's take on it) rather than by other sources on the legendary Egyptian Queen. Since this poem by Akhmatova is rather short, it should be useful to cite it in full:

Александрийские чертоги

Покрыла сладостная тень.

Пушкин.

Уже целовала Антония мертвые губы,
 Уже на коленях пред Августом слезы лила . . .
 И предали слуги. Грохочут победные трубы
 Под римским орлом, и вечерняя стелется мгла.
 И входит последний плененный ее красотою,
 Высокий и статный, и шепчет в смятении он:
 "Тебя--как рабыню . . . в триумфе пошлет пред
 собою . . . "
 Но шеи лебяжьей все также спокоен наклон.
 А завтра детей закуют. О, как мало осталось
 Ей дела на свете--еще с мужиком пошутить
 И черную змейку, как будто прощальную жалость,
 На смуглую грудь равнодушной рукой положить.

Cleopatra

Alexandria's palaces
Were covered with sweet shade.

Pushkin

She had already kissed Anthony's dead lips,
And on her knees before Augustus had poured out
her tears . . .

And the servants betrayed her. Victorious trumpets blare
Under the Roman eagle, and the mist of evening drifts.

Then enters the last captive of her beauty,
Tall and grave, and he listens in embarrassment:
"You--like a slave . . . will be led before him in
in the triumph . . ."

But the swan's neck remains peacefully inclined.
And tomorrow they'll put the children in chains. Oh,
How little remains

For her to do on earth--joke a little with this boy [sic!]
And, as if in a valedictory gesture of compassion,
Place the black viper on her dusky breast with an
indifferent hand.

(Tr. by Hemschemeyer)

In 1940, the poem was published with an epigraph from Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Presently the poem is published with only one epigraph, that from Pushkin's *Egyptian Nights*, but the connection to Shakespeare also remains. "How little she has left to do on earth / Just to exchange jokes with a peasant" ("О, как мало осталось, / Ей дела на свете--еще с мужиком пошутить . . . "). This detail, so strikingly out of line with Classicist aesthetics, appears to be taken from Shakespeare's scene in which Cleopatra talks with the peasant about the "Joy of the Worm." Akhmatova herself pointed to the connection with Shakespeare and planned to show the poem to Mikhail Lozinsky, a well-respected translator of Shakespeare and to ask for his opinion (Chukovskaya 2:59).

Akhmatova's Cleopatra corresponds to the viewpoint expressed by Goddard that Shakespeare's Cleopatra had already decided to commit suicide even before confirming her suspicions about Caesar's plans regarding her destiny; the information that Caesar is to send her as a captive in his triumphal procession only validates the correctness of the choice Cleopatra had made earlier (61). In Akhmatova, kissing the dead lips of Anthony (corresponding to the Russian custom of giving a ceremonial kiss to the dead person before the coffin is closed), kneeling in tears

before Caesar, and being betrayed by her servants are all listed as an expected sequence of events, which is highlighted by the repetition of the word "already" and by the use of imperfective verb forms in Russian for "to kiss" and "to shed (tears)" and the perfective form for the verb meaning "to betray." Boris Gasparov described the imperfective aspect as allowing the speaker to express an internal, subjective perspective on the situation being described. Such a position projects an "existential" view of the world; it views life as a "continuous experience into which every person (including the speaker) is inextricably immersed" (195).

"The last man conquered by her [Cleopatra's] beauty" enters, murmuring almost the exact words of Shakespeare's Dolabella: "You as a slave... in a triumph he will send before him." (Shakespeare: "You with your children will he send before"). Akhmatova's Cleopatra remains calm; the asp she applies to her breast is compared to a "farewell caress" ("как будто прощальную жалость"), echoing Shakespeare's "As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle."

Susan Mert argues that the poem has political allusions: Akhmatova sees herself--and the whole nation--defeated by the Stalinist regime (11). This interpretation could serve as a key to Akhmatova's understanding of

Shakespeare's Cleopatra in the final scene of the play. Certainly, Akhmatova had no illusions about the lot that she can expect from the regime. Projecting an image from Shakespeare onto the historical context of Soviet Russia, Akhmatova singles out the theme of preserving one's individuality in the face of tyranny, even if at the price of life.

Shakespeare's image functions in a completely different manner within the context of Russian pre-revolutionary culture in Blok's "Cleopatra" ("Клеопатра") (1907). This poem is dedicated to a common motif in modernist poetry--the pettiness and banality of modern life and the unromantic nature of suffering. "The drunken and brutish crowd" ("Толпою пьяной и нахальной") rushes to the wax figure museum in St. Petersburg where a wax likeness of Cleopatra is one of the major attractions. While idle onlookers "continuously whisper shameless words" about Cleopatra ("шепчут неустанно / О ней бесстыдные слова"), Blok's lyrical hero enters into a dialogue with Cleopatra. The dialogue, consciously placed on the border between imagination and reality, ends with Cleopatra's sarcastic comment on her fate in this modern world, which knows no awe:

Тогда я исторгала грозы.
 Теперь исторгну жгучей всех
 У пьяного поэта--слезы,
 У пьяной проститутки смех.

Some time ago I provoked trembling
 Now I provoke, more than anyone,
 Tears from a drunken poet,
 Laughter from a drunken prostitute.

This final stanza of Blok's poem echoes the lines of Shakespeare:

The quick comedians
 Extemporally will stage us, and present
 Our Alexandrian revels; Anthony
 Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
 Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
 I'the posture of a whore. (V,ii)

For Blok, this degradation of a high drama show symbolized the growing superficiality of the modern world. In Blok's view, strongly stated e.g. in his article "Lightning of Art" ("Молнии искусства") (written in 1909 and

revised in 1918), technological progress is in reality an aggressive, destructive force, inextricably linked to the demise of culture:

Civilization is growing. At the turn of the century Balzac spoke of a "human comedy." . . . Now it is a street farce. . . . Do you know that every screw in a machine, every turn of the bolt, every new achievement of technology breeds a global mob? (6:303).

Цивилизация растёт. В начале века Бальзак говорил о "человеческой комедии." . . . Теперь--уличный фарс. . . . Знаете ли вы, что каждая гайка в машине, каждый поворот винта, каждое новое завоевание техники плодит всемирную чернь?

Anticipating the time when "art, in its turn, will fall victim to an unheard of destruction" (6: 304) (a prophesy that will soon come true in Russia), Blok turned to Shakespeare in order to warn of the dangers faced by humanistic art.

"EARTH BUBBLES"

There are, however, a few by far less known instances in which Shakespearean images are used, independent of their historical or political connotations. For instance, Blok used an image from *Macbeth*, "earth bubbles," without an obvious link to the main problematic of this Shakespearean play. In Shakespeare, "earth bubbles" are the witches, capable of foretelling the future. Blok takes "earth bubbles" as the title of his 1907 cycle of poems and prefaces it with a quotation from Kronenberg's translation of *Macbeth* (I, iii): "Земля, как и вода, содержит газы, / И это были пузыри земли." (Literal translation: "Earth, just as water contains gases, and these were bubbles of the earth"). In the original: "The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, / And these are of them." In the introduction to the collection of poem *Unexpected joy*, which included poems of the *Earth Bubbles* cycle, Blok said:

Пробудившаяся земля выводит на лесные опушки
 маленьких мохнатых существ . . . Я привязался к
 ним только за то, что они--добродушные и
 бессловесные твари,--привязанностью молчаливой,

ушедшей в себя души, для которой мир--балаган,
 позорище . . .

The awakening earth brings to the edge of forest
 some small furry creatures . . . I developed an
 affection for them only because they are good-
 natured and silent creatures,--the affection of a
 taciturn self-absorbed soul for whom the world is
 a show-booth, a spectacle (2: 315).

For Blok, "earth bubbles" stand for the philosophical
 apprehension of nature, which is contrasted to the show
 booth of human life. In Blok's image of the world as a
 "show booth, a spectacle" contains an echo of Shakespeare's
 famous definition of the world as a stage. Blok clearly
 sides with this view.

Blok opens his poem "The show booth" ("Балаган")
 (1906) with an epigraph taken from the Russian translation
 of Dumas père's play "Kean" (1836) about the famous
 Shakespearean actor Edmund Kean: "Well, old chap, let's go
 / Take on your Shakespeare!" ("Ну, старая кляча, пойдём /
 Ломать твоего Шекспира!") The mentioning of "rot" that eats
 away at the soul ("В тайник души проникла плесень") refers

the reader back to the famous "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (I, iv).

The theme of human beings as actors continues to be the focal point of Blok's poem:

. . . Актеры, правьте ремесло,
 Чтобы от истины ходячей
 Всем стало больно и светло!
 В тайник души проникла плесень,
 Но надо плакать, петь, идти,
 Чтоб в рай моих заморских песен
 Открылись торные пути.

. . . And players, practice well your art
 That the itinerant truth may surely
 Bring joy and grief to every heart.
 There's rot deep in the soul's recesses,
 But we must weep, sing, ride along
 That easy paths be opened up to
 The heaven of my alien song.
 (Tr. by Alex Miller)

These lines bear resemblance to Hamlet's instructions to the actors regarding "holding the mirror up to nature"

(*Hamlet* III, i). The notion of an artist's duty to remain true to his calling and to life became one of the central themes in Blok's poetry. As for Pasternak years later, this topic for Blok was linked to Shakespeare. The "joy and grief" caused to the public (more closely translated as "pain and light"), reminiscent of Hamlet's "I must be cruel, only to be kind" (III, iv), further support the idea of art as a purifying element. As Cox aptly observes, "The human condition is such that when human suffering is seen in a literary work to be the product of absolute necessity, it affords some insight, some liberation--if not to the hero, at least to the audience. This insight or liberation is apparently what Aristotle means by *catharsis* and what Jaspers means by *transcendence*" (7).

Another example of a Shakespearean allusion subtly woven into lyrical poem may be found in Annensky's poem "Before the burial service" ("Перед панихидой"). This poem, written in the form of a sonnet, laments the failure of the human language to describe death. Conversations in the household where a dead body is being prepared for burial prompt an unexpected quotation from *Hamlet* (II, ii): "Words, words, words" ("Слова, слова, слова"). This is taken from the scene in which Hamlet talks to Polonius, not even from the "To be or not to be" soliloquy. Neither

Shakespeare nor any of his characters are brought up directly, yet in the context of Annensky's poem, this thinly veiled quotation very effectively refers the reader to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a play in which consistent failure of communication *between* characters culminates in destruction.

Another poem by Annensky, "The burden of life is light and easy for me" ("Ноша жизни светла и легка мне"), also uses a complex structure of allusions. The first of these allusions is contained in the title itself, which echoes the words of Christ (Mt 11:30): "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Chekalov believes this title to be also linked to Hamlet's philosophical soliloquy (91); the same parallel may be seen in the epigraph, taken from Maurice Rollinat, "Le silence est l'âme des choses" [Silence is the soul of things]:

И не горе безумной, а ива
 Пробуждает на сердце унылость.
 Потому что она, терпеливо
 Это горе качая . . . сломилась.

And it is not the grief of an insane [woman],
 but the willow

That awakens sadness in [my] heart.
 Because the willow, patiently
 Rocking this grief . . . broke down.

Though the name of Ophelia is not given, the image of the willow in this scene clearly evokes the description of Ophelia's death in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (IV. vii):

There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
 When down her weedy trophies and herself
 Fell in the weeping brook . . .

This final stanza may provide a key to the earlier place in the text of the poem, where Annensky's lyrical hero expresses regrets for a withered violet. ("Я жалею, что даром поблекла / Позабытая в книге фиалка"). The context of the poem allows perceiving the image of a violet, as also related to the theme of Ophelia. Violets were offered by the already insane Ophelia to the King (IV. v)--"I would give you some violets, but they wither'd all when my father died"; these are also the flowers Laertes wishes for Ophelia's grave ("And from her fair and unpolluted flesh / May violets spring!"). The image of a

withered violet, almost a stock symbol of loyalty, is not immediately recognized by the reader as related to the theme of Ophelia, but other allusions within the poem enable the image of a violet to be filled with new content. The fact that the violet was "left forgotten in a book" ("позабытая в книге фиалка") may no longer be seen as incidental: now it suggests to the reader that the book may be one that Hamlet was reading in the scene with Polonius, or one that Ophelia was holding during her last encounter with Hamlet.

Images accumulate and interlay, all of them connecting as if through some centripetal force, to the main problematic of *Hamlet*: the questions of life and death, personal fulfillment, loneliness. The Shakespearean theme is taken outside the immediate context of the play and used to gradually generate new meanings by creating multiple layers of allusions, each of which, in their turn, leads us to other themes.

The theme of Hamlet returns as a symbolist echo of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy in Bryusov's "Wind at dawn" (1916): ("Закатный ветер"): "There is sadness, loss; Here--everything is lit by light" ("Там тоска, ущерб. Здесь--все светом залито"). Bryusov's lyrical hero simultaneously speaks of Hamlet in the third person and himself weeps for

Ophelia "like [her] brother Laertes." In this poem, Bryusov successfully creates a double-faced lyrical hero, (not altogether unlike that in Gumilyov's "Morning Chat"), reinforced by juxtaposition of images: Hamlet--Laertes (in his role of "non-Hamlet"), pussy willow--cedar, moans--replies. This duality opens a possibility of inner dialogue, as Bryusov points out himself: "And from secret recesses / Memory brings out images" ("И из тайных недр / Память кажет облики . . . ").

Blok's little known ultraromantic play "The original mother" ("Праматерь"), written in 1909 and revised in 1918, is a not entirely successful attempt to find new forms for the Russian modernist theater. The main character of "The original mother," Yaromir, upon meeting the ghost of the ancient hostess of the castle, rephrases Macbeth: "As God is my witness, I am no coward! / I swear to take on anything! / Bring the devil out of hell / And count the beats of my heart-- / Will the fear seize my chest? / Not in my imagination, / Not in my heated mind / Not in my chest / Shall he look for help!"

Бог свидетель, я не трус!

Все снести готов, клянусь!

Черта выведи из ада

И считай удары сердца--
 Разве страх стеснит мне грудь
 Не в моем воображеньи,
 Не в горячечном мозгу,
 Не в груди моей--пусть ищет
 Он помощника себе!

This is very close to Macbeth's soliloquy on his vision of a sword: "a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain" (II, i).

Another stanza in Blok almost verbally repeats Shakespeare's word play:

My brow is marked
 With a luminous motto: "a man"
 There is a limit set for a man,
 A secret limit.

На челе моем начертан
 Светлый лозунг "человек"
 Есть предел для человека,
 Тайный есть предел.

Again, these lines closely follow Shakespeare's text: "I dare do all that may become a man" (I, vii). "What man dare, I dare" (III, iv). The above examples, almost amounting to an exercise in free translation, show Blok's interest towards Shakespeare's poetical technique. Regrettably, perhaps due to remaining within genre constraints of a narrative poem, this particular work by Blok fails to engage the Shakespearean text into a fully-fledged dialogue as it happens in Blok's lyrical poetry.

"TO LOOK AT HISTORY THROUGH THE EYES OF SHAKESPEARE":
RUSSIAN MODERNIST VIEWS OF SHAKESPEAREAN HISTORICISM

Переживание своей личной судьбы в
неразрывной связи с судьбой
целого.

Living out one's own destiny
in inseparable connection to the
destiny of the whole.

B. Engelgardt 72

Pushkin's view of history, formed under the influence of contact with Shakespeare's work, was in its turn was a

major influence on the poetry of Russian modernism, where the individual becomes that focal point through which the greatest historical upheavals are analyzed. Pasternak wrote in a letter in 1958:

It is from Pushkin that our Russian modernity has begins, our contemporary way of thinking. Pushkin erected the edifice of our spiritual life, the home of Russian the historical conscience.

С Пушкина началась русская современность, наш нынешний образ мыслей. Пушкин построил здание нашей духовной жизни, дом русского исторического сознания (*On art* 355).

Analyzing Pushkin's narrative poem *The Bronze Horseman*, Svetlana Evdokimova finds in it signs of Pushkin's mythological consciousness, (230), interpreting Eugene's struggle with the Bronze Horseman as a sacrilegious rebellion against cosmic powers (227). However, another scholar, V.V. Musatov suggests that the very process of struggle between the bronze statute of Peter, symbolizing the historical process, and the poor clerk Evgenij, who embodies the "average person," is

history in its dramatic expression. History is seen by Pushkin in the very process of interaction between the individual and the social forces.

Pushkin's famous phrase about the necessity to look at history through the eyes of Shakespeare (13: 259) was uttered in the aftermath of the Decembrists' failed uprising in 1825. Speaking about the fate of Decembrists, five of whom were executed, and the rest sentenced to hard labor in Siberia, Pushkin could hardly have called for a reconciliation with reality and for an impassive view of the development of Russian society, "unmoved by good and evil." It seems more plausible that, realizing there will be enough attempts to mythologize events along the lines of classical tragedies, Pushkin argues for seeing those events as a profound human drama--a Shakespearean drama according to Goethe's understanding that Shakespeare's plays concern around individual will rather than historical necessity. This need to approach history through the individual experience became a major part of the philosophy of Russian literary modernism, as figured e.g. in Mandelstam, Akhmatova and Pasternak.

In many instances modernist authors immerse themselves into a situation taken from Shakespeare, without seeking identification with a specific character. It is the

emotional tension of the situation itself which serves as a reflection of the lyrical hero. For instance, in his poem "The lady washed her hands . . ." (1922), Khodasevich relates his horror in the face of the revolutionary bloodshed in Russia, his bitter regrets of the impossibility of returning to the past and his sense of hopelessness. He does not assume the persona of Lady Macbeth, who is tormented by sleeplessness because she "cannot forget a blood-stained throat," but uses her plight to describe his own torments. There may be a sense of Khodasevich's personal implication in a collective act of violence, yet it is the complete impossibility to erase excruciating memories that forms the main parallel to the Shakespearean theme in this poem.

Триста лет уж вам не спится--

Мне лет шесть не спится тоже.

For three hundred years you haven't been able to
sleep--

I have not been able to sleep for about six
years, either.

The boundary between empirical and artistic reality once again disappears in Khodasevich's poem "Вот в этом палаццо жила Дездемона . . ." ("Here is the palazzo where Desdemona lived . . .") (1914): "All this isn't true, but it's shameful to laugh." The past is likened to "a boy who fell from the balcony"; it is abruptly cut short, dead. With the physical image of the dead body, rather than an abstract memory of the boy who is gone, it is something to be avoided, a taboo. The future "should not be touched," either. "Maybe it's true--Desdemona / did live in this palazzo?" ("Быть может, и правда - жила Дездемона / Вот в этом палаццо?"). Real life experience is blocked; it is only intellectual experience, a literary memory that remains and helps to preserve one's identity. So Lady Macbeth still lives, plagued by guilt-ridden insomnia, and wrings her hands.

Bryusov once expressed a similar thought:

Having gone through the consciousness of millions, Don Quixote is no less real than Napoleon. Therefore the tour guides are right to take their tourists to the prison on island d'If where Monte-Cristo was held (6: 384).

For Russian modernist poets, literary and real experience not only become inseparable but influence each other, entering into complex relationship. The play on contrasting the real and the imaginary, the switch from one semiotic system to another at some inner boundaries, comprises the basis for generating new meanings (Lotman 1: 155). Anticipating semiotic theory, Tynyanov (*Archaists and Novators* 1929) describes Mandelstam's poetic speech:

Здесь главный пункт работы Мандельштама--создание *особых смыслов* [emphasis added]. Его значения-- кажущиеся, значения косвенные, которые могут возникать только в стихе, которые становятся обязательными только через стих. У него не слова, а тени слов.

The main point of Mandelstam's work is the creation of *special meanings* [emphasis added]. The meanings of words are just appearances, indirect meanings, which may arise only in a poem, which become necessary only through a poem. He has not words, but shadows of words (571-572).

Tynyanov's analysis of Mandelstam' poetry may be relevant to the discussion of other modernist poetry as well since it did not rely on fixed semantic constructions but instead created them. Active contact with the Shakespearean text, linguistically and chronologically alien to Russia at the turn of the twentieth century, catalyzed the process of creating these "special meanings."

The very movement of history is likened to the artistic reality of Shakespeare's plays in Akhmatova's poem "The twenty-fourth tragedy of Shakespeare . . ." ("To Londoners") (1942), where the poet describes current events --the bombing of London at the beginning of World War II-- as a new Shakespearean tragedy written by Time itself. Literature and reality as if switch places: the poet and her contemporaries do not simply read Shakespeare's plays but participate in them, burying Juliet, trembling with the hired assassin, looking into Macbeth's window; the very real tragedy of the war becomes a tragedy that we are "no longer able to read." What is particularly striking here is that the verbs "to read" and "to live" are interchangeable.

Двадцать четвертую драму Шекспира

Пишет время бесстрастной рукой.

Сами участники грозного пира,

Лучше мы Гамлета, Цезаря, Лира
 Будем читать над свинцовой рекой . . .
 Лучше заглядывать в окна к Макбету,
 Только не эту, не эту, не эту,
 Эту уже мы не в силах читать!

Time, with an impassive hand, is writing
 The twenty-fourth drama of Shakespeare.
 We, the celebrants at this terrible feast,
 Would rather read Hamlet, Caesar or Lear . . .
 Would rather peer in at Macbeth's windows
 Only not this, not this, not this,
 This we don't have the strength to read!
 (Tr. by J. Hemschemeyer)

In his article on Ganville Barker's staging of *King Lear* in London, Terence Hawkes points out that this was also the time of Nazi attacks on France, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. On May 22, 1940, when the danger of Nazi occupation was particularly close, the British parliament succeeded in passing, in one day's time, the Emergency Powers (Defense) Act, requiring citizens to place "themselves, their services and their property at the disposal of His Majesty." Under this law, the British

government gained full control of all banks and an unprecedented right to command private property, to force an individual citizen to do any type of labor required, and so on. For the sake of fighting Nazism, the British government decided to adopt laws dangerously similar to the practices of Nazi Germany and, Stalinist Soviet Union. Hawkes notes that *King Lear* "offered an illusion of individuality to a public that was de-individualized, standardized, mobilized, issued ration cards, deprived of its rights" (87). It is quite likely that Akhmatova kept this development in mind when identifying with the plight of Londoners who had to face the threat from the Fascist Germany and a totalitarian trend in their own government.

Akhmatova again mentions Shakespeare in her late *Poem Without a Hero*, (1940-1963), saying that she needs a lyre "Not that of Shakespeare anymore, but of Sophocles"

Скоро мне нужна будет лира,
 Но Софокла уже, не Шекспира.
 На пороге стоит--Судьба.

Soon I will need a lyre,
 But that of Sophocles, not Shakespeare.
 At the threshold stands--Destiny.

(Tr. by J. Hemschemeyer)

This poem, written at the end of the poet's life, shows Akhmatova's search to transcending her personal experience as an individual in order to be able to express the fate of millions. In a similar vein, Akhmatova will say in *Requiem*, (1939), that her voice is shouting "for one hundred million people." What is remarkable is that it is Shakespeare whose gift is associated with the individual principle and whose tradition Akhmatova acknowledges to have followed previously.

Russian modernists turned most often to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to describe the realities of Russian history. A special place belongs to Pasternak's translation of *Macbeth*, which is still performed in by Russian theaters. Without allowing himself obvious departures from the original text, Pasternak is able to accentuate those elements which permitted the Russian reader to see parallels to their own existence in Shakespeare's description of the moral crisis of power and society.

This is how Pasternak in his translation of *Macbeth*, having shown the downfall of a dictator, hints at the anticipated rise of a new one.

1. MACDUFF. Hail, king! for so thou art. Behold, where
stands

The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine;
Hail, King of Scotland!

In Pasternak's version:

Живи, Малькольм! Теперь ты наш король.
Вот голова злодея. Край свободен.
Вокруг тебя, как жемчуг на венце,
Цвет королевства. Братья, грянем хором
От всей души: "Да здравствует король
Шотландии!"

Literal re-translation of Pasternak's version:

Live, Malcolm! Now you are our King.
Here's the villain's head. The country is free.
Around you, like pearls in a crown,
[Are] the flowers of the kingdom. Brothers, let's
break out in choir

With our entire souls: "Hail King of Scotland."
 (V, viii.)

The translation of this scene offers a highly interesting example of Pasternak's understanding of Shakespeare's play. In Pasternak's version, Macduff expresses a hope that his country has gained a benevolent and even liberal-minded ruler who will dedicate himself to the good of his country. The entire soliloquy is written in the style of Pushkin's youthful idealism: ". . . At door will freedom wait to meet you; / Your brothers, hastening to greet you, / To you the sword will glad present." ("Deep in Siberia's mines, let naught . . ."). Through this style, the Russian reader is reminded of the ideas of the Decembrists whose doomed rebellion in 1825 in St. Petersburg the reading public knew only too well to have been doomed to failure. A subtle warning is being given, the full explanation of which is contained in Malcolm's lines.

MALCOLM. Producing forth the cruel ministers

Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen . . .

Переловить

Пособников и близких кровопийцы

И дьявола в венце, его жены . . .

(To catch

All allies and relations of the blood-sucking monster

And that fiend in a crown, his wife . . .)

(V, viii.)

"Allies and relations" imply that the revenge is not going to be limited to the "cruel ministers," i.e. those who have actively assisted Macbeth in his crimes. This sounds dangerously close to Macbeth's words referring to Macduff in Act IV, Scene I: ". . . give to the edge of the sword / His wife, his babies, and all unfortunate souls / That trace him in his line." ("Его жену, детей, родню и слуг, /--Я вырежу.") ("His wife, children, kinsmen and servants / I shall butcher.") Naturally, after such a statement, Malcolm's words (which lack a direct parallel in the original text) "Мы с Божьей помощью займемся всеми" ("We, with God's help, will deal with everybody") sound somewhat ambivalent.

Pasternak seems to be giving his own view on any change of power as merely the substitution of one tyrant

for another. The perpetual popular belief in a "good Tsar" notwithstanding, historical evidence seems to suggest that assassination of one monarch and his replacement by another has rarely leads to desirable results. Obviously, Pasternak's stand is even more readily understandable if we consider the political situation in which Pasternak had spent the most of his adult life.

FIRST MURDERER. Well, let's away...

Пойдемте к самому

(Let's go to the master.)

(III. iii.)

Pasternak uses an everyday down-to-earth expression with the meaning "owner, master, etc.," that has been used for several centuries, always indicating a figure of unquestionable authority. This expression is still occasionally used today; in Soviet times it was often applied to the Party heads of the city, region as well as to the highest Party leader himself. "Cam" is a person who values power before anything else and is beyond the law. All these are connotations of one brief word, which is not even uttered by Macbeth.

In the next example, Pasternak turns from rural talk to an elevated style of speech in order to provide his emotional commentary, as it were, on the original text. "And make our faces vizards to our hearts." "И наши лица превращать в личины"--"And turn our faces into masks". (III. ii.) "Личина" is a Church Slavonic word for "mask," now obsolete and used exclusively in a symbolical sense. It always carries a negative connotation rooted in the Russian medieval belief of inadmissibility of masks and other artificial means of changing appearance since it leads to amendment of God's creation. Thus Pasternak refers not simply to hiding one's true feelings, but to the hypocritical substitution of falsity for truth.

Boris Pasternak's reflections on Russian contemporary life are also present in his translation of *Hamlet*, though they are less known than Pasternak's engagement with the philosophical problematic of *Hamlet*. There are at least three published versions of Pasternak's translation of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy.

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,

The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

Pasternak's earliest version of this soliloquy takes great liberties with the original text, having clear contemporary political allusions:

А то, кто снес бы ложное величье
Правителей, невежество вельмож,
Всеобщее притворство, невозможность
Излить себя, несчастную любовь
И призрачность заслуг в глазах ничтожеств.

Otherwise, who would tolerate the false greatness
Of rulers, ignorance of great lords,
Everybody's hypocrisy, impossibility
To express oneself, unhappy love
And trifling importance of merits in the eyes of
nonentities.

Unfortunately, precise circumstances that made Pasternak amend this version are unknown; perhaps his editors felt that these lines were all too closely hinting at the hypocrisy and ignorance permeating the Soviet

society. Whatever the reason, in a later edition of Pasternak's translation published in 1956 by Detgis Publishers (108), these lines appear:

А то, кто снес бы унижение века,
 Неправду угнетателей, вельмож
 Заносчивость, отринутое чувство,
 Нескорый суд и более всего
 Насмешки недостойных над достойным.

Otherwise, who would tolerate the humiliation of
 the age,
 Falsehood of oppressors, the haughtiness
 Of lords, rejected feelings,
 Slow judgement and, most of all,
 The unworthy ones spurning the worthy one.

However, though this version has been brought closer to the original, in this version "the unworthy ones spotting the worthy one" emerge, which sounds all too close to Pasternak own life situation. It was in 1956 that the manuscript of Doctor Zhivago was rejected by the leading Soviet literary journal *Novy Mir*; the collective review accused the protagonist of Pasternak's novel in hypertrophied

individualism and "extolling his psychological being" (E. Pasternak 632). In this version of Shakespeare's soliloquy, Pasternak replaces the abstract "merit" has been replaced by a human being who is worthy; the fact that the human being is a man seems to be explained by more than the traditional primacy of male gender in Russian grammar.

In another version published in 1968 by the Vsemirnaya literatura Publishers not long after Pasternak's death, considered the final and definitive version, the lines appear as follows:

А то, кто снес бы униженья века,
 Позор гоненья, выходки глупца,
 Отринутую страсть, молчанье права,
 Надменность власть имущих и судьбу
 Больших заслуг перед судом ничтожеств.

Otherwise, who would tolerate the humiliations of
 the age,
 The disgrace of persecution, escapades of a fool,
 Rejected passion, silence of justice,
 Insolence of the powers that be and the destiny
 Of high merit when judged by nonentities.

This version, toned down and reserved, still may be taken to reveal Pasternak's view: Russian readers easily discerned what was meant by "the disgrace of persecution," which has no direct parallel in the original. Shakespeare's text not simply provided a vehicle of expression in a time when Pasternak's communication with his readership was severely limited, but, more importantly, added a philosophical dimension to the topical social concerns. In his own lyrical poem, "Hamlet," Pasternak openly compares his task as an artist to the plight of Hamlet; the mission of the artist is being defined by Pasternak both existentially and historically. In spite of the highly dramatic nature of Russian history, Pasternak, along with most modernist poets, rejected an eschatological view. This rejection led Russian modernists to turn away from the concrete historical situation to the philosophical problem of human history as a whole.

"THE BONNET OF HAPPINESS--FATHER OF SHAKESPEARE"

Я человек эпохи Москвошвея,

Смотрите, как на мне топорщится пиджак.

I am a man of the epoch of Moscow mass-produced
clothing,

Look how poorly my jacket fits.

O. Mandelstam

В чужом костюме ходит Гамлет.

Hamlet wanders around in someone else's dress.

A. Tarkovsky

Arseny Tarkovsky's poem, written (supposedly) in 1940s and containing a strange echo of Mandelstam's lines quoted above, opens with a quotation from Goethe, "Werde, der du bist" ("Become who you are"). Becoming oneself or, more precisely, remaining oneself under the ruthless pressure of the society has been always a major theme for Mandelstam.

In Mandelstam's work, almost all Shakespearean images appear in connection to philosophical issues, regarded not as an abstraction but within the concrete socio-historic context. Spiritual quest of Mandelstam's in the 1920s convinced him that it is impossible to attempt withstanding pressure of the society while still remaining within the boundaries of the society itself and recognizing only the

officially prescribed scale of social values. This created a tragic paradox: Mandelstam's lyrical "I," who disputes with his age while trying to establish some contact with it, seeks a foothold for his individuality in values that are beyond any individual existence--primarily in art. For Mandelstam, the notion of art has philosophical significance. "The power of culture is in its inapprehension of death"--"Сила культуры--в непонимании смерти" (*Word and Culture* 161). Culture is seen by Mandelstam as a force that resists destruction, giving life to the works of human spirit and functioning as a safeguard of immortality, as proclaimed in this 1914 poem:

И не одно сокровище, быть может,
 Минуя внуков, к правнукам уйдет,
 И снова скальд чужую песню сложит
 И как свою ее произнесет.

And many treasures, may be,
 Will go to great-grandchildren, by-passing
 grandchildren grandchildren,
 And a bard will once again compose a foreign song
 And sing it as its own.

Clinging to earthly existence, Mandelstam's lyrical hero summons all those who, for him, represent the life-giving culture:

И Шуберт на воде, и Моцарт в птичьей гаме,
 И Гете, свищущий на вьющейся тропе,
 И Гамлет, мысливший пугливыми шагами.

Schubert on the water, and Mozart in bird's twitter,
 And Goethe, whistling on a serpentine path,
 And Hamlet, thinking in frightened steps.

Mandelstam lists together the names of artists and their creations, as if suggesting that both have an equal claim to immortality through culture. Death may be rendered powerless through culture, but the danger of destroying one's soul in this life is all too real to Mandelstam. This is why in Mandelstam's poem Hamlet, who appears not to have been able to remain himself in his "out of joint" time, is "thinking in frightened steps."

Mandelstam regarded the severance of the ties between the contemporary epoch and accumulated cultural experience as the biggest catastrophe for Russia. In one of Mandelstam's program poems, "Баллада о неизвестном солдате"

("A Ballad of an Unknown Soldier," 1937), Shakespeare's heritage is brought up as a synonym of human creativity, of a break-through beyond temporal limits of human existence through art:

Развивается череп от жизни
 Во весь лоб--от виска до виска,--
 Чистотой своих швов он дразнит себя,
 Понимающим куполом яснится,
 Мыслью пенится, сам себе снится,--
 Чаша чаш и отчизна отчизне,
 Звездным рубчиком шитый чепец,
 Чепчик счастья--Шекспира отец.

The skull is developing from life
 To spread across the forehead--from temple to
 temple,
 Teasing itself by the clarity of its stitches,
 Glaring its comprehending dome,
 Brimming with thought, dreaming of himself,--
 Cup of cups and homeland of homelands,
 A bonnet sown with a star thread,
 A bonnet of happiness--father of Shakespeare.

Though this poem contains no direct references to political realities, its very spirit revolts again the Soviet regime by proclaiming the primacy of the individual conscience rather than social circumstances. Creativity, exemplified here by Shakespeare, for Mandelstam is the ultimate meaning of human life and a powerful antidote to the corruptive forces of every totalitarian regime.

The same idea of violence destroying both its victims and its agents is expressed in a 1933 poem by Akhmatova:

И напрасно наместник Рима
 Мыл руки пред всем народом,
 Под зловещие крики черни;
 И шотландская королева
 Напрасно с узких ладоней
 Стирала красные брызги
 В душном мраке царского дома.

And in vain the vice-regent of Rome
 Washed his hands before all the people,
 Urged on by the ominous shouts of the rabble;
 And the Scottish queen
 In vain washed the spattered red drops
 From her slender palms

In the stifling gloom of the king's home.

(Tr. by J. Hemschemeyer)

Just as in Pasternak's "Hamlet," a Biblical event that was clearly viewed as historical fact by the poet--Pontius Pilate demonstratively washing his hands before the crucifixion of Christ (Mt 27: 24)--and fiction--Lady Macbeth's insane attempts to wash off non-existing blood stains from her hands--are given equal status within the realm of the poem. Yet both protagonists seem to have difficulties separating objective reality from a conventional construction: Pontius Pilate mistakenly believes that his symbolic gesture exculpates him from his actual guilt, and Lady Macbeth in her delusion sees her actual guilt to be manifesting itself through a symbolic appearance. Earlier in the poem, Akhmatova warns us of the falsehood of such mental constructions: "But we learned once and for all / That blood smells only like blood." ("Но мы узнали навсегда, / Что кровью пахнет только кровь"). In the poem, Pontius Pilate and Lady Macbeth, both easily recognizable, lose their names, presumably because they have become completely defined by their social functions: vice-regent of Rome and the Scottish Queen. A constricting social role which is given supremacy over the

individuality, undermines and ultimately destroys the human soul.

It was the individual experience rather than specific social conditions that came to the focus of attention in Russian modernist poetry. It was this approach which allowed modernist authors to see more parallels between contemporary issues and themes of Shakespearean plays. If Tolstoy rejects Shakespeare in part because of a lack of convincing social descriptions, the poets of Russian modernism found Shakespearean characters psychologically convincing and therefore timeless.

The dramatic understanding of history that Pasternak came to see "the Russian branch of the Shakespearean tradition" ("русское ответвление шекспировской художественной традиции") as an inherent quality of Russian literature. In his presentation on a literary evening dedicated to Shakespeare, Pasternak traced this tradition as a "form of the highest artistic condensation ("форма высшей художественной сгущенности"), which forms a "dramatic story" (4: 693). Pasternak believed that Shakespeare will always be a favorite with generations that are historically mature, having survived many trials. Long before Pasternak, the critic Pavel Annenkov, speaking of the 1840s, had said already that Shakespeare

allowed a whole generation of Russian people to feel that they were intelligent human beings capable of comprehending the historical process and the essential conditions of human existence. And all this at a time, when indeed a whole generation had no social integration and no voice, even in the slightest affairs of civil existence (*Shakespeare and Russian literature* 87).

Unfortunately, this description of stifled civil life will be equally applicable to the Soviet society of the 1940s-50s, the period during which Pasternak did most of his translations from Shakespeare. Once again, Shakespeare's heritage belonged to those works which afforded a possibility to re-examine the meaning of history and the value of individual existence.

Shakespeare's view of history was perceived by Russian modernists as being close to what Pasternak called "poetry of faith and of being enchanted by existence" ("поэзия веры и замороженности существования") (4: 687). History was understood by Russian modernist poets as an objectively valuable process which cannot be stripped of its ultimate meaningfulness in spite of the tragic cataclysms of

contemporary life. Just as on the lyrical pole of Russian modernist poetry Shakespeare provides a new language that initiates generation of new meanings, Shakespeare as an artistic alter ego of historical tragedy provides a mirror effect, which creates "a wide field of opportunities for artistic modeling" (Lotman 1:157).

CONCLUSIONS

In one of his recent public appearance, Alexei Bartoshevich, a modern Russian theatre scholar, referring to the Polish poet Stanislaw Wyspiański's description of Hamlet as a poor boy with a book in his hands, attempted to define exactly whose book Hamlet may be holding: in Shakespeare's time that book might have been Montaigne, in the Romantic period--Goethe's *Werther*, at the turn of the twentieth century--Nietzsche, in Mikhail Chekhov's staging--Steiner and the New Testament, in Olivier's staging--only Freud and too much of Freud, in contemporary Russian performances--Pasternak's translation of *Hamlet*, in postmodernist literature--Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

It is clear that every epoch has searched in Shakespeare for a reflection of its own conflicts and dilemmas. Changes in Russian literary approaches towards Shakespeare may be seen as a projection of major shifts in literary epochs. The unique nature of treatment of Shakespeare during the Russian literary modernism consisted in the Shakespearean text being allowed to become a full-fledged participant in a dialogue between cultures. Thanks to this intense interaction, the Shakespearean text effectively functioned as a generator of new meanings within the Russian cultural context.

Examination of treatment of Shakespearean themes in images during previous literary epochs, from Sumarokov to Chekhov, has shown that various social and communicative functions of the Shakespearean text remained dormant or incompletely actualized before modernism. Shakespeare's heritage was not immediately acknowledged in Russia, whose links with the English literature were insufficiently strong until the beginning of the nineteenth century. After a brief infatuation with Shakespeare in the 1830-1840s, the Russian reading public acquired sufficient knowledge of Shakespeare's work to recognize references to his characters. Very soon after entering literary canon, Shakespeare's work was relegated to the academic bookshelf. Writers referring to Shakespearean themes and images utilized them as a convenient way to illustrate a social type or an archetypal conflict.

When Russian modernists rediscovered Shakespeare and made his themes and images part of their aesthetic experience, they had to go back over the immediately preceding period of Russian literature to Pushkin's early attempt at establishing a dialogue with the Shakespearean text, overlooked by the generation immediately following him.

This new approach culminated in a full realization of all social and communicative functions of the Shakespearean

text during Russian literary modernism. As Mandelstam has put it: "And many treasures, may be / Will go to great-grandchildren, by-passing grandchildren" ("И не одно сокровище, быть может, / Минуя внуков, к правнукам уйдет"). Undoubtedly, this process not only led to some original interpretations of Shakespearean works, but also to the creation of some of the greatest poems of Russian modernism.

The semiotic character of the Shakespearean text, brought to the foreground by Russian modernists, was conducive to generic (from the tragic to the lyric), cultural (from the social to the personal) and stylistic (from the plot to the word) transpositions taking place in Russian poetry of the period.

As Blok's cycle on *Hamlet* exemplifies, interaction with Shakespearean texts led to the heightening of the lyric principle, resulting in dramatization of Russian poetry. Pasternak in his "Hamlet" makes individual destiny the focus of historical discourse, which is anything but an attempt to avoid social issues or to strike a romantically elevated pose. When Akhmatova says in her *Requiem* that an entire one-hundred million people shout through her mouth, this will be a sincere --and dearly paid for--expression of her approach to history through an individual destiny. The function that used to be

primarily carried by the plot now was being taken on by the poetic word itself. So, for instance, Tsvetaeva no longer feels the need to rewrite Shakespearean plots as it had been done by Turgenev; her approach to *Hamlet* is fully expressed through the two soliloquies she writes in Ophelia's voice.

Such poets as Pasternak (exemplified by "Snow is Falling" or "Shakespeare") and Tsvetaeva (e.g. "Ophelia--to Hamlet" and "Ophelia--in defense of the Queen") found in Shakespeare inspiration for their attempts at renewing Russian poetical language through introduction of new semantic and syntax structures and through reconciliation of different stylistic layers within one poetical work. The modernists used Shakespearean themes and images as elements of language. Starting with an existing common understanding of the content of each Shakespearean image (not unlike the dictionary meaning of a word of real language), the modernists deliberately narrowed (e.g. Gumilyov's "Theatre" or Blok's "She Came in from the Cold") or expanded its semantic field. Just as poetic use of real-language words generates new meanings, Shakespearean images were used to generate new meanings in Russian poetry.

In his *Lectures on Russian literature*, Nabokov said, clearly having in mind his own early years that coincided with the period of Russian modernism:

The Russian reader in old cultured Russia was certainly proud of Pushkin and of Gogol, but he was just as proud of Shakespeare or Dante, of Baudelaire or of Edgar Allan Poe, of Flaubert or of Homer, and this was the Russian reader's strength (11).

Analyzing ways in which Russian modernists interacted with Shakespeare's works provides a key to understanding their approach to the traditional text as such--an approach which was characterized by an "anxiety for influence," a fervent desire to step outside national and historic boundaries. Shakespeare serves as particularly fertile material because it offers an opportunity to compare reception of his heritage across various periods of Russian literature and across the works by many authors of Russian literary modernism itself.

Within the Russian cultural context, Shakespeare's heritage proved to function both a litmus paper pointing to the pivotal characteristics of Russian modernist poetry and simultaneously as a catalyst accelerating literary innovation.

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