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1977

HAMLET IN TRANSLATION:  
ANDRÉ GIDE AND BORIS PASTERNAK

by

Michael Sulick

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Abstract

Hamlet in Translation: André Gide and Boris Pasternak

by

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This dissertation represents an attempt to test a methodology for the systematic analysis of artistic translation, a long neglected branch of literary study. Hamlet provides an excellent model for testing this method because the play depends so much on language for its dramatic impact and thus presents innumerable difficulties for a translator. In addition, the character of Hamlet is extremely complex and has been subject to a wide range of divergent interpretations. The critical choices involved in translating the play inevitably narrow the possibilities of meaning in Shakespeare's original text.

The translations of André Gide and Boris Pasternak were chosen because they are both twentieth century versions of the play that were directly commissioned for stage production in two countries which have been greatly influenced by Shakespearean drama and, in particular, by Hamlet. The primary focus of this study is on the language of the original and the translations, although brief surveys of Hamlet translations and Hamletism in France and Russia are provided to relate the versions of Gide and Pasternak to their historical and cultural context.

The method used in the study is primarily based on Jiří Levý's work on the theory of literary translation. Levý applies methods of Czech structuralism to determine the interaction of various linguistic strata and their aesthetic functions in the structures of original works and translations. According to Levý, translatability of an artistic text depends to a great degree on the confrontation between the structures of the languages involved. In this study, many of Shakespeare's stylistic devices used in Hamlet are isolated from the text in order to analyze the difficulties posed in translating into French and Russian and to evaluate the compensatory means that Gide and Pasternak take from their respective languages to recreate effects equivalent to those of the original.

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THE STUDY OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

In the history and theory of literature, translation has figured marginally, if at all. "Translation," as Reuben Brower aptly notes, "has as yet no Aristotle or Coleridge,"<sup>1</sup> and it is certainly surprising that the function of literary translation has not been discussed more systematically in theoretical literature, especially considering the great role which is, and has been, played by translation in the culture of all peoples. For with the exception of the Greek, perhaps, all literatures of our cultural area have their roots in translations. In the course of European literary development, the conception of translation as a medium through which foreign influences enter domestic literature has changed due to the growing demand for literary originality. In Antiquity and the Middle Ages, little importance was attached to originality of subject matter, and so translators had considerable latitude in treating foreign works, which they often used as springboards for creations of equal value. On the other hand, the modern conception of the translation as a basically unoriginal work has led to the creation of a sharp boundary between original literature and translation, and the obvious consequences have been a

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<sup>1</sup> On Translation, ed. Reuben Brower (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966) p. 4.

decline in the quality of translation and neglect of the art of translation in literary theory.

In the twentieth century some balance has been restored between these two attitudes, mainly due to the renewed interest of poets in the art of translation. Ezra Pound, among others, has been a seminal influence in restoring literary translation to its proper status as a creative art (though his own "translations" might better be classified as imitations). Because of the influence of modern poets, it is generally agreed now that a translation, though dependent on the original which it recreates, must still be a work of art in its own right. If a literary work of art is "an object charged with values,"<sup>2</sup> as Rene Wellek staunchly asserts, then a translation must function as an artistic object in its own culture at the same time as it transmits the aesthetic values of the original.

It would then seem that the methods used for the criticism of literature are applicable to the study of literary translation. Criticism of literature always implies value judgment, as Wellek maintains, and in arguing against Roman Jakobson's subordination of poetics to linguistics, he specifically singles out the

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<sup>2</sup> "Stylistics, Poetics, and Criticism," Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1970), p. 339.

stylistic approach based on linguistic methods as a purely descriptive discipline incapable of the evaluation required in the critical response to literature. Style is only one function within the totality of the literary work, which must be seen "in its relation to reality, its social and generally human import."<sup>3</sup> While many diverse methods are needed in explaining the relation of a literary work to its model, reality, the direct model of a literary translation is always a verbal construct, the original text, and as such the linguistic methods dismissed by Wellek are of primary importance in determining the aesthetic value of a literary translation.

Though Wellek is justified in asserting the autonomy of literature against the domination of linguistics, he is perhaps too extreme in underestimating Roman Jakobson's work as merely a "classification of verbal devices" which fails to establish anything about the aesthetic value of a poem.<sup>4</sup> In his literary studies on "the poetry of grammar and the grammar of poetry"

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> "Stylistics, Poetics, and Criticism," p. 337.

in Pushkin, Baudelaire, and Shakespeare,<sup>5</sup> among others,<sup>9</sup> Jakobson has opened new areas not only for critics of literature but for students of literary translation as well. His controversial paper, "Linguistics and Poetics," is one point of departure for this essay. In his analysis of Antony's funeral oration from Julius Caesar, Jakobson showed that by starting from the simplest uses of language, one could see that "the main dramatic force of Antony's exordium to the funeral oration for Caesar is achieved by Shakespeare's playing on grammatical categories and constructions."<sup>6</sup> In his assertion that the verbal sign in Shakespeare's plays takes on dramatic value through a complex transaction involving euphony, the semantic nexus inherent in the word, as well as the grammatical patterns discernible in the verse, Jakobson has provided an approach to the systematic

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<sup>5</sup> "Socha v. symbolice Puškinově" /The Statue in Pushkin's Symbolism/, Slovo a Slovesnost, 3 (1937), pp. 2-24; "Les Chats de Baudelaire," L'Homme, 2, No. 1 (1962), pp. 5-21 (with Claude Lévi-Strauss); Shakespeare's Verbal Art in "Th' Expense of Spirit" (The Hague: Mouton, 1970) (with Lawrence Jones). It is interesting to note that in the first article Jakobson's analysis of the poetry of grammar in Pushkin was prompted by his comparison of the originals and translations that he selected for a Czech edition of the Russian poet's works.

<sup>6</sup> Style in Language, ed. T. Sebeok (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), p. 375.

study and evaluation of translations which can range far beyond the boundaries of previous translation criticism.

Previous translation studies have been plagued by their limited concentration on only the lexical stratum of the original and the translation, in which too much attention is devoted to mistranslations of single words and phrases and the rendering of archaic vocabulary, local color, or dialect speech. These are certainly valid questions in themselves, but they barely touch the surface of the complex creative process by which the various strands interlaced in the verbal tissue of the original work are reconstructed in translation.

Jakobson's methods for studying the linguistic interrelationships in poetry and their consequent stylistic effects have been further developed by the next generation of structuralist critics, among them Juriij Lotman in the Soviet Union, Lubomir Doležel and Jiří Levý in Czechoslovakia. Levý, in particular, has applied structuralist methods to the theory and study of literary translation. His major work, Die literarische Übersetzung, the second point of departure for this essay, is one of the most comprehensive and systematic studies on the subject. The term "function,"

a key concept in Czech structuralism, is basic to  
Levý's theory of translation:

Das Original sollte als ein System und nicht als eine Summe von Elemente betrachtet werden, als organische Ganzheit und nicht als eine mechanische Ansammlung von Elementen. Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers besteht weder darin zu reproduzieren, noch darin, die Elemente und Strukturen des Originals umzuformen, sondern darin, ihre Funktion zu erfassen und solche Elemente und Strukturen der eigenen Sprache anzuwenden, die, soweit wie möglich, deren Ersatz und Gegenwert mit der gleichen funktionalen Eignung und Wirksamkeit sein könnten.<sup>7</sup>

The function of any element or any dynamic system of elements in a literary translation is always assumed to be aesthetic: "...das eigentliche Fundament des Umdichtens ist das Bestreben, sei es auch mit anderen Mittel als im Original, einen künstlerischen Effekt zu erzielen...die Gleichheit der künstlerischen Effekte ist wichtiger als die Gleichheit der Kunstmittel" (ibid.). In his excellent analysis of passages from many translations (especially A. W. Schlegel's Hamlet), Levý uses the concept of "function" to bridge the gap between studying the mere substitution of verbal devices in a foreign text and determining how effectively the aesthetic value of the original is transmitted.

The degree to which the transference of the equivalent functions of the original is possible varies from text to text and genre to genre. Many

<sup>7</sup> Die literarische Übersetzung: Theorie einer Kunstgattung, tr. from Czech by W. Schamschula (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1969), pp. 21-22. Subsequent references in this chapter will be included in the text.

writers, as Levy notes, affect us more by the force of their thought than by their means of expression (p. 55). Similarly, some genres are more accessible to translation than others. An exact ranking by order of difficulty is hard to achieve, since genres are never quite pure; while a prose novel would rank low in the hierarchy, certain passages in it may show a high concentration of controlled form. On the other hand, poetry, with its great degree of interaction between form and content, would generally stand highest on the scale of difficulty. Levý's general formula serves to mark the degree of translatability in all texts and genres: "Daher ist die Übersetzung umso schwieriger, je grösser die Rolle der Sprache bei der künstlerischen Gestaltung des Textes ist" (p. 55), i.e., the more complex the interaction between the various linguistic strata -- phonetic, lexical, syntactic -- the more difficult it is to achieve an equivalent interrelationship in the translation.

Levý cites Shakespeare as one author who eludes easy translation because his "...Ausdrucksweise aus der spezifischen Vorzügen und Möglichkeiten der Sprache hervorgeht" (p. 40). I have chosen Shakespeare's Hamlet as the original text for applying Levý's theory of translation, since the tragedy depends so much on language for its dramatic impact and consequently poses

innumerable problems for the translator. In a sense, <sup>13</sup>  
the play is also about language; for Hamlet, the chief  
player with words in all Shakespearean tragedy, language  
is both a weapon and an enemy in the battle between  
appearance and reality. The internal conflict in the  
hero and the external conflict between the prince and  
the court is played out on the field of language in the  
soliloquies, the mousetrap play, and Hamlet's bitter puns  
and verbal baiting of the court. As Harley Granville-  
Barker points out, language is partly responsible for  
Hamlet's tragedy: "...Words themselves he distrusts;  
they are also things which 'seem', the 'trappings and the  
suits' of reality, tricking the speaker as often as the  
hearer; and they are also a weak man's weapon. Hamlet,  
in fact, despises in himself one of his chief abilities,  
and this is part of the discord which disables him."<sup>8</sup>

We will study the Hamlet translations of André  
Gide and Boris Pasternak, two modern authors who were  
also eminent translators in their respective countries.  
Their versions were directly commissioned for stage  
production in two nations which have been greatly af-  
fected by Shakespearean drama and, in particular, by  
Hamlet. The primary focus will be on the language of  
the original and the two translations, although brief  
surveys of Hamlet translations and Hamletism in France

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<sup>8</sup> Prefaces to Shakespeare: Hamlet (Princeton: Prince-  
ton University Press, 1946), 1, p. 187.

and Russia will be provided to relate the versions of Gide and Pasternak to their historical and cultural context.

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Any analysis of a translation must start out with a detailed consideration of the original author's style and the interaction of its various stylistic strata, and the function of the individual components in the structure of the work as a whole. Many characteristic features of Shakespeare's style, such as his puns, discordant metaphors, play on the grammatical functions of a word, and contorted syntax that portrays the restless churnings of Hamlet's mind, will be analyzed in the study in order to disentangle the web of linguistic interrelationships involved and their aesthetic effect. The functions of these stylistic elements will always be treated in their dramatic context, for, as T. S. Eliot observes, "When Shakespeare introduces what might seem a purely poetic line or passage, it never interrupts the action or is out of character, but on the contrary, it in some mysterious way supports both action and character." In Shakespearean drama, all verbal resources are subordinated to the mimetic function, all stylistic effects are calculated for their dramatic impact.

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<sup>9</sup> On Poetry and Poets (New York: Noonday, 1957), pp. 88-89.

An exact translation of the stylistic effects in Hamlet into either French or Russian is, of course, impossible, since the effects are derived precisely from Shakespeare's consistent poetic exploitation of the linguistic potential of Elizabethan English. As Valéry notes, only "a certain approximation of form" can be attained, and the degree of similarity possible between the original and the translation depends on the degree of similarity between the systems of form and meaning in the two languages involved. The more serious the deviations from one language to another, the less of the original stylistic effect can be salvaged in the process of transfer.

In modern French, for example, Shakespeare provokes a certain stylistic intransigence even on the part of a flexible translator like Gide, since the rigidity of syntax, restrictions on word formation, and tendency to substantive constructions in the language are diametrically opposed to the linguistic liberties of Shakespeare's English. Though there are perhaps fewer problems in rendering Hamlet into Russian, the inherent concision of the English language which Shakespeare exploits to the fullest poses barriers for translation into a language with a predominantly polysyllabic lexicon such as Russian. To convey the equivalent functions of

Shakespeare's original text, Pasternak derives his compensatory devices from the verbal resources of his native medium, such as the inflectional system, the greater flexibility in word order, and the array of verbal prefixation so rich in connotation in the Russian language.

In this essay we will isolate from the text of Hamlet some of Shakespeare's stylistic devices in order to analyze and evaluate the compensatory means that Gide and Pasternak take from their respective languages to recreate the equivalent effects of the original. The assumption in this method of comparative stylistics is that the stylistic shifts necessitated by the different structures of Shakespeare's English and the target languages are also shifts in the expressive values of the linguistic means, and so the compensatory devices will be judged above all in terms of their effectiveness in approximating the dramatic impact of the original.

The stylistic shifts in the translation of a work as dependent on the source language structure as is Hamlet most often results in some sacrifice of poetic force. The duty of the translator is to ensure that maximum effect is achieved with minimal loss, or, as I. A. Richards put it, "What sort of loss will we take

in order not to lose what?"<sup>10</sup> Here the concept of "foregrounding" from Czech structuralist poetics<sup>11</sup> can be applied to the study of literary translation in order to determine both the degree and value of maximum effect and minimum loss. In many of the words, phrases, and passages selected for study in this essay, the various stylistic strata that interact to play a particular dramatic function operate on a hierarchical scale of importance. In some cases, for example, the phonetic or syntactic component is foregrounded more than the lexis, while the opposite may occur in other cases. After deciding which component(s) constitutes the "dominant", the translator either uses a corresponding

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<sup>10</sup> "Toward a Science of Translating," Studies in Chinese Thought, ed. Arthur Wright (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 160.

<sup>11</sup> "Foregrounding" is the intentional violation of the norm of the standard language which distinguishes poetry from other verbal acts. The foregroundings in poetry are intentional in the sense that they are in a highly organized dynamic system, according to Jan Mukařovský: "The systematic foregrounding of components in a work of poetry consists in the gradation of the interrelationships of these components, that is, in their mutual subordination and superordination. The component highest in the hierarchy becomes the dominant. All other components are evaluated from the standpoint of the dominant." Standard Language and Poetic Language, A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style, ed. & tr. P. Garvin (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1964), p. 20.

component in his own language if it can create an equivalent effect, or he compensates by choosing a different component which may play an equivalent function.

In other examples from Hamlet, however, the interrelationship between the linguistic elements is so compact that all the stylistic strata contribute equally to the dramatic impact. Translatability reaches its nadir in such cases, and Gide and Pasternak must sacrifice the effect of one or more components in order to stay close to the sense of the original. We shall analyze the predominant functional shifts in their translations to determine the degree to which they approximate the original aesthetic effects.

The functional shifts in the Hamlet translations of Gide and Pasternak may be dictated at times by the exigencies of their native languages, but just as often they involve the translators' interpretation of the specific stylistic elements of the original that are most foregrounded or can be sacrificed with minimal loss. Gide, for example, often prefers to sacrifice lexical accuracy in his Hamlet translation in order to reproduce the rhythmic effects of the original.

Elucidating the reasons behind these decisions provides an invaluable contribution to the knowledge of the special creative process of literary translation,

but it is precisely at this juncture that the linguistic method breaks down, as Jiří Levý notes: "Fast alle linguistischen Arbeiten haben eines gemeinsam: dass sie nämlich den Anteil des Übersetzers am Übersetzungsprozess und an der Struktur des übersetzten Werks übergehen; dass sie...die Übersetzung auf den 'Kontakt zweier Sprachen'reduzieren" (p. 35). Translation is not a mechanical reproduction of sentence after sentence but an act of creation and interpretation. The study of literary translation must go beyond the flow chart of compared verbal operations provided by linguistic methods in order to penetrate the nature of the energies involved, one of which is the personality of the translator himself.<sup>12</sup>

The role of the personality in literary translation is even more complex when the translator is an artist in his own right, with a set of aesthetic and philosophical attitudes and a clearly defined literary style of his own, which is exactly why we have chosen the Hamlet translations of André Gide and Boris Pasternak for study. Hamlet is an excellent model for

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<sup>12</sup> Some excellent studies of the role of the translator in even the most seemingly "objective" versions are included in two works by outstanding Soviet critics of literary translation, Kornej Chukovskij, Vysokoe iskusstvo/A Noble Art/ (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), and Efim Etkind, Poèzija i perevod/Poetry and Translation/ (Moscow: Sovetskiĵ Pisatel', 1963).

studying the influence of the artist-translator on the original work. Levy attributes the existence of so many Shakespeare translations to "the broad segmentation of the semantic pattern in Shakespeare's work; his characters are more complex and incorporate a range of possible interpretations."<sup>13</sup> This is certainly truer of Hamlet than of any other character in Shakespearean drama, or in world literature for that matter. Generations of critics have not succeeded in plucking out the heart of Hamlet's mystery, mainly because of the dense ambiguity in the text which is responsible for the divergent, even totally opposed, interpretations of the prince's character and the nature of the tragic conflict.

Since the translator is first of all a critic, he will inevitably make choices based on his interpretation of the play and its hero that will narrow the possibilities of meaning and explain away some of the original ambiguity in his translation. Artist-translators often make choices that reflect their own views more than those in the original (Gerhard Hauptmann's Hamlet translation, for example), but Gide and Pasternak never explicitly distort the meaning of a passage in

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<sup>13</sup> "Translation as a Decision Process," To Honor Roman Jakobson (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), II, p. 1178.

Hamlet to present their own version of the tragic hero instead of Shakespeare's. Yet the importance of the character of Hamlet for both writers is evident in their own works and critical remarks, and thus it is inevitable that their critical attitudes towards the hero emerge in subtle, almost imperceptible changes in the language of their translations.

This subtle infiltration of the translators' creative personality is most discernible in the lexical choices in which Gide and Pasternak resolve the original ambiguity of Shakespeare's text in their translations. Many of these lexical choices will be traced in the study to establish the presence of a clearly defined pattern that will be evaluated to determine both the degree to which the interpretive influence of Gide and Pasternak is felt in their translations and its consequent effect on the transfer of the dramatic value of the original. Other stylistic elements, such as phonetics, syntax, and even punctuation will also be considered, although it is often more difficult in these cases to distinguish whether the translator's choices are influenced by personal interpretation or dictated by the structure of his native language. For example, the reason why Gide does not convey Hamlet's contorted syntax, which typifies the disconnected and emotional expression of a mind in

torment, may be attributed to the rigid syntactic rules of French as much as to his interpretation of Hamlet as a speculative philosopher,<sup>14</sup> a view which would dispose him to present a Hamlet using a more orderly syntax.

Similar difficulties arise in studying the tension between the personal style of the artist-translator and that of the original author. The styles of Gide and Pasternak in their own works obviously depend on their exploitation of the verbal resources of French and Russian, which often makes it difficult to tell whether the functional shifts in their Shakespeare translations result from the peculiarities of their native languages or from individual stylistic preferences within the framework of the languages.

We will attempt to overcome these difficulties by comparing other translations of Hamlet in French and Russian with the versions of Gide and Pasternak. The stylistic shifts made by other translators of Shakespeare's tragedy present alternative possibilities that can exist in the target language(s), and thus their choices serve to throw into relief the particularities of style and interpretation in the versions of Gide and Pasternak. Also, since the "ideal" translation of any

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<sup>14</sup> The Journals of Andre Gide, ed. & tr. Justin O'Brien (New York: Knopf, 1949), III, p. 176.

literary text is an impossibility, the other French and Russian versions map the limits of what has so far been achieved in translating Hamlet and as such they provide a relative yardstick by which we can gauge the dramatic impact of the translations of Gide and Pasternak.

The systematic study of the complex interplay of the artist-translator's personal style, his critical attitudes to the original, and the two linguistic structures involved in the translation can contribute much to our understanding of a unique creative process which has so far led a limbo-like existence in literary studies, falling as it does somewhere between criticism and original creation. But since a translation must function as the original in its own culture, it fully deserves the same informed critical response as all other modes of literary endeavor. The analysis and evaluation of literary translations require more exact criteria than have been exercised up to the present. "Theoretical" statements which take the form of anecdotal puns such as "traduttore, traditore" and banal analogies personifying translations as homely yet faithful matrons or beautiful women of doubtful loyalty provide rather vague guidelines both for the translator and the student of translation. Similarly, terms such as "sense," "faithfulness," "spirit," and "letter" are all so ill-defined and pumped up with critical

afflatus that they burst into meaninglessness, thus serving to confuse more than clarify. A critical method which successfully combines the approaches of linguistics and literary criticism may provide more definite terminology and criteria by which we can study and judge the adequacy of a translation to its aesthetic purpose.

The detailed criticism of literary translation also has value beyond the immediate scope of its study. By its very nature a mirror of an essentially verbal reality, the translation can offer new insights into the often neglected yet most integral part of the original, its language. The age in which psychoanalytic and sociological studies dominated literary criticism has passed, and perhaps the proper response for the critic now is not to return to explorations of character and social relevance, but to use analysis of language in order to understand more exactly the words through which literature is given a life beyond words. The study of literary translation involves a dialectic which, by measuring the limits of what is possible in another language, at the same time illumines the unique genius of the original and the inseparability of its aesthetic value from the words which convey that value.

PART ONE    --    ANDRÉ GIDE

CHAPTER I

GIDE AND THE FRENCH HAMLET:

A BRIEF SURVEY OF SHAKESPEARE IN FRANCE

The first mention of Shakespeare in France occurs in 1675 when Louis XIV's librarian, Nicole Clement, expressed the ambivalent attitude toward the English dramatist which continued until the rise of French romanticism: "Ce poète anglois a l'imagination assez belle, il pense naturellement, il s'exprime avec finesse, mais ces belles qualitez sont obscurcies par les ordures qu'il mêle dans ses comédies."<sup>1</sup> This mixed attitude of attraction and repulsion to Shakespeare was firmly instilled in eighteenth-century France by Voltaire. While Voltaire staunchly upheld the superiority of French classical tragedy, he praised Shakespeare's genius in his early remarks on English theater<sup>2</sup> but regretted the fact that this "barbaric" genius had been nurtured in a rude age. Voltaire's

<sup>1</sup> Jules P. Jusserand, Shakespeare in France under the Ancient Regime (London: Unwin, 1899), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> His early remarks are found in his "Essai sur la poésie épique" (1728), his prefaces to his own plays Brutus (1731), Oedipe (1736), and Semiramis (1746), and in Lettres philosophiques (1734).

early ambivalence to Shakespeare is perhaps best stated <sup>26</sup>  
in his opinion of Hamlet:

On croirait que cet ouvrage est la fruit de  
l'imagination d'un sauvage ivre. Mais parmi  
ces irregularités grossières, qui rendent  
encore aujourd'hui le théâtre anglais si  
absurde et si barbare, on trouve dans Hamlet  
par une bizarrerie encore plus grande, des <sup>3</sup>  
traits sublimes, dignes des plus grandes genies.

Voltaire was also, in a sense, the first French  
translator of the work of the "drunken savage," since he  
had presented the French public with two excerpts from  
Shakespearean tragedy, Brutus' funeral oration from  
Julius Caesar and Hamlet's monologue "To be or not to be!"  
His translation of Hamlet's soliloquy is far from the  
original and contains more of Voltaire than of Shakespeare:

Demeure, il faut choisir et passer à l'instant  
De la vie à la mort et de l'être au néant.  
Dieux justes, s'il en est, éclairez mon courage.  
Faut-il vieillir courbé sous la main qui m'outrage,  
Supporter ou finir mon malheur et mon sort?  
Qui suis-je ? qui m'arrête ? et qu'est-ce que la mort?  
C'est la fin de nos maux, c'est mon unique asile;  
Après de longs transports, c'est un sommeil tranquille.  
On s'endort, et tout meurt. Mais un affreux reveil  
Doit succéder peut-être aux douceurs du sommeil.  
On nous menace; on dit que cette courte vie  
De tourments éternels est aussitôt suivie.  
O Mort ! moment fatal ! affreuse éternité !  
Tout coeur à ton seul nom se glace épouvante.  
Eh ! qui pourrait sans toi supporter cette vie ?  
De nos prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie ?

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<sup>3</sup> "Préface à la tragédie de Semiramis," Oeuvres complètes  
(Paris: Garnier, 1877-1885), IV, p. 121

D'une indigne maîtresse encenser les erreurs?  
 Ramper sous un ministre, adorer ses hauteurs?  
 Et montrer les langueurs de son ame abattue,  
 A des amis ingrats, qui détournent la vue?  
 La mort serait trop douce en ces extrémitiés.  
 Mais la scrupule parle, et nous crie, arrêtez.  
 Il défend à nos mains cet heureux homicide,  
 Et d'un héros guerrier, fait un chrétien timide.<sup>4</sup>

The first two lines of the translation, as Harry Levin comments, "...round out Hamlet's existential dichotomy with a flourish more characteristic of Sartre."<sup>5</sup> Voltaire also confers the dignity of alexandrines on the irregular movement of Hamlet's thought in the original. Instead of the twisting trains of thought in the original soliloquy, we have in Voltaire's translation a formal and connected harangue in which it would appear that the translator, offended with the abrupt manner of the original and judging those irregular starts of expression to be unsuited to the precision required in abstract reasoning, has "corrected" the defects and given unity and clarity to the philosophical argument. In addition, Voltaire introduces a religious sense by "chrétien timide" and with characteristic anti-clerical fervor includes "nos prêtres menteurs" among the sufferings of life listed by Hamlet.

<sup>4</sup> "De la tragédie anglaise," Lettres philosophiques, introd. & ed. G. Lanson (Paris: Didier, 1964), II, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> "Shakespeare in the Light of Comparative Literature," Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature (New York: Oxford, 1966), p. 121

was practically taken verbatim by Pierre-Antoine de La Place, who provided the first complete translation of some Shakespearean plays in French (1745-1746). La Place's extremely clumsy prose translation of Hamlet served as the basis for the popular adaptation of the play by Jean-François Ducis in 1769, which ran successfully at the Comédie Française until 1846. The famous English actor David Garrick, who had already staged his sentimental versions of the play in his native country, brought his production to France in the 1750's, and Ducis, whose overwhelming admiration for Shakespeare was matched only by his total ignorance of the English language, claimed that he dreamily gazed at etchings of Garrick playing Hamlet to inspire him as he penned his bowdlerization of Shakespeare's play from La Place's translation.<sup>6</sup>

Ducis, appropriately enough, never considered himself a translator, and he felt that as an adapter he had a perfect right to accommodate an original text to the national traditions and tastes of his people. Shakespeare's masterful handling of English, of course, is not even taken into account in his version of Hamlet,

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<sup>6</sup> Jusserand, op. cit., p. 195.

and even the very plot of the tragedy is distorted. The ghost of Hamlet's father who has been killed by the queen, speaks only to Hamlet off-stage; Claudius is the father of Ophelia, so that this Hamlet "...like the heroes of Corneille, is faced with a clear-cut choice between his love for the heroine and his own family honor."<sup>7</sup> Hamlet successfully defends Elsinore against the siege of the king and lives happily ever after with his bride Ophelia. Ducis' version of Hamlet was extremely popular on the French stage and ironically enhanced Shakespeare's reputation in France, though his attempts to enrich the classical tragedy of Racine and Voltaire with the Elizabethan genius presented Shakespeare under the falsest pretenses possible.

While Ducis' version dominated the French stage, Pierre Letourneur published a more accurate translation of Shakespeare's plays, including Hamlet, in 1776. In his introduction to the translation, Letourneur challenged Voltaire's status as the official Shakespeare critic on the continent by attempting to justify and even praise Shakespeare's deviations from the rules of classical tragedy. Voltaire's vanity was piqued, and so his earlier ambivalence to Shakespeare turned to outright condemnation as he waged a needless war in

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<sup>7</sup> Levin, op. cit., p. 117.

French letters between the barbaric Shakespeare and the classical tragedy of Racine: "It was I who in the past first spoke of this Shakespeare; it was I who was the first to point out to Frenchmen the few pearls which were to be found in this enormous dunghill. It never entered my mind that by doing so I might one day help the effort to trample on the crowns of Racine and Corneille in order to wreath<sup>8</sup> the brow of this barbaric mountebank."

Letourneur's work was a pioneer effort and thus exhibited the usual defects of such an undertaking, but it still provided a truer image of Shakespeare than the versions of La Place and Ducis. However, Voltaire's influence in the French theater was still strong and it was unfortunate that because of his petty resentment the French public received their first taste of Shakespeare in the polished and prettified adaptation of Ducis rather than in productions using Letourneur's translation.

Letourneur was not alone in stressing the dramatic importance of Shakespeare. The growing hostility to the rigid precepts of French classicism was

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<sup>8</sup> Letter to Comte d'Argenthal, cited by George Steiner in After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 365.

accompanied by a growing interest in Shakespeare, and it is significant, as Harry Levin notes, that the word "romantique," as opposed to "romanesque," first appears in Letourneur's introduction to his Shakespeare translation.<sup>9</sup> Mme. de Stael's De la littérature (1800) and De l'Allemagne (1810) and Stendhal's Racine et Shakespeare (1823) all but toppled Voltaire's criticism of Shakespeare, and Victor Hugo in his preface to Cromwell (1827) virtually established Shakespeare's superiority over classical tragedy for the romantics. But for all their bardolatry of the author of Hamlet, the romantics of the 1820's -- 1840's were just as false in presenting Shakespeare to the French as their classicist predecessors had been. Just as the eighteenth century had used Shakespeare as a vehicle to enhance classical tragedy and thus distorted him in the process, so did the romantics lay hold of the Elizabethan playwright as a cudgel to beat classicism into its final resting place.

The romantics paid little attention to the intricate language and texture of Shakespeare's plays and only presented him superficially as a manifesto for a new philosophy. The translations of these decades are mostly bombastic, oratorical and explicitly political in tone in order to further the aims of progressive

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<sup>9</sup> Levin, op. cit., p. 119

democracy in France.

The most popular production of Hamlet in this period was the Dumas-Meurice adaptation which replaced the Ducis version at the Comédie Française in 1846 and ran there continuously until 1932. Dumas père claimed that after God, Shakespeare created most, and with the near divine stature accorded the English dramatist, one would almost consider the Dumas adaptation a sacrilege. The tragedy of Hamlet was refashioned into a melodrama de cape et d'épée<sup>10</sup> where the ghost appears as a deus ex machina in the final scene to wish long life to the conquering prince after he escapes the rapier. The success of the Dumas adaptation underscores the duality of the French Shakespeare and the French Hamlet. While Hamlet was popularized on the French stage by the watered-down versions of Ducis and Dumas, only the reading public and scholars for the most part were exposed to the more accurate translation of Pierre Letourneur and, later, of François-Victor Hugo.

François-Victor Hugo, son of the romantic poet and novelist, finished his complete translation of

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<sup>10</sup> Henri Fluchère, "Shakespeare in France: 1900-1948," Shakespeare Survey 2 (1949), p. 116.

Shakespeare's plays in 1865, and his work has been called "the second greatest landmark in the history of Shakespeare translations in France."<sup>11</sup> Among a number of pompous translations in the nineteenth century, Hugo's stands out for its extremely faithful, at times too faithful, rendering of the original, despite the occasional political tone added to passages by this passionate progressive who wrote an essay on "Shakespeare's Democracy" in 1859. Many of Hugo's translations have been included in the Pléiade publication of Shakespeare's Oeuvres complètes edited by André Gide in 1938, and his translation of Hamlet has been the most widely circulated of the 217 French versions of the play.<sup>12</sup> Because of the widespread reputation of Hugo's Hamlet translation in France, it will be discussed in greater detail below in comparison with André Gide's translation.

After F.-V. Hugo's translation, no significant French versions of Hamlet appeared in the nineteenth century, although the character of the Danish prince became more popular than ever for the later romantics

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<sup>11</sup> René Davril, "Shakespeare in French Garb," Shakespeare-Jahrbuch 92 (1956), p. 199.

<sup>12</sup> Levin, op. cit., p. 119.

and symbolists. Just as the classicists and early romantics had refashioned the tragedy of the prince to suit the prevailing literary currents of the times, so did the symbolists adopt Hamlet as their hero of despair, their affirmation of the impossibility of hope. With the emergence of symbolism, Hamlet may be said to have come into his own. Shakespeare's spiritually embattled hero, with his intuition of things undreamed of in a corrupt and sordid world, found a congenial element in the climate of ideality that nurtured poetry in the last half of the nineteenth century. Baudelaire's impressions of Hamlet were molded more by the soft, feminine portraits of the prince by Delacroix than by a close reading of Shakespeare's play. Mallarmé and Laforgue ("Le plus hamlétique des poètes français"<sup>13</sup>) followed in viewing Hamlet as the suffering artist obsessed with death who seeks the stars while chained to the mud of reality.

With the possible exception of Hugo's version, all French translations of Shakespeare's Hamlet in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suffered tremendously from their misuse of the English dramatist and his tragic

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<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer, "Barraults Hamlet," Shakespeare-Jahrbuch 99 (1963), p. 124.

hero to serve the various ends of warring literary factions. It was inevitable that in using Shakespeare and Hamlet as weapons in a literary polemic each school would extract exactly what it needed to justify its own opinions, yet at the same time ignore precisely the most essential aspect of Shakespeare's genius -- the dramatic impact of his complex use of language.

The language of Shakespeare's dramas, and especially of Hamlet with its varying registers, and abundance of dramatic puns, poses the greatest problem for the French translator. Taine has best stated the problem in his remarks on Shakespeare: "We, for our part, writers and reasoners, can note precisely by a word each isolated fraction of an idea and represent the due order of its parts by the due order of our expressions. We ... try to treat our words as numbers, our sentences as equations; we attain exactitude (justesse) and clearness, not life. Shakespeare lets justness and clearness look out for themselves and attains life."<sup>14</sup> Despite his general praise of Shakespeare, Taine is also squeamish before his "furious expressions"

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<sup>14</sup> History of English Literature, trans. H. Van Laun (London: Chatto & Windus, 1897), II, pt. 1, p. 73.

and mixed metaphors: "No man has ever submitted words to such a contortion."<sup>15</sup>

Taine's appraisal of his native language is perhaps oversimplified, but undoubtedly the tendencies in the French language towards precision, definite nomination, and strict syntactic arrangement are alien to the discordant metaphors, word derivations and syntactic liberties of Elizabethan speech. Next to this insurmountable barrier, the mixture of comic and tragic scenes, the presence of characters of low station in tragedy, and the neglect of the unities were merely superficial obstacles to be overcome for the French appreciation of Shakespeare.

The first translation of Hamlet to reflect a detailed consideration of Shakespeare's language was the Marcel Schwob - Eugene Morand version of 1899. This translation was used in the renowned stage production of the tragedy in which Sarah Bernhardt played Hamlet and was also the version that replaced the Dumas adaptation at the Comédie Française in 1932, marking the first time that an actual translation instead of an adaptation was played in this major Parisian theater.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 69.

Although Schwob the poet and Morand the dramatist seemed well-suited to collaborate on the difficult task of rendering Hamlet, their translation often has an archaic and stilted tone, mainly due to the premises of translation theory on which it is based. Schwob and Morand felt that a translation should be written in the language of the same period in which the original work was created, and so the logical procedure was to translate Hamlet in the idiom of the sixteenth century. The result, especially for a stage production of the tragedy, showed that their translation did not improve on existing versions and was indeed inferior to Hugo's more literal rendering.

Schwob and Morand had attempted in their Hamlet translation to restore some of the "plaisante plasticité"<sup>16</sup> still shown by the language of Ronsard and Montaigne who were Shakespeare's counterparts, but the rigorous idiom of modern French was too resistant to their efforts. As George Steiner claims, "The evolution of modern French contains an aesthetic, one could almost say a socio-political ethic, of retrenchment. Possibilities of verbal prodigality, of grammatical exuberance, of metaphoric licence present in fifteenth-

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<sup>16</sup> André Gide, "Avant-Propos," W. Shakespeare, Théâtre complet (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), I, p. x.

and sixteenth-century speech and writing were suppressed or relegated to the argotic and eccentric by the centralizing neo-classicism of seventeenth-century reform."<sup>17</sup> The task of reversing this retrenchment in translating Shakespeare is difficult enough as it is, and Schwob and Morand hardly responded to the challenge, since they merely introduced archaic lexical choices to recreate the spirit of Renaissance French, without any regard for its rhythmic and syntactic potential.<sup>18</sup>

The stage productions of the Schwob - Morand translation had been directed at the Comédie Française for some time by Jean-Louis Barrault, who became so disillusioned with their stilted version that he finally urged André Gide to undertake a translation of Hamlet.<sup>19</sup> Gide was no stranger to the play; he had first begun translating it in 1922 but quit soon after completing

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<sup>17</sup> After Babel, op. cit., p. 365

<sup>18</sup> The theoretical premises of the Schwob - Morand version are discussed and compared with Gide's translation by Jean C. Noel, "L'art de la traduction chez Schwob et Gide: à partir de leurs traductions de l'Hamlet de Shakespeare," Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, 39 (1969), pp. 173-211.

<sup>19</sup> Gide recounts the meeting in his journal of 1942, The Journals of Andre Gide, ed. & trans. J. O'Brien (New York: Knopf, 1949), IV, p. 109. Subsequent references to this edition of the journal will be referred to in the text as JAG with appropriate volume and page number.

only the first act,<sup>20</sup> once he had realized the difficulties in accommodating his own style to Shakespeare: "a certain need of number, an indulgence toward eurhythmy, bend my style. I should like less polish, more broken edge and accent" (JAG, II, p. 302).

Although Gide abandoned the translation, he confessed soon after that "however irksome that work may have been, now I miss it" (JAG, II, p. 308). But inspired by Barrault's confidence years later, Gide completed the translation of Hamlet in Algeria on August 31, 1942 after devoting three months of eight-hour-a-day labor to it. The stage production at the Théâtre Marigny was the hit of the 1946-1947 season,<sup>21</sup> with Barrault directly the play and starring in the title role.

Barrault had every reason to be confident, since Gide had already proven himself to be one of the foremost French translators of the twentieth century.

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<sup>20</sup> The first act was published in the French - English bilingual review Echanges in December, 1929, pp. 3-38.

<sup>21</sup> Some excerpts from various reviews of the play are listed by John C. McClaren, The Theatre of Andre Gide (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), pp. 107-108.

Besides the first act of Hamlet, Gide had completed a translation of Antony and Cleopatra in 1917, which was used successfully on stage in 1920 and again, after some revision, in 1938. Among his other translations are Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Rilke's Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge, several poems of Walt Whitman, Pushkin short stories and Conrad's Typhoon.

Gide considered translation an act of conscience and reverence, a patriotic duty which every writer owes to his nation. Aside from his translations, Gide also wrote a number of essays on European writers and perhaps did more than any other native author to enrich French culture through knowledge of foreign literature: "It was Gide who clarified the French view of Nietzsche and Dostoevsky, who reaffirmed and revived Goethe's cosmic grandeur, introduced Blake and Kierkegaard, rediscovered Pushkin, Rilke and the great English novelists."<sup>22</sup>

Though Gide firmly believed in the importance of cross-cultural relations, he made no secret of the fact that his interest in foreign authors was also an

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<sup>22</sup> Klaus Mann, Andre Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought (New York: Creative Age, 1943), p. 280.

extremely personal one: "They have merely revealed to me some part of myself of which I was still in ignorance; they were only an explanation, yes, but an explanation of myself."<sup>23</sup>

What explanation of himself did Gide find in Shakespeare's Hamlet and what had led him to translate it in the first place in 1922? The Antony and Cleopatra translation had been done not on Gide's own initiative but at the request of Ida Rubinstein of the Ballets Russes, and even while translating Hamlet in 1922, Gide clearly expressed his preference for Othello: "...even though the subject of Hamlet is stronger, richer, and more subtle, I did not for a moment experience the swoons of raputre that shook me all through the reading of Othello" (JAG, II, p. 304). Gide never explicitly states why he first chose to translate Hamlet, but his earliest remarks on the subject indicate that one possible reason for his decision was his dissatisfaction with the prevailing Schwob - Morand version which he found to be "...incomprehensible in spots, arhythmical, as if unbreathable" (ibid.).

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<sup>23</sup> "Concerning Influence in Literature," Pretexts: Reflections on Art and Morality, ed. & trans. J. O'Brien (New York: Meridian, 1959), p.27.

Undoubtedly, the inadequacy of existing translations prompted Gide's decision to translate the tragedy anew, but considering his subjective approach to the authors he read and translated, Gide must have felt deeper, more personal affinities with Hamlet. The play certainly deals with themes that preoccupied Gide in his own work, such as the conflict of appearance and reality and the paradox of thought and action, but it is the exploration of the self at the heart of Hamlet's tragedy that is central to Gide's own work. "The state of dialogue," Gide claimed, "which for so many others is intolerable, became necessary to me" (JAG, II, p. 343), and it is probably the inner dialogue which Hamlet carries on with himself in the soliloquies that attracted Gide most to the play.

Gide frequently alluded to Hamlet in his novels, especially in Les Caves du Vatican and Les Faux-monnayeurs, but his attraction to the hero's penchant for self-analysis marks the extent of Shakespeare's influence on his work. In fact, Gide felt more aesthetic kinship with Racine and even claimed that the French tragedian was superior to Shakespeare: "I admire Shakespeare tremendously, but with Racine I feel an emotion that Shakespeare never gives me: one of

perfection... man and nature, all poetry laughs, weeps, and vibrates in Shakespeare, but Racine is the summit of art" (JAG, III, p. 285).

In contrasting Shakespeare's natural genius to Racine's artistic perfection, Gide resurrects the dichotomy of nature (Shakespeare) and art (Racine) which is implicit in Voltaire's criticism of Shakespeare and classical tragedy and which has prevailed in French criticism of the English dramatist since the eighteenth century. Gide, who always maintained that he was a classicist, clearly prefers Racinian constraint to Shakespearean natural genius: "Art and nature are rivals on earth; beauty is only produced by artificial constraint."<sup>24</sup> Gide concedes that "Shakespeare is more human" but Racine is aesthetically superior because of "that sharpness of outline, the triumph of a sublime fitness, the delightful harmony" (JAG, III, p. 285).

Gide's admiration for Racine's style raises serious questions about his translation of an author such as Shakespeare whose aesthetic is directly at odds with his own. Barely a month after completing the Hamlet translation, Gide notes his irritation at the exaggerated

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<sup>24</sup> "The Evolution of the Theater," My Theater, trans. J. Mathews, (New York: Knopf, 1952), p. 263.

metaphors and spasmodic quality of Hamlet's language with an almost Voltairean disdain<sup>25</sup> and the implication seems to be that Hamlet is too far removed from the style of Racine to suit Gide's taste. True, this is only one expression of dissatisfaction with Shakespeare's play, but it leads to one of the central problems in studying Gide's translation, i.e., whether the exigencies of the French language and the Racinian tradition of restraint and harmony, which is embraced by Gide yet alien to Shakespeare's style, has vitiated his rendering of the complex language and dense poetic texture of Hamlet. In the next chapter some basic stylistic devices used by Shakespeare in Hamlet are studied in Gide's translation to determine how much the linguistic exigencies of French and his own impulses toward Racinian purity of style force Gide to sacrifice some of the dramatic impact of the original in the translation process.

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<sup>25</sup> "I hate the spasmodic: 'For in the very torrent, tempest and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness,' said Hamlet. What a flabbergasting way to kill oneself by striking oneself with a metaphor! It's enough to make me wonder whether I didn't perhaps exaggerate the beauty of the first part of the drama which seemed to me so great" (JAG, IV, p. 129).

CHAPTER II

## SHAKESPEARE, GIDE, AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

...pour écrire du bon français,  
il faut quitter trop Shakespeare

(JAG, II, p. 302) André Gide

In his prefatory letter to the completed translation of Hamlet, Andre Gide confessed that the first act of the play had cost him more effort than the entire translation of Antony and Cleopatra, since "on n'imagine pas texte plus alambiqué, plus retours et plein d'ambiguités, de traquenards et de chausse-trappes. Toute autre pièce de Shakespeare...paraît eau de roche à côté."<sup>1</sup> However, Gide still felt that his own version of Hamlet surpassed all previous translations which had only provided a mere literal paraphrase of Shakespeare's ideas. Gide objects to his predecessors' work primarily because "...Shakespeare n'est pas un 'penseur'; c'est un poète, et sa pensée ne nous importe guère sans les ailes qui l'emportent dans l'empyrée. C'est cet essor de la pensée qui nous importe ici, non la pensée

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<sup>1</sup> "Lettre-Préface," Hamlet: A Bilingual Edition, ed. J. Schiffrin (New York: Beacon, 1964). The French edition of the translation was first published by Gallimard in 1946. Subsequent references to the preface will be included in the text.

même" (ibid.). The remark is significant, for here Gide acknowledges that form and content are inextricably bound in a literary work and that the translator must somehow convey that bond in transferring a work from one linguistic medium to another.

The indissoluble bond of form and content, of course, is precisely what makes the translation of literature a more difficult task than the translation of a scientific or legal text. The task is further complicated if the two linguistic structures involved are dissimilar, and Gide is clearly aware of the structural gap between Shakespearean English and modern French:

Tout /in Hamlet/ est transposé dans une domaine supra-réel, tout baigne dans une atmosphère si particulière, que les écarts les plus singuliers de langage en viennent à paraître naturels, et naturelle cette diaprure étrange ou s'irisent également les contours...Comment transposer cette réalité extra-naturelle dans une langue beaucoup plus rétive que celle de Schlegel ou de Stephan George, dans une langue intransigeante, aux strictes exigences grammaticales et syntaxiques, une langue aussi claire, précise et prosaïque (pour ne point dire anti-poétique) que la nôtre? (Préface)

Gide often complained of his highly intractable native language, and the structural peculiarities of French certainly present the greatest problem in conveying the poetic qualities of Hamlet, a play which depends so much on Shakespeare's constant exploitation

of the much more pliable linguistic material of English.<sup>47</sup>

In this chapter some of Shakespeare's stylistic devices entailing his complex grammatical usage of the parts of speech will be isolated from the text of Hamlet, and the compensatory means Gide employs to convey the equivalent aesthetic effects in his translation will be analyzed. For purposes of comparison, two more French translations of the tragedy have been selected: the nineteenth century version of F.-V. Hugo<sup>2</sup>, because of its widespread circulation, and the most recent version of Yves Bonnefoy<sup>3</sup>, because of the esteem it has won as a successful verse translation of Hamlet.

One linguistic form common in Shakespeare's verse and typical of his method has been discussed by William Empson in his study of literary ambiguity: "the '(noun) and (noun) of (noun)' in which two, often apparently quite different, words are flung together, followed by a word which seems to be intended to qualify both of them."<sup>4</sup> The construction plays

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<sup>2</sup> Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1972). Subsequent references to this edition will be included in the text by page number.

<sup>3</sup> Théâtre de Shakespeare: Hamlet, Jules César (Paris: Formes et Reflets, 1957). Subsequent references to this edition will be included in the text by page number.

<sup>4</sup> Seven Types of Ambiguity (New York: New Directions, 1947), p. 90.

several roles in Shakespeare's plays, and one of the principal effects achieved is to create a spontaneous and striking image which concentrates a wealth of meaning and association in a single phrase.

A simple example of this is found in Laertes' advice to Ophelia concerning Hamlet's romantic intentions: "And keep you in the rear of your affection/  
Out of the shot and danger of desire."<sup>5</sup> The two lines provide a brief illustration of the typical pattern of Shakespearean imagery where one metaphor generates still another metaphor from the same field which in turn suggests new meanings for the original idea. In this discussion of love and courtship, the association of the military image "rear" with "affection" is contrasted to another military image, "the shot and danger" which are related to "desire." The '(noun) and (noun) of (noun)' phrase, "shot and danger of desire" also combines the concrete and abstract connotations of the military metaphors and thus manages to convey a number of suggestions and achieve immediacy of statement by the

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<sup>5</sup> Hamlet: A Bilingual Edition, op. cit., I, 3, 3-4, p. 46. Subsequent references to this edition of Gide's translation and to the English text accompanying the translation will be included in the text by act, scene and page number. Since Gide's translation is in prose, the edition contains no separation by lines, so line numbers of the original text will be cited from the edition of George L. Kittredge, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (1939; rpt. Lexington, Mass.: Xerox, 1967).

Gide's translation of the above lines is:

...ne t'aventure pas au bord de ton amour; reste en retrait du danger du désir" (p. 47). The progression of military imagery is preserved by substituting "aventure" in the first clause and shifting "retrait" to the second, but the vivid image of the "shot" is omitted and thus the suggestiveness and vitality in the original construction is lost in the phrase "... en retrait du danger du désir."<sup>6</sup>

Gide has successfully conveyed the general idea of Shakespeare's images in his rendering of these lines, but the ultimate meaning of a metaphor is inseparable from the grammatical form in which it is expressed. The compression of meaning through grammatical usage and the resulting fusion of associations in Shakespeare's imagery are precisely what elude many translators and have especially caused problems for French translators who resist using the connective "et" to equate unlike qualities such as the physical and the abstract.

This resistance becomes more apparent if we compare translations of another example of the same

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<sup>6</sup> Gide's use of alliteration in "... reste en retrait du danger du désir" somewhat conveys the formal tone of the court style typified by Laertes' speech.

construction in Hamlet. In his tirade to his mother, Hamlet describes her sin as "Such an act/That blurs the grace and blush of modesty" (III, 4, 40-41, p. 172). The '(noun) and (noun) of (noun)' phrase again joins physical and abstract qualities in the metonymical use of "grace" and "blush" to convey various aspects of the idea of "modesty." In Hugo's translation, the construction is altered to "l'aimable rougeur de la pudeur" (p. 89), just as in Bonnefoy's version the phrase becomes "Un acte tel/Qu'il souille de la pudeur la rougeur aimable" (p. 85). In Gide's version the original undergoes even greater change: "le gracieux émail de la pudeur" (p.73).

In discussing this Shakespearean construction, Empson notes that "...those linguistic forms are likely to be most convenient which insist on no definite form of connection between words and allow you simply to pass from one to the other."<sup>7</sup> The use of the simple conjunction "and" in a phrase such as "the grace and blush of modesty" creates spontaneous associations of similarity and contrast (physical-abstract) in the reader's mind that provide "...a powerful means of forcing him to adopt a poetical attitude toward words."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Seven Types of Ambiguity, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 91

In the three French versions above, the aura of evocation is constricted by making the first noun an adjective and thus subordinating it to the second: "l'aimable rougeur," "le gracieux émail...". Gide's translation deviates from the original even more than the other two versions do, since he replaces the physical association in "grace and blush" with the static metaphor of "émail." By omitting the physical manifestations, Gide eliminates the vividness of the original and instead raises the quality of "modesty" to an abstract ideal of purity and durability symbolized by the image of "enamel."

The translation of this Shakespearean device by shifting the first two nouns joined by "and" in the original to an '(adjective) (noun)' phrase is a pattern of French translations which Gide follows in his own version. However, Gide occasionally recreates the exact grammatical form of the '(noun) and (noun) of (noun)' construction, such as in the following lines spoken by Rosencrantz to the king:

The single and peculiar life is bound  
 With all the strength and armor of the mind  
 To keep itself from noyance... (III, 3, 11-13, p.162)

Chaque existence particulière emploie toute la  
 force et la défense de l'esprit pour se garer de  
 la nuisance... (p.163)

Even though Gide reproduces the syntax of Shakespeare's phrase, his reproduction involves a lexical change which allows him to equate two abstract nouns by "et" instead of conveying the combination of the concrete and abstract in the original phrase "the strength and armor of the mind." Granted that "défense" has martial connotations similar to "armor," the lexical choice still reveals the general tendency toward abstraction which characterizes Gide's translation and the French reluctance to equate dissimilar qualities by a coordinating conjunction.

Another construction that is frequently used by Shakespeare is the '(adjective) and (adjective) (Noun)' phrase which also combines concrete and abstract qualities in the two adjectives modifying the noun. When the ghost announces to Hamlet that "My hour is almost come/When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames/Must render myself up" (I, 5, 3-4, p. 60), the two adjectives suggest, respectively, both the physical substance and the intensity of the "flames" in which Hamlet's father suffers. The concentration of meaning in Shakespeare's construction is sacrificed by Gide's expansion of the phrase into two nouns: "L'instant est proche ou vont me relcamer les sulfureuses flammes et les tourments" (p. 61). Gide does manage, however, to capture the

union of the physical and the abstract in the two nouns "flammes" and "tourments," and his version is an improvement over Hugo's more prosaic rendering: "... les flammes sulfureuses qui servent à mon tourment" (p.26). But of the three translations under consideration, Bonnefoy's version of these lines comes closest to recreating the original compression: "L'heure est presque venue/Ou je dois retourner/ Aux flammes sulfureuses torturantes" (p. 26).

Gide's preference for abstraction is also evident in his treatment of an '(adjective) and (adjective) (noun)' form used by Horatio in his speech on the fall of Rome. When Horatio speaks of "the most high and palmy state of Rome" (I, 1, 113, p. 22), the first rather vague modifier is intensified by the more vivid image of the tall palms which conjures associations of the lush and verdant opulence of the Roman state, only to emphasize its destruction which Horatio depicts in the following lines. Gide's version, "... à Rome au temps de sa glorieuse apogée" (p. 23), conveys only in the most abstract fashion the concrete picture of natural majesty in the original phrase. Hugo's more literal translation at least captures some of the evocative atmosphere of the original by retaining the imagery of plant life: "...à l'époque la plus

glorieuse et la plus florissante de Rome" (p.7).

Of course, any attempt at translating "palmy" would present innumerable problems for a translator, since the adjective overlaps with another of Shakespeare's favorite devices. In her study of Shakespeare's rhetoric, Sister Miriam Joseph lists this device of making a word serve other than its usual grammatical functions as the trope "anthimeria" and calls it "one of the most exciting grammatical schemes of Elizabethan English."<sup>9</sup> Shakespeare, in particular, gives his style a special vitality and compression of meaning in one word that is often impossible to render in a foreign language.

The problem is especially acute for French translators of Shakespeare. In their stylistic comparison of French and English, J. P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet have noted that English offers far more richness in adjectives, adverbs and verbs because of its ease in forming derivatives, while the French language is exceedingly more rigid and prefers to keep

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<sup>9</sup> Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (1947; rpt. New York: Hafner, 1966), p. 62.

its words ordered according to the established functions which they serve in sentences.<sup>10</sup> They mention Stendhal's shock at the verb "progresser" and the French hostility today against using some recently coined verbs such as "tester" for "faire subir un test" or "poster" for<sup>11</sup> "mettre a la poste."

The majority of cases where Shakespeare uses anthimeria entail the formation of another part of speech from a noun, although there are instances when other parts of speech are interchanged, such as the usual formation of an adverb from an adjective in Claudius' remark on Polonius' hasty burial: "...we have done but greenly/In hugger-mugger to inter him..." (IV, 5, 81-82, p. 206). Here the weakness of French is evident in the versions of Gide and Hugo who must resort to abstract phrases to render "greenly": "Nous fumes

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<sup>10</sup> Stylistique comparée due français et de l'anglais: Méthode de traduction (Paris: Didier, 1958), p. 103.

<sup>11</sup> We must not ignore the same tendency in English, though it has never been as strong as in France. Eighteenth-century critics cringed at the havoc Shakespeare brought upon the language with such bold devices. George Bernard Shaw was repulsed by the use of "contact" as a verb, and it must be admitted that the ease in using parts of speech in different grammatical functions has led to such ridiculous extremes as those which received public airing in Watergab, e.g., John Mitchell's "I'm no commenting on that," or Richard Nixon's "Let's stone wall it." See Edwin Newman, Strictly Speaking (New York: Bobs-Merrill, 1974)

bien malavisés..." (Gide, p. 207), "Nous avons agi maladroitement..." (Hugo, p. 109).

The formation of adjectives from nouns is extremely frequent in Hamlet and allows Shakespeare to pack greater expression of thought and imagery in a phrase by avoiding simple similes or "of" constructions, such as Hamlet's "inky cloak" (I, 2, 77, p. 30) instead of "cloak (like) the color of ink," which is the literal translation of Gide's version in French, "... manteau couleur d'encre" (p. 31). Gide usually conveys the idea behind these formations but is forced by the strict exigencies of his native language to seek a circumlocution such as above. For example, when Hamlet claims that Claudius' court has brought Denmark into ill-repute among nations, he says "They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase/Soil our addition..." (I, 4, 19-20, p. 54). Gide stays as close as possible to the original yet is forced to expand "swinish phrase" into an entire clause which practically nullifies the image compressed into the original adjective and noun: "les nations ... qui nous traitent d'ivrognes et distribuent nos titres de noblesse aux pourceaux" (p. 55).

Shakespeare's formation of verbs from nouns constitutes his most frequent usage of anthimeria

and contributes to the dynamic quality of his style. As mentioned above, the French language is especially resistant to this trope, and Vinay and Darbelnet cite this as one of the reasons for the static quality of French as opposed to the dynamic quality of English.<sup>12</sup>

An excellent example of Shakespeare's formation of a verb from a noun occurs when Hamlet tells Horatio of the mousetrap play to catch Claudius: "...if his occulted guilt/Do not itself unkennel in one speech/It is a damned ghost we have seen" (III, 2, 78-80, p. 140). Shakespeare not only coins the verb from the noun "kennel",<sup>13</sup> but also gives it a privative sense and presents another vivid metaphor in the iterative pattern of animal imagery associated with Claudius throughout the play. Gide settles for a weaker equivalent: "...si sa culpabilité cachée ne se démasque pas dans quelque phrase, alors c'est que nous avons été les jouets d'une apparition" (p. 141). The verb "démasque" certainly captures the privative aspect by the negative prefix but sacrifices the original

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<sup>12</sup> Stylistique comparée, p. 103.

<sup>13</sup> The participial adjective "occulted" is another example of Shakespeare's use of anthimeria.

image. However, considering the impossibility of translating this coined verb into French, Gide has cleverly compensated by choosing a verb with theatrical connotations that is appropriate for a passage in which Hamlet speaks of using a play to convince himself of Claudius' guilt.

However, Gide is most often compelled to resort to circumlocutions in order to translate Shakespeare's verbs derived from nouns. For example, when asked where Polonius' body is hidden, Hamlet replies: "You shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby" (IV, 3, 35-36, p. 192), and the verb "nose" creates a lively sensual image of the king's courtiers busily scuffling about and sniffing out the smell of the corpse. The brilliantly compressed image in the original verb is approximated adequately Gide but the vitality of Hamlet's language is somewhat diluted in the circumlocution "Vous le sentirez à plein nez" (p. 193). Obviously, any neologism such as "nezer" would seem incredibly ludicrous to the French ear.

Shakespeare's overall use of verbs is in large part responsible for his power as a dramatist. Ernest Fenollosa claimed that "Shakespeare's English is superior

because of his persistent natural and magnificent use  
of hundred of transitive verbs.<sup>14</sup> The sheer physical  
dynamism of Shakespeare's verb usage poses insurmountable  
barriers for French translators, since their language,  
as Vinay and Darbelnet have noted, is distinctly in-  
ferior to English in verb power, and even many simple  
English verbs such as "lock" or "sift" can only be  
translated into French by locutions such as "fermer à  
clef"<sup>15</sup> and "passer au crible."

The necessity for using circumlocutions to  
render English verbs presents difficulties in the  
translation of a highly poetic text as Hamlet where a  
single verb is capable of expressing so many shades of  
meaning. Gide often tries to attain the brevity of  
the English text by employing an equivalent verb, but  
in the process the French verb chosen usually weakens  
much of the semantic power of the original. For example,  
Laertes predicts to Claudius the results of using his  
poisonous foil: "...I'll touch my point/With this  
contagion, that, if I gall him slightly/It may be death"

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<sup>14</sup> The Chinese Written Character As a Medium for Poetry,  
ed. Ezra Pound (San Francisco: City Lights Press, 1936),  
p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Stylistique comparée, p. 41

(IV, 7, 146-148, p. 228). The verb "gall" expresses both the action of touching Hamlet with the point and the fatal fluid in which it is dipped, while in Gide's version, "Je mouillerais de ce poison ma pointe; si légèrement qu'elle l'atteigne, c'est la mort" (p. 229), the verb "atteigne" merely conveys the idea of hitting the target.

Similarly, when Hamlet asks Rosencrantz and Guildenstern if they "...would pluck out the heart of my mystery" (III, 2, 349-350, p. 158), Gide renders the phrase "forcer le coeur de mon mystère," which, though retaining some of the physical intensity of the verb "pluck" still replaces the suggestion that Hamlet is treated by his friends as a barnyard beast with the image of breaking open a locked secret ("forcer").

Often Gide will render the original verb by adding an adverb in order to capture another shade of meaning already implicit in the English word. For example, when the ghost withdraws from the stupefied guards and Horatio, Bernardo screams "See, it stalks away" (I, 1, 50, p. 18). Gide's translation, "Il se retire fièrement," (p. 19), certainly conveys the sense of pride and haughty majesty in the English verb but fails to render its other associations, such as the rather sinister and ominous suggestion of a hunter stealthily "stalking" its prey.

The range of implications compacted in the simple verb "stalk" provides an excellent example of what Yves Bonnefoy has called the "ouverture" of English in contrast to the "fermeture" of French. Gide himself realized that Shakespeare used the supple "ouverture" of English to let different possibilities of meaning hover around the principal semantic axis. He claims that a Shakespearean word often "...désigne un objet précis et trouve un équivalent précis dans une autre langue, mais s'entoure d'un halo d'évocations et de réminiscences, sortes d'harmoniques."<sup>17</sup>

Undoubtedly, the translation of what Gide terms the "harmoniques" in Shakespeare's verb usage alone caused many of the difficulties encountered in his version of Hamlet. Instead of using a single nearly equivalent verb or a verb plus qualifying adverb as in the examples above, Gide most often resorts to a substantive construction to compensate for the wealth of associations in a single English verb. The French

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16 "Shakespeare et le poète français," Preuves, No. 100 (Juin 1959), p. 46.

17 "Avant-propos," W. Shakespeare, Théâtre complet, ed. A. Gide (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), I, p. x.

linguist Charles Bally notes that this form is more natural in French and also attributes the essentially static quality of the language to its frequent usage: "Le caractère statique du français se reflète dans le prédominance du substantif sur le verbe."<sup>18</sup> Aside from the predominance of this construction in French, Jean Hytier in his study of Gide's style has indicated the French novelist's overriding personal preference<sup>19</sup> for the use of the substantive in his own works.

Even a simple verb such as "long" in Claudius' welcome to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "We much did long to see you" (II, 2, 2, p. 82), becomes in Gide's version "...notre grand désir de vous voir" (p. 83). Similarly, when Rosencrantz tells Hamlet about the reputation of a troupe of child actors that "they are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages..." (II, 2, 333-334, p. 104), Gide renders the phrase "Telle est la mode du jour, au grand détriment des

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<sup>18</sup> Linguistique générale et linguistique française (Berne: Francke, 1944), p. 196.

<sup>19</sup> André Gide, trans. R. Howard (New York : Ungar, 1962) p. 57.

autres théâtres" (p. 105). Again the substantive replaces the verb and produces a totally abstract concept in "détriment," with the adjective "grand" as a weak compensation for the physical intensity of the coined English verb. There are French verbs that can certainly approximate the sense of action in the original, as the translations of Hugo and Bonnefoy prove: "...ils sont maintenant à la mode, et ils clabaudent si fort contre les théâtres ordinaires..." (Hugo, p. 49); "...ils sont le dernier mot de la mode, et ils décrivent tellement les théâtres du commun..." (Bonnefoy, p. 50).

The general tendency of the substantive in this and many other cases in Gide's translation is to create an overwhelming sense of abstraction, since, as Charles Bally states, "le français présente les événements comme des substances."<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare's world, on the other hand, is characterized by movement; his use of verbs of motion, as Caroline Spurgeon notes, gives life to entire passages,<sup>21</sup> and the translation of this sense of movement into a language where concepts and

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<sup>20</sup> Linguistique générale et linguistique française, p. 356.

<sup>21</sup> Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us, (1935; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971), p. 48.

substances often come to replace actions can pose insoluble problems, especially for a translator like Gide whose own stylistic impulses prompt his predominant use of the substantive. In fact, Gide's attempts to render many of the stylistic devices which Shakespeare uses in Hamlet, such as the grammatical combinations of the abstract and concrete in special nominal and adjectival constructions and the frequent use of anthimeria, all betray to some degree a pattern of excessive abstraction which is diametrically opposed to the spirit of the original. Despite Gide's efforts to stay as close as possible to the spirit and letter of Shakespeare's Hamlet, the reader feels the uneasy tension of a translator who tries, often unsuccessfully, to counter his personal stylistic urges and subordinate himself to an author whose style is alien to his own.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET IN GIDE'S TRANSLATION

The most significant abstraction in Gide's Hamlet occurs in his translation of the following exchange between Hamlet and his mother, in which the queen reminds her son that the death of his father is a "common" occurrence which must be accepted:

Queen:           If it be,  
                  Why seems it so particular with thee?  
                  (I, 2, 75-76, p. 30)

Hamlet:          Seems, madame ! Nay, it is;  
                  I know not "seems."

Q:                Alors pourquoi si particulière votre  
                  apparence?

H:                Apparence ? Eh! Non! Réalité.  
                  Qu'ai-je affaire avec le "paraître"?  
                  (p. 31)

Hamlet puns on the queen's verb to cast barbs on the hypocrisy of false sorrow pervading the court of Denmark, and, in doing so, he states one of the essential themes and metaphors of the tragedy. From this point on the word "seems" becomes a leit motif in the play. The ghost of Hamlet's father will condemn his "seeming-virtuous queen" (I, 5, 46, p. 62), and Hamlet and Horatio will catch the conscience of the king "... in censure of his seeming" (III, 2, 84, p. 140).

Gide's translation of this dramatically important exchange between Hamlet and Gertrude renders

the semantically opposed verbs "seems" and "is" by the nouns "apparence" and "réalité" and thus produces a metaphysical abstraction. By comparing Gide's version of these lines with those of Hugo and Bonnefoy, we can see that Gide's abstractions are certainly not necessitated by the rules of French:

Elle me semble, madame; Non: elle est. Je ne connais pas les semblants. (Hugo, p. 12)

Qui me semble, madame ? Oh, non: qui est. Je ne sais pas ce que sembler signifie. (Bonnefoy, p. 10)

The original lines are somewhat diluted in these versions, since in the original, as Reuben Brower says, "the effect is very like another pun, since the second 'seems' by a grammatical sleight of words now also has the meaning of 'is.' (Your seems equals my is). We have been beguiled into taking 'it' as referring to 'seems', since the reference of 'it' has become fairly vague,"<sup>1</sup> The equivalent of the English impersonal pronoun "it" can never be used as loosely in French,<sup>2</sup> and so Hugo must resort to defining "la règle", i.e., the rule of death, as the antecedent from a few

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<sup>1</sup> "Poetic and Dramatic Design in Versions and Translations of Shakespeare," Mirror on Mirror: Translation, Imitation, Parody (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974), p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Vinay & Darbelnet, Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais, p. 113.

lines before ("c'est la règle commune"). Bonnefoy's rendering improves on this by having "qui" refer to the interrogative pronoun in the previous line of the queen, "Qu'y a-t-il dans ton cas qui te semble si singulier," though his use of the verb "signifie" in Hamlet's reply is a little too abstract and makes the prince sound like a post-Saussurean linguist.

In any case, it seems particular to Gide's version that the verb play in the original is reduced to a conceptual dialectic. Not only is his translation abstract, but it also seems to be a case of blatant overstatement, as if Gide were so struck by the significance of Hamlet's words for the meaning of the tragedy that he set up the two concepts in his own version as brightly flashing signals to announce the major theme of Hamlet to the audience.

Perhaps one explanation for the overstatement is Gide's preoccupation with this theme in his own works. One critic claims that "the problem of appearance and reality underlies the argument of all Gide's works,"<sup>3</sup> and real and apparent values certainly constitute the very symbol of his experimental novel Les Faux-monnayeurs. Undoubtedly, Gide was attracted by

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<sup>3</sup> E. San Juan, Jr., "Pattern and Significance in Two Plays of Andre Gide," Discourse 8 (1965), p. 358.

Hamlet's pun in a tragedy that is laden with "counterfeits" as his own work is.

In addition to Gide's personal attraction to the theme, critics have seen the influence of German philosophy in Gide's dichotomy between "apparence" and "réalité." Reuben Brower claims that "only in Wittenberg would Hamlet talk like this,"<sup>4</sup> and Harry Levin voices a similar opinion: 'Apparence'... 'Réalité'...it is the unavoidable jingle of the German metaphysicians, schein and sein.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of German metaphysics in the prince's reply to his mother is far from accidental in Gide's translation, considering the significant comments about the character of Hamlet which Gide makes in a journal entry of 1931. The passage is given below in its entirety since it is the longest and most complete exposition of Gide's conception of Shakespeare's tragic hero:

A little sentence in Hamlet, which I do not know to have been much noticed, seems to me so important that I should almost like to see it engraved on the pediment of the drama, of which it seems to me, in a way, the explanation. It is spoken by Rosencrantz or Guildenstern to Hamlet:

"What were you going to do at Wittenberg?"

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<sup>4</sup> op. cit., p. 147

<sup>5</sup> The Question of Hamlet (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 32.

Has anyone brought out, as an explanation of Hamlet's character, that he is returning from a German university? He is bringing back to his native land some germs of a foreign philosophy; he has plunged into a metaphysics of which "to be or not to be" seems to me the indubitable product. I already glimpse all German subjectivism in the famous soliloquy. What was the philosophy that might then have been taught to students? Who were their teachers? And probably his own character predisposed him to it; but on his return from Germany he is incapable of action; he ratiocinates. I consider German metaphysics responsible for his irresolution. From his teachers there his mind received liberty to roam at will in abstract speculation, which so speciously substitutes itself for action.

In the whole drama of Shakespeare (and I ought to say more absolutely: in all drama) there is not a single character more Germanized than Hamlet. (JAG, III, p. 176)

Gide seems almost naive in asking if anyone has ever explained Hamlet's character in this way, since his evaluation matches squarely with the nineteenth century presentation of Hamlet as weak, incapable of action, speculative, the epitome of the hero of psychological tragedy. In fact, Gide's reading of Hamlet as "Germanized" is due much less to the evidence of the actual play than to the image of Hamlet which German critics popularized in the nineteenth century.

More than any other character in world literature, Hamlet has been so shaped and misshaped by critics that he has come to mean all things to all men. From Goethe's image of the prince as a delicate piece of

crockery shattered by the oak tree growing inside,  
we have passed to G. W. Knight's view of Hamlet, and  
not Claudius, as the "something rotten in the state of  
Denmark,"<sup>7</sup> and even more to the extreme, the condem-  
nation of the prince by the Spanish translator of the  
tragedy, Salvador Madariaga, as a callous, brutal,  
foul-mouthed egotist.<sup>8</sup> The widely divergent views of  
Hamlet's character result in many cases from the whims  
of critics who project their own attitudes on the Danish  
prince, but the range of possible interpretations also  
stems from the dense ambiguity of the text which makes  
the tragedy so elusive of rigid definition and at the  
same time creates its richness and vitality.

But while the critic is free to extract whatever  
meaning he pleases from a literary text and to mold it  
into whatever form he chooses, the translator must  
remain faithful to the spirit and letter of the original.  
When he is confronted with a text as ambiguous and rich  
in meaning as Hamlet, the translator is often forced to  
make choices that will inevitably narrow the range of  
possible interpretations.

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<sup>6</sup> Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre (Frankfurt, 1800), Bk. IV,  
Ch. 13, p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> "The Embassy of Death: An Essay on Hamlet," The Wheel  
of Fire (London: Methuen, 1949), p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> On Hamlet (London: Cass, 1948), p. 98.

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The choices in the translation process, as Jiří<sup>9</sup> Levý maintains, are both objective, that is, dependent on the linguistic material involved, and subjective, dependent on the structure of the translator's views and aesthetics. In this chapter we are specifically concerned with the subjective choices Gide makes in his Hamlet translation which are not necessarily conditioned by the exigencies of the French language but by the translator's preference for a word, phrase, or syntactical form which subtly express his personal views of Hamlet's character.

As suggested above, Gide's critical remarks on Hamlet bear a close relationship to the predominant German view of Shakespeare's tragic hero. Goethe, whom Gide cited as a major influence in his life and art (JAG, I, p. 44), created the image of the sensitive and delicate prince, "ein höchst moralischer Wesen" unfit for the tasks imposed on him by a hardened and corrupt world, and his observations on Hamlet in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre set the tone for the romantic portrayal of the Danish prince. August W. Schlegel's reading of the play as a Gedankenschauspiel may have eliminated Goethe's sentimentality, but it still focused

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<sup>9</sup> "Translation as a Decision Process," To Honor Roman Jakobson (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), II, p. 1173.

on a character whose inability to act resulted from  
<sup>10</sup>  
 excessive cerebration, and Schlegel's psychological  
 Hamlet crossed the channel through the German trans-  
 lator's influence on Coleridge, who saw the play as a  
 study of "the moral necessity of a due balance between  
<sup>11</sup>  
 thought and action."

Whether or not Gide was acquainted with Cole-  
 ridge's Shakespeare criticism is unknown, but he does  
 admit to a close study of Schlegel's translation of  
<sup>12</sup>  
Hamlet. Gide's own views predisposed him to the  
 Schlegel-Coleridge criticism of Hamlet's excessive  
 speculation. For the novelist who praised équilibre  
 as the highest national value in France (JAG, II, p. 245),  
 Hamlet's obsessive thinking would ultimately seem to be  
 responsible for his tragic downfall.

Gide's own protagonists often symbolize this  
 excess of one or the other side of an inner dialectic.  
 Michel in L'immoraliste seeks his freedom by breaking  
 the moral code of society only to lapse into a totally

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<sup>10</sup> Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature,  
 trans. J. Black (London: Bohn, 1846), Ch. XXV, p. 404.

<sup>11</sup> Shakespearean Criticism, ed. T. M. Raysor (New York:  
 Dutton, 1967), I, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> "Lettre-Préface" to the Hamlet translation.

sensual existence which paradoxically destroys his freedom. On the other side of the spectrum, Alissa in La porte étroite seeks the ideal self-sacrifice by negating the life of the senses only to end in self-destruction in the life of the spirit. Just as Gide felt that these two characters lacked the necessary balance between the pure life of the spirit and the pure life of the senses, so he must have believed that Hamlet's tragedy resulted from the absence of a proper balance between thought and action.

The major question, of course, is just how much the personal views of Gide the reader and critic affect the work of Gide the translator. In all fairness, it must be stated that Gide never purposely distorts the sense of an entire passage in Hamlet to fit his own opinion of the Danish prince, but there are numerous cases where his critical attitudes inevitably emerge through subtle changes in lexis, syntax, or even punctuation.

Gide's changes often involve the choice of a word or phrase which in itself is a close approximation of the corresponding original in Hamlet's speech but at the same time tends to connote the idea of philosophical speculation. Hamlet's Wittenberg training is emphasized in Gide's decision to render the simple

phrase "...oft it chances in particular men" (I, 4, 23, p. 54) as "...ainsi voyons-nous certains êtres" (p. 55). Gide's choice of "êtres" is perhaps justified in this passage where Hamlet discusses with his Wittenberg schoolmate Horatio the ethical problem that a simple fault in a man can cause total corruption.

However, Gide repeats the abstract term "être" in Hamlet's soliloquy immediately following the appearance of his father's ghost. Hamlet's words, "And you, my sinews, grow not instant old/But bear me stiffly up" (I, 5, 94-95, p. 66), are translated by Gide as "Ne vous relâchez pas vous mes nerfs, maintenez tendu tout mon être" (p. 67). The entire monologue in the original portrays a Hamlet far different from the speaker of this "Être ou ne pas être" soliloquy; Hamlet's lines in the passage convey a passionate and resolute thirst for revenge. Even the hissing "s" sounds of anger released in these lines are compensated for by Gide in his use of the fricatives "v" and "f" and the affricate "sh" ("relâchez"), but somehow the harsh rhythm is broken by substituting the phrase "tout mon être" for the simple pronoun "me."

Gide occasionally draws attention to the idea of Hamlet's excessive contemplation by rendering the verb "think" or the noun "thought" through forms of the French words, "réfléchir" and "réflexion." In the soliloquy, "How all occasions do inform against me," in which Hamlet compares his own delay with the courage of Fortinbras, the prince attributes his feeling of cowardice directly to his penchant for thinking:

Now whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,  
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part  
wisdom,  
And ever three parts coward, I do not know  
Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do"...  
(IV, 4, 39-44, p. 198)

Both the verb and the noun in question become "réfléchir" and "réflexion" in Gide's version:

Mais, sinon, par oubli bestial, du moins par  
scrupule timoré qui réfléchit trop minutieusement  
aux conséquences -- réflexion composée d'un quart de  
sagesse et de trois quarts de couardise -- j'en  
suis encore à douter si je ne vis que pour me  
dire: "Ce geste doit être fait"... (p. 199)

The French verb here is accurate enough for "thinking too precisely," but it still manages to narrow the sense of the original word and serves to slightly emphasize the sense of Hamlet's overspeculation for the audience.

Perhaps harping on the use of this one word and its derivatives in a translation as difficult as Hamlet may seem to be splitting hairs, but the word is repeated often enough in Gide's translation instead of the more general verb "penser" (used by Hugo and Bonnefoy) to confirm the slight shade of personal interpretation that Gide injects into his translation. A comparison of the opening lines of the soliloquy in the original and in Gide's version when Hamlet foregoes the opportunity of killing the praying Claudius may serve to reinforce the point:

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying  
 And now I'll do't; and so he goes to heaven  
 And so I am revenged. That would be scanned:  
 A villain kills my father; and for that  
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
 To heaven. (III, 3, 73-78, p. 166)

Je pourrais fondre à pic sur lui, pendant qu'il  
 prie. Je le fais?... Il va droit au ciel.  
 Est-ce là ma vengeance? Cela vaut qu'on  
 y réfléchisse. Un faquin assassine mon père;  
 et moi, pour récompense, moi, son unique fils,  
 j'envoie ce faquin au paradis. (p. 167)

The word "scanned" is glossed by G. L. Kittredge<sup>13</sup> in his edition of Hamlet as "consider closely," of which "réfléchisse" is certainly an adequate equivalent,

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<sup>13</sup> The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, p. 100

but a more precise definition is assigned to the word as used by Hamlet in the O.E.D.: "to discover by examination."<sup>14</sup> Yves Bonnefoy's version, "cela vaut un examen" (p. 82), is more accurate here, especially considering the context of "scann'd." In the original the evenly balanced clauses are the product of the mind of a clever logician, not of a dreamy philosopher. The three clauses starting with "now" introduce the circumstances and possible course of action, while the following clauses beginning with "so" present the possible conclusions of Hamlet's inductive reasoning. But the two conclusions, "So he goes to heaven/And so am I revenged," though equal syntactically, are semantically contradictory. The sharp cesura in the line "And so am I revenged; that would be scann'd" corresponds perfectly to the movement of Hamlet's thought, for the demonstrative "that" signals that Hamlet, despite his desire for revenge, does not easily fall prey to deceptive logic. The following lines show Hamlet's realization that sending Claudius to heaven is logically

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<sup>14</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 173.

no revenge at all:

A villain kills my father; and for that  
I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
To heaven.

The word "scann'd" in this passage has the sense of "consider closely" but not necessarily the connotation of a hesitant mind hindered from action by excessive reflection. Gide's translation approximates the sense of the original, but the choice of "réfléchisse" must be considered in the context Gide creates in his version of the passage. The syntactic balance of the logical argument in the original is not retained, but even more significantly, Gide's punctuation alters the meaning of the original lines. There is no justification from any extant text of Hamlet for putting two of Hamlet's declarative statements into the interrogative form as Gide does: "Je le fais?... Est-ce là ma vengeance?"

In the context of these two questions, the verb "réfléchisse" further intensifies the suggestion of a hesitant and overspeculative Hamlet. The passage is particularly important for an understanding of Hamlet's

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<sup>15</sup> Hamlet has not heard Claudius' soliloquy prior to this and is not aware that the king is incapable of salvation since he states that he cannot renounce the fruits of his sin.

character; nineteenth century critics used it as proof of Hamlet's lack of will and indecisiveness when faced with a perfect opportunity to kill Claudius and revenge his father. Gide's version agrees much more with their views than with the original text, where the lexis, syntax, and rhythm together convey more the shrewd and calculating mind of a man committed to total revenge than the weak will of a philosopher crippled by too much "reflexion" and thus incapable of action.

The Goethean image of the weak and oversensitive Hamlet occasionally surfaces in Gide's translation through explicit lexical choices for words in the original that have more exact French equivalents. The most striking example is found in Gide's translation of Hamlet's soliloquy, "What a rogue and peasant slave am I," where Hamlet berates himself for delaying his revenge and so claims that he is "...unpregnant of my cause" (II, 2, 553, p. 118). "Unpregnant" is glossed by Kittredge as "with no real feeling, without plans for executing,"<sup>16</sup> but Gide's version "défaillant à ma cause" (p. 119) has an entirely different sense. While

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<sup>16</sup> The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, p. 68.

Hamlet decries his insensitivity and carelessness in the original, Gide's choice of "défaillant," with its connotations of the faint and the feeble, conveys the image of the delicate tragic hero who chides himself for his weakness. Bonnefoy's rendering of the word by "insoucieux" (p. 57) is more accurate in this case.

Hamlet has also been characterized as a prig and a purist by many critics who have stressed his strong sense of moral outrage at his mother's remarriage, but the intense moral tone of Hamlet's invective to Gertrude is certainly justified if one simply recalls that the remarriage is compounded with Hamlet's knowledge of the murder of his father by Claudius and that the entire crime takes place on the highest level of supposed moral authority in the state. But moral outrage at this deed is hardly sufficient evidence to judge Hamlet as a moral purist, especially if one considers his bawdy exchanges with Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, or the ribald quips he makes to Ophelia during the mousetrap play.

In Gide's translation, however, there are strong suggestions of Hamlet's moral righteousness and prudery. Helen Bailey, in her study of Hamlet in France, claims that Jean-Louis Barrault in the title role

played the prince as "a superhero of spiritual chastity,"<sup>17</sup> and it is very probable that Barrault's interpretation of the role was conditioned to some degree by the image of Hamlet created in Gide's translation.

The first note of Hamlet's moral and spiritual purity is struck in Gide's translation in the injunction of his father's ghost, "Taint not thy mind" (I, 5, 85, p. 64), which Gide renders as "Garde ton esprit pur" (p. 65). Reuben Brower comments on Gide's version that "'Taint' in its Shakespearean associations with melancholy and corruption is allied at once with the disease-rottenness theme that has already been underlined in a dozen or more different expressions. Gide's 'Garde ton esprit pur' eliminates the connection and gives no hint of what is to come. Bonnefoy's translation 'Ne souille pas ton âme' picks up nicely his 'O souillures, souillures de la chair! (this too, too sullied flesh) and shows the poetic dramatist at work in the act of translation."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hamlet in France: From Voltaire to Laforgue (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1964), p. 231

<sup>18</sup> op. cit., p. 150-151.

Gide's translation of the phrase certainly loses any association with melancholy in the sense that Hamlet's father here warns his son not to be swayed from his duty by immersion in gloomy thought. But the association with the iterative pattern of disease-rottenness imagery is maintained, however dialectically, by the suggestion of its opposite in the adjective "pur". Brower is too hasty in arguing that Gide "eliminates the connection," since various forms and derivatives of the word "pur" appear throughout the translation to reproduce this pattern of imagery.

Jiří Levý maintains that "in his choices the translator often creates the context for a certain number of subsequent decisions,"<sup>19</sup> and this is precisely what Gide has done in his repetition of "pur" and its derivatives in the Hamlet translation. A morphological pattern is established to correspond to the dominant disease imagery of the original; Gide, with the love of dialectics so pervasive in his own works, sets up a strict dichotomy of the "pure" and the "corrupt" which is enhanced in French by the phonetic similarity of "pur" and "pourri," an adjective that Gide frequently employs to convey the sense of rot and decay.

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<sup>19</sup> "Translation as a Decision Process," p. 1172.

However, the correspondence between the pattern set up by Gide and that of Shakespeare is far from exact. The word "pur" and its derivatives in Gide's version are mostly used by or applied to Hamlet, which suggests in Gide's dialectic that the prince, on the side of moral and spiritual purity, stands distinctly apart from and uninfected by the general corruption around him. In Shakespeare's play there is certainly an overwhelming impression of rottenness and corruption, but at the same time there is little suggestion of Hamlet as basically "pur."

Hamlet's first soliloquy after the ghost has implanted his command, "Garde ton esprit pur," already continues the pattern of repetition. The prince vows that "...thy commandment alone shall live/Within the book and volume of my brain/Unmixed with baser matter..." (I, 5, 103-106, p. 66), and Gide renders the last phrase as "expurgé de toute scorie" (p. 67), suggesting that Hamlet's moral purity is a necessary precondition for fulfilling his vow to his father. Hugo's version, "fermé à ces vils sujets" (p. 29), is a bit too prosaic, while Bonnefoy's "séparé des matières plus frivoles" (p. 29) emphasizes a resolve to perform a duty unswervingly and not explicitly to stay morally upright. Another example of this pattern in Gide's

translation is the repeated use of "impur" to render "foul" or "rotten" and also to suggest its dialectical opposite "pur", such as in Hamlet's speech on man, where the earth is called "a foul and pestilential congregation of vapors" (II, 2, 298, p. 102) and is translated by Gide as "un impur amoncellement de vapeurs pestilentielle" (p. 103).

Hamlet's preoccupation with purity and chastity in Gide's translation is also emphasized by other lexical and syntactic deviations from the original. For example, Hamlet tells Ophelia that "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny" (III, 1, 136-137, p. 130), and Gide renders this as "tu serais chaste comme la glace, pure comme la neige, la calomnie te souillera" (p. 131). By the syntactic reversal in the final clause and the substitution of "souillera" for "escape," Gide again emphasizes the imagery of corruption and makes Hamlet more of a spokesman for chastity than the original text suggests. In another example, Hamlet rants at his mother about the mutiny "in a matron's bones" (III, 4, 83, p. 174), and instead of translating the vivid image literally as Hugo and Bonnefoy do ("os"), Gide chooses the word "chair" (p. 175) with its explicit association of

Gertrude's sin with pleasures of the "flesh".

The word "chair" also figures importantly in Hamlet's first soliloquy, which is extremely significant dramatically since it is our initial glimpse of the inner man away from the court of Claudius where his mysterious puns and barely controlled hostility are as yet unexplained to the audience. The soliloquy is definitely full of the imagery of rot and decay, and the opening lines "O that this too, too solid flesh would melt/Thaw and resolve itself into a dew" (I, 2, 129-130, p. 34) strike the keynote of Hamlet's disgust with the flesh and the material world. But these lines undergo a strange permutation in Gide's version: "Chair trop massive, Oh! Si tu pouvais fondre, t'évaporer, te résoudre en rosée!" (p. 35).

Not only is the material self, the "chair", in the emphatic first position, but it is also addressed ("si tu pouvais"), as if the flesh were a separate and

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20 The idea of sexual corruption is also implied in Gide's rendering of the famous phrase "The time is out of joint" (I, 5, 189, p. 72) as "Cette époque est dévergondée" (p. 73). The image in the original is drawn from the everyday world of carpentry, and one must admire how Gide, despite the sense of debauchery and licentiousness implied in "dévergondée," manages to convey in one word both the pervasive motif of rotteness and the simple image of the hinge or joint, which in French is "gond," the morphological root of Gide's choice. Bonnefoy's translation of the phrase is the idiom "hors des gonds," which is accurate and without the added associations of Gide's "dévergondée."

distinct part of the self, almost another person. While it is certainly true that the inner self emerges in the soliloquy, there is no suggestion in the original of the sharp split between the inner self as "I" and the bodily, external self as "thou" which Gide conveys grammatically in his translation. The spiritual Hamlet, in a sense, stands outside his corporeal self in Gide's version and expresses loathing at his flesh which is doomed to rot in a corrupt world.<sup>21</sup>

Here Gide lays additional emphasis on the division in Hamlet's character, which though certainly present in the original, is not as explicitly stated. Not only in this case, but also in the strict dichotomy of "apparence" and "réalité," the moral Hamlet and the immoral world, the "pur" and the "pourri," the hero's total immersion in thought and total inability to act, Gide's entire treatment of Hamlet in his translation reflects the extremely sharp separation of opposed values which is found more in the dialectic of his own works than in Shakespeare's tragedy.

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<sup>21</sup> The same sharp separation between the inner self and the body occurs in Claudius' soliloquy (III, 3, 43-45, p. 164-165) when the king refers to "this cursed hand... thicker than itself with brother's blood"; in Gide's version the hand is addressed as "thou": "...maudite main, quand le sang d'un frère t'enduirait d'un revêtement plus épais que ta chair même."

CHAPTER IV

## GIDE'S TRANSLATION OF THE "TO BE OR NOT TO BE" SOLILOQUY

Since we have been discussing so far only isolated elements of Shakespeare's text to study Gide's image of Hamlet, it would be more profitable now to move on to a detailed analysis of Gide's translation of an entire passage which is significant for his interpretation of Hamlet's character. The most famous passage in the tragedy, Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy will be examined below in order to determine both the functional shifts and compensatory devices Gide employs to convey the dynamism of the original and also the image of Hamlet which emerges in his version of this important monologue.

The "To be or not to be" soliloquy is among the most challenging Shakespearean passages for a translator, since it is characterized by "its rapid transitions, dissolution of syntax, its extraordinary economy, its fusion of several emotions and ideas, which can follow the quickly changing reactions of a

sensitive mind." <sup>1</sup> Here more than in any other part of the play we see Hamlet dealing with the ultimate philosophical question of life and death, though not in the manner of a schooled philosopher (as in Voltaire's translation), for the twisting turns of thought in the soliloquy characterize a man who is not deliberating the problem from a distance but one who intensely feels its paradox as he discusses it. The greatest difficulty for the translator is in rendering the emotional logic of the soliloquy which proceeds more by quicksilver verbal association than by preconceived plan.

Because of the major importance of the soliloquy, additional translations of the passage have been consulted, mainly those listed in the *Pléiade Shakespeare* edited by Gide, and they will be cited when necessary for the sake of comparison. For convenience the soliloquy will be discussed in arbitrarily chosen sections which more or less correspond to new thoughts or variations on the basic theme as they arise in Hamlet's mind.

The opening lines of the soliloquy state the alternatives of existence and non-existence, and this

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Clemen, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art: Collected Essays* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 160.

is followed by a more concrete set of alternatives that serves as a variation on the basic dichotomy:

To be or not to be: that is the question  
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
 And by opposing end them? (III, 1, 56-60, p. 126)

These five lines already introduce the emotional logic of Hamlet's thought; the abstract dichotomy, "to be or not to be," is rapidly restated in the identical syntactic form of the infinitives, yet in a flurry of metaphors that characterize the inner turmoil of a man who seems to pluck images out of a rushing whirlpool of ideas in order to grasp the ultimate paradoxes of life. As Samuel Johnson so aptly noted, "...the connections in 'to be or not to be' are more in the speaker's mind than on his tongue."<sup>2</sup>

The spontaneous fusion of images in the original lines undergoes an interesting change in Gide's translation:

Etre ou ne pas être: telle est la question.  
 Y a-t-il pour l'âme plus de noblesse à endurer les coups et les revers d'une injurieuse fortune, ou à s'armer contre elle pour mettre frein à une marée de douleurs? (p. 127)

Gide's tendency toward abstraction is again evident in his bland rendering of the '(noun) and (noun) of (noun)' phrase, "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,"

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<sup>2</sup>Preface to Shakespeare (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957), p. 77.

as "les coups et les revers d'une injurieuse fortune."  
 But a curious syntactic shift occurs in Gide's translation of the image "...to take arms against a sea of troubles/And by opposing end them." This is the problematic mixed metaphor which bothered Pope and other English rigorists and which "...could never accommodate itself to the rules of French logic and clarity,"<sup>3</sup> as Harry Levin notes. Levin adds that "the impulse of French translators is to qualify Shakespeare's trope by neutralizing one component or the other, modifying 'take arms' to 'lutter' or 's'insurger' and a 'sea of troubles' to 'un monde de douleurs' or 'la mer orageuse', or else abstracting both, as in Letourneur's rendering: 'se révoltant contre une multitude de maux.'<sup>4</sup>"

Gide's solution for the problematic lines is the most original of all French translators but also the most perplexing: "...ou s'armer contre elle pour

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<sup>3</sup> "Shakespeare in the Light of Comparative Literature," Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 121-122.

mettre frein a une marée de douleurs." First of all, in the original the "slings and arrows" seem to suggest to Hamlet by purely verbal association the "take arms" image in which he expresses the second alternative. Taking arms against "a sea of troubles" undoubtedly seemed as illogical to Gide as it has to other French translators since Voltaire. Though Gide's translation avoids the typical French neutralization discussed by Levin, it still betrays a mind ill at ease with the mixed metaphor. By the simple insertion of "contre elle" ("elle" referring to "fortune") after "s'armer," Gide separates the idea of "to take arms" from "une marée de douleurs" and draws the martial imagery of the infinitive back within the sphere of "les coups et les revers," words which, if not vivid, at least connote warfare.

Gide's rendering of the idea of "a sea of troubles" as "...pour mettre frein a une marée de douleurs" is imaginative yet problematical. Levin expressed surprise at this "unexpected step of transporting the catachresis from warfare to horsemanship,"<sup>5</sup> and one possible explanation could be that the riding image is rather loosely related to warfare. More likely, however, Gide had a Voltairean hostility to the

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<sup>5</sup> "Shakespeare in the Light of Comparative Literature," p. 122.

mixed metaphor and thus rearranged the syntax by his positioning of "contre elle" to create proper metaphoric logic, yet he still felt that he had to compensate for this by substituting a catachresis of his own. This is a very significant point, for Gide's version of these difficult lines betray the tension which characterizes his entire translation of Hamlet -- a desire, on the one hand, to be faithful to Shakespeare's text, no matter how extravagant it may seem at times to Gide, yet on the other hand a certain aversion to a style which is so alien to his native literary heritage and personal tastes.

In the next section of the soliloquy, Hamlet introduces the idea of death, which is expressed by the same grammatical form as the other associations of "to be or not to be" that have arisen in his mind:

To die, to sleep;  
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heart-ache and thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;  
 To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub  
 (11.60-65)

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Soon after he had completed the translation, Gide expressed irritation at Hamlet's "flabbergasting" and "spasmodic" imagery, even going so far as to wonder "whether I didn't perhaps exaggerate the beauty which seemed to me so great" (JAG, IV, p. 129)

By the use of the infinitive, "to sleep" becomes equivalent to saying that all our sufferings end, as if Hamlet juggles and balances the various associations of an idea in his mind grammatically. Gide's version stresses the infinitive equivalence by placing the phrase "Calmer enfin ..." in the emphatic first position, almost immediately following his translation of the infinitives "to die" and "to sleep":

Mourir, dormir; c'est tout. Calmer enfin, dit-on,  
 dans le sommeil les affreux battements du coeur;  
 quelle conclusion des maux héréditaires serait plus  
 dévotement souhaitée? Mourir. Dormir. Dormir,  
 rêver,  
 peut-être. C'est là le hic!

In the original lines the image of "the heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks/That flesh is heir to ..." compactly expresses both the intensity ("heart-ache") and range ("thousand natural shocks") of life's suffering. Gide splits the phrase and loses the compression of the original by placing the two ideas in separate clauses: "Calmer...les affreux battements du coeur; quelle conclusion des maux héréditaires serait plus dévotement souhaitée?" The phrase "battements du coeur" ("heartbeats") is just as vivid as the original but does not adequately convey the idea of pain in "heart-ache," while "maux héréditaires" is certainly a devitalized abstract substitute for "the thousand natural shocks/That flesh is heir to."

The syntax of the original lines also exemplifies the characteristic inversion of logical thought in Hamlet's soliloquies, since the first three and a half lines in normal word order would follow the phrase "... 'tis a consummation/Devoutly to be wished." Jiří Levý maintains that many translators tend to regularize the syntax of older dramas,<sup>7</sup> and Gide seems to have followed that pattern in his Hamlet. By dividing the lines into two distinct clauses, Gide makes Hamlet's thought seem much more ordered than in the original text and thus fails to convey the typical dissolution in Hamlet's syntax. In one of his comments on Shakespeare's dramas, Gide indirectly attributes his inability to render Hamlet's contorted syntax to the stringency of the French language: "le traduction français se trouve, par les exigences de notre grammaire, dans l'impossibilité de laisser subsister l'hésitation poétique et cette incertitude psychologique où parfois se révèle admirablement un certain trouble d'esprit."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Die literarische Übersetzung: Theorie einer Kunstgattung, trans. W. Schamschula (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1969), p. 129

<sup>8</sup> "Avant-Propos," W. Shakespeare, Théâtre complet, p. xi.

The version of his predecessors undoubtedly reinforced Gide's view of the irreconcilability of French and English syntax. The "trouble d'esprit" evident in Hamlet's syntax is certainly difficult to translate, but the difficulty stems more from the liberties of Elizabethan English than the strict rules of French.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Yves Bonnefoy's translation of the original lines proves Gide's theory wrong, since in it he comes remarkably close to conveying the syntax of Hamlet's long sentence:

...Oh, penser qu'un sommeil peut finir  
 La souffrance du coeur et les mille blessures  
 Qui sont le lot de la chair, oui, c'est un  
 dénouement ardemment désirable... (p. 61)

This section ends with the phrase "...ay, there's the rub," which provides an abrupt shift in rhythm from the thought of "to dream" to the further association that it evokes in Hamlet's mind. The image of the rub is taken from bowling and indicates any unfavorable inclination of ground that diverts

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<sup>9</sup> Russian syntax is more flexible than French, yet Pasternak and other translators of the play in Russia have experienced the same difficulty in rendering Hamlet's syntax. Schlegel also divides the original lines into two clauses in the German translation: "...Und zu wissen dass ein Schlaf/Das Herzweh und die tausend Stösse endet/Die unsers Fleisches Erbteil; Es ~~ist~~ ein Ziel/Aufs innigste zu wünschen."

the ball from its path. Most French translators have usually resorted to rendering just the idea of an impediment by "l'obstacle" or "l'embarass," while some more adventurous ones introduce metaphors of their own: "l'écueil" (Guizot, 1821), "gouffre" (Ménard, 1886), or even "le point d'interrogation" (Montégut,<sup>10</sup> 1867).

Gide also creates his own metaphor and translates the difficult phrase as "c'est là le hic." As Harry Levin notes, "a metaphor from sport is transposed to a bit of scholastic jargon. Since the hic is an abbreviation of the Latin hic est quaestio, it is basically a repetition of Hamlet's 'That is the question.'<sup>11</sup> True, the use of "hic" enhances the image of Hamlet the schooled philosopher that is already emphasized in Gide's translation, but this term from "scholastic jargon" is not altogether out of place in Hamlet's most philosophical soliloquy. In fact, "hic" is even superior to all the other French versions, primarily because it retains the monosyllabic abruptness of the original word that provides a rhythmic stop to the line and to the thought.

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<sup>10</sup> Appendice, Théâtre complet, pp. 1346-1357.

<sup>11</sup> "Shakespeare in the Light of Comparative Literature," p. 122.

The "rub" or obstacle signals another turn in Hamlet's argument after the concept of "to die" has triggered the suggestion of "to sleep" and "to dream." All these words have become momentarily synonymous in Hamlet's mind but they are repeated with different implications in the following lines of the soliloquy:

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
 Must give us pause. There's the respect  
 That makes calamity of so long life. (ll. 66-69)

Death may seem only a restful sleep to ease our earthly sufferings, but still suicide cannot be justified if the "sleep of death" is just another illusion. Hamlet proceeds from the idea of death as sleep to death as an unfathomable and possibly evil dream by purely verbal association, which is stressed in his repetition of "sleep," "death," and "dreams," but Gide for some reason chooses to find synonyms for all three words in his translation and thus fails to convey the very process of thinking by suggestive repetition of Hamlet's soliloquy:

Mourir, dormir. Dormir...rêver, peut-être. C'est là le hic. Car, échappés des liens charnels, si, dans ce sommeil du trépas, il nous vient des songes... halte-là! Cette considération prolonge la calamité de la vie.

What is most interesting in Gide's translation of this section is his rendering of "when we have shuffled off this mortal coil" as "échappés des liens charnels." "Fleshy bonds," as Gide renders "mortal coil," is probably more vivid and accurate than "mortelle enveloppe," which has been a favorite among French translators since Letourneur (Ménard, 1886; Rosny, 1909; Pourtalès, 1928). But the word "shuffled" in the original, according to Kittredge's gloss, has the sense of "casting off an encumbrance."<sup>12</sup> Gide, by his use of "échappés," conveys the general sense of the original but just slightly seasons it with another shade of meaning, since "échappés" in its emphatic position as first semantic kernel in Gide's version subtly suggests again the Goethean image of a tragic hero who is unfit for the world and considers death a desired "escape" from it.

Though it may seem here that too much is read into Gide's choice of one word, the subtle connotations introduced by "échappés" are supplemented by similar lexical choices in the next section of the soliloquy. This section is composed of two lengthy rhetorical

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<sup>12</sup> The Tragedy of Hamlet, op. cit., p. 74.

questions by which Hamlet convinces himself that the <sup>99</sup>  
possibility of a terrible afterlife is the main barrier  
to an expedient suicide. The first long rhetorical  
question is presented below in the original and in  
Gide's translation:

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin?... (ll. 70-76)

Car, sinon, qui supporterait du sort les  
soufflets et les avanies, les torts de l'oppresseur,  
les outrages de l'orgueilleux, les affres de l'amour  
dédaigné, les remises de la justice, l'insolence des  
gens officiel, les rebuffades que les méritants  
rencontrent auprès des indignes, alors qu'un  
petit coup de pointe donnerait quitus de tout cela?

Man's ignorance of the afterlife has introduced  
an impasse into Hamlet's argument which is dramatically  
conveyed in this rhetorical question by the sharp  
contrasts between earthly suffering and suicide. The  
sufferings of our existence, "the whips and scorns  
of time," are catalogued in such detail that they  
provide overwhelming justification for suicide, es-  
pecially when contrasted to the ease by which one can  
end these sufferings: "...when he himself might his  
quietus make/With a bare bodkin ?".

The vividness of Shakespeare's '(noun) and  
(noun) of (noun)' phrase, "the whips and scorns of time,"

is considerably weakened by Gide's translation, "... du sort les soufflets et les avanies." Although the union of the abstract ("avanies") and the concrete ("soufflets") is retained, the French nouns seem to suggest, rather inappropriately at this point, the tragedy of honor and thus considerably narrow the range of connotation and the intensity implicit in  
<sup>13</sup>  
the original images.

The list of life's earthly woes is translated fairly literally by Gide, but one of his better achievements in the Hamlet translation is his rendering of "a bare bodkin" by "un petit coup de pointe." The original noun and adjective, "bare bodkin," is a salient image which in the masterful interaction of lexis, syntax, and phonetics emphasizes the extreme simplicity of committing suicide. Lexically, the "bodkin" is a  
<sup>14</sup>  
small stiletto-like object, seemingly insignificant when compared to the mighty enemies it can overcome.

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<sup>13</sup> In any case, Gide's version was suggested most likely by the Schwob-Morand translation: "les soufflets et les avanies du temps," Théâtre complet, p. 206.

<sup>14</sup> Kittredge, p. 74.

Syntactically, Shakespeare places it in the final emphatic position, just following the long catalogue of life's torments to which it stands in contrast; phonetically, the repeated sounds of the initial voiced labial "b" practically prompt the actor to spit out Hamlet's contempt for the sufferings which can be alleviated so effortlessly by a simple stab.

Gide renders the phrase "alors qu'un petit coup de pointe donnerait quitus de tout cela," which reveals his usual more regularized syntax that in this case sacrifices the final emphasis on "bare bodkin" in the original. However, the phrase "petit coup de pointe" is far superior to the recurring versions in other French translations such as "simple poignard," "seul coup de poignard," or "simple poinçon," which substitute mere paraphrases for the total stylistic effect of the original. Here where sound and sense are married so effectively in the original, Gide manages to compensate by conveying the idea of smallness in two words "petit" and "pointe", which at the same time have the equivalent abruptness of the original and a similar repetition of the initial labial sounds in the voiceless "p."

The second rhetorical question in Hamlet's argument reiterates the sufferings of life in different images, yet this time the prince comes to affirm the

necessity for that suffering because of our fear of  
the unknown after death:

who would fardels bear  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of ? (ll. 76-82)

Qui donc assumerait ces charges,  
accepterait de geindre et de suer sous  
le faix écrasant de la vie, s'il n'y avait  
cette crainte de quelque chose après la mort,  
mystérieuse contrée d'où nul voyageur ne revient ?  
Voici l'énigme qui nous engage à supporter les  
maux présents, plutôt que de nous en échapper  
vers ces autres dont nous ne connaissons rien.

Gide's version gives a fairly literal translation of the original lines but also includes some interesting functional shifts in both lexis and syntax which bear on his interpretation of Hamlet's character in the translation. For example, the "weary life" that mortals "grunt and sweat" under becomes "le faix écrasant de la vie" in Gide's version, and this intensification of Hamlet's words in French once again enhances the impression of a weak character who is overcome by a world in which he is too delicate to survive. Also, when Hamlet says that the dread of death "makes us rather bear those ills we have/Than fly to others we know not of," Gide renders "fly" by "échapper," and since Gide relies on this verb more than any other French translator in

rendering the soliloquy, its repeated use must be considered a highly conscious choice on his part.

The verb "échapper," of course, is a justifiable equivalent for "fly" in this context, but the slight shade of difference between the two words serves as another example of Bonnefoy's distinction between the "ouverture" of English and the "fermeture" of French. The English verb does have the sense of "flee" or "escape" which is connoted in Gide's choice of "échapper," but "fly" can also suggest a hasty, rash decision to commit suicide that is prompted more by sudden impulse than gloomy meditation. This is obviously not the definitive sense of the verb "fly" in this line, but it is certainly just as valid as a possible explanation of Hamlet's meaning, considering that the prince himself claims that he thinks about consequences before acting and tries to control his impulses by his reason. It is precisely this "ouverture" of an English word such as "fly" that creates the ambiguity which had led critics to fashion so many divergent interpretations of Hamlet's character and the meaning of the tragedy.

Gide's greatest deviation from the original occurs in the syntax of his translation of this question,

after Hamlet asks who would suffer through life

But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others we know not of?

This is a typical Hamlet sentence, where the subject is qualified and re-qualified by subordinate phrases and appositives and thus passes through many semantic fields before the predicate is reached.<sup>15</sup> The stylistic effect is to portray in language a character whose thought develops more by a stream of words and ideas than by an orderly syntactic plan.

Gide, like other French translators, finds it difficult to sustain the original disruption of normal syntax in French, a language in which the syntactic flow from subject to verb is much more strictly maintained.<sup>16</sup> The stringent syntactic rules of French compel Gide in this case to separate the original lines into

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<sup>15</sup> Another example of this is in Hamlet's soliloquy, "What a rogue and peasant slave am I":

This is most brave  
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall-a-cursing, like a very drab,  
A scullion ! (II, 2, 568-573, p. 120)

<sup>16</sup> Stylistique comparée, p. 202

two sentences: "...s'il n'y avait cette crainte de quelque chose après la mort, mystérieuse contrée d'où nul voyageur revient ? Voici l'énigme qui nous engage à supporter les maux présents, plutôt que de nous en échapper vers ces autres dont nous ne connaissons rien." The "dread of something after death...puzzles the will" in the original text, but in Gide's version this dread is conveyed by the bland form of "avoir" ("s'il n'y avait cette crainte..."). The predicate "puzzles the will" is transferred to another sentence in Gide's translation and stated in extremely abstract terms: "Voici l'énigme qui nous engage..." In addition, the elimination of the word "will" in the translation practically epitomizes Gide's interpretation of Hamlet as a hero whose lack of will ultimately destroys him.

The phrase "Voici l'énigme" is consistent with Gide's earlier use of "hic," and this additional term from scholastic jargon is an adequate component in the orderly syntax of a schooled philosopher which Gide substitutes for the original syntax. But this is exactly where the inadequacy of Gide's translation lies, since his more formal diction and syntax depict a character who contemplates a profound question objectively rather than a tragic hero who experiences the dilemma intensely as he ponders it. Shakespeare's

achievement in this tragedy is in large part due to his stylistic use of syntax to imitate dramatically the whirlwind reactions of a sensitive and suffering mind. The insurmountable problems involved in translating these dramatic effects has not only plagued Gide but all French translators of the play, and it has been, perhaps, one of the major barriers to a total French appreciation of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

The consequences of Hamlet's argument between a tortured life and an expedient but awesome suicide are presented in the final lines of the soliloquy:

Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all;  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale case of thought,  
 And enterprises of great pith and moment  
 With this regard their currents turn awry,  
 And lose the name of action. (ll. 83-88)

Et c'est ainsi que la conscience fait de chacun de nous un peureux; c'est ainsi que la verdure première de nos résolutions s'éteint à l'ombre pâle de la pensée; c'est ainsi que nos entreprises de grand essor et conséquence tournent leur courant de travers et se déroutent de l'action.

Gide is particularly successful in rendering the sense of contrast in the sentence, "Thus the native hue of resolution/Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought!" The Renaissance connotations of humors denoted by colors is lost in Gide's version, but these associations are probably just as remote for a

contemporary audience of native English speakers. Still, Gide retains the contrasting color imagery of the "native due" and the "pale cast" by "verdeur" and "pale," and the verb "s'etiole" is an adequate compensation for "sicklied o'er," especially since it is consistent with the image of greenery which Gide substitutes.

Hamlet's syntax is much more regular in this sentence than in the rest of the soliloquy, and its aphoristic style of syntactic balance and semantic contrast is not only easier for Gide to translate, but it is also similar to the style of his own works.<sup>17</sup> This explains Gide's success in rendering the phrase, and although he had the same difficulty as other French translators in conveying Hamlet's contorted syntax, Gide has been more fortunate in translating the speech of other characters in the play, which has its dramatic impact from Shakespeare's clever use of syntactic balance and semantic contrast. In the next chapter we shall discuss Gide's treatment of the speech of Claudius and Polonius, whose language is in large part much more measured and thus more amenable to translation than Hamlet's is.

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<sup>17</sup> Jean Hytier discusses Gide's use of syntactic balance and semantic contrast in André Gide, op. cit., p. 57-58.

CHAPTER V

## HAMLET AND THE COURT:

## CLAUDIUS AND POLONIUS IN GIDE'S TRANSLATION

Hamlet has justifiably earned the lion's share of criticism of Shakespeare's tragedy, yet many critics become so engrossed in disentangling the complex skein of contradictions in the prince's character that they de-emphasize the other characters or merely treat them as vehicles whose actions only serve to illuminate by contrast the complexity of the tragic hero. There is some justification for this in the play; Laertes and Fortinbras, for example, are definitely characters who set off Hamlet's indecisiveness and overspeculation by their resolute thirst for action. Hamlet himself, in his final soliloquy, marks the contrast between Fortinbras' courage and his own delay, and Laertes' passionate impulse to revenge the death of his father is clearly juxtaposed with Hamlet's long hesitation in fulfilling the duty imposed on him by the ghost of the murdered king.

Laertes and Fortinbras, however, are minor foils in the tragedy; more significantly, the major group of characters who stand in sharp contrast to

Hamlet are the members of the Danish court. In the tragic conflict between appearance and reality, it is clearly the court of Denmark which represents every shade of false appearance, hypocrisy and deceit that disgust Hamlet and force him to adopt the mask of madness to gain his revenge.

The conflict between Hamlet and the Danish court is played out largely on the field of language, and so the language of the characters at court is sharply distinguished from the various registers of Hamlet's style. A dramatic character, as George Steiner asserts, is "a semantic construct, an aggregate of verbal and gestural indicators,"<sup>1</sup> and the verbal indicators in Hamlet's character studied in the preceding two chapters are marked by a language which ranges from the intense emotional logic and contorted syntax of the soliloquies to the jocular yet caustic prose aimed at shattering the false veneer of court hypocrisy. The language of the characters at court, on the other hand, is characterized by a balanced and measured syntax which belies the corruption and "disjointedness" underneath, and the foremost representatives of this official style are

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<sup>1</sup> After Babel, p. 6,

king Claudius and his chief counselor Polonius.

An excellent example of the court style is Claudius' first address in Act I:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
 The imperial jointress of this warlike state,  
 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
 With one auspicious and one dropping eye,  
 With mirth in funeral and dirge in marriage,  
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,  
 Taken to wife: Nor have we herein barr'd  
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
 With this affair along: for all, our thanks.  
 (I, 2, 1-16, p. 26)

The salient features of this passage are the parallel grammatical structures typical of the court style, but in this case the syntactic balance reaches its cleverest yet most deceitful heights. Here Claudius' balanced phrases include a set of oxymorons, and underlying these lexical contrasts are opposed values which Claudius in his skillful use of syntax manages to reconcile by sheer linguistic trickery to justify his hasty marriage to the recently widowed queen.

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<sup>2</sup> The difference between the use of prose and poetry in the play is also operative here, and it will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

The passage is significant dramatically, not only because it sheds further light on the sinister and troubling appearance of the ghost in the opening scene of the play, but also because it establishes Claudius as a formidable opponent for Hamlet. The tragic conflict of the play requires that the king be a worthy enemy in order to make Hamlet's strategic ploys and delays credible to the audience, and it is precisely by Claudius' expert use of rhetoric that he is characterized as a powerful master diplomat capable of juggling moral laws in syntax and persuasively making sin "seem" a reasonable virtue in order to justify his machinations.

Gide's version of the passage is one of the better achievements of his translation:

Encore bien que la mort de notre cher frère laisse un verdoyant souvenir; encore que nos coeurs n'aient pas à relever de ce deuil, non plus que le royaume à défroncer son sourcil chagriné -- toutefois la raison lutte avec la nature et combine une douleur tempérée avec le souci de nous-même. Or donc -- dans une sorte de joie navrée -- riant d'un oeil et pleurant de l'autre--  
 mêlant le glas au chant des noces, le carillon au chant funèbre -- équilibrant pour tout dire liesse et deuil -- nous avons pris pour femme, notre soeur d'hier qui est aujourd'hui notre reine, douairière impériale de notre belliqueux Etat -- ne contrecarrant pas, au reste, vos très sages conseils, qui m'ont accompagné si bien tout le long de cette affaire-- dont ici nous vous remercions. (pp. 27-29)

The translation reveals Gide's awareness that the dramatic impact of Claudius' opening speech depends largely on the clever manipulation of syntactic balance and lexical contrast. The language of the speech is also characterized by syntactic inversions and formal diction, especially in the first four lines:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe...

The irregular inversion of the noun and possessive phrase, "...of Hamlet our dear brother's death/The memory...", and the inverted subject-object-verb order in "that it us befitted," along with the lexis of "befitted" and "contracted" all serve to convey an impression of formality and regal pomp in the original, and in his translation Gide has managed to convey the official tone of the king's first speech in the play. Though the French language prevents Gide from recreating the syntactic inversion of Shakespeare's lines, he compensates in translating the clauses of obligation by using negation as a grammatical circumlocution to state the same idea: "...encore que nos coeurs n'aient pas à relever de ce deuil, non plus que le royaume à défroncer son sourcil chagriné... ." The second clause in French, "non plus que la royaume

("ait" understood) à défroncer son sourcil chagriné,"<sup>113</sup>  
makes a positive statement by two negative forms  
which cancel each other out: "non plus" and the  
privative prefix "dé-" in "défroncer." The roundabout  
way of stating the duty of mourning closely approximates  
the pomp of perfunctory sorrow expressed in the original  
syntax and diction. The coined verb "défroncer" also  
corresponds well to the image and formality of the  
participle in the phrase "contracted in one brow of  
woe."

After these lines urge the solemn necessity  
for mourning the death of the late king, Claudius then  
presents the other side of the argument and becomes  
the spokesman for moral balance by warning against  
excess grief:

Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.

Under the guise of reason, Claudius argues the need  
for equilibrium between "sorrow" for the former ruler  
and "remembrance of ourselves," and in the following  
lines of the passage, he masterfully uses all his  
powers of rhetoric to persuade the court that the  
death of Hamlet's father and the subsequent remarriage  
of his queen are both in accord with the proper moral

equilibrium which "discretion" dictates:

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,  
Taken to wife...

We repeat Gide's version of these lines below:

Or donc -- dans une sorte de joie navrée -- riant  
d'un œil et pleurant de l'autre -- mêlant le glas  
au chant des noces, le carillon au chant funèbre--  
équilibrant pour tout dire liesse et deuil -- nous  
avons pris pour femme, notre soeur d'hier qui est  
aujourd'hui notre reine, douairière impériale de  
notre belliqueux Etat...

Starting from the oxymoron "defeated joy," which Gide renders well as "joie navrée," Claudius introduces a series of balanced syntactic forms that unite opposite lexical meanings. In translating the phrase, "With one auspicious and one dropping eye," Gide compensates for the repetition of "one" and the lexically opposite adjectives by using participles of two antonymic verbs which still retain the original image of optically expressed emotions: "...riant d'un œil et pleurant de l'autre." The aura of formality in the word "auspicious" is sacrificed to the syntactic balance which Gide must have felt to be the overriding concern in rendering the phrase.

The participial symmetry is continued in Gide's translation of the next oxymoronic phrase, "With mirth in funeral and dirge in marriage," in which the concepts of "riant" and "pleurant" seem to merge in his use of the verb "mêlant": "...mêlant le glas au chant des noces, le carillon au chant funèbre," The lexical contrast and syntactic balance of "mirth in funeral" and "dirge in marriage" are rendered by Gide through two noun phrases that are in the identical form of '(noun) au (noun)' and that are joined by the repetition of "chant." Gide uses the word "chant," which is undoubtedly suggested by "dirge" in the original, as a pivotal image to convey the idea of contrast through two aural metonymies, "le glas" and "le carillon," that are both associated with the use of the same device, bells, at the antithetical ceremonies of a wedding and a funeral.

Phonetic effects must also be considered in translating these lines, since Shakespeare conveys the clever duplicity of Claudius' rhetoric not only by expressing concepts opposite in meaning in identical syntactic forms but also by masterfully combining similar sounds with words of opposite meaning. Beginning with the phrase, "With a defeated joy," the

preposition "with," denoting conjunction and association, is used five times in the next three lines; we have already noted the repetition of "one" with the antonyms "auspicious" and "dropping" and in the following line the sense of contrast and balance is certainly heightened by the internal rhyme created by the "ir" sounds in "mirth" and "dirge." A similar effect is conveyed in the next line "In equal scale weighing delight and dole," by the alliteration of the two antonyms "delight and dole."

The inseparable linkage of sound and meaning that is characteristic of all great poetry is undeniably one of the greatest problems facing a translator and is probably responsible for Robert Frost's somewhat cynical definition that "poetry is what disappears in translation." However, Gide on the whole is remarkably sensitive to Shakespeare's masterful use of phonetic effects in Hamlet.<sup>3</sup> Although the skillful blend of

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Gide is aware of Shakespeare's habit of using words which have the sounds suggested by the image which the words evoke. In the ghost's description of his murder, the serpentine image of the poison's effect on his body is portrayed by a series of fricative hissing sounds:

"And a most instant tetter bark'd about  
Most Lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body..." (I, 5, 71-73, p. 64)

Gide retains this effect in his translation: "...et

sound and sense in the above lines of Claudius' speech are impossible for any translator to render totally, Gide still manages to compensate to some degree by his repetition of participial forms with their attendant identical endings: "riant," "pleurant," "mêlant," and "équilibrant." The first two lexically opposite verbs coalesce in the participle "mêlant," and the sense of union and contrast is enhanced in Gide's translation of "In equal scale weighing delight and dole" as "... équilibrant pour tout dire liesse et deuil." The sound repetition is further intensified by the double use of the noun "chant," and the cumulative effect of the often repeated "-ant" sound is to create an aural harmony of nasal tones that belies the wide difference of meaning on the lexical level, just as the original phonetic effects serve to reconcile opposite meanings in the minds of the audience.

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pareil à celui de Lazare, mon corps lisse se couvrit aussitôt d'une écorce d'artreuse, squame immonde" (p. 65). In another example, Claudius is reminded of his guilt by some offhand remark of Polonius, and its effect on the king is conveyed in an aside full of fricatives that imitate the snapping of the whip in the image used: "How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!" (III, 1, 50, p. 126). Gide conveys the sound effect of the image through a similar use of fricative "f" and "s" sounds in his version: "De quel fouet cuisant ces mots cinglent ma conscience!" (p. 127).

One stylistic element which Gide fails to render in his otherwise excellent translation of Claudius' speech is the irregular word order by which the king declares his marriage to Gertrude:

Therefore our sometime sister (object), now our queen,  
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,  
Have (auxiliary verb) we (subject) ...

· · · · ·  
· · · · ·  
· · · · ·  
Taken (main verb) to wife ...

The ellipses indicate the lines studied above in which the phrases of balance and contrast occur, and their omission here serves to illustrate the wide grammatical distance between the subject and the main verb in the king's announcement of his marriage. Although the word order in Claudius' lines is similar grammatically to the broken syntax typical of Hamlet's soliloquies, the dramatic effect is quite different. While Hamlet's syntax dramatically imitates a mind which expresses itself more by feeling than strict logic, the king's syntactic inversions and qualifications of the predicate by balanced prepositional phrases operate as rhetorical camouflage to hide the intrigue and deceit underlying them. His new wife the queen, in a sense, frames the sentence, since she stands at the beginning ("sister") and at the very

end ("wife"), and the oxymoronic phrases that intervene between the subject and verb are calculated to persuade the king's audience of the necessary moral balance which justifies the change from one relationship, sister, to another, wife.

Gide sacrifices this effect in his version by placing the phrases of balance and contrast at the beginning and thereby retaining regular word order:

...dans une sorte de joie navrée -- riant  
d'un oeil et pleurant de l'autre -- mêlant  
le glas au chant des noces, le carillon  
au chant funèbre -- équilibrant pour tout dire  
liesse et deuil -- nous avons pris pour femme,  
notre soeur d'hier, qui est aujourd'hui  
notre reine, douairière<sup>4</sup> impériale de notre  
belliqueux Etat...

Shakespeare's irregular word order, as we have noted earlier, has plagued French translators of Hamlet, and, of all the versions consulted, only Yves Bonnefoy has approached the stylistic effect of the original

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<sup>4</sup> "Douairière" is the usual choice of most French translators for "jointress" but it does not convey the tangential association of the original. Denotatively, "jointress" does indicate the idea of a wife receiving the estate of her dead husband, but the word also fits in ironically with the number of associations that revolve around the root "joint". A few lines below, Claudius will sneer at Fortinbras' estimation of Denmark as "disjoint and out of frame," and later Hamlet will claim that "the time is out of joint" (I, 5, 189),

manipulation of syntax:

Celle donc qui fut notre soeur, celle qui est  
notre reine,  
L'impératrice douairière de ce pays belliqueux,  
Nous l'avons -- et ce fut avec une joie pour ainsi  
dire défigurée,  
Avec un oeil joyeux et l'autre pleurant,  
Avec de l'allégresse aux obsèques et un chant  
funèbre au mariage,  
Tant nous tenons égaux le plaisir et le deuil,  
Nous l'avons prise pour femme... (p. 8)

Bonnefoy is unable to maintain the object-auxiliary verb-subject-main verb inversion in French but still manages to capture a trace of the original effect by the simple repetition of "nous l'avons." However, the superiority of Gide's version in this case is evident from the total lack of phonetic symmetry in Bonnefoy's rendering of the contrast and balance in Claudius' speech.

Gide's success in translating Claudius' speech, as opposed to his problems in rendering the dense texture of Hamlet's soliloquies, can be explained by reference to his own work. Haskell Block claims that "...in translating Shakespeare, Gide adapted him to his own literary style...the clarity and precision of the translation are a direct expression of the literary language employed by Gide in his own writing."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "The Writer as Translator: Some French examples," Comparative Literature Forum, State Univ. of N.Y. (1975), p. 11.

There is certainly a great deal of truth in this, but in translating the effects of lexical contrast and syntactic balance in Claudius' address, Gide's own literary style has proven to be more an asset than a liability.

Gide most often uses the stylistic device of syntactic balance and lexical contrast as a striking and expressive means for presenting the dialectical paradoxes which he explores in his own novels. For example, the gap that Michel in L'Immoraliste feels between the conventional moral code of society and his growing estrangement from it is succinctly expressed by the two nouns in the phrase, "...les plus sages raisonnements ne parent faire aboutir en moi le moindre sentiment de révolte,"<sup>6</sup> which describes his experience of vicarious rebellion while observing an Arab boy steal a pair of scissors in his room. Many similar constructions, identical syntactically but lexically opposite, are used in the novel to portray the dialectic between social enslavement and sensual freedom, such as Michel's remark that "le pire instinct me paraissait le plus sincère."<sup>7</sup> Ménalque's comment to his disciple Nathaneál in Les Nourritures Terrestres

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<sup>6</sup>L'Immoraliste (Paris: Mercure de France, 1902), p. 53,

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 174,

is in the same vein: "Je ne dus le salut de ma chair  
qu'a l'irréremédiable empoisonnement de mon âme."<sup>8</sup>

Finally, in Les Caves du Vatican, Julius de Baraglioul provides Lafcadio with an explanation of the much misunderstood Gidean concept of l'acte gratuit in terms of a paradox that is formed by syntactic balance and lexical inversion: "Songez donc: un crime qui ni la passion, ni le besoin ne motive. Sa raison de commettre le crime, c'est précisément de la commettre sans raison."<sup>9</sup>

Examples of such constructions permeate Gide's works. As we noted earlier, Jean Hytier has emphasized Gide's use of "combination by contrast" as a characteristic feature of his style, and though the expressive functions desired by Gide and Shakespeare are quite different in using this device, the novelist's predilection for syntactic balance and lexical contrast certainly aided him in transposing Claudius' rhetoric into French.

In the examples cited above from Gide's own works, we can see that the novelist's use of "combination

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<sup>8</sup> Les Nourritures Terrestres suivi de Les Nouvelles Nourritures (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> Les Caves du Vatican (Paris: Gallimard, 1922), p. 207.

by contrast" may also lend itself to the aphoristic style which characterizes the language of Polonius, the chief Danish courtier in Hamlet. Like the king, Polonius also indulges in the measured syntax and neatly balanced phrases typical of the official style. The language of the old advisor does not contain the linguistic subterfuge beneath the king's use of rhetoric; instead it reflects only a pedantic interest in style and a certain artificiality of thought which expresses itself in worn-out axioms.

Although Polonius should not appear "oafish" in the play, as J. D. Wilson warns,<sup>10</sup> he is certainly a comic foil to Hamlet in his interest in and use of language. While Hamlet's preoccupation with language compels him to probe its philosophical implications, Polonius' linguistic curiosity merely represents the rhetorical affectation of court speech. The spontaneous exuberance of Hamlet's language stands in sharp contrast to Polonius' penchant for the "foolish figure," and even at the court, the old advisor's everlasting search for the clever turn of phrase exasperates the

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<sup>10</sup> What Happens in Hamlet, 3rd.ed., (1935; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 134.

queen who begs for "more matter, less art" (II, 2, 95, p. 88).

The artificiality of Polonius' language is best illustrated in the courtier's advice to his departing son Laertes which is couched in aphoristic phrases built on the principle of syntactic balance and lexical contrast:

There, my blessing with thee!  
 And these few precepts in thy memory  
 Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.  
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;  
 The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
 Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware  
 Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,  
 Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee.  
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;  
 Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;  
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man,  
 And they in France of the best rank and station  
 Are most select and generous, chief in that.  
 Neither a borrower, nor a lender be;  
 For loan oft loses itself and friend,  
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
 This above all; To thine own self be true,  
 And it must follow, as the night the day,  
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
 Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!  
 (I, 3, 57-81, p. 48)

One of the greatest ironies in the history of Hamlet is that among the many lines and phrases of the play that are most remembered and embedded in everyday English are the words of Polonius' counsel to his son, which function dramatically to characterize the old courtier as a man wise in the petty wisdom of wordly prudence,

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a man whose advice to his only son contains not a jot of personal feeling or experience but is drawn from a common pool of sententiae such as the average Elizabethan would glean from Lyly's Euphues.

In discussing Polonius' precepts to Laertes, A. R. Humphreys claims that "the tabulating linear structure opposes itself to the living flexibility of the play. The inertness is not in the specific contents but in the repetitious, formal, and sententious manner."<sup>11</sup> This is a significant comment for our purposes, since the critic indicates that the most salient feature of the passage is not the content, not the words themselves, but the style in which they are expressed, and this is precisely what must be conveyed by the translator of Hamlet.

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The "feeling for neat antithesis,"<sup>12</sup> which Francis Fergusson ascribes to Polonius' language, is also congenial to Gide's own style, though it is obviously used for different purposes in his novels and plays. Gide's translation of the passage presents an extremely accurate version of idées reçues that

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<sup>11</sup> "Style and Expression in Hamlet," Shakespeare's Art: Seven Essays, ed. M. Crane (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> The Idea of a Theater (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1949), p. 142

convey the syntactic balance of Polonius' advice in the original:

Que ma bénédiction t'accompagne, et ces quelques préceptes que je confie à ta mémoire. Pense avant de parler et pèse avant d'agir. Sois familier, jamais vulgaire. Les amis éprouvés, adoptés par toi, qu'un lien d'acier les attache à ton âme, mais ne déprécie pas ta poignée de main avec tous les freluquets de rencontre. Considère avant d'entrer en querelle, mais, une fois en lice, fais-toi considérer. Accorde ton oreille à tous, mais rien qu'à quelques-uns ta voix. Prends l'avis de chacun, mais réserve ton jugement. Que ta fortune s'exprime par la richesse de tes costumes, et non point par leur fantaisie; cossus mais non voyants. Souvent on connaît l'homme à sa veste; en France les gens du meilleur rang sont fort experts en la matière, et passés maîtres en distinction. Ne prête, ni n'emprunte; car souvent par un prêt, l'on perd et l'argent et l'ami; quant à l'emprunt, il émousse le sens de l'économie, Avant tout: sois véridique avec toi-même-d'où découlera, comme du jour, la nuit, que tu ne seras faux pour personne. Adieu! Bon Voyage! Emporte ces conseils et que ma bénédiction les murisse. (p. 49)

There is no need for a line by line analysis of the translation since a cursory reading shows Gide's ability to convey the tone of the original maxims. Such phrases as "Pense avant de parler et pese avant d'agir," "Sois familier, jamais vulgaire," "Prends l'avis de chacun, mais réserve ton jugement," and "Ne prête, ni n'emprunte" all have that aphoristic quality of concision and counterpoise characteristic of the borrowed wisdom Polonius imparts to his son in the original. Polonius' language is not as difficult to translate as Hamlet's soliloquies are, and it

certainly is more amenable to French syntax, but a comparison of a few selected phrases in Gide's translation and the versions of Hugo and Bonnefoy may serve to illustrate how Gide's stylistic inclination toward syntactic balance in his own works actually helped him achieve a more satisfactory rendering of the passage than the other two translators.

Gide translates Polonius' first words of advice, "Give thy thought no tongue/Nor any unproportion'd thought his act," with even more brevity and balance than the original contains: "Pense avant de parler et pèse avant d'agir." The verb "pèse" is an adequate substitute for "unproportion'd thought," since it also conveys the suggestion of moderation and equilibrium in the original, but the French choice sacrifices the pomp and formality of Polonius' diction that is exemplified in the negative participial adjective "unproportion'd."

F.-V. Hugo captures the idea behind the original expression but only in the most prosaic fashion: "Silence sur tes pensées et qu'aucun acte ne suive celles qu'inspire la démesure" (p. 20). Hugo's use of the noun "démesure" to convey the idea of equilibrium in the original word "unproportion'd" is perhaps a better choice than Gide's verb, but Hugo's version still loses

the axiomatic quality of the original which Gide achieves in his balanced imperative phrases. Bonnefoy's translation improves on Hugo's a little by retaining some counterpoint, but it is still too elliptical in comparison with the original: "...sur tes pensées, pas un mot/A celles qui seraient immodérées, pas de suite" (p. 19).

In another phrase, "Beware/Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in/Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee," the foregrounded elements are not only the balanced syntax of the imperative phrases but also the phonetic play on "beware" and "bear" and the over-emphasis on the alliteration of the voiced labial "b" sound, used five times in these few lines. These salient features give the impression of a character whose interest in linguistic play is matched only by his feeble attempts to create it in his own speech. Hugo's version of these lines is again too prosaic and does not even approach the sound effects of the original and their significance for Polonius' character: "Garde-toi d'entrer dans une querelle, mais, une fois engagé, comporte-toi de manière que l'adversaire se garde de toi" (p. 20). Just as the original lines are framed by the verb "beware" and the shift of the personal pronoun "thee" from understood subject to object

("...beware of thee"), so does Hugo begin and end his sentence with "garde-toi" and "...garde de toi."

Bonnefoy's version is in much the same vein: "Garde-toi/ D'entrer dans une querelle, mais engagé/Mène-la de façon que l'on se garde de toi" (p. 19).

Gide's translation clearly improves on the versions of Hugo and Bonnefoy: "Considère avant d'entrer en querelle, mais, une fois en lice, fais-toi considérer." Gide at least attempts to compensate for the sound effects of the original by shifting from the labial to the fricatives "s" in "considérer" and "lice," and the alliterative "f" in "fois" and "fais-toi." However, the phonetic repetition is still not as overemphasized as in the original, and it would be hoped that a French actor in a production using Gide's translation would lay special emphasis on the fricative sounds in performance in order to approximate the stylistic effect Shakespeare intended. In any case, all three translations of the phrase are much more fluid than the original, and even Gide's substitution of fricative consonants does not attain the same effect as the closely compacted "b" sounds in "...but, being in, bear't" that create a harsh labial conglomerate which throws into relief the awkwardness of Polonius' attempts at verbal play.

The last phrase we will consider is the one general truth which includes and ennobles all the precepts of worldly wisdom which Polonius has piled one upon another: "To thine own self be true." In Gide's version, "Sois véridique avec toi-même," the adjective "véridique" suggests the formal diction characteristic of Polonius' speech and serves to compensate well for the formality in the inverted word order of the original phrase. Both Hugo and Bonnefoy select the more common adjective "loyal" in their translations. Hugo is strictly literal ("Sois loyal avec toi-même"), while Bonnefoy's version ("Envers toi sois loyal") is just as adequate as Gide's in his preservation of the original syntactic inversion.

In an otherwise accurate translation of both the content and style of Polonius' empty eloquence, Gide makes only one significant deviation from the original text. In his translation of the lines, "... do not dull thy palm with entertainment/Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade," Gide renders the predicate "do not dull thy palm" by an explicit metaphor from finance, "ne déprécie pas ta poignée de main... ." Although the idea is not implied in the original, Polonius often uses the imagery of money and finance throughout the play, especially in his constant

attempts at punning. In the next chapter we shall study Gide's admirable efforts to translate the puns in Hamlet, with special reference to the dramatic contrast between the superficial puns of Polonius and the penetrating wordplay of Hamlet.

CHAPTER VIGIDE'S TRANSLATION OF THE PUNS IN HAMLET

Puns play a larger role in Hamlet than in any other Shakespearean drama. On the statistical bases alone, Molly Mahood estimates an average of 78 puns in a Shakespearean play, and Hamlet has three times this number, with 90 puns used by the hero,<sup>1</sup> "the chief player with words in all Shakespearean drama."<sup>2</sup> Puns are among the most difficult elements of a text to translate, since they are deeply rooted in the native etymology and depend on the characteristic features of the source language for their effect. Moreover, in Hamlet the hero's wordplay performs double duty by both masking his hostility towards Claudius and providing him with an outlet for his bitterness, and as such his puns are integral to the dramatic impact of the tragedy. Any translator who ignores this fact and merely peppers his text with footnotes to illuminate the original wordplay not only fails to do justice to the richness of the text but also forgets that it is intended primarily for stage presentation.

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's Wordplay (London: Methuen, 1957), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Willard Farnham, The Shakespearean Grotesque (London: Oxford, University Press, 1971) p. 106.

Gide's translation was directly commissioned for the stage, and so he was aware of the necessity of finding adequate substitutes for the wordplay in the English text. In many cases this is impossible, but Gide at least tried to render many of the dramatic puns in Hamlet. From a comparison of his translation with the versions of Hugo and Bonnefoy, it is obvious that Gide's version is better suited for the stage in this regard, since the other two translators often ignore the puns and merely file their stylistic impact away in explanatory footnotes.

"Pun" is defined in the O. E. D. as "the use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings or different associations, or the use of two or more words of the same or nearly same sound with different meanings so as to produce a humorous effect; a play on words."<sup>3</sup> The English language, as Jiří Levý suggests, offers a vast potential for artistic wordplay in its very structure: "Die Sprache entwickelt oft schon aufgrund ihrer tektonischen Eigenschaften besonders günstige Voraussetzungen für bestimmte Kunstmittel. So bietet die englische Sprache wegen

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<sup>3</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary, p. 1594

ihres Reichtums an Homonymen und Synonymen, der in einer überwiegend einsilbigen Sprachenatürlich ist, besonders günstige Bedingungen zur Bildung von Wörtspielen." <sup>4</sup> Shakespeare's genius lies precisely in his sensitivity to the possibilities offered by the structural peculiarities of his native language which he exploited to the fullest in Hamlet.

The stylistic effects of the puns which Shakespeare derived from the monosyllabic quality of English and its ease in forming homonyms and synonyms usually traverse rough semantic terrain in the shift to another linguistic medium. In very rare cases Shakespeare's puns can be translated directly if the target language, in this instance French, shares cognates and similar structural forms with English.

Such examples from Hamlet are few but they do exist. For example, while baiting the prying Polonius about his daughter Ophelia, Hamlet quips "Conception is a blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't" (II, 2, 184-185, p. 96). There is a veiled pun on the two meanings of the verb "conceive" in its abstract sense signifying thought and its

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<sup>4</sup>Die literarische Übersetzung, p. 39.

physical sense related to impregnation. Since the French equivalent also conveys both meanings, Gide is able to transfer the pun directly: "C'est une bénédiction de concevoir, mais pas comme votre fille le conçoit. Ami, veillez-y" (p. 97).

Gide is also able to translate another pun in this exchange between Hamlet and Polonius because of a play on an idiomatic expression common in both languages. When the perplexed councilor departs from Hamlet with the banal court formula of farewell, "My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you," Hamlet adds one final stroke: "You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life" (II, 2, 211-215, p. 96). Gide translates the above lines as:

Polonius: Mon honorable Seigneur, permettez que je prenne humblement congé de vous.

Hamlet: Vous ne pouvez rien me prendre, Monsieur, que je vous cède plus volontiers...sinon ma vie, sinon ma vie, sinon ma vie. (p. 97)

The exact correspondence between the verbs "take" and "prendre" and their concomitant idioms, "take leave" and "prendre congé", allow Gide to translate the pun without any difficulty.

Hamlet's pun here is dramatically significant since it is one of a number of instances when Hamlet uses wordplay to puncture the hypocritical afflatus in the clichés of court civility, but, more significantly, these puns also betray a mistrust of language on Hamlet's part which is revealed in his insistence on "translating" the idiomatic into the literal. A similar use of the pun occurs in the following exchange between Hamlet and Polonius, as the exasperated courtier tried to announce the arrival of the theatrical troupe:

Pol: My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham: My lord, I have news to tell you. When  
Roscius was an actor in Rome -

Pol: The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham: Buzz, Buzz!

Pol: Upon my honor!

Ham: Then each actor came on his ass -  
(II, 2, 379-385, P. 108)

Once again Hamlet's pun is another "metatranslation" which focuses on literalism; the idiomatic phrase "upon my honor," which is little more than a courtly exclamation, is comically construed by Hamlet's insistence on taking the preposition in its literal sense of denoting location, which creates the verbal humor in the gap between "honor" and "ass." Since this use of the preposition in both the idiomatic and strictly

denotative senses is common in Indo-European language;<sup>5</sup>

Gide is again able to translate the pun literally:

Pol: Monseigneur, j'ai quelque chose à vous dire.  
 Ham: Monseigneur, j'ai quelque chose à vous dire.  
       Roscius, du temps qu'il était acteur à Rome -  
 Pol: Les acteurs sont arrivés, Monseigneur.  
 Ham: Xzz! Xzz!  
 Pol: Sont arrivés, sur mon honneur!  
 Ham: Vous voulez dire: sur un baudet. (p. 109)

Although the double use of "sur" corresponds to that of "upon-on" in English, Gide may be accused here of drawing more attention to the wordplay than the original warrants in his substitution of "vous voulez dire" in Hamlet's reply to Polonius. Both Hugo and Bonnefoy take advantage of the literal correspondence to render a more accurate translation of the pun: "Pol: Sur mon honneur!; Ham: Alors arriva chaque acteur sur un âne" (Hugo p. 51); "Pol: Sur mon honneur! Ham: Sur leur âne v'naient les acteurs..." (Bonnefoy, p. 52).

Although Polonius is the frequent butt of Hamlet's quips, the elderly courtier probably exhibits more interest in wordplay than any other character in the play except the hero. But just as Polonius'

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. W. Schlegel's translation of the pun by a similar play on the preposition "auf": "Auf meine Ehre" - "Auf einem Eselein," William Shakespeares Gesammelte Werke (Berlin: Tillgner, 1924), V, p.317.

measured syntax is sharply distinguished from the loose, contorted sentences of Hamlet's soliloquies, so are the courtier's puns in marked contrast to those of Hamlet. Polonius' wordplay is merely superficial verbal slapstick that serves to characterize the old councilor as a pompous pedant whose interest in style often lapses into "foolish figures," while Hamlet's puns reveal a satirical insight directed against the malevolent circumlocution of the court and even serve to question the very validity of language itself as an instrument of truth.

The extreme contrast between Hamlet's and Polonius' wordplay is significant for the translator, for in many cases the lack of complexity in the courtier's puns makes them more accessible to expression in another language. One of the best examples of this is found in Polonius' stumbling efforts to explain Hamlet's madness to the king and queen:

That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true, 'tis pity;  
 And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;  
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
 Mad let us grant him, then; and now remains  
 That we find out the cause of this effect,  
 Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
 For this effect defective comes by cause;  
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.

(II, 2, 97-104, pp. 88 & 90)

The comic puns in this case depend on the simple syntactic inversion of predicate adjectives and the phonetic similarity between "effect" and "defect." The inversion can be accomplished without any problem, and the Latin origins of the two words allow the possibility of similar equivalents in French. Thus Hugo renders the wordplay by an opposition between "effet" and "méfait," while Bonnefoy chooses "effet" and "défaut," but Gide emphasizes the sound similarity in the original pun much more in his translation by choosing a different word:

Que le prince soit fou, c'est certain. Il est certain que c'est triste, et il est triste que ce soit certain. Médiocre parallélisme...Mais foin des parallèles! J'ai juré de n'user point d'art. Nous devons donc tenir qu'il est fou. Reste à découvrir la cause de cet effet; disons mieux: la raison de sa déraison; car la déraison de sa raison n'est pas sans cause. Telle elle reste, et le reste est tel. (pp. 89 & 91)

By substituting "raison" for the usual choice "effet" Gide creates the combination of opposite meaning and phonetic similarity by the word "déraison," which also adds a touch of formality that is generally characteristic of Polonius' style. In avoiding the strict literality which Hugo and Bonnefoy succumbed to in their versions, Gide may shift the meaning from

"defect" to the more explicit term "déráison," but in doing so Gide translates not the words alone but their stylistic effect which depends on a phonetic parallelism.

Not all of Polonius' puns, however, are as amenable to translation as the one above. When the old courtier warns his daughter to be wary of Hamlet's amorous intentions, he couches his advice in an array of puns and images drawn from the fields of money, law and fashion:

From this time  
 Be somewhat scancer of your maiden presence;  
 Set your entreatments at a high rate  
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
 Believe so much in him, that he is young,  
 And with a larger tether may he walk  
 Than may be given to you; in few, Ophelia  
 Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,  
 Not of that dye which their investments show,  
 But mere implorators of unholy suits...  
 (I, 4, 123-129, pp. 50 & 52)

Metaphors of money and finance abound in Polonius' speech, although there is no need to go to the extreme view of the Soviet Shakespearean critic Mikhail Morozov who sees the old courtier as the ideal representative of "acquisitive capitalism."<sup>6</sup> In this passage the monetary and legal metaphors coalesce with

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<sup>6</sup>"The Individualization of Shakespeare's Characters through Imagery," Shakespeare Survey 2 (1949), p. 105.

images of clothing through puns on the double meanings of "investments" and "suits." "Investments," "suits," and "dye" fit in with the iterative pattern of clothing imagery in the play which is associated with the theme of appearance and reality and recalls Hamlet's "inky cloak...customary suits of solemn black...suits of woe" in his angry reply to Gertrude where he states the thematic dichotomy of "seems" and "is."

The sense of Shakespeare's combination of imagery from different fields is conveyed to some degree in the versions of Hugo and Bonnefoy, although the union between the metaphoric concepts so compressed in the original wordplay is total sacrificed:

Ma fille, soyez un peu plus avare de votre  
virginale presence. Mettez vos entretiens à plus  
haut prix que de les accorder à la première  
requête. Quant au seigneur Hamlet, ce que vous  
devez penser de lui, c'est qu'il est jeune, et  
qu'il a pour ses écarts la corde plus lâche que  
vous. En un mot, Ophélie, ne vous fiez pas à ses  
serments. Ce sont des pourvoyeurs dont les in-  
tentions ne sont pas de la couleur de leur costume,  
les entremetteurs des désirs sacrilèges... (Hugo,  
p.22)

Et désormais, soyez  
Quelque peu plus avare de votre virginale présence,  
Mettez votre rencontre à un plus haut prix  
Qu'une offre de parlementer... Pour monseigneur  
Hamlet  
Pensez de lui ceci seulement: qu'il est jeune  
Et qu'il peut beaucoup plus tirer sur la longe,  
Que vous ne le pourrez jamais. En un mot, Ophélie,

Ne vous fiez pas à ses serments, car ce sont des  
 entremetteurs  
 Bien différents du vêtement qu'ils portent,  
 Ils ne font que plaider pour infâmes requêtes...  
 (Bonnefoy, p. 21)

In Hugo's version the translation of "intentions" for "investments" avoids the pun rather than trying to find an equivalent, and "désirs sacrilèges" has more to do with "unholy" than "suits." Bonnefoy is fairly literal in his translation, but, unfortunately, his literality in this case captures only one of the associations of "investments" ("...bien différents du vêtement qu'ils portent") and of "suits" ("infâmes requêtes").

Puns that depend on two meanings of a word such as "investment" or "suit" present insoluble problems for translators, since the chances of finding equivalents with the same or similar associations in the target language are extremely rare. But the translator of a literary work such as Hamlet, in which puns contribute significantly to the dramatic impact of the play, must realize the necessity for rendering the stylistic effect of the wordplay rather than the words which create the effect in the original. To translate the wordplay in this passage, Gide deviates from

literality in order to find adequate compensation for the original:

Dorénavant, ma fille, soyez plus économe de votre virginale présence; la faveur de causer avec vous, vous la dépréciez à l'accorder sur un signe. Quant au prince Hamlet, créditez-le pour autant qu'il est jeune; la bride flotte sur ses épaules plus librement qu'il ne sied de la laisser flotter sur les vôtres. En un mot, Ophélie, ne vous fiez pas à ses serments; ils sont pareils aux pourvoyeurs dont les inavouables desseins ne sont pas de la couleur de leur costume... (pp. 51 & 53)

First of all, Gide embellishes the monetary imagery of the original; in addition to conveying the idea of a "higher rate" by "dépréciez," Gide substitutes "plus économe" for the comparative adjective "scanter" and "créditez-le" for "believe so much in him." This is a case of creative transposition on his part, which means basically that Gide compensates for images which he is unable, for one reason or another, to render in translation by adding similar images in other parts of the play in order to give the overall impression of the character which is suggested by the original.

The superiority of Gide's translation of this passage, however, lies in his excellent handling of Polonius' wordplay. In his translation of "Not of that dye which their investments show/But mere implorators of unholy suits," Gide manages to combine

all the images of clothing, law and business in order to approximate the effect of the original puns: "... pourvoyeurs dont les inavouables desseins ne sont pas de la couleur de leur costume." The adjective "inavouable" conveys the idea of baseness in "unholy," and it is also morphologically derived from "avouer," a verb which suggests the images of the courtroom and legal procedure implied in "suits." The choice of the noun "desseins" is perhaps a little vague for "investments," though the original word certainly has the idea of a financial project or plan, and, in addition, the clothing imagery in both "suits" and "investments" would be suggested by the identical pronunciation of "desseins" and "dessins" in performance, especially in the context of the remaining words: "...ne sont pas de la couleur de leur costume." It may be argued that Gide compresses too much of the original wordplay into one noun and one adjective, but considering the extreme difficulty of translating such puns in any language, Gide's version is perhaps the most adequate compensation for the total semantic import of the original lines and is clearly superior to the versions of Hugo and Bonnefoy.

While Polonius' puns often seem to be merely shallow wordplay for its own sake, Hamlet's constant quips take on tragic implications in the hero's exploration of reality and the very nature of language itself. It is certainly true, as A. C. Bradley suggests, that "Hamlet is the only one of the tragic heroes who can be called a humorist,"<sup>7</sup> but the prince's wordplay is related more to the black humor that has become the vogue in twentieth century literature. While Hamlet does take an artistic pleasure in words, his puns are also weapons used either to hide or expose the truth for strategic purposes or to release his own pent-up hostility and bitterness. Hamlet's wordplay is essential to an understanding of his tragedy, as Harley Granville-Barker points out: "...for words themselves he distrusts; they are also things which 'seem', the 'trappings and suits' of reality, tricking the speaker as often as the hearer; and they are a weak man's weapon. Hamlet, in fact, despises in himself one of his chief abilities and this is a part of the discord which disables him."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Shakespearean Tragedy (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1964), p. 128.

<sup>8</sup> Prefaces to Shakespeare: Hamlet (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), I, p. 187.

It is thus characteristic that Hamlet's first utterance in the play is a bitter pun. When Claudius first addresses the prince as "my cousin Hamlet, and my son" (I, 2, 64, p. 30), Hamlet's aside underscores the wide gulf existing between the "apparent" relationship of son and nephew and the prince's real feelings about his former uncle and present father: "A little more than kin and less than kind." The translations of Hamlet's wordplay by Hugo and Bonnefoy merely provide a paraphrase of the meaning behind Hamlet's pun by simply rephrasing the king's address: "Un peu plus que cousin, et un peu moins que fils" (Hugo, p. 11); "Un peu plus qu'un neveu, mais rien moins qu'un fils" (Bonnefoy, p. 10. A footnote explaining the pun is added).

Gide renders the sense behind the original wordplay, but in doing so, he also manages to compensate for the pun based on the sound similarity between "kin" (apparent relationship) and "kind" (real emotional attitude) by substituting phonetic effects of his own: "De fait hélas! un peu plus que de cœur" (p. 31). The repetition of the preposition "de" may not have as strong an impact as the original pun on "kin" and "kind" but at least Gide approaches the effect of making Hamlet's first words in French a play on words that will characterize his use of language throughout the

tragedy.

When Hamlet addresses a pun to one or another member of the Danish court, the wordplay is usually intended as a veiled insult or reference to the general corruption in Denmark. Hamlet's punning on the literal and idiomatic use of a word in his exchange with Polonius is a general pattern of this type of wordplay. When Claudius greets Hamlet just before the mousetrap play with the formulaic civility, "How fares our cousin Hamlet?", the prince replies "Excellent; i'faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed; you cannot feed capons so" (III, 2, 90-92, p. 140). Once again the idiomatic is reduced to the literal as Hamlet takes the king's "fares" in the sense of "eats." Kittredge comments on the pun that "the chameleon was believed to feed upon the air. Hamlet is implying that the promise of succession to the throne is not enough to satisfy him, thus fostering the king's belief that he is mad because of frustrated ambition."<sup>9</sup>

Puns such as this contribute to the dramatic tension of the play, since Hamlet's mysterious quips

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<sup>9</sup> The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, p. 83.

at court are meant to be ostensibly humorous yet are intended at the same time to make the addressee somewhat uneasy about the real meaning behind them. The translator must find an adequate substitute to achieve a similar effect of dramatic tension, and it is evident from the three versions given below that Gide alone has managed to approximate the original wordplay in this case:

Le Roi: Comment se porte notre cousin Hamlet?  
 Ham: Parfaitement ma foi! Je vis du plat du caméléon: je mange de l'air, et je me bourre de promesses. Vous ne pourriez pas nourrir ainsi des chapons. (Hugo, p. 71)

Le Roi: Comment va notre cousin Hamlet?  
 Ham: Parfaitement bien, ma foi. Je vis de l'air du temps, comme le caméléon, je me gave d'espérances, mais ce n'est pas ainsi que vous obtiendrez un chapon. (Bonnefoy, p. 68)

Le Roi: Comment se porte notre cousin Hamlet?  
 Ham: Il supporte, ma foi, fort bien son régime: nourriture de caméléon: L'air du temps, farci de promesses; ce qui n'engraisserait pas un chapon. (Gide, p. 141)

Hugo and Bonnefoy merely paraphrase and explain the original; Gide translates, in the true sense of the word, by achieving a pun on the sound similarity between "se porte" in its idiomatic sense and its morphological relative "supporter,"

Many other cases exist, however, where no homonymic parallels can be found in the target language;

Gide, despite his large measure of success in compensating for the original wordplay of Shakespeare's tragedy, is compelled to sacrifice many puns in his translation of Hamlet. For example, immediately after Hamlet's pun on "kin" and "kind" is delivered in aside, the prince replies to the king with a more veiled play on words in the following exchange:

King: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?  
 Hamlet: Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.  
 (I, 2, 66-67, p. 30)

In this context of family relationship's "sun" obviously evokes its homonym "son" and implies Hamlet's aversion to acknowledging Claudius as his new father. Gide, like all French translators, must resort to losing the effect of the pun by rendering "sun" literally as "soleil":

Le Roi: Toujours ces nuages sur votre front:  
 Hamlet: Nuages, non Sire; me voici trop près du  
 soleil. (p. 31)

In the majority of cases there is no exact correspondence in other languages between words played off in puns such as "sun" and "son," and so the best course for the translator is to seek associations or synonyms which one of the components in the wordplay suggests, and then find equivalents for these synonyms in his own language. The complete translation of the pun will then depend on the eventuality that one of the

synonyms found will also have a counterpart of associated meaning in the target language that is somehow related to the second component in the original wordplay. The degree to which this is possible in a literary translation is also conditioned by the total semantic import of the pun in the original text. Thus the effect of Polonius' puns on "investments" and "suits" hinges on the evocation of clothing, legal and monetary imagery, and so Gide has available many alternatives from these different fields of imagery which enable him to translate the puns by finding phonetically identical words that will combine related metaphors from the same areas.

The semantic import of the "sun" - "son" wordplay for the tragedy presents more difficult problems for the translator. The dramatic impact of the pun revolves around the veiled insult conveyed in the phonetic identity of "sun" with Hamlet's supposed family relationship to Claudius, "son." In contrast to the number of synonyms available for "investments" and "suits," the word "son" is implied in a strictly denotative sense which considerably narrows the field of associated meanings from which the translator could hope to find an alternative. Since

the relationship of Hamlet to Claudius is the crux of the pun, a French translator would hypothetically start from the equivalent "fils" and, since no homonyms exist for this word in French, he must then hope to find a word suggesting family relationship that would also have a homonym that could be stated in Hamlet's reply to the king's question about his melancholy (The weather imagery of "clouds" and "sun" are not as important as the pun itself; the two words serve only to provide the stimulus for creating the pun in English and can be sacrificed by the translator).

To make the problem even more insoluble, the force of the pun in the original also depends on its final emphatic position in the sentence, and so syntactic considerations would further complicate the search for the hypothetical equivalent in French. Considering all these obstacles, it is no wonder that a pun on homonyms such as "sun" and "son" has inevitably been lost in translation; of course, we do not discount the possibility that an extremely imaginative Frenchman may yet provide an adequate translation of this pun, but it would seem necessary to reconstruct the original lines so much that the translation would either sound artificial or stray too far from the sense of the original.

Another pun from Hamlet which is based on a homonym will also serve to illustrate the degree to which stylistic and dramatic considerations condition the possibility of rendering wordplay in Shakespeare's tragedy. The homonym "lie" in the two senses of deceiving and reclining forms the basis for the humor in the following exchange between Hamlet and the gravedigger:

Ham: Whose grave's this, sir?  
 Gr: Mine, sir.  
 Ham: I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in it.  
 Gr: You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.  
 Ham: Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.  
 (V, 1, 111-118, p. 242)

The gravedigger's wordplay here and in other parts of the scene is dramatically significant for our understanding of the tragedy, for behind the comic reductive literalism of his puns is an insistence on seeing things as they are; in the tragicomic dialogue between the prince and the gravedigger, the tragic hero confronts the reality of existence in the form of a rotting skull. Since the impact of the pun depends on the peasant's demand for literality with its corresponding thematic implications, the sense of wordplay

rather than the words themselves is the most salient feature of these lines. This allows the translator more latitude in finding an adequate substitute, unlike the previous case where the stylistic effect derives from the implied lexical meaning of "son" and its implications for Hamlet's hostile attitude toward Claudius. Of the three French versions of Hamlet consulted, only Gide's attempts to compensate for the original pun in this exchange between Hamlet and the gravedigger:

Ham: A qui est cette tombe, mon ami?  
 Pays: A moi, monsieur.  
 Ham: Tu dis qu'elle est à toi, parce que tu es dedans.  
 Pays: En vous disant qu'elle est à moi, c'est vous que je mets dedans, Monsieur, encore que vous restiez dehors.  
 Ham: Et toi qui es dedans tu te donnes les dehors d'en être l'occupant. Mais tu t'en occupes, sans l'occuper. Les tombes c'est pour les morts, non pour les vifs. (p. 242)

Gide seems to have followed the procedure outlined above to compensate for the pun in English. Realizing that the wordplay is more important than the idea of falsehood or reclining in "lie," Gide chooses one of the two meanings in order to find attendant associations that may have equivalents in French. The obvious choice is the meaning of "lie" as physical

position, since it corresponds to the actual stage <sup>154</sup>  
situation of the gravedigger, and from this Gide finds  
an equivalent idea of location in the French "dedans."  
This word in turn suggests "dehors" whose double  
meaning of location outside and external appearance  
provides Gide with the pun necessary to compensate  
for the original wordplay: "Paysan: ...vous restiez  
dehors; Ham: Et toi qui es dedans, tu te donnes les  
dehors d'en être l'occupant."

Gide reinforces the wordplay on spatial location  
with another pun in the phrase "Mais tu t'en occupes,  
sans l'occuper." The pun on the verb "occuper" in its  
reflexive ("t'en occupes") and non-reflexive ("sans  
l'occuper") forms serves to emphasize, in spatial  
terms, the rather peculiar nature of the gravedigger's  
task.

The graveyard scene in Hamlet contains the  
greatest concentration of humorous wordplay in the  
tragedy, though, as C. S. Lewis claims, "it is surely  
the strangest comic relief ever written."<sup>10</sup> The philo-  
sophical burlesque in the verbal wit of Hamlet and the  
gravedigger seems to contain the essence of the ab-  
surdist drama of Beckett and Ionesco. The gravedigger

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<sup>10</sup> "The Prince or the Poem?" Hamlet: Norton Critical Edition, ed. Cyrus Hoy (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 215.

has no interest in man "the paragon of animals" but only in man the corpse that is his daily trade; Hamlet suddenly realizes that the sum total of life's efforts and achievements are inescapably reduced to bones and ash.

Gide's version of this entire scene is unfortunately one of poorest areas in his translation of the tragedy. The wide gap between the hollow dignity of life's professions and the stark reality of death are expressed through the corresponding levels of formal and colloquial diction. For example, when Hamlet laments the fact that the skull which might have belonged to a lawyer or statesman is now "knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade" (1.83, p. 240), Gide's rendering of the colloquial "mazzard" by "maxillaire" certainly fails to convey the brutal realism in Hamlet's diction.

However, Gide has a great deal of success in rendering many of the puns in the scene for which most other French translators supply explanatory footnotes. For example, the reductive literalism of the gravedigger is revealed early in the scene in the following exchange

with his co-worker:

- 1st Gr: There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners,  
ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up  
Adam's profession.
- 2nd Gr: Was he a gentleman?
- 1st Gr: A' was the first that ever bore arms.
- 2nd Gr: Why, he had none.
- 1st Gr: What! Art thou a heathen? How dost thou  
understand the Scripture? The Scripture  
says, Adam digged; could he dig without  
arms? (ll. 27-35, p. 236)

In Gide's translation

- 1st Pays: Il n'y a pas plus ancienne noblesse que  
les cultivateurs, les piocheurs et les  
fossoyeurs. C'était le métier d'Adam.
- 2nd Pays: Adam était-il de la noblesse?
- 1st Pays: Il était le premier qui a eu des armes.
- 2nd Pays: Mais il n'avait pas d'armoirie.
- 1st Pays: Tu parles comme un païen qui ne connaît  
pas l'écriture. L'écriture dit qu'Adam  
bêchait. Or la bêche, c'est une armoirie.  
(p. 237)

The original play on the words "arms" in the literal sense of physical limbs and in the figurative sense of a "coat of arms" is compensated for in Gide's version by shifting the double meaning to the lexical opposition of "armes" and its derivative "armoirie" in heraldic and military connotations. The meaning of "arms" as physical limbs contributes to the literality of the peasant's language in the original, but the use of "bras" and "armes" in the translation of Hugo and Bonnefoy nullifies the verbal buffoonery which Gide manages to approximate in his version.

From all the examples presented in this chapter, it is evident that Gide's rendering of the puns in Hamlet

reveals the poetic dramatist at work in the act of translation. By avoiding literal paraphrase and instead transposing the original dramatic impact conveyed by the puns, one of Shakespeare's favorite devices in Hamlet, Gide gives the tragic hero and the play the wit and vitality it deserves to come across in translation. Although Gide's inclination to Racinian purity of style and balanced syntax at times impairs his translation of Shakespeare's tragedy, his innate feeling for humor exhibited in such novels as Les Caves du Vatican and such plays as Oedipe definitely gave him the sensitivity needed to render the dramatic puns in Hamlet.

CHAPTER VIITHE PROSE RHYTHM OF GIDE'S HAMLET

In Hamlet Shakespeare passed beyond the simple mechanical division in Elizabethan drama of using poetry for heroics and sentiment and prose for buffoonery. Milton Crane claims that "In Hamlet Shakespeare employed prose as no one had ever done before,"<sup>1</sup> for prose is integral to the dramatic conflict in the play and to the delineation of the tragic hero's character. Hamlet's prose is both a protective disguise and a strategic medium of communication in the suspect world of the court. Its main dramatic effect, as Harry Levin notes, is "to isolate Hamlet from everyone whose discourse runs in the expected rhythms, so that we are continually and painfully reminded of his exceptional predicament."<sup>2</sup> After his initial encounter with the ghost, Hamlet uses verse only to explore his innermost self in the soliloquies, to speak with his trusted friend Horatio, and to confront his mother with her sin.

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's Prose (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> The Question of Hamlet (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 117.

Rendering Shakespeare's blank verse has been a problem for French translators. In searching for an appropriate verse form, some translators have mistakenly assumed that the equivalent stature of blank verse and the alexandrine in the English and French literary traditions implies their equal stylistic value in tragic drama. However, a simple glance at Voltaire's translation of "To be or not to be" or at Dumas' Hamlet proves the total incompatibility of the two verse forms.

André Gide, like many other translators, has chosen the safer path of prose to render Hamlet. In his preface to the translation, Gide feels that the "prosa rythmique" of his version makes it superior to those of his predecessors. Gide's choice is undoubtedly a compromise, but the rhythmical prose that he seeks in his translation represents an attempt to come to terms with the traditional dilemma of the disparity between available prosodies.

Rhythm is undeniably Gide's overriding concern for the style of his own works, an obsession which he freely admits in his journals: "It is no use struggling against what may seem to me an unjustified servitude; rhythm dominates my sentence, almost dictates it, clings closely to my thought" (JAG, III, p. 318). At times, Gide's thought is even subordinated to it: "The

exactingness of my ear was such that I should have warped the meaning of a sentence for its rhythm" (JAG, II, p. 323). The critic who called Gide the "Racine of prose" (JAG, IV, p. 272) was certainly justified, since the French novelist staunchly affirmed that artistic prose requires the same rhythmic precision that is characteristic of poetry: "I maintain that it is utterly, obviously true that one cannot change or displace a single word in a beautiful line of verse, but this is equally true of beautiful prose ... the scansion of the sentence, the placing of the syllables, both strong and weak, all this matters to me as much as the thought itself, and the thought strikes me as halting or distorted if it lacks a foot or has one too many" (JAG, III, pp. 260 & 318).

The basic characteristic of rhythm, be it in prose or poetry, is a regular pattern which sets up expectations in the listener's mind, together with enough deviation from that pattern to avoid monotony and keep the mind alert. To restate this in the terminology of Czech structuralism, rhythm is created by the dialectical tension between the automatization (pattern) and foregrounding (deviation) of the linguistic phenomena

in poetry.<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare uses the pattern of blank verse in Hamlet yet foregrounds elements within this metrical convention by his frequent variation of stress and cesura and use of enjambment in order to create various rhythms for dramatic effect.

It is precisely the dramatic effect more than the separate stylistic elements which produce it that should be the foremost concern of the translator, as Jiří Levý notes: "Die formalen Mittel der Poesie treten in den Dichtungen in komplizierten Beziehungen zu deren gedanklicher Äusserung ein, und der Übersetzer sollte auf der Suche nach dem formalen Schlüssel vor allem von den semantische Funktionen der Form ausgehen."<sup>4</sup> Gide felt that skillfully executed prose in French could provide resources which could adequately convey the semantic functions of the original rhythm in Hamlet that is created by metrical devices inaccessible to the French translator.

In the following lines from the scene where Hamlet confronts Gertrude with the truth of her marriage, a shift in rhythm functions dramatically to enhance the extreme contrast between two significant characters

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<sup>3</sup> Jan Mukařovský, "Standard Language and Poetic Language," p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Die literarische Übersetzung, p. 186.

in the play, the former king Hamlet and the present ruler Claudius:

Hamlet: Look here, upon this picture, and on this;  
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
 See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
 Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,  
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command,  
 A station like the herald Mercury  
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,  
 A combination and a form indeed,  
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
 To give the world assurance of a man.  
 This was your husband: look you now, what  
 follows.  
 Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you  
 eyes?

(III, 4, 53-65, p. 172-174)

The verse throughout the description of the late king is in fairly strict iambic pentameter that serves to create a fluid rhythm appropriate to the majestic grace and grandeur ascribed by Hamlet to his deceased father. In the diction, however, the classical allusions, compound epithets, and Latinate words such as "station" and "combination" are juxtaposed with the simplicity of the monosyllabic Anglo-Saxon lexis in "Where every god did seem to set his seal/To give the world assurance of a man," with its final emphasis on the word "man" echoing Hamlet's earlier reply to Horatio, "He was a man, take him for all in all/I shall not look upon his like again" (I, 2, 38, p. 187). The lexical contrast here broadens the range of the king's nobility.

King and husband, the heroic and the human blended perfectly, and it is primarily through the regular pulse of the metrical scheme that Hamlet suggests how effortlessly and harmoniously these dual aspects of godlike hero and man merged in the figure of his late father.

Gide sacrifices the lexical contrast in his version but the rhythmic regularity of the original is approximated both syntactically and phonetically:

Regardez! Contemplez! l'un de ces deux tableaux, puis l'autre; portraits fidèles de deux frères. Voyez ce visage où respire la grâce, les boucles d'Hypérion, le front de Jupiter, le regard de Mars, plein d'autorité menaçante, le port du messager Mercure lorsqu'il s'abat sur la colline au bord du ciel, les traits ou chacun des dieux mit son sceau pour assurer au monde un homme. C'était votre mari. Et regardez ensuite le successeur; c'est votre mari; épi pourri, injure à la santé du frère (p. 173-175).

Rhythmical considerations seem to be responsible for Gide's regularization of the syntax; the identical grammatical constructions of '(definite article) (noun) de (noun)' used to enumerate the king's attributes in Gide's version establish a rising cadence of iambs and anapests that is typical of the French language, with its fixed word stress on the final syllable. Gide also compensates for the regal grace of the original rhythm through his modulation of repeated broad low back

vowels, the /a/ in "voyez...visage...grâce...regard... Mars...menaçante...abat" and the /ɔ/ which is followed by the consonant "r" in "autorité...port...lorsqu'il...bord." "The liquid consonants "r" in this position and "l" in the repeated definite article have an inherent semivowel quality enhancing the vocalic harmony of Gide's translation which functions dramatically in the same capacity as does the metrical regularity of the original lines.

The rhythmic flow of the original is broken as Hamlet abruptly shifts from the late king to his successor Claudius in the lines

This was your husband; look you now, what follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?

For the first time in the passage Shakespeare uses enjambment in "...like a mildew'd ear/Blasting his wholesome brother..." This prosodic device, which creates tension between the metrical stop and the continuous urge of the prose syntax, serves here to foreground the shift in rhythm that corresponds to the contrast between the murderous brother and the noble king. The effect is enhanced by the stress shift on the first word, "blasting," in the next line, and the combination of the voiced plosive labials and liquids

in "blasting" and brother," along with the repetition of hissing spirants in "Blasting his wholesome," almost seems to spit out Hamlet's utter contempt for the queen's present husband.

The contempt is not expressed quite as strongly in Gide's translation, although he does come close to marking the rhythmical contrast between the flowing description of the king and the curt dismissal of Claudius which is conveyed metrically by enjambment and stress shift in the original. Again Gide uses sound and syntax to recreate the semantic function of the original rhythm: "C'est votre mari; épi pourri, injure à la santé du frere." Syntactically, Gide has ranged in the passage from the frequent use of the definite article in his translation of the king's virtues to the complete omission of articles for the two nouns used to appraise Claudius, "épi" and "injure." The elliptical effect is somewhat similar to Hamlet's contemptuous dismissal of the present king in the original by brief prepositional and participial phrases. Phonetically, Gide compensates for the original change in rhythm by abruptly shifting from the open back vowels and semi-vocalic liquid consonants in his description of the late king to the double use of the diametrically opposite

high front vowel /i/ and the plosive labial "p" in "épi pourri." The consonant conveys in a minor degree the contempt suggested by the original "blasting" and "brother," though the use of "injure" has none of the verbal force in the original participle.

Gide frequently modulates vowels and consonants for rhythmic effect in his own works, and this stylistic practice has provided him with a more than adequate means for conveying the semantic functions that metrically created rhythm performs in the original Hamlet. Shakespeare himself, of course, was a master at exploiting the sound value of words for their dramatic impact. One of the most emotionally charged scenes in Hamlet, the ghost reveals to his amazed son the true identity of his assassin in impassioned lines whose rhythmic effect depends largely on the finely nuanced modulation of vowels and consonants:

Hamlet: O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

Ghost: Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous  
gifts--  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce--won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous  
queen. (I, 5, 40-46, p. 62)

The brilliant interplay of vowels and consonants in this passage is dramatically significant, since it characterizes the ghost as both passionately angered at the violent wrong done him and at the cruel deception noticed only too late, yet frustrated by his total inability to redress that wrong. Only through his impassioned rhetoric can the murdered king hope to gain his revenge by arousing such normal revulsion in Hamlet toward Claudius that his son will undertake the task for him.

Gide attempts to recreate the tense emotional rhythm of the original by a similar use of sound:

Spectre:    Oui, cette bête adultère et incestueuse,  
                   par des sortilèges de son cru, des dons  
                   perfides--maudits soient l'esprit et  
                   les dons qui ont ainsi pouvoir de  
                   séduction--sut gagner à sa lubricité  
                   honteuse le vouloir de ma reine aux  
                   verteux semblants. (p. 63)

The first line of the passage is translated fairly literally, since the French equivalents share identical etymological origins with the original, although Gide is forced to sacrifice the abrasive fricative alliteration of the doubly used demonstrative pronoun "that," with its suggestion of loathing verbally passed through clenched teeth.

However, Gide is more successful in approximating the rhythm of the next lines

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts--  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce--

The original lines present the evil cunning of Claudius in eloquent iambic verse, but the rhythm depends not so much on the metrical regularity as on the perfect blend of sound and sense, for the repetition and interaction of vowels and consonants produce a rhythm totally in accord with the sinister evil and aversion to it which are so emotionally expressed in the passage. The short front vowel /ɪ/ is the pivotal sound in advancing the tense rhythm of the original it is followed by consonant clusters (-th, -tch, -fts) or dental stops, all of which seem to prevent vocalic sonority, thus creating an effect of tightness and frustration that dramatically suggests evil skulking about in cramped corners, hidden and thus undeterred from its monstrous crimes.

The vowel is also preceded in most cases by the slithery glides in "with," "witchcraft," and "wicked," which interact with a series of fricatives (th, ch, f, s) to enhance the sinister connotations of the lexis and the ghost's aversion to Claudius. Dental stops and fricatives seem to clash phonetically,

as if the late king, who breaks his syntax in an exclamation to reiterate Claudius' evil ("O wicked wit" etc.), cannot believe that such qualities as "gifts" and "wit" could be so heinously abused. The tension in the rhythm created by this harsh consonantal conflict also seems to suggest the ghost's barely repressed anger, repressed because he is now forever incapable of venting it himself at his murderous enemy.

Gide creates a similar effect by modulating vowels and consonants, though the interaction is not as complex as in the original: "...par des sortilèges de son cru, des dons perfides--maudits soient l'esprit et les dons qui ont ainsi pouvoir de séduction," Three consonants, "d," "r," and "s," are repeated with some regularity in his version, with the major emphasis on the dental stops, used alliteratively in all cases except "perfides," which is the final emphatic word before the syntactic break.

The word "wit," which is used twice in the original, is translated by "cru" and then "esprit" in Gide's version, and rhythmical considerations are primarily responsible for the choice of the two separate terms. Gide attempts to compensate for the tense rhythm created by the interaction of the front vowel, stops, and clusters in the original by substituting a predominance of monosyllabic words in his translation,

which readily explains his initial preference for "cru" (in fact, only four of the fifteen words used to render the first two original lines have more than one syllable). "Cru" occurs in the densest monosyllabic cluster in his translation of the line: "...de son cru, des dons..." Gide eliminates the conjunction "et" between the prepositional phrases not only to preserve the rhythmic emphasis on the "d" sound, but also because it would create a neat balance inappropriate to the impassioned rhythm of the ghost's expression of rage. Of course, a row of monosyllables can tend to produce a rapidly paced rhythm, but this is prevented in Gide's translation by the heavily foregrounded alliteration of dental stops that create a thudding beat to capture some of the sinister tone of the original.

Although there is a syntactic break in the king's original sentence, the rhythm is still maintained by metrical regularity and the repetition of the key words "wit" and "gifts" with their attendant phonetic interaction. Gide creates a similar movement in his translation by continuing the vowel and consonant modulation. The last word before the syntactic break in his version, "perfides," flows with the first word of the exclamation by a sound chiasmus where the

front vowel and the dental stop is "perfides" is reversed in maudits." The translation of "wit" by the second choice "l'esprit" is also dictated by rhythmical and phonetic considerations, since by sheer vocalic identity the positive value "l'esprit" becomes "maudit" in this context. This highest front vowel, which can almost be intoned as a slight screech to suggest both contempt and helplessness, is continued throughout the French phrase in "qui" and "ainsi" and thus provides a fairly close counterpart to the semantic function played by the short /ɪ/ vowel in the original.

The exclamation in the original culminates in a final outburst of contempt in the next line which is enhanced by the enjambment isolating the three hissing consonants in "so to seduce":

O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce!--won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.

After the pause, high and low vowels, nasals and spirants interact to create a sound contrast in the rhythm implied in the lexis. Gide unfortunately sacrifices the rhythm created by the sound modulation in the remaining line and a half, and his translation becomes curiously prosaic at this point: " (cette bête)...  
sut gagner à sa lubricité honteuse le vouloir de ma

reine aux vertueux semblants." Spirants do occur but they hardly approximate the complex phonetic interplay of the original.

There is little deviation from the metrical scheme in the examples discussed so far, yet Shakespeare exploits stress variation within blank verse for its dramatic effect more than any other Elizabethan playwright. In Hamlet the greatest deviation from the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare's verse occurs in Hamlet's soliloquies to create the varying rhythms that correspond to the prince's quicksilver leaps of thought and emotion. Hamlet's second soliloquy, prompted by the emotional speech of the actor visiting Elsinore, is a passionate tirade in which the prince rails at his own delay in revenging the murder of his father. The monologue begins in an energetic verse with a regular number of stressed and unstressed syllables:

O whát a rógue and peásant sláve am Í!

The gestating thought of the soliloquy is compressed into the next seven lines, poured out without pause:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!  
For Hecuba! (II, 2, 534-542, p. 118)

After the initial two regular lines of the soliloquy, the tempo quickens in the third line which has only three stressed syllables: "But in a *fí*ction, in a *dreám* of *passí*on"; the rhythm slows momentarily due to the heavy concentration of stress in the first half of the fourth line, which only serves dialectically to accelerate the beat in its second half: "Cou<sup>l</sup>ld *fó*rce his *só*ul *só* to his *ó*wn *conceít*." This dialectical tension between metrical pattern and deviation is continued by the regularity of the next line, which is suddenly interrupted in the following verse by the abrupt stress shift in the first foot: "Tears *ín*/*hís* *eyes*... ." The passion of the opening section culminates in the two words "For Hecuba" that receive the value of a line's length.

Gide attempts to approximate the rhythm of the original by foregrounding syntactic and lexical elements in his translation:

Quel rustre je suis! Quel esclave informe!  
 N'est-il pas monstrueux que cet acteur, dans une  
 fiction, un simulacre de passion, puisse ainsi  
 forcer son âme, jusqu'a obtenir ce visage blêmi,  
 ces yeux pleins de larmes, cet aspect égare, cette  
 voix haletante, la soumission de tout son être à  
 ses propos! Et tout cela pour rien! Pour Hécube!  
 (p. 119)

Gide interrupts the normal subject-verb word order in his version by placing the prepositional phrase "dans

une fiction, un simulacre de passion" between "cet acteur" and "puisse" in order to suggest the incipient emotion in the passage of avoiding the regular syntax of logically expressed thought. Also, the preposition is used only once to create the rapid pace of the original rhythm, unlike the version of Bonnefoy, who repeats the preposition in "...pour une simple fiction, pour l'ombre d'une douleur" (p. 57), or that of Hugo, who not only repeats the preposition but produces a measured cadence by uniting the phrases with a conjunction: "...dans une pure fiction et dans le rêve d'une passion" (p. 57).

Just as Gide relied upon a repetition of definite articles to create the rhythm of Hamlet's enumeration of the late king's virtues in the example discussed earlier, so does he repeat the demonstrative adjective in this case to describe the actor's attributes. Lexically, the French adjective is of little importance in the passage, yet phonetically its initial spirant helps to suggest the passion expressed in the original rhythm, especially when it is clustered in the four substantives, "ce visage blêmi, ces yeux pleins de larmes, cet aspect égare, cette voix haletante,"

However, these substantives create a measured cadence not quite appropriate to the emotional rhythm formed by the stress shifts in the original.

The final phrase, "cette voix haletante," is particularly interesting, since the mute "h" of "Haletante" forms a hiatus between the two vowel sounds that is unmelodious to the French ear and thus jars the rhythm of Gide's version just slightly in order to approximate the original metrical deviations. The word "Haletante" is not quite lexically accurate for the original, but its lexical meaning may be a concession for suggesting the breathless rhythm conveyed by the cluster of aspirated "h" sounds in the next section of the soliloquy,

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba  
 That he should weep for her? What would he do  
 Had he the motive and cue for passion  
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,  
 And cleave the general ear with horrid speech.  
 Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
 Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
 The very faculties of eyes and ears. (ll. 543-550)

As Harley Granville-Barker notes, "the repeated queries, with their effect of indrawn breath, suggest hysteria."<sup>5</sup> Gide sacrifices this effect in his translation:

Qu'est Hécube pour lui, lui pour Hécube, qui vaille

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<sup>5</sup> Prefaces to Shakespeare, Volume I: Hamlet (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 188.

tant de pleurs? Que ne ferait-il pas, alors, sous l'inspiration et la dictée de mon chagrin? La scène serait inondée de ses larmes; ses cris horribles crèveraient les tympans; il affolerait le coupable, emplirait l'innocent d'angoisse, confondrait l'ignorant, stupéfierait l'ouïe et la vue.

The sense of breathlessness conveyed by the original aspirates is only vaguely hinted at in Gide's translation by the sudden break in the syntactic flow of the second question through the parenthetical "alors."

The lines following the two questions are another unchecked rush in which the rhythm is carried along by the sheer force of the physically intense verbs which receive the heaviest stress in the metrical scheme. In Gide's version, however, the rhythm has more fluidity than force. Here the problem in conveying the original rhythm lies in the structure of the languages involved. English rarely depends on endings to indicate verb tense or mood, with these functions usually relegated to auxiliary words. In this case the auxiliary "would" can be used only once and still be joined to the forceful main verbs, each in succession intensifying and building upon the other.

The intensification of emotion by the heavily stressed verbs is inevitably lost in French translations

because of the required endings to render the verb mood. The English verbs have great impact because they are simply roots, bare lexical meaning, but their impact is reduced in the French verbs which must bear the semantic weight of not only the root meaning but also of the suffix indicating the mood. The repeated "-erai" endings, with their attendant phonetic equivalence, also establish a stable rhythm that is far from the nervous excitement of the original lines.

In the next section of the soliloquy Hamlet condemns himself for his slow and lackadaisical response to his duty of revenge:

Yet I,  
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
 Like John-a-Dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king  
 Upon whose property and most dear life  
 A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
 Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?  
 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the  
 throat,  
 As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?  
 (ll. 551-560)

In Gide's translation

Moi, cependant, morne et misérable comparse,  
 Pierrot Lunaire, défaillant de ma cause, je reste  
 sans voix! Sans voix, pour un roi, dont un damné  
 complot a défait la fortune et la vie! Suis-je un  
 couard? Qui me traitera de lâche? me donnera du  
 poing sur la gueule, m'arrachera le poil et me  
 soufflètera? Qui me tirera par le nez? Qui me  
 renfoncera la protestation dans la gorge jusqu'au  
 fond des tripes?

The shift in thought is conveyed by a corresponding shift in the rhythm, which is suspended in mid-air by the two significant words "Yet I" that receive a whole line's metrical value to immediately signal the pause before the contrast between Hamlet and the player. Gide accomplishes the same lengthy pause and shift in his translation quite concisely by the two nasals in the adverb "cependant."

The rhythm of the original seems to linger after this pause due to the interaction of the soft nasals, retarding dental stops, and heavy stressed /A/ vowels in the phrase, "a dull and muddy -mettled rascal." The rhythmic effect of this phrase can be described by Kenneth Burke's term, "tonal chiasmus," "an acrostic strategy for knitting words together musically"<sup>6</sup> in order to achieve consistency in variation. Gide's translation reveals remarkable sensitivity to this acrostic structure: "morne et misérable comparse." The "m" sounds of the original are retained and interact with the substituted liquid consonants; the vowel /ɔ/ in "morne" and "comparse" plays a function similar to the original by retarding the

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<sup>6</sup> "On Musicality in Verse," The Philosophy of Literary Form (New York: Vintage, 1957), p. 298.

rhythm. Though the vowel is followed by consonant clusters in both cases, it still retains its length because of the liquid "r" in one cluster and the nasal in the other. This vowel and consonant interplay used by Gide suggests the heavy and lethargic rhythm conveyed by the /A/ vowels in the original which function dramatically to enhance the feeling of lassitude which Hamlet accuses himself of.

After this the tempo quickens again in the rapid, clipped phrases with verbs again heaped upon verbs to relate a series of physical events of mounting intensity:

Am I a coward?  
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
 Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?  
 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the  
 throat,  
 As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

Suis-je un couard?  
 Qui me traitera de lâche? me donnera du poing  
 sur la gueule, m'arrachera le poil et me  
 soufflètera? Qui me tirera par le nez? Qui me  
 renfoncera la protestation dans la gorge jusqu'au  
 fond des tripes?

Admittedly, these are not easy lines to translate. Much of the original vigor is lost in Gide's translation by the shift from present to future tense, and despite the elongation of phrases Gide still drops one whole

sentence, "Who does me this?" The same problem as in the previous section arises in translating these verbs which also receive the heaviest stress in the original meter. By unexplainably shifting to the future tense, Gide again creates a stable rhythm through the repetition of "era" endings instead of approximating the terse and clipped forcefulness of the original where Hamlet turns his anger on himself to provoke the action he must take. In this case, however, the choice of tense is not dictated by the original, and it seems that verbs in **the** present tense would have been much more suitable for conveying these abrupt emotional lines of Hamlet's soliloquy.

Gide's translation of the first half of Hamlet's soliloquy proves, despite his critical sensitivity to the semantic functions of rhythm in Hamlet and the ingenious means he finds to compensate for the original rhythm, that prose can never fully substitute for the dense poetic texture of Shakespeare's tragedy. The stylistic effects that Gide creates to approximate the original poetry are brilliant at times, especially in his skillful modulation of vowels and consonants for phonetic effect, but the most that his rhythmic prose

achieves in translating Hamlet is a compromise which marks the limits of translation as much as it illumines the uniqueness of the original.

PART TWO      --      BORIS PASTERNAK

CHAPTER VIII

HAMLETISM AND HAMLET TRANSLATIONS IN RUSSIA

No other character in world literature has excited the Russian literary imagination as much as Shakespeare's Hamlet. Major Russian writers from Lermontov to Pasternak have used some form of Hamletism to develop ideas and characters in their own works; above all, Shakespeare's hero consistently served as a symbol of a prevalent social type who mirrored the political and cultural crises of various ages in eighteenth and nineteenth century Russia.

Hamlet was first introduced in Russia, as in France and Germany, under the false guise of French neoclassicism in Alexander Sumarokov's 1748 adaptation of the play from the French translation of Laplace. The plot of the original is considerably distorted in Sumarokov's neoclassical version, in which the tragedy emerges in the conflict between Hamlet's love for Ophelia and his family honor. The gravediggers are eliminated for purposes of decorum, and the ghost is

reduced to a dream recounted by Hamlet to Ophelia. Shakespeare's name, appropriately enough, was not included on the title page of Sumarokov's version, although the Russian dramatist did pay rather dubious homage to the source of his adaptation in two essays on English literature published the same year. In the "Two Epistles," Sumarokov's analysis of Shakespeare is little more than a paraphrase of Voltaire's early view of the natural genius unfortunately nurtured in a crude and barbaric age.<sup>1</sup> Sumarokov was one of the leading figures in establishing French neoclassical standards in Russia, and, by virtue of the fact that he exchanged a few letters with Voltaire, he also considered himself the major spokesman of Russian "vol'ter'yanstvo."

Sumarokov's Hamlet, however, was more than a transplanted Voltairean adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy. Its characteristic Russian quality lies in the implied analogy made by Sumarokov between the plot of the play and the political circumstances in mid-eighteenth century Russia. As M. Alekseev notes, the philosophical questions raised in Shakespeare's Hamlet are displaced in Sumarokov's version by "the theme of a

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<sup>1</sup> Dve èpistol'y, (St. Petersburg, 1748).

purely political conflict between a usurper and an heir unlawfully deposed from the throne. Shakespeare's tragedy in Sumarokov's version was used to justify the nobles' revolt that brought Elizaveta Petrovna/Elizabeth I/ to the throne."<sup>2</sup>

It was precisely because of this implied political analogy that Sumarokov's Hamlet was never performed in Russia during the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-1796). While Sumarokov attempted to stir patriotic feelings by emphasizing Elizabeth's seizure of power from a German-dominated court, Catherine preferred to dim the memory of the coup which brought her power through the assassination of her husband Peter III.<sup>3</sup> In this case political motives took precedence over Catherine's otherwise glowing admiration for Shakespeare's drama. In her letters the empress acknowledged reading the translations of Eschenburg and Letourneur and also urged that more of Shakespeare's plays be rendered into Russian.<sup>4</sup> Shakespeare's name actually appears for the

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<sup>2</sup> Shekspir i russkaya kul'tura (Leningrad: Nauka, 1965).

<sup>3</sup> Karamzin's first published work, a translation of Julius Caesar, (1787), was suppressed for the same reason.

<sup>4</sup> Sbornik imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva (St. Petersburg, 1878), XXVIII, p. 383.

first time in Russian publication in the empress' translations of Timon of Athens and The Merry Wives of Windsor, and a series of her own plays devoted to Russian history were patterned after Shakespeare's historical dramas.

Catherine the Great was undoubtedly the major figure in enhancing Shakespeare's reputation in eighteenth century Russia, but due to her influence the growing enthusiasm for the English dramatist remained limited to his comedies and historical dramas. Hamlet did not reemerge on the Russian stage until fourteen years after the empress' death in the adaptation of S. Viskovatov (1810). The new version of Hamlet was even further removed from the original than Sumarokov's work, since it was an adaptation of the Ducis adaptation of LaPlace's translation. But Viskovatov, like his predecessor, also drew subtle parallels to the contemporary political situation in his Hamlet. As Boris Eichenbaum maintains, the frequent addition of the word "tsar" in numerous lines of Viskovatov's version is clearly intended to associate Alexander I with the Danish prince and thereby quash any rumor of the tsar's involvement in the assassination

of his father Paul I in 1801.<sup>5</sup>

Although Viskovatov's adaptation is marked by its patriotic support for Tsar Alexander, his portrayal of Shakespeare's hero is at the same time the first in a long line of Russian Hamlets in the nineteenth century who decry oppression and voice liberal sentiments. The key to these sentiments both in Viskovatov's adaptation and in later translations is found in the lines of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy where Hamlet asks

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time  
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay  
The insolence of office, the spurns  
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? (III, 1, 70-76)

Viskovatov elaborates on these evils even more in his version:

Kto b polzal po zemle, zlodeistvom naselennoi?  
Gde v zlate skryt porok, gde pravdy glas svyash-  
chennyi  
Stol' redko slyshitsya vlastitelyam zemnym;  
Gde dobrym bedstvie, daetsya schast'e zlym;  
Gde lavry kroviyu nevinnykh obagrenny;  
Gde khishchniki v luchakh, na trony vozvyshenny;  
Gde lest', kak smradnyi par, gnezditsya vkrug  
ventsa...<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "K istorii Gamleta v Rossii," Shekspirovskii Sbornik (1967), p. 87.

<sup>6</sup> Gamlet, tragediya v pyati deistviyakh, v stikhakh (St. Petersburg, 1810), p. 87.

/Who would crawl on the earth, filled with villainy,  
 where crime is hidden in gold, where the sacred voice of  
 truth is rarely heard by earthly leaders, where disaster  
 is given to the good and fortune to the evil, where  
 laurels are stained with the blood of the innocent,  
 where beasts of prey in the rays of the sun are raised  
 onto thrones, where flattery, like a stinking vapor,  
 nests around the crown/

The combination of praise for the tsar and strong protest against suppression and injustice lurking about the throne is not as paradoxical as it may seem, considering that the adaptation was completed in the early years of Alexander's reign when the young tsar was engaged in social reform and that the lines are spoken by Hamlet, the tsar figure in the play who fears the evil influences will undermine him.

Viskovatov's Hamlet, however, had little influence on the future widespread popularity of the play in Russia. The initial impetus for Russian Hamletism actually came from the continent with the spread of romanticism in Russia in the 1820's. Although the Russian romantics had little in common with their French and German counterparts, they still shared their hostility to the rigidity of neoclassicism and the adoption of Shakespeare as a more viable alternative.

One of the major spokesman for Shakespeare in

the 1820s was Alexander Pushkin, who, following Stendhal and Madame de Stael, consistently noted the English dramatist's superiority to Racine in tragedy and to Molière in comedy. Shakespeare was imitated and parodied in Pushkin's own works (e.g., Count Nulin, Angelo), and in Boris Godunov and The Little Tragedies he attempted to create a Russian form of Shakespearean drama. Of all Shakespeare's plays, however, Hamlet seems to have held the least interest for Pushkin. It was not so much the text of Shakespeare's play as it was the image of Hamlet in the 1820s that conditioned Pushkin's indifference to the melancholy Dane. The Hamlet interpretations of Goethe and A. W. Schlegel were translated and feverishly discussed in a number of literary journals, and thus the Russian Hamletism of the 1820s was little more than an imported version from German idealism, which had always held little attraction for Pushkin, as evidenced in his parody of the German-educated Lensky in Eugene Onegin.

Pushkin was also a leading figure in the controversy over literary translation<sup>7</sup> in the 1820s when the

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<sup>7</sup> See his essay on Chateaubriand's translation of Paradise Lost, "O Mil'tone i perevode Poteryannogo Raya Shatobrianom" Sobranie sochinenil v shesti tomakh (Moscow: Krasnoproletarshaya, 1969).

romantics attached the neoclassical theory of translation by which foreign works were "adapted" or rather polished and prettified for purposes of decorum. Under French influence most foreign works were rendered into Russian from French translations rather than from the original texts, such as the Hamlet versions of Sumarokov and Viskovatov. Because of the growing interest in continental criticism of Shakespeare's Hamlet, the play became a rallying point in the demand for more accurate translations of foreign literature.

The overwhelming hostility to the versions of Sumarokov and Viskovatov finally prompted the first new translation of the tragedy from the original text, exactly eighty years after its first appearance in Russia in 1748. In reaction to the existing free adaptations of the play, the Hamlet translation of Mikhail Vronchenko (1828) was a literal, perhaps overly literal, version of Shakespeare's tragedy. Vronchenko's literalism together with his attempt to create an archaic tone and equilinear rendering of the original verse made his translation unsuitable for stage production, and so the Viskovatov Hamlet still remained the only version performed in Russian theatres.

Vronchenko's translation of Hamlet was not only a product of its age in its literal accuracy but also in its interpretation of the hero. While the Hamlets of Sumarokov and Viskavatov were both French tragic heroes caught in a conflict between love and honor, Vronchenko's Hamlet was modeled after the interpretation of the hero on Goethe's Wilhelm Meister. Goethe's image of the delicate, weak-willed prince is clearly evident in Vronchenko's version of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, where the sentimental prince catalogues the world's ills according to a dichotomy of strength and weakness:

Kto b snes bich i ponoshen'e sveta  
 Obidy gordykh, pritesnen'ya sil'nykh,  
 Zakonov slabost', znatnykh svoevol'stvo,  
 Osmeyannoi lyubvi muki, zloe  
 Prezrennykh dush prezrenie k zaslugam  
 Kogda kinzhala lish' odin udar --  
 I on svoboden<sup>8</sup>

/Who would bear the whip and abuse of the world, the wrongs of the proud, the oppressions of the strong, the weakness of laws, the wilfulness of the distinguished, the torments of ridiculed love, the evil contempt of contemptible souls for merit, when only a single stroke of the knife--and he is free?/

The adjective "slabyi" represents Vronchenko's greatest deviation from an otherwise literal rendering of the original and is used frequently by Hamlet to characterize his inadequacy for the task of revenge.

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<sup>8</sup>

Gamlet, prints datskii (Moscow, 1828), p. 48.

For example, when the prince curses his inaction by comparing himself to a "drab" and a "scullion" in one soliloquy, Vronchenko transforms the harsh similes to "kak slaboe ditya" (Like a weak child), and the first line of Hamlet's monologue "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" is rendered as "O ya prezrennyi i slabyi rab" (O, a contemptible and weak slave am I).

The Hamlet interpretations of Goethe and A. W. Schlegel continued to dominate Russian criticism of the play and its hero in the 1830s, the decade in which Hamletism became firmly established as an integral part of Russian culture. As D. S. Mirsky notes, "Feeling and inner experience formed the chief interest in the life of the better class of Russians in the thirties; Hamlet was their hero and introspection their principal occupation."<sup>9</sup>

Not only was Hamlet the most popular tragedy on Russian stages in the thirties but Shakespeare's hero had already begun to fascinate Russian writers. The first major Russian writer of the nineteenth century to use some form of Hamletism in his own work was the poet Mikhail Lermontov. His interpretation of Hamlet,

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<sup>9</sup> History of Russian Literature (1926; rpt. New York: Knopf, 1958), p. 145.

however, is highly individual and in direct opposition to the romantic view of the prince prevailing in the thirties. As B. Eichenbaum maintains, the Russian poet was attracted to the "demonic" in Hamlet and actually felt that Hamlet had a strong will, as indicated in a letter in which Lermontov mistranslates Hamlet's lines to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "Do you wish to pluck out the heart of my mystery?" as "Kak khotite iz menya, sushchestva odarennogo sil'noi voleyu, istorgnut' tainye mysli?" (do you wish to force hidden thoughts from me, a creature gifted with strong will?).<sup>10</sup> Lermontov's reading of Hamlet clearly bears some resemblance, however slight, to strong-willed, demonic characters in his own works, such as Arbenin in Maskarad (Masquerade) and Pechorin in Geroi nashego vremeni (Hero of Our Time).

In his deviation from the mainstream of Russian criticism of the play, Lermontov characterizes the Hamletism of major Russian writers. With the exception of Turgenev, every major Russian author who deals with Hamlet in his fictional or critical works presents and extremely personal vision of the Danish prince,

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<sup>10</sup> Op. cit., p. 66.

whereas most Russian translators of the play portray a tragic hero who is explicitly representative of the political and social situation of a particular age.

A translator whose portrayal of Hamlet reflected the political turmoil of his age most of all was Nikolai Polevoi. As chief editor of the liberal journal The Moscow Telegraph (1825-1834), Polevoi was an enthusiastic pioneer of romanticism and played a crucial role in publishing foreign criticism of Shakespeare and promoting native criticism of the dramas. His journal, however, was suppressed for printing an unfavorable review of a patriotic play, and Polevoi was consequently ruined and forced, ironically, to work for government censors.

Abandoned by his liberal friends and distraught at his misfortune, Polevoi had to survive on translation, and his version of Hamlet (1836) is one of the rare cases in the history of literary translation when a translator achieves a successful rendering of a work despite the fact that it is heavily colored by his personal opinions and emotions. The success of Polevoi's translation is not surprising, however, since many intellectuals under the repressive reign of Nicholas I could identify with the personal bitterness and frustration

that Polevoi injected into his portrayal of Hamlet as a misanthropic, neurotic wretch disgusted with his weak will and powerlessness.

Polevoi espoused the Goethean view of Hamlet in seeing the tragic theme as a study of "slabost' dolga"<sup>11</sup> (weakness in the face of duty), but the translator carried the Goethean interpretation to such an extreme that Hamlet's weakness in the translation leads to his utter contempt for himself and his fellow man. Hamlet's pessimistic remark to Rosencrantz, "Man delights not me," takes on misanthropic overtones in Polevoi's version, "Ya ne lyublyu cheloveka" (I do not love man), and other phrases are freely added to enhance the image of Hamlet's terror and self-abasement, such as the expressions "pozor i styd tebe"<sup>12</sup> (shame and dishonor on you) and "strashno, mne strashno za cheloveka" (I am afraid, terribly afraid for man), which are included in Hamlet's "rogue and peasant slave" soliloquy.

The word "nichtozhnyi" (insignificant, worthless) also occurs at so many important points in Polevoi's Hamlet that it becomes a leit motif characterizing

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<sup>11</sup> Moskovskii Telegraph, No. 2 (1832), p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Gamlet, prints datskii (Moscow, 1836), p. 80.

the prince's attitude to himself and the world crumbling about him. Whereas Hamlet deems the uses of the world "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" in the original, Polevoi's hero considers them "gnusny, besplodny, i nichtozhny" (foul, fruitless, and worthless). Similarly, in another soliloquy Hamlet reproaches himself with epithets "rogue and peasant slave" and "dull and muddy-mettled rascal," which in Polevoi's translation become expressions of sheer self-contempt: "Kakoi ya nichtozhnyi chelovek" (what a worthless creature am I) and "nichtozhnyi ya, prezrennyi chelovek" (a worthless and contemptible man am I).

Hamlet's feeling of worthlessness is also emphasized in Polevoi's version of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy which, as in other Russian translations, is indirectly related to the political circumstances of the time:

Kto by perenes obidy, zlobu sveta  
 Tiranov gordost', sil'nykh oskorblen'ya,  
 Lyubvi otvergnutoi tosku, tschchetu zakonov,  
 Sudei besstydstvo i prezren'e eto  
 Zaslugi terpelivoi... (p. 91)

/Who would bear the wrongs, the bitterness of the world,  
 the pride of tyrants, insults of the strong, the grief of  
 rejected love, the vanity of laws, the shamelessness of  
 judges and this contempt for patient merit./

The adjective "sil'nykh" serves by contrast to remind the audience of Hamlet's own weakness; the noun "tiran" for "oppressors" is used here for the first time in Russian translation, and, although an accurate rendering, the word was still surrounded by an aura of political connotation which could not be missed by a spectator during the repressive era of Nicholas I, especially since the noun is frequently used to characterize King Claudius in Polevoi's version.

Although Polevoi deviated quite often from the original text of Shakespeare's play, his translation of Hamlet was still lighter and smoother than the archaic and overly literal Vronchenko version. Polevoi felt that Shakespeare had to be brought down to the level of the Russian audience, and his simplification of the complex language and imagery in Hamlet in a sense contributed to the popularity of his translation as much as did its relevance to the contemporary political atmosphere. The complete success of his translation was further ensured by its use in stage productions of the thirties and forties in which the greatest Russian tragic actor of the age, Pavel Mochalov, played the title role and created the

gloomy and romantic figure that characterized Russian Hamletism for years to come.

Polevoi's major role in the development of Russian Hamletism has been ignored by critics. His translation of Hamlet remained the standard in major Russian theatres throughout the nineteenth century. Writers such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev , and Chekhov invariably quoted Hamlet in Polevoi's version, and phrases such as "mne strashno za cheloveka" entered the Russian language as everyday maxims. While other translators used Hamlet to make only slight allusions to contemporary affairs, Polevoi created the first native Russian Hamlet who was a representative of his age and a mirror through which the Russian audience could see its own oppressed condition reflected. His interpretation of Shakespeare's hero set the tone of Russian Hamletism for the next three decades. Whatever its shortcomings, Polevoi's version of Hamlet exerted more influence in its native country than any other translation of the play in any language, with the possible exception of A. W. Schlegel's German version.

Polevoi's importance in the development not only of Russian Hamletism but also of Russian criticism

has been underestimated by historians of Russian literature. In seeing Hamlet as a "chelovek nashego vremeni, ditya XIX veka (a man of our time, a child of the nineteenth century)"<sup>13</sup> Polevoi is actually the precursor of Belinsky and Turgenev, who in their interpretations of Hamlet both characterize the pervasive method in Russian criticism of constantly attempting to derive from a few fictional figures a spiritual history of the social types of the time, be it the superfluous man, the nihilist, the underground man, or the positive revolutionary hero.

The reputation of Polevoi's Hamlet translation was also enhanced by the initial praise of Vissarion Belinsky, Russia's leading critic of the thirties and forties. Nurtured by the German idealism of the Stankevich circle in the 1830s, Belinsky naturally embraced the romantic conception of Hamlet formulated by Goethe and developed by Polevoi in his translation. Belinsky's enthusiasm for Polevoi's translation was overwhelming: "...prekrasnyi, poëticheskii perevod. Ego perevod Gamleta est' odna iz samykh blestyashchikh zaslug Polevogo russkoi literature" (1838).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cited by M. Alekseev, op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>14</sup> Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (Moscow: Nauka, 1953), II, p. 426. Subsequent references to the complete works will be included in the text.

But just two years later, in 1840, Belinsky reevaluated the translation and found it "iskazhennym" (distorted), little more than "romantic vaudeville," and even went so far as to accuse Polevoi of creating "another Ducis adaptation" (IV, 296).

The reasons for Belinsky's turnabout were not altogether aesthetic, since Polevoi in 1840 had outraged the critic by his complete submission to government pressure. Although political motives were perhaps responsible for the extremity of Belinsky's criticism, there was also a substantial philosophical basis for his reevaluation. Belinsky's early attraction to German idealism gave way under the influence of his reading of Fourier and Hegel to revolutionary utopian socialism, and his evolving interpretation of Hamlet provides a touchstone to gauge this development. Belinsky no longer saw Shakespeare as the "poet idealov, a deistvitelnosti" (poet of ideals but of reality) (III, 508), and so Hamlet was interpreted according to the Hegelian dialectic as a hero who proceeds from initial idealism through inevitable strife to a synthesis in his tragic apprehension of reality in death. As P. V. Annenkov noted in his memoirs, for Belinsky "Hamlet became the incarnation of a philosophical formula, Hegel's 'What is real is

rational."<sup>15</sup>

In his extensive criticism of Hamlet, Belinsky continued the tradition started by Polevoi of viewing Shakespeare's hero as a representative of the Russian character: "Gamlet! ...èto zhizn' chelovecheskaya, èto chelovek, èto vy, èto ya, èto kazhdyi iz nas, bolee ili menee, v vysokom ili smeshnom, no vseгда v zhalkom i grustnom smysle" (II, 254) (Hamlet...this is human life, this is man this is you, this is I, this is each of us, more or less, in a lofty and in a humorous sense, but always in a pitiful and sad sense.) However, Belinsky sees Hamlet's representativeness more in the prince's habitual introspection than in his weak will. In calling Hamlet "the poetic apotheosis of reflection," Belinsky is closer to A. W. Schlegel in emphasizing the philosophical aspect of the prince's character. Belinsky's critical views of Hamlet actually prompted a new translation of the play by I. A. Kroneberg in 1844.

Reacting against the romantic portrayal of Hamlet in Polevoi's version, Kroneberg in his "realistic"

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<sup>15</sup> Extraordinary Decade: The Literary Views of P. V. Annenkoy, ed. A. Mendel & trans. R. Titunik (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1968), p. 33.

version even simplifies Shakespeare's complex imagery more than his predecessor. Kroneberg's philosophical Hamlet often speaks in a dry tone full of abstractions, and puns and other flights of humor are largely omitted. Kroneberg's translation is generally closer to the literalism of Vronchenko, and this was undoubtedly responsible for its failure on stage, even despite Belinsky's enthusiastic approval.

Hamletism became an established phenomenon in Russian cultural life mainly due to Polevoi's translation, Mochalov's acting, and Belinsky's criticism in the thirties and forties. However, the Russian view of Hamlet assumed new forms and significance in the changing intellectual and political atmosphere of the next two decades. Whereas Belinsky felt that Hamlet was a noble and great soul (*velikaya dusha*) only weakened by habitual reflection, radical critics of the fifties and sixties such as Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, and Pisarev believed there was little nobility in a character whose tender feelings and philosophical meandering rendered him useless and impractical in an age that demanded an active revolutionary response.

The negative estimation of Hamlet was best formulated by Ivan Turgenev in his famous essay "Don

Quixote and Hamlet" (1860), in which he continues the critical tradition of using fictional characters as symbols of the social types of the period. The essay is less a critique of the actual works than a study of the political circumstances in mid-nineteenth century Russia. Hamlet is seen in purely negative terms as a sheer egotist, selfish, introspective and thus ineffectual, whereas Don Quixote is characterized by his enthusiasm, single-mindedness, and self-sacrificial courage. In the essay Hamlet is pictured as the archetype of the "lishnii chelovek" (superfluous man), a term which Turgenev himself originated in his Diary of a Superfluous Man (1850) and which has long been a cliché in discussing the heroes of nineteenth century Russian fiction.

Turgenev was preoccupied with Hamlet and Hamletism more than any other Russian writer and portrayed a number of Hamlet figures in his own works such as "Piotr Petrovich Karataev," "A Hamlet of the Shchigrov District," Asya, and Rudin. However, unlike other writers who dealt with Hamlet in their works, Turgenev depicted his Hamlet figures according to the prevailing critical view of Shakespeare's hero, Turgenev's novel, of course, greatly contributed in creating the predominant Russian image of Hamlet in the 1850s and 1860s.

His heroes are often idealistic, intellectual, yet vacillating and shallow in moments demanding action, such as Rudin or Nezhdanov in Virgin Soil. In On the Eve Turgenev attempted to create a Don Quixote figure in the revolutionary Insarov, but the Bulgarian nationality of the hero was an implied accusation that only Hamlets existed on Russian soil. To a certain degree, all Turgenev's heroes conform to the two types of human beings that he analyzes in "Don Quixote and Hamlet."

One of the immediate effects of the essay was a new translation of Hamlet published by N. Zagulyaev in 1861 and dedicated to Turgenev. Proceeding from Turgenev's negative view of Shakespeare's hero, Zagulyaev eliminates much of the spark and gusto of Hamlet's language and thus portrays little more than the self-indulgent thinker that he describes in his preface to the translation.

Turgenev's Hamlet rather than Shakespeare's seems to speak in Zagulyaev's version of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy in which his translation of the lines "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer/ The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" alludes to Belinsky's appraisal of Hamlet as a "velikaya

dusha": "Dolzhna li velikaya dusha snosit' udary roka?" (Should a great soul bear the blows of fate?). In the original, Hamlet only speaks of man in general and not of a great soul; the reference to Belinsky is validated by the use of the root "dush-" in Zagulyaev's version of "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all" at the end of the soliloquy, in which he indirectly refutes Belinsky's positive view of Hamlet: "Da, malodushnym menya delaet somnenie" (Yes, doubt makes me petty, small-souled).<sup>16</sup> The more general pronoun in the original, "us," is related only to Hamlet in Zagulyaev's translation, and the use of "velikaya dush" and "malodushnym" within this most important monologue practically epitomizes the opposite responses to Hamlet of two generations in Russia, one represented by Belinsky, the other by Turgenev.

During the same period in which Turgenev portrayed negative Hamlet figures in his novels and criticism, Fyodor Dostoevsky continued the tradition of integrating extremely personal forms of Hamletism in his own work. In his early work Dostoevsky joined critics in condemning and parodying those who cloak

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<sup>16</sup> Gamlet prints datskii (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 88.

their emptiness by pretending to be noble and tragic Hamlets, but after The Notes from Underground (1864), his preoccupation with Hamlet ranges far beyond the social criticism of his era in his use of Shakespeare's hero to explore the tragic dimensions of consciousness and its implications for human freedom. Of all Dostoevsky's heroes, the underground man bears the most direct influence of Hamlet, but as George Steiner suggests, the most deeply rooted Hamletism in all Russian literature is perhaps found in Ivan Karamazov and Stavrogin (The Devils).<sup>17</sup>

Although Dostoevsky's vision of Hamlet was more philosophically complex than that of his contemporaries, his interpretation of Shakespeare's hero was ultimately rooted in the Goethe-Schlegel view of the sentimental and cerebral hero which dominated not only Russian, but all European, criticism throughout the nineteenth century. Whether the Russian Hamlet was considered a positive or negative figure, he was still treated as a character who is rendered inactive by his tender feelings and constant introspection. Scenes or language in the play contrary to this view, such as Hamlet's

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<sup>17</sup> Tolstoy or Dostoevsky (New York: Dutton, 1971), p. 312.

bawdy remarks to Ophelia and harsh treatment of Rosen-<sup>206</sup>  
crantz and Guildenstern, are usually ignored by critics  
and eliminated in performances and translations (es-  
pecially in Polevoi's version).

The frequent analogies between Hamlet and the  
political milieu abated in Russia in the 1880s and 1890s,  
when the realistic novel began to decline and intel-  
lectuals sought escapism as the only relief from what  
they felt to be an intolerable political situation.  
More attention was turned to the dramatic and stylistic  
value of existing Hamlet translations, and, as in the  
1820s, the play again became a focal point in a contro-  
versy over literary translation. Translators of Hamlet  
argued the merits of either prose or verse versions of  
the tragedy, and more translations of the play were  
produced in these decades than in any other period in  
the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

None of these translations, however, supplanted  
the popular Polevoi version in the last decades of the  
century. The continued acceptance of Polevoi's trans-  
lation as the standard Hamlet can perhaps be gauged

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<sup>18</sup> A. Sokolovskii (1883); P. Gnedich (1891); D. Averkiev  
(1895); K. Romanov (1899).

by the frequent quotations from his version in the works of Anton Chekhov. Like Dostoevsky and Lermontov, Chekhov's treatment of Hamlet in his own works is highly individual and unrelated to contemporary critical views of Shakespeare's hero. Ironic detachment and gentle mockery characterize the passing analogies made between Hamlet and Chekhovian heroes such as Laevsky in The Duel and the main character in Ivanov. However, the constant references to Shakespeare's Hamlet in The Seagull are not so much quotations as they are a leit motif integral to the structure and theme of the play. Besides the numerous citations from the Polevoi translation, the plot of The Seagull is developed, as in Hamlet, by the use of a play within a play, and the relationship between Hamlet and the hero of the play, Treplev, extends by analogy to other characters such as Treplev's mother Arkadina (Gertrude) and his beloved Nina (Ophelia).

Whereas Chekhov shared the enthusiasm of major Russian writers for Shakespeare and Hamlet, Leo Tolstoy stood apart from the mainstream of Russian Hamletism in his utter condemnation of the English dramatist. The more Tolstoy turned away from his own fiction in the 1880's, the more he vilified the established literary

canon, and Shakespeare, in particular, was one of the major targets of his attack on "vulgar" literature in What is Art? (1898). Shakespeare's growing popularity in Russia even provoked Tolstoy to devote a separate polemic to the dramas a few years later in O Shekspire i o drame (1903). While King Lear bears the brunt of Tolstoy's invective against Shakespeare, Hamlet is also dismissed as rubbish in brief but stinging comments. Curiously enough, the ghost scene in Hamlet which Voltaire found to be so offensive also disgusted Tolstoy more than any other part of the play.<sup>19</sup>

Tolstoy's condemnation of Shakespeare did little damage to the established popularity of Hamlet in Russia. New interest in the tragedy was aroused in 1911, a year after Tolstoy's death, through the innovative production at the Moscow Art Theatre staged by the famed English director Gordon Craig. In his own words, Craig was principally concerned with "Hamlet the idea, Hamlet the symbol," and in his highly stylized production Hamlet is depicted as a spiritual hero assailed by the petty evils of a nonetheless

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<sup>19</sup>O Shekspire i o drame (Moscow, 1903), p. 64.

powerful, materialistic adversary. His production of Hamlet was experimental for a time when dramatic naturalism had been canonized by Stanislavskii, but Craig's interpretation of Shakespeare's hero was not totally alien in Russia. The conception of Hamlet as a spiritual and mystical hero had been advanced earlier by the philosopher Lev Shestov and the poet Alexander Blok (who in his youth as an actor had often played Hamlet in provincial theatres).

This new development in Russian Hamletism, however, was short-lived due to the political turmoil which eventually led to the revolution in 1917. After the revolution Shakespeare still held the same esteem in the Soviet Union as he had before in Czarist Russia. Despite attempts by dogmatic Marxists such as F. M. Friche to condemn him as an aristocrat who hated the masses,<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare was still praised by other critics, among them Gorkii and Lunacharskii, for his great "humanism." Of all Shakespeare's dramas, however, Hamlet was least in keeping with the Soviet conception of literature. The nineteenth century interpretation of Hamlet the superfluous man rendered

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<sup>20</sup> Ocherki po istorii zapadnoevropeiskoi literatury (Moscow, 1918), p. 51

inactive by introspection was the complete antithesis of the revolutionary positive hero which was to be forged by Soviet literary smithies. Hamlet either had to be dismissed as a footnote to the literary history of a pre-revolutionary era or to be accommodated to the spirit of revolutionary Marxism.

Hamlet was too popular to be consigned to oblivion (although Stalin kept the play off the stage from 1945 until his death), and so Soviet critics responded to the need for a new Russian Hamlet by completely reversing the nineteenth century interpretation of the hero and emphasizing his positive qualities, chief among them his humanism. Hamlet was treated historically as a revolutionary hero of his own age, who, according to the Shakespearean critic A. Smirnov, "...mirrored the crisis of humanism" and thus became a "merciless judge of his epoch" in renouncing the feudalistic world.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Shakespeare: A Marxist Interpretation, trans. S. Volochov (New York: Critics Group, 1937), p. 62.

The reaction against nineteenth century Russian Hamletism also led to a demand for a new translation of the play, not so much to create a Soviet version of Hamlet as to eradicate any traces of Hamlet the superfluous man, a view still perpetuated in the continued use of Polevoi's translation. Aside from political motives, many stage directors, including Nemirovich-Danchenko and Meyerhold (1931), clamored for a modern translation to replace all the existing versions that were too outdated and unsuitable for contemporary theatre productions.

Thus three new translations of Hamlet were commissioned by theatres in the 1930s (Anna Radlova, 1936; Mikhail Lozinski, 1937; Boris Pasternak, 1939-1940), and the urgency of the demand for a new version of Hamlet is perhaps demonstrated by the fact that two of the greatest Soviet translators, Lozinski<sup>22</sup> and Pasternak, retranslated Shakespeare's most popular play in Russia. Lozinski's translation is far superior to Radlova's version and so it will be used in this analysis of Pasternak's Hamlet for purposes of comparison.

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<sup>22</sup> Lozinskii also translated Don Quixote and The Divine Comedy.

Hamlet was the first of eight Shakespearean plays translated by Boris Pasternak (the others include Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, Henry IV, Parts I & II). The translation of Hamlet was directly commissioned for the theater at the suggestion of Menirovich-Danchenko and was first used in the successful production of Vladimir Bebutov in 1941. Pasternak's Hamlet was also used by the renowned Soviet director Grigorii Kozintsev in his highly acclaimed film version of the play (1964).

Pasternak followed in the long tradition of Russian poet-translators dating back to Zhukovskii, and he certainly surpassed his predecessors in the sheer output of his translations. While the Shakespearean dramas form a major part of his translations, Pasternak also rendered Goethe's Faust, another foreign work of immense influence for Russian culture, and he was largely responsible for the introduction of Georgian lyric poetry into Great Russia due to his numerous translations. Among the other foreign poets translated by Pasternak were Shelley, Keats, Byron, Jonson, Verlaine, and Verhaeren.

Pasternak's prolific translating activity resulted just as much from practical considerations as from his belief that "translations are not a method of

getting acquainted with particular works but a medium of the age-old intercourse of cultures and peoples."<sup>23</sup> Prevented from publishing his own poetry because of his noncommittal attitude to the Stalinist regime, Pasternak was forced by financial difficulties to translate throughout the thirties and forties. Translation, however, also provided Pasternak with an outlet for his own creative energy and even helped him eliminate some of the excesses of his earlier style from his post-war poetry.

Pasternak was also one of the first translators of Hamlet to turn his attention to the stylistic complexity of Shakespeare's text. Although Pasternak believed that any translation of a literary work must function as Russian poetry in its own right, he still realized that translation was essentially a confrontation between two linguistic systems, and in translating the works of English poets, he learned that the most significant advantage of the English language is its monosyllabic quality which allows such great compression in poetry: "The small number of syllables in English words opens up a rich expanse for English style. The

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<sup>23</sup> "Perevody ne sposob oznakomleniya s otchel'nymi proizvedeniyami, a sredstvo vekovogo obshcheniya kul'tur i narodov." Sochineniya (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1961), III, p. 184.

compression of the English phrase guarantees its pithiness, and its pithiness is a guarantee of its musicality, because the music of the word consists not in its sonority but in the mutual relation between sound and meaning. In this sense English poetry is musical to an extreme degree."<sup>24</sup> Shakespeare, as Pasternak suggests, exploited this quality of the English language to the fullest: "The added charm of each English verse is the invisible presence of Shakespeare and his influence in many of the most effective and typical English devices and turns of speech."<sup>25</sup> Realizing that this same concision was absent in Russian, Pasternak finds compensation for it in his native linguistic resources, and the following chapter will be devoted to a systematic study of the compensatory devices which Pasternak employs in his translation to render the stylistic complexity of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

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Ibid. "Nemnogoslozhnost' angliiskogo yazyka otkryvaet bogateishii prostor dlya angliiskogo sloga. Szhatost' angliiskoi frazy -- zalog ee soderzhatel'nosti, a soderzhatel'nost' -- poruka ee muzykal'nosti, potomu chto muzyka slova sostoit ne v ego zvuchnosti, a v sootnoshenii mezhdu ego zvuchaniem i znacheniem. V etom smysle angliiskoe stikhoslozhenie predel'no muzykal'no."

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Ibid. "Dopolnitel'noe ocharovanie kazhdoi angliiskoi Strochki est' nezrimoe prisutstvie Shekspira i ego vliyaniya v tselom mnozhestve naibolee deistvennykh i tipicheskikh angliiskikh priemov i oborotov."

CHAPTER IX

## SHAKESPEARE, PASTERNAK, AND THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Russian translators generally have fewer problems in coping with the flexibility and fluidity of Shakespeare's English than do their French counterparts. The inherent concision that Pasternak notes as the major advantage of English is, however, extremely difficult to convey in a predominantly polysyllabic language such as Russian. According to statistical studies cited by Kornei Chukovskii, "A Russian word is on the average twice as long as an English word. In Russian translation an energetic idea in seven lines is inevitably replaced by an inert one in eleven or twelve lines."<sup>1</sup> Attempts by Russian translators, such as Anna Radlova in her Shakespeare translations, to convey the concision of English by finding as many monosyllabic or disyllabic Russian words as possible or by using excessively elliptical phrases usually result in what Chukovskii calls a kind of "asthmatic speech"<sup>2</sup> that is

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<sup>1</sup> Vysokoe iskusstvo /A Noble Art/ (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

unnatural to the native ear.

Pasternak avoids this pitfall in his translations by deciding to render "...not individual lines but whole passages."<sup>3</sup> However, by the very nature of his linguistic material, Pasternak must sacrifice certain elements of the original to convey the equivalent effect of Shakespeare's conciseness. Pasternak's choices of which elements to retain and which to omit are conditioned by what Jiri Levy terms "the minimax strategy,"<sup>4</sup> the aim for achieving maximum effect with minimal loss. The translator has to conceive his art in terms of minimal loss and then balance and adjudicate, as best as possible, the claims of rival functions.

Pasternak's frequent willingness to sacrifice the function of essential stylistic effects in Hamlet reveals his overriding concern to the concise. Typical Shakespearean devices which André Gide translates almost literally are often freely adapted in Pasternak's version of the play. For example, Pasternak often eliminates or radically condenses such constructions

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<sup>3</sup> "Novyi perevod Otello Shekspira" /A New Translation of Shakespeare's Othello/, Literaturnaya gazeta, December, 1944, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> "Translation as a Decision Process," To Honor Roman Jakobson, II (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), p. 1179.

as the (noun) and (noun) of (noun) phrase, in which the use of the conjunction "and," according to William Empson, "...insists on no definite connection between words and thus implies that the reader must open his mind to all their associations... it's a powerful means of forcing him to adopt a poetical attitude to words."<sup>5</sup>

Pasternak omits conveying the spontaneous association in this grammatical construction by compressing the phrase into a single noun. In translating Hamlet's rhetorical question

What is a Man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? (IV, 4, 33-35)

Pasternak renders "good and market" by the single noun "tsena" /value/:

Ne velika tsena  
Togo, edinstvennye ch'i zhelaniya  
Eda da son.<sup>6</sup>

/Is the value great of that man whose only desires are sleep and food?/

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<sup>5</sup> Seven Types of Ambiguity (New York: New Directions, 1947), p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> Vil'yam Shekspir, Tragedii, trans. B. Pasternak (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1967), p. 208. Subsequent references to this edition, which contains all Pasternak's revisions, will be included in the text. Most of the lines referred to remain unchanged throughout the revisions of the play; in cases where the lines in question were altered, the appropriate revisions will be cited and discussed.

Here the noun is perhaps adequate, since it conveys the dual notion of moral and commercial worth in "good and market," but in other cases the dramatic effect of Shakespeare's grammatical device is totally lost in Pasternak's translation. For example, the (noun) and (noun) of (noun) phrase in the final lines of Claudius' address to Hamlet contributes significantly to the tone of the passage:

For your intent  
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
 It is most retrograde to our desire,  
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
 Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.  
 (I, 2, 112-117)

Together with the elaborate diction (retrograde, etc.) and calculated rhetoric (beseech you, bend you), the phrase, "cheer and comfort of our eye," creates the formal and officious tone of a demanding authoritarian ruler which contrasts to the ostensible "beseeching" request of a concerned stepfather. Pasternak hardly conveys the tension between the tone and the lexis of the original in his version:

Chto do nadezhd vernut'sya v Vittenberg,  
 I prodolzhat' uchen'e, èti plany  
 Nam polozhitel'no ne po dushe,  
 I ya proshu, razdumai i ostan'sya  
 Pred nami, zdes', pod laskoi nashikh glaz,  
 Kak pervyi v rode, syn nash i sanovnik. (p. 134)

/About your hopes to return to Wittenberg and continue study, these plans are positively not to our liking, and

I ask you, think it over and stay with us, here, in the comfort of our eyes, as first in the family, our son and courtier/.

Besides the absence of equivalent rhetoric and diction, Pasternak also condenses the two nouns "cheer and comfort" into "laskoi." The Russian noun may have associations embracing the meanings of both English terms, but in his effort to achieve concision by using a single term, Pasternak sacrifices an important element of the original lines which functions to reveal the king's ambivalent attitude to Hamlet from their first confrontation in the play. Mikhail Lozinski retains some formality in his version and also renders the Shakespearean construction literally to approximate the tone of the original:

Chto do tvoei zaboty  
Vernut'sya dlya uchen'ya v Vittenberg,  
Ona s zhelan'em nashim v raskhozhden'e.  
I ya proshu tebya, sklonis' ostat'sya 7  
Zdes' v laske i v utekhe nashikh vzorov.

/About your worry to return to study in Wittenberg, it is in divergence with our wish. I ask you, bend yourself to stay here in the comfort and delight of our glances./

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<sup>7</sup> Gamlet, prints datskii (Moscow: Detskaya literatura, 1965), p. 25. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.

Shakespeare also uses the (noun) and (noun) of (noun) device to generate spontaneous associations by fusing in the first two nouns the concrete and abstract connotations of an image referring to the third noun, such as in Rosencrantz's words to the king

The single and peculiar life is bound  
 With all the strength and armor of the mind  
 To keep itself from noyance... (III, 3, 11-13)

Whereas Gide and other French translators resist using the conjunction "et" to equate unlike qualities such as the concrete and abstract, Pasternak eliminates Shakespeare's device merely to be concise, as a comparison with Lozinski's version proves:

Dolg kazhdogo berech'sya ot bedy  
 Vsei siloi predostavlennoi rassudku. (Pasternak,  
 (p. 191)

Zhizn' kazhdogo dolzhna  
 Vsei krepost'yu i vsei bronei dushi  
 Khranit' sebya ot bed... (Lozinski, p. 122)

/The duty of each man is to keep himself from care with all the force that reason provides./

/The life of each man should be guarded from care with all the strength and armor of the soul./

Lozinski has no problem in translating the lines literally and thus preserves the original imagery; Pasternak, on the other hand, certainly gains more compactness by condensing the two original nouns into

"siloi," but only at the cost of losing the contrast between the concrete "armor" and the abstract "strength." In this case Pasternak's omission of the original imagery further proves his overwhelming desire to be just as compact as Shakespeare's text is, since, according to Andrei Sinyavsky, the combination of the elevated and abstract with the prosaic and concrete is a predominant feature of his own poetry.<sup>8</sup>

Pasternak also achieves economy of expression in his translation by using metonymy, a trope which often appears in his own poetry. In fact, Roman Jakobson considers metonymy, not the metaphorical, moves that lend his work an expression far from common. Pasternak's lyricism is imbued with metonymicity; in other words, it is association by contiguity that predominates...In Pasternak's poetry, images of the surrounding world function as contiguous reflections or metonymical expressions of the poet's self."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Boris Pasternak," in Pasternak: Modern Judgments, ed. D. Davie (London: Aurora, 1969), p. 214.

<sup>9</sup> "The Prose of the Poet Pasternak," Pasternak: Modern Judgment, p. 141

A prime example of Pasternak's use of metonymy to achieve concision in the Hamlet translation occurs in his version of the scene in which Hamlet derides his mother's feelings for Claudius because of her age:

You cannot call it love, for at your age  
The heyday in the blood is humble, it's tame,  
It waits upon the judgment ... (III, 4, 69-71)

Pasternak's version of these lines is even more concise than the original:

V leta kak vashi  
Zhivut ne buryami, a golovoi. (p. 197)

/In years as yours people live not by tempests but  
by the head./

Pasternak uses only two nouns, the metaphor "buryami" /tempests/ and the metonymy "golovoi" /head/ to encompass whole clauses of the original that create the contrast between passion and reason, "the heyday in the blood" and "judgment." In his remarks on Shakespeare, Pasternak notes the quality of Shakespearean English "which makes it possible to compress a whole statement, made up of two or more contrasted propositions, into a single line of iambic verse,"<sup>10</sup> and the translation of the above lines seems a prime example of Pasternak's efforts to attain the equivalent effect of contrast in his Hamlet.

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<sup>10</sup> Sochineniya, III, p. 195.

Pasternak's concision in this example results not only from his use of metaphor and metonymy but also from the advantages of an inflectional system. Pasternak exploits the native resources of inflection in his own poetry, which according to Donald Davie, is thus extremely difficult for translators to render into English: "Unfortunately, the grammatical structures are so different that the translator despairs of producing any equivalent to his style. Five polysyllabic words can be ranged in two lines of Pasternak as massively as blocks of masonry -- an effect available only in a highly inflected language, something that English, with its clutter of prepositions and particles, can hardly attain to."<sup>11</sup> The reverse applies when Pasternak translates from English. His version of Hamlet's lines to Gertrude are typical "blocks of masonry," twelve words used to render three lines, and the "clutter of prepositions and particles" creating relationships in the original are compensated for by the grammatical identify of the two nouns in the instrumental case.

However, Pasternak attains economy of expression in this case at the expense of overall dramatic impact.

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<sup>11</sup> Introduction, Pasternak: Modern Judgments, p. 17

In the original the repetition of the pronoun and contracted verb "it's" and the use of the synonymous adjectives ("the heyday...is tame, it's humble") convey the nervous agitation that dominates Hamlet throughout the scene. Pasternak completely sacrifices this effect in his translation, in which the terseness of statement and neat antithesis between the nouns suggest more the craft of a poet than the anxiety of a troubled hero.

In addition to using metonymy and the resources of an inflected language, Pasternak often shifts to different parts of speech in his translation to achieve the conciseness of Shakespeare's English. These shifts most often involve the replacement of a noun or noun phrase by a verb, a part of speech that in Russian "...possesses unmatched resources for rendering the precise nature of a movement, its frequency and duration, in a compressed way."<sup>12</sup>

One of the best examples of Pasternak's shift to verbs is his translation of the closing lines of

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<sup>12</sup> Sidney Monas, "Boian and Iaroslavna: Some Lyrical Assumptions in Russian Literature," The Craft and Context of Translation, eds. W. Arrowsmith and R. Shattuck (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1971), p. 110

Hamlet's final soliloquy in which the prince weighs his own duty and inaction against the potentially pyrrhic courage of Fortinbras' men:

... to my shame I see  
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men  
 That for a fantasy and trick of fame  
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for plot  
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
 Which is not tomb enough and continent  
 To hide the slain... (IV, 4, 5, 59-65)

... i so stydom  
 Smotret' na dvadtsat' tysyach obrechennykh,  
 Gotovykh lech' v mogilu, kak v postel'.  
 Izdaleka ikh gonit prizrak slavy  
 V bor'bu za zemlyu, gde ne razmestit'  
 Derushchikhsya i ne zaryt' ubitykh. (p. 209)

/And with shame to look on twenty thousand doomed men ready to lie in a grave as in a bed. From afar the spectre of glory drives them into battle for a land where those fighting cannot be placed and the dead cannot be buried./

Pasternak's translation certainly proves his contention that he rendered not individual lines but whole passages in Hamlet, since the elements of Shakespeare's text are adapted and rearranged to a great degree. The rearrangement of elements contributes to the economy of Pasternak's version, but the use of verb forms is primarily responsible for compressing the original seven lines into six.

Infinitives and participles are substituted to serve the functions of entire phrases in the original.

The phrase "numbers cannot try the cause," i.e., "find space in which to settle the issue by battle" (Kit-tredge's gloss), is radically contracted to "razmestit' derushchikhsya" /to place those fighting/. The infinitive "razmestit'" (from "mest-"/place/and "raz-," prefix denoting dispersion, equivalent to English "dis-") conveys the concept of insufficient space in "numbers" and "cannot try," while the participle "derushchikhsya" fulfills the function of both "numbers" and the verb "fight" in "fight for a plot." Even more compact is the translation of "which is not tomb enough and continent/To hide the slain" as "zaryt' ubitykh," in which the sense of the noun "tomb" and the verb "hide" are packed into the infinitive "zaryt'." Although a direct rendering of "continent" (receptacle) is omitted, the verb "razmestit'" partially suggests the spatial metaphor of the English noun. While certain stylistic elements of the original, such as the double noun phrases, "fantasy and trick," "tomb enough and continent," are eliminated, the overall loss of dramatic effect is minimal in Pasternak's version of the passage.

Pasternak can easily shift from nouns to verb forms for the sake of concision because the Russian

language, like English, is extremely flexible in forming derivatives, such as the verb "razmestit'" from the nominal root "mest-." Pasternak's shift from noun to verb is, however, often not conditioned by the aim for brevity. For example, in translating the noun phrase "dews of blood" in the following lines spoken by Horatio, Pasternak's substitution of a verb formed from a noun (krovavilas' from "krov'" /blood/) contributes little concision to his version:

A little ere the mighty Julius fell,  
 The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;  
 \*As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood...  
 Disasters in the sun... (I, 1, 114-117)

\*Kittredge and other commentators note that a line has probably been omitted before this.

Pred tem kak vlastnyi Yulii pal, mogily  
 Stoyali bez zhil'tsov, a mertvetsy  
 Na ulitsakh nevyatitsu mololi.  
 V ogne komet krovavilas' rosa.  
 Yavilis' pyatna v solntse. (p. 129)

/Before mighty Julius fell, the graves stood without inhabitants and the dead wailed inarticulately in the streets; in the fire of comets the dew was bloodied, stains appeared in the sun./

Lozinski uses adjectival forms to translate "As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood" as "krovavyi dozhd', kosmicheskie svetila" /bloody rain, cosmic lights/, which is just as compact as Pasternak's rendering.

The difference between Pasternak's choice of a verb and Lozinski's of an adjective is typical of both translations. Russian, like English, is a "dynamic" language that exploits its verb richness to express an infinite variety of nuances, unlike French, a "static"<sup>13</sup> language in which "les événements se présentent comme les substances."<sup>14</sup> Just as André Gide's own works and translations reflect an overriding personal preference for the substantive construction natural in his language, so do Pasternak's writings display an overwhelming tendency toward verb use.

Pasternak's predisposition to verbs makes him extremely suitable for translating Shakespeare. Two critics commenting on, respectively, Shakespeare and Pasternak are strikingly similar in appraising the verb usage of each author:

His use of verbs of movement is a study in itself, and one of his outstanding characteristics is the way in which by introducing verbs of movement about things which are motionless and cannot have physical movement, he gives life to a whole phrase.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The distinction is made by Vinay and Darbelnet, Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais. See Gide section, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Bally, Linguistique générale et linguistique française, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> C. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery (Cambridge: Camb. UP, 1935), p. 151,

Everyday life is nearly always in movement: the vagrant smell of fermenting wine, the discourse of membranes, the shuffling of flower beds, spattered tea...even sleep is in movement for him -- the pulsing temple!<sup>16</sup>

The sheer physical dynamism of Shakespeare's verbs presents far less difficulty for Pasternak than for Gide, who relies heavily on noun constructions and circumlocutions in his version of Hamlet. At times Pasternak even surpasses Shakespeare in the vividness and physicality of his verb choices in the translation. For example, in translating Guildenstern's line to the king that Hamlet "...keeps aloof with a crafty madness" (III, 1, 7-8), Pasternak transforms the static verb of the original to a more active term indicating stealthy movement: "On uskol'zaet s khitrost'yu bezumtsa" /he slips away with the cunning of a madman/ (p. 175). Similarly, in rendering the king's remark to Laertes about the queen's affection for Hamlet, "The queen his mother lives almost by his looks," Pasternak substitutes a more physical verb for "lives": "Lish' im dyshit koroleva-mat'" (p. 218) /The queen his mother almost breathes by him/. Lozinski's choice is purely literal: "Ona zhivet ego vzorom" /she lives by his looks/.

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<sup>16</sup> Marina Tsvetaeva, "A Downpour of Light," Pasternak, p. 52.

In his choice of extremely vivid verbs, Pasternak sometimes reinforces an image in the original phrase. In one case, Hamlet uses the metaphor of a monstrous maxilla to describe the opened grave from which his father has suddenly emerged:

Why the sepulchre  
Wherein we saw thee quietly interred  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws  
To cast thee up again. (I, 4, 48-51)

In Pasternak's translation

Otchego grobnitsa  
Gde v pokoe my videli tvoi prakh,  
Pazzhalas siloi chelyusti iz kamnya,  
Chtob vyplyunut' tebya. (p. 146)

/Why has the grave, where we saw your dust in peace, forcefully opened its jaws of stone to spit thee out again?/

Pasternak's rendering of the infinitive "to cast up" as "vyplyunut'" /spit out/ is not only more graphic than the original verb but also supplements the oral imagery in the noun "jaw" /chelyusti/. In other cases Pasternak uses a vivid verb to create an image that is absent in the original. When Horatio informs Hamlet about his father's ghost, "Thrice he walked/By their (i.e., the guards) oppressed and fear-surprised eyes" (I, 2, 202-203), Pasternak alters the neutral verb "walked" to the more connotative "skol'zil" (slipped, slithered

away): "Trizhdy on skol'zil/Pred ikh ostolbenelymi glazami" (p. 137) /Thrice he slithered by their astonished eyes/. The Russian word suggests a sinister quality not directly expressed in the original verb, but the added implication is certainly justified by the overall portrayal of the ghost in the play.

In addition to exploiting the vividness and flexibility of Russian verbs, Pasternak also compensates for various elements of Shakespeare's Hamlet by using aspect, a grammatical feature peculiar to the Slavic verb system. Verb aspect in Russian basically denotes the time required for the performance of an action, but it is also an extremely complex form capable of specifying the precise nature, frequency, duration and degree of a given action. Russian has two verb aspects: the imperfective, which denotes the continuation or repetition of an action, and the perfective, which indicates a single occurrence, the start, completion or limited duration of the action described. Aspects are formed, with few exceptions, by alternations in the verb root or by the addition of certain suffixes or prefixes to the root.

Verbal prefixation in the aspectual system is a crucial means for Pasternak in conveying concepts

of time that have thematic implications in Hamlet. One of the best examples of this is Pasternak's repeated use of verbs with the prefix "pro-" throughout the gravedigger scene in the final act. The prefix "pro-" denotes specifically limited duration and is thus especially appropriate to this scene, which is a tragicomic treatment of death and the brevity of human existence. The dialogue in the original, by the very nature of its subject, includes several words dealing with temporal process, yet Pasternak's choice of aspect and prefix further enhance the various perceptions of time permeating the original.

For example, the first gravedigger explains his riddle about who is the strongest builder with the reply: "The gallows maker, for his frame outlives a thousand tenants" (V, 1, 40). Pasternak accurately renders the verb "outlives" as "perestaivaet" /outstands, outlasts/. Just a few lines below, the same digger suggests to his colleague that graves, like man, are short-lived since they "... last til Doomsday," which Pasternak renders as "...prostoyat do vtorogo prishestviya" (p.228) /will last til the second coming/. In the first case the imperfective verb "perestaivaet" denotes that

the action of "outliving" is of infinite, uninterrupted duration, and the prefix "pere-" (through, across) further suggests going beyond limits, especially in the sense of the superior longevity or endurance of one object or person over another. Pasternak counterbalances the two different perceptions of time in the original cases by translating "last" in the second example by a verb with the same root, "stoi-" yet also by using the perfective aspect and the prefix "pro-" to indicate the very opposite notion of the limited duration of man's existence on earth.

Pasternak emphasizes the idea of brief human life throughout the scene by his constant use of perfective verbs prefixed by "pro-." Hamlet's question to the digger, "How long will a man lie in earth ere he rot?", is translated as "Mnogo li prolezhit chelovek v zemle poka on ne sginet?" /Does a man lie long in the earth until he rots/; the diggers reply that, if the man's already rotten before death, "he'll last you some eight or nine year" is rendered "to let vosem'-devyat' proderzhitsya" /he'll hold out about eight or nine years/. Similarly, the digger shows Hamlet a skull that "... hath lien in the earth three and twenty years," which Pasternak renders by a verb

prefixed with "pro-": "Etot cherep prolezhal v zemle dvadtsat' tri goda" / This skull has lain in the earth twenty-three years/.

Verbal prefixes can also specify other elements of a given action in addition to its temporal nature. Pasternak is particularly successful in using prefixation as a compensatory device for a wide range of stylistic effects in Shakespeare's Hamlet. For example, Pasternak uses two forms of the verb "dat'" /to give/ to render the dying Hamlet's refusal to let Horatio poison himself: "Give me the cup! Let go! By heaven, I'll have it! (V, 2, 332). Pasternak translates this as "Dai kubok mne! Otdai ego!" (p. 244). Both imperatives are perfective aspects, implying a single action to be completed, but the prefix "ot-" in the second imperative ("otdai") suggests not only the idea of giving but also of giving up, giving back, the yielding of the object once and for all. The verbal prefix in this case fulfills the same function as the strong lexis of the original "Let go" and makes Pasternak's version far more effective than Lozinski's, in which the unprefixated imperative is merely repeated: "Dai kubok mne. Dai, ya khochu" (p. 205) /Give me the cup, give it, I want it/.

Pasternak also uses prefixation to add a connotation that is absent in the original lexis yet implied by the dramatic situation. One example of this is Pasternak's version of the queen's horrified reaction to Hamlet's murder of Polonius, "What hast thou done!" (III, 4, 27), as "Chto ty nadelal!" (p. 195). Lozinski renders the English verb as "sdelal," which is simply the past tense, perfective aspect of the verb "delat'" /to do/, without any added specification of the action. Pasternak's substitution of "nadelal," however, is much more suggestive of the seriousness of Hamlet's crime, since the prefix "na-" specifies the surpassing of quantitative limits, "overdoing," especially in the negative sense. This is perhaps a minor alteration, since Lozinski's rendering is perfectly accurate, but Pasternak's choice of verb reveals a sensitivity to the dramatic impact of the short phrase by foregrounding the negative nature of Hamlet's action.

Besides adding connotations to the original text, verbal prefixation also functions in Pasternak's Hamlet translation to enhance Shakespeare's imagery. Hamlet uses the metaphor of a sponge to tell Rosencrantz and Guildenstern what they have become as spies

in the king's service: "When he needs what you have gleaned, it's but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again" (IV, 2, 19-20). Pasternak renders the sentence as "Ponadobitsya to, chego vy nasosalis', on vzyal i vydavil vas i snova vy sukhi dlya novoi sluzhby" (p. 204) /When he needs what you have sucked up to the fullest, he takes and squeezes you and again you're dry for new service/. Pasternak's translation offers further evidence of his tendency toward metonymicity. The noun "sponge" is omitted but the image is transferred to the rendering of "gleaned" as "nasosalis'" /sucked up/, a verb suggesting the activity of the original metaphor. In addition, the prefix "na-" with the reflexive suffix "-s'" indicates that the action is performed to the point of satiation, thereby painting a rather rapacious picture of the two royal spies.

In other instances the connotation of a verbal prefix totally compensates for imagery in the original. A primary example of this usage is Pasternak's translation of Claudius' lines about his sin

What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than iteself with brother's blood,  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow? (III, 3, 44-46)

as

Kogda by krov'yu brata  
Byl ves' pokryt ya, razve i togda  
Omyt' ne v silakh nebo èti ruki? (p. 192)

/If I were all covered with the blood of my brother,  
would heaven have the power to completely wash these  
hands?/

Pasternak's use of the prefix "o-" (o-myt'. wash around), indicating the encompassing activity of the verb root, serves the same function as the original simile "white as snow," which suggests the complete purification resulting from the washing action. Pasternak's elimination of the simile is undoubtedly conditioned again by his desire to achieve concision in the translation. Lozinski transfers the simile directly in his version, which is thereby longer than Pasternak's rendering:

Bud' eta proklyataya ruka  
Plotnei camoi sebya ot bratskoi krovi,  
Uzheli u nebes dozhdy ne khvatit  
Myt' ee, kak sneg... (P. 123)

/Be this accursed hand thicker than itself with a  
brother's blood, do the heavens have rain enough to  
wash it as snow?/

The prefix whose connotative value Pasternak exploits most in his translation is "pod-" (under). While such verbal prefixes in Russian have a primary meaning of a physical, directional, or spatial nature,

most of them also have one or more figurative meanings that are directly related to or derived from the primary sense. The prefix "pod-," for example, denotes direction or location under an object, but the literal sense also produces the added connotation of a hidden, secretive, or unnoticed action, such as in the verbs "podslushat'," to listen-under or eavesdrop, overhear, and "podskazat'," to say-under or whisper, prompt, cue. Pasternak uses this prefix both in the literal and figurative senses to create a morphological pattern that reinforces the suggestion of intrigue or conspiracy present in the dramatic situation.

Pasternak often uses the prefix to indicate the purely literal sense of action or location underneath, but in the context of the situation the figurative meaning is also implied, such as in his rendering of the ghost's lines to Hamlet about his murder

Thus was I sleeping by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched,  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin...  
(I, 5, 74-76)

Tak byl rukoyu brata ya vo sne  
Lishen korony, zhizni, korolevy;  
Tak byl podrezan v tsvete greshnykh dnei...  
(p. 150)

/Thus was I in sleep deprived by a brother's hand of  
crown, life, queen; thus was I cut from under in the  
blossom of sinful days./

The participle "podrezan" (undercut) denotes the spatial nature of the action, yet it also enhances the king's disclosure of his furtive assassination by Claudius. A similar instance of the literal usage of "pod-" is Pasternak's translation of Claudius' worried lines to Gertrude about rumors of Laertes' rebellion against the throne:

O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like a murdering piece, in many places  
Gives me superfluous death. (IV, 5, 95-96)

Eti strakhi  
Menya, Gertruda, steregut vezde  
I podsekayut, kak oskolki yader. (p. 212)

/These fears watch for me everywhere, Gertrude, and  
hack under me like shell fragments./

Pasternak's choice of the verb "podsekayut" /hack under/ supplements the simile "kak oskolki yader" /like shell fragments/ used to render "like a murdering piece," i.e., a cannon, but the prefix "pod-" in the Russian verb also suggests that the king's fears concern a coup that will undermine his power. In both examples Lozinski uses two different words without the connotations of Pasternak's prefixed verbs. "Cut off" is rendered as "skoshen" /mowed down/, and Claudius' lines are translated literally: "Vse eto, kak kartech', mne shlet s izbytkom smert' otovsyudu" (p. 152) /All this, like buckshot, sends

me death in excess from all sides./

In other cases the figurative meaning of the prefix is specifically denoted in Pasternak's verb choices. Pasternak uses "pod-" in translating Polonius' lines about his covert attempts to set up Ophelia as a ruse for unearthing the cause of Hamlet's madness, "At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him," as "Ya doch' emu podkinu v `etot chas" (p. 164) /I'll put my daughter stealthily to him at that hour./ Whereas Lozinski's translation of the verb "loose" as "vyshlyu" /send out/ is purely literal, Pasternak's use of "podkinu" /put stealthily/ morphologically emphasizes the intrigue in the dramatic context. Pasternak uses this prefix in the same way in his version of the king's lines to Laertes concerning the secretive exchange of the poisoned sword designed to kill Hamlet:

... with ease  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,  
Requite him for your father. (IV, 7, 135-139)

... vy legko,  
Chut' izlovchas', podmenite tupuyu,  
S predokhranen'em, goloi boevoi  
Za ottsa skvitaetes'. (p. 222)

/You will easily substitute the dull sword, barely contriving, and with protection you will requite for your father in naked battle./

The verb "podmenite" /substitute/ is derived from the root "men-" /change/ and the addition of the prefix "pod-" specifically indicates that the substituting action is of a furtive nature and thereby stresses the clandestine character of the dialogue between Laertes and Claudius (Lozinski again renders the verb literally as "vybrat'" /choose/).

All the above phrases in which Pasternak uses the verbal prefix "pod-" to enhance the suggestion of intrigue in the plot of Hamlet deviate minimally from the original and so are perhaps too random to validate the existence of an intentionally drawn morphological pattern in the translation. However, conclusive proof of Pasternak's consistent exploitation of the connotative possibilities of the prefix is found in his translation of Hamlet's words to Gertrude about his plans to foil Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard, and 't shall go hard  
But I will delve one yard below their mines  
And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet  
When in one line two crafts meet. (III, 4, 207-211)

The original lexis (delve, below, mines) and the imagery of mining and explosive convey Hamlet's plan of pitting intrigue against intrigue, undermining against undermining. A comparison of the translations of Pasternak

and Lozinski shows that Pasternak greatly foregrounds the suggestion of undermining in the original by his use of "pod-":

Zabavno budet, esli sam podryvnik  
 Vzletit na vozdukh. Ya pod ikh podkop  
 Bud' ya neladen, vroyus' yardom glubzhe  
 I ikh vzorvu. Nu i perepolokh  
 Kogda podvokh natknetsya na podvokh. (Italics mine)  
 (p. 201) (Pasternak)

/It will be amusing if the demolition man himself flies up to the air. I will (under)mine under them, and if I'm unlucky, then I'll dig in a yard deeper and blow them up. What a commotion it is, when dirty trick meets dirty trick!/  
 /

V tom i zabava, chtoby zemlekopa  
 Vzorvat' ego zhe minoi; plokho budet,  
 Kol' ya ne vroyus' glubzhe ikh arshinom,  
 Chtob ikh pustit' k lune; est prelest' v tom,  
 Kogda dve khitrosti stolknutsya lbom! (Lozinski,  
 p. 135)

/It is amusing when the navy is exploded by his own mine; it will be bad if I don't dig in an arshin deeper than they in order to send them to the moon; It is charming when two crafts strike their foreheads together!/  
 /

Pasternak deviates slightly from the literality of Lozinski in order to foreground the element of undermining and intrigue by morphological repetition. Instead of rendering "engineer" by its Russian equivalent "inzhener" or by Lozinski's term "zemlekopa"/navvy, literally, earth digger/, Pasternak opts for a noun with the prefix connoting underhanded activity, "podryvnik" /literally, one who mines or burrows under/. Similarly, Pasternak renders "crafts" as

"podvokhi" /dirty tricks, from "podvodit'," undermine or do a bad turn to someone/ rather than by Lozinski's literal version "khitrosti," The choice of "podvokhi" is further foregrounded by its rhyme with "perepolokh" (perepolokh - podvokh). The pervasive use of the preposition and prefix "pod-" in the five lines can hardly be missed by a spectator during performance.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to its other uses in the translation, the prefix "pod-" fulfills the basic function that conditions all Pasternak's stylistic choices: concision. The prefix provides a monosyllabic means of suggesting implications of the original which lexical items could not supply in such short space. In

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Pasternak also uses the prefix with nouns and adjectives to create the morphological pattern suggesting intrigue. For example, Hamlet's description of the mousetrap play as "miching mallecho," or "mischief," according to Kittredge's gloss, is rendered freely as "zmeya podkolodnaya," an idiom equivalent to "snake in the grass." Similarly, when Claudius asks Laertes if he wants to know the "certainty" of his father's death, Pasternak renders the noun by the idiom "podnogotnuyu," literally an adjectival noun meaning "undernail" and best translated into English as "ins and outs." Finally in translating Hamlet's phrase about the sycophants around the king's throne, "Let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp" (III, 2, 57), Pasternak uses the noun "podlizam," literally, those who lick under, or toadies, lickspittles.

other cases, however, Pasternak's drive for concision is a prime example of a translator's obsession with only one element in the original text, to the detriment of all others. In his overriding concern to be concise, Pasternak fails to see that Shakespeare's ability to wrest maximum meaning from a few words in a line is not an end in itself but always directed toward ultimate dramatic impact. Pasternak often approximates Shakespeare's economy of expression, but in doing so he sacrifices stylistic effects that are essential in conveying the dramatic power of Hamlet.

CHAPTER X

THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET IN BORIS PASTERNAK'S TRANSLATION

In his "Notes on Translating Shakespeare's Tragedies," Pasternak takes issue with the predominant nineteenth century view of the weak-willed and tender-hearted Hamlet:

Po davnishnemu ubezhdeniyu kritiki, Gamlet -- tragediya voli. Eto pravil'noe opredelenie. Odnako v kakom smysle ponimat' ego? Bezvolie bylo neizvestno v shekspirovskoe vremya. Etim ne interesovalis'. Oblik Gamleta, obrisovannyi Shekspirom tak podrobno, ocheviden i ne vyazhetsya s predstavleniem o slabonervnosti. Po mysli Shekspira, Gamlet -- prints krovi, ni na minutu ne zabyvayushchii o svoikh pravakh na prestol, baloven' starogo dvora i samonadeyannyyi, vsledstvie svei bol'shoi odarennosti, samorodok. V sovokupnosti chert, kotorymi ego nadelil avtor, net mesta dryablosti, oni ee isklyuchayut. Skoree naprotiv, zritel'yu predostavlyatsya sudit', kak velika zhertva Gamleta, esli pri takikh vidakh na buduschee on postupaetsya svoimi vygodami radi vysshei tseli

S momenta poyavleniya prizraka Gamlet otkazyvaetsya ot sebya, chtoby, "tvorit volyu poslavshego ego." Gamlet ne drama, beskharakternosti, no drama dolga i samootrecheniya. Vazhnee vsego, chto voleyu sluchaya Gamlet izbiraetsya v sud'i svoego vremeni i v slugi bolee otdalennogo. Gamlet-- drama vysokogo zhrebiya, zapovedannogo podviga, vverennogo predznacheniya (Sochineniya, III, p. 196-197).

/According to the well-established view of critics, Hamlet is a tragedy of the will. This is true. But in what sense is it to be understood? Absence of will power did not exist as a theme in Shakespeare's time: it

aroused no interest. Nor does Shakespeare's portrait of Hamlet, drawn so clearly and in so much detail, suggest a neurotic. Hamlet is a prince of the blood who never, for a moment, ceases to be conscious of his rights as heir to the throne; he is the spoilt darling of an ancient court and self-assured in the awareness of his natural gifts. The sum of qualities with which he is endowed by Shakespeare leaves no room for flabbiness: it precludes it. Rather, the opposite is true: the audience, impressed by his brilliant prospects, is left to judge the greatness of his sacrifice in giving them up for a higher aim.

From the moment of the ghost's appearance, Hamlet gives up his will in order to "do the will of him that sent him." Hamlet is not a drama of weakness but of duty and self-denial. What is important is that chance has allotted Hamlet the role of judge of his own time and servant of the future. Hamlet is the drama of a high destiny,<sup>1</sup> of a life devoted and preordained to a heroic task. <sup>1</sup>/

Pasternak sees Hamlet not only as a strong and self-assured tragic hero who bravely responds to the command of his father, but as the language of his remarks suggest ("zapovedannogo...zhertva...predznacheniya"), Hamlet's mission is interpreted in almost religious terms. The relationship between Hamlet and the figure of Christ implied in the translator's comments on self-denial, sacrifice, and "a life...preordained to a heroic

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from I Remember, trans. M. Harari (New York: Meridian, 1960), p. 130-131.

task" is actually made explicit in "Hamlet," the first in the cycle of poems written by the hero of Pasternak's novel Doctor Zhivago:

Gul zatikh. Ya vyshel na podmostki.  
Prislonyas' k dvernomu kosyaku,  
Ya lovlyu v dalekom otgoloske  
Chto sluchitsya na moem veku.

Na menya nastavlen sumrak nochi  
Tysyach'yu binoklei na osi.  
Esli tol'ko možhno, Avva Otche,  
Chashu ètu mimo pronesi.

Ya lyublyu tvoi zamysel upryamyi  
i igrat' soglasen ètu rol'  
No seichas ident drugaya drama,  
I na ètot raz menya uvol'.

No produman rasporydok deistvii,  
I neotvratim konets puti.  
Ya odin, vse tonet v fariseistve,  
Zhizn' prozhit' -- ne pole pereiti.<sup>2</sup>

/The stir is over. I step forth on the boards, leaning against an upright at the entrance; I strain to make the far-off echo yield a cue to the events that may come in my day.

Night and its murk transfix and pin me, staring through thousands of binoculars. If thou be willing, Abba Father, remove this cup from me.

I cherish this, thy rigorous conception, and I consent to play this part therein; but another play is running at this moment, so, for the present, release me from the cast.

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<sup>2</sup> Doktor Zhivago (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 532.

And yet, the order of the acts has been schemed and plotted, and nothing can avert the final curtain's fall. I stand alone. All else is swamped by Pharisaism. To live life to the end is not a childish task./<sup>3</sup>

In the second stanza of the poem, the actor Hamlet echoes Christ's words in Mark 14:36: "If thou be willing, Father, remove this cup from me." The biblical verse refers to Christ's initial impulse in the garden of Gethsemane to renounce the destiny set for him by his heavenly father, just as Hamlet wavers in his response to the call of his dead father in Shakespeare's tragedy. But although Hamlet begs his father to "release me from the cast" in the pre-ordained drama, he nevertheless accepts his appointed role as Christ does:

And yet, the order of the acts has been schemed  
and plotted  
And nothing can avert the final curtain's fall,  
I stand alone.

The analogy between Christ and Hamlet also operates structurally in Zhivago's poetry, since the same New Testament verse used by Hamlet in the opening poem of the cycle is paraphrased in the last poem,

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<sup>3</sup> Doctor Zhivago, trans. B. G. Guerney (New York: Signet, 1958), p. 433.

"Gethsemane," in which Christ's agony is vividly portrayed:

I glyadya v `eti chernye provaly,  
 Pustye, bez nachala i kontsa,  
 Chtob `eta chasha smerti minovala,  
 V potu krovavom On molil Ottsa. (p. 565)

/And peering into these black abysses -- void, without end and without beginning -- His brow sweating blood, He pleaded with his Father that this cup of death might pass from Him./ (p. 456)

But Christ, like Hamlet, also accepts His higher destiny:

No kniga zhizni podoshla k stranitse,  
 Kotoraya dorozhe vsekh svyatyn'  
 Seichas dolzhno napisannoe sbyt'sya,  
 Puskai zhe sbudetsya ono. Amin' (Ibid.)

/But now the book of life has reached a page which is more precious than are all the holies. That which was written now must be fulfilled. Fulfilled be it then. Amen/ (Ibid.)

This cyclical relationship between the first and last of Zhivago's poems establishes the fact that the story of Christ represents an archetypal pattern of heroism and self-sacrifice occurring in the life of the tragic hero Hamlet, and, to some extent, in the life of Pasternak's fictional poet Zhivago who must forego the revolution, the other "play running at this moment,"

and follow the higher destiny of his art.<sup>4</sup>

Pasternak's interpretation of Hamlet certainly follows in the tradition of other major Russian writers who integrate personal forms of Hamletism in their own works, but since Pasternak is the first major writer to render Shakespeare's tragedy into Russian, the extent to which his highly religious attitude toward Hamlet affects the accuracy of his translation must be examined. Although Pasternak never directly attempts to create a Christ figure out of Hamlet or incorporate specifically Christian themes in his translation, there are many significant lexical deviations from the original text in his version which have religious overtones bearing on the nature of the tragic situation Hamlet confronts and the character of Hamlet himself.

For example, Pasternak refers to the "zhertva" of Hamlet in his notes on the play, and the word, which means both sacrifice and victim in Russian, operates in the translation as a verbal motif relating to Hamlet's

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<sup>4</sup> This pattern is also reinforced structurally by the middle poem of the cycle, "Fairy Tale," in which the mythical figure of St. George is related to Hamlet and Christ by his initial reluctance and then heroic acceptance of his self-sacrificial role.

mission of revenging his father's death.<sup>5</sup> The verb form "pozherstvovat'" is used rather freely in one line of Pasternak's translation of the soliloquy, "How all occasions do inform against me," in which Hamlet rails against his inaction by comparing it with the daring and bravery of Fortinbras:

Witness this army of such mass and charge,  
 Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
 Whose spirit, with divine ambition puffed,  
 Makes mouths at the invisible event,  
 Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
 To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,  
 Even for an eggshell. (IV, 4, 47-53)

Naprimer, ryady  
 Takogo opolchen'ya, pod komandoi  
 Iznezhennogo printsa, gordetsa  
 Do konchikov nogtei. V mechtakh o slave  
 On rvetsya k seche, smerti i sud'be,  
 I zhizn'yu rad pozherstvovat', a delo  
 Ne stoit vyedennogo yaitsa. (p. 208)

/For example, these rows of soldiers, under the command of a delicate prince, a proud man to the very ends of his fingernails. In dreams of glory he rushes to battle, death, and fate, and is happy to sacrifice his life when the matter isn't worth an eggshell./

In the original Hamlet takes note of the mortal risks involved in Fortinbras' venture (Exposing what is mortal and unsure/ To all that fortune, death, and danger dare), but there is certainly no indication that the Norwegian

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<sup>5</sup> Pasternak also uses the word often in his own poem Lieutenant Schmidt to describe the revolutionary task of the hero.

prince is "happy to sacrifice his life" (zhizn'yu rad pozhertvovat') as in Pasternak's version. For Pasternak, heroism and bravery are always coupled with self-sacrifice, as seen in his own heroes Lieutenant Schmidt and Zhivago and in his treatment of Hamlet and St. George in Zhivago's poems. Christ is clearly the archetype of heroic self-sacrifice in all these cases; in the lines cited above, Pasternak's Hamlet realizes that he should be "happy to sacrifice his life" as Fortinbras is, and the prince's self-sacrifice in Pasternak's view is ennobled because by analogy with that of Christ it is "... for a higher aim, to do the will of Him who sent him."

Hamlet is certainly ordered to do the will of his dead father in Shakespeare's tragedy, but whether this duty represents a "higher aim" is a complicated question which is largely ignored by Pasternak. Hamlet's attainment of this supposedly higher aim involves blood revenge for his father's death, and many critics have attributed the prince's delay to his moral qualms about murder, even for the sake of retribution. Pasternak's unquestioning acceptance of the divine origin of the command to Hamlet implies necessarily that the code of revenge in this case, is without a doubt, morally

acceptable and justified. Pasternak's religious interpretation of the hero and his tragic dilemma filters into his translation of the play through other subtle lexical deviations from the original. For example, in the same soliloquy cited above, Hamlet claims

I do not know  
 Why yet I live to say, "This thing's to do,"  
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means  
 To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.  
 (ll. 43-46).

Pasternak translates these lines as

Chto zh medlyu ya i bez kontsa tverzhu  
 O nadobnosti mesti, esli k delu  
 Est' volya, sila, pravo i predlog?  
 Nelepost' ètu tol'ko ottenyaet  
 Vse, chto ni vstrechu. (p. 208)

/Why am I so slow and endlessly prate about the need for revenge when I have will, strength, right, and grounds for the deed? Whatever I come across only emphasizes this absurdity!/  
 /

First of all, in translating the four items that provide Hamlet with ample motive for action, "cause," "will," "strength," and "means," Pasternak unnecessarily substitutes "pravo" (right) for "means" and thus eliminates any doubt about the morality of blood revenge, sanctioned as it is by the divine. Not only does Hamlet have power and reasons for action at his disposal but external evidence of action such as that of Fortinbras

to spur him on: "Examples gross as earth exhort me." According to Kittredge's gloss, "gross" means "large and evident," yet despite this highly visible evidence, the audience knows Hamlet is acutely aware that such appearances can be deceiving and can lead him into evil. These possible subtleties in Hamlet's moral reasoning are omitted in Pasternak's extremely free translation "Nelepost' ètu tol'ko ottenyaet/Vse ni vstrechu... ." The word order is inverted to place "nelepost'" in the emphatic first position of the line, and this single word reduces all the possible rumblings of Hamlet's conscience or any reasons for this delay to utter "absurdity." For Pasternak there can be no question that "examples" or "appearances" prompting Hamlet to act may blind him to the moral consequences of his appointed duty, since this duty is imposed by a higher power that is indisputably divine and thus incapable of suggesting wrongdoing.

Hamlet's moral conscience is certainly not the definitive explanation of his delay, as some critics have suggested, but there is enough evidence from the play to support this as one possible view of the hero's inaction. In any case the range of ambiguity in the original text is considerably narrowed and even

eliminated by the lexical choices Pasternak makes by virtue of his highly religious interpretation of Shakespeare's hero.

In the same soliloquy Pasternak uses another word with religious connotations in translating the lines in which Hamlet compares Fortinbras' insignificant reason for action with his own:

How stand I then  
That have a father killed, a mother stained  
(ll. 56 - 57)

Otets ubit, i mat' oskvernena (p. 208)

/A father killed, a mother profaned/

The word "oskvernyat'," denoting profanation or sacrilege, operates as another motif which occurs with even more frequency than "zhertva" in Pasternak's translation. Pasternak's rendering of "stained" as "oskvernena" in this case is highly characteristic, since he often uses the word and its derivatives in his version to convey the iterative pattern of rot and disease imagery in the original. While the Russian word also carries the meaning of "defile," its repeated use in Pasternak's translation of Hamlet adds a religious dimension which

is absent in the original imagery.<sup>6</sup>

One of Pasternak's most significant uses of the word "oskvernyat'" is his rendering of the ghost's command to Hamlet "Taint not thy mind," as "Ne oskvernyai dushi" (p. 150) /Do not profane your soul/. As Reuben Brower suggests, "'Ne oskvernyai', 'do not profane', with its religious overtones, hardly permits the links with melancholy and disease to develop as they do in the original."<sup>7</sup> Just as Andre Gide's

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<sup>6</sup> For example, when Hamlet refers to Ophelia's "unpolluted flesh" (V, 1, 226) in the original, Pasternak renders the privative adjective as "neoskvernenni" (p. 230); Hamlet also refrains from killing the praying Claudius "when he is fit and seasoned for his passage" (III, 3, 86), which Pasternak translates as "Kodga on chist ot oskverneniya i ves' gotov k dalekomu puti" (p. 193) /when he is cleansed of sacrilege (defilement) and ready for the distant journey/. Pasternak uses the word in other instances also, such as in the comic exchange between Hamlet and Osric. In extolling Laertes' virtues in the same flowery language as Osric employs, Hamlet asks "Why do we wrap the gentleman in our rawer breath?" (V, 2, 121), and Pasternak translates the verb as "oskvernyaem": "Zachem oskvernyaem my ètogo džhentl'mena svoim grubym dykhan'em?" (p. 236). It would seem as if the sacred command of the ghost is so deeply ingrained in the subconscious of Pasternak's Hamlet that such religious terms emerge in his speech in humorous moments.

<sup>7</sup> "Poetic and Dramatic Structure in Versions and Translations of Shakespeare's Plays," Poetics. Poetika. Poetyka, eds. R. Jakobson & D. Davie (The Hague: Mouton, 1961), p. 667.

version of the command, "Garde ton esprit pur," emphasizes the moral and spiritual purity of his Hamlet, so is Paternak's translation of the phrase in accord with his interpretation of the hero, who would understandably receive from a sacred power a summons tinged with religious overtones.<sup>8</sup>

Gide and Pasternak both view Hamlet as standing apart from the general infection and disease pervading the court of Denmark. While Gide's assumption of Hamlet's moral purity stems largely from the influence of nineteenth century views of the play and its hero, Pasternak's incorruptible figure of Hamlet follows logically from his religious interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy. Pasternak sees Hamlet as a "drama of

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<sup>8</sup> Lozinski 's translation of the phrase, "Ne zapyatnai sebya" (p. 48), is more literal, although he too fails to preserve the link with melancholy in the original. In all the cases cited above where Pasternak uses some form of "oskvern-," Lozinski 's choices are always more literal and without the added religious connotation; for example, "a mother stained" is rendered as a "mat' v pozore" (p. 148) /a mother in disgrace/. "Fit and seasoned" are rendered fairly literally as "snaryaden i gotov" (p. 185) /equipped and ready/, while Ophelia's "unpolluted flesh" becomes "neporochnoi ploti" (p. 124) /immaculate, pure flesh/.

duty and self-denial ...of a high destiny, a life pre-ordained to a heroic task," and so the Christlike mission and ascetic, almost saintly, qualities ascribed by Pasternak to Shakespeare's hero preclude any possibility of his corruption by the evil around him.<sup>9</sup>

Pasternak's view of Hamlet often leads him to crucial changes in translating passages which refer to the spreading of contamination or corruption. For example, there are significant deviations in Hamlet's speech to Horatio, in which the prince implies that not even the noblest man can escape the spreading effects of evil. Hamlet claims that the Danes' drunken carousing soils their otherwise spotless reputation for valor and virtue and then compares this with the moral situation of the individual:

So oft it chances in particular men  
That (for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin)  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens  
The form of plausible manners -- that these men  
carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,

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<sup>9</sup> Some critics take a completely opposite view, such as G. W. Knight who claims that "Hamlet is an element of evil in the state of Denmark. The poison of his mental existence spreads outward along things of flesh and blood, like acid eating into metal." Wheel of Fire (London: Methuen, 1930), p. 38.

Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,  
 Their virtues else, be they pure as grace,  
 As infinite as man may undergo,  
 Shall in the general censure take corruption  
 From that particular fault. The dram of evil  
 doth all the noble substance of a doubt,  
 To his own scandal. (I, 4, 23-38).

In Pasternak's translation

Byvaet i s otdel'ny'm chelovekom  
 Chto, naprimer, rodimoe pyatno,  
 V kotorom on nevinen, ibo, verno,  
 Roditelei sebe ne vybral,  
 Il' strannyi sklad dushi, pered kotorym  
 Sdaetsya razum, ili nedochet  
 V manerakh, oskorblyayushchii privychni--  
 Byvaet, slovom, chto pustoi iz'yan  
 V rodu li, svoi li, gubit cheloveka  
 Vo mnen'e vsekh, bud' doblesti ego,  
 Kak milost' bozh'ya, chisty i nesmetny.  
 A vse ot ètoi glupoi kapli zla,  
 I srazu vse dobro idet nasmarku.  
 Dosadno ved'. (p. 145)

/It also happens to a particular man that, for example, a birthmark for which he is not to blame because he surely didn't choose his parents, or a strange cast of soul to which reason surrenders, or a defect in manners that offends custom -- it happens, in short, that an empty flaw ruins the man in the opinion of all, even if his valor is pure and inestimable as the kindness of God, and all from this stupid drop of evil, everything good goes to pot. Why, it's annoying./

The notion that an individual's virtues, "be they pure as grace," can "take corruption" from a bit of evil is completely omitted by Pasternak, while "that particular fault" is reduced to a "pustoi iz'yan," an empty flaw, thus devoid of the original malignancy. The "mole of nature" is no longer "vicious" but only

a mere birthmark ("rodimoe pyatno"), and "the o'er-growth of some complexion", with its suggestion of spreading evil, is lost in Pasternak's "strannyi sklad dushi"/strange cast of soul/. The contaminating influence of the drop of evil is also played down in Pasternak's version of the final lines, in which, as A. K. France notes, "The 'dram of evil' has become a 'stupid' (glupoi) drop of evil, and the final "dosadno ved' (why, it's annoying, it's a nuisance) implies that Hamlet has been talking of something vexatious, no more. The disturbing possibility that evil may be able to infect and overcome even the virtuous does not come out so strongly in Pasternak's translation."<sup>10</sup>

Pasternak's translation of the play reflects the incorruptibility of Hamlet himself most notably in his version of the opening lines of the prince's first soliloquy:

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,  
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew! (I, 2, 129-130)

O esli by ètot gruznyi kul' myasnoi  
Mog isparit'sya, sginut', stat' rosoyu! (p. 135)

The original lines, of course, have been debated by textual critics who argue either for the use of "solid" (1623 folio) or the emendation of "sallied" (1603 quarto)

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<sup>10</sup> "Boris Pasternak's Interpretation of Hamlet," Russian Literature Triquarterly, 7 (1973), p. 206.

to be sullied." Pasternak naturally chooses "solid" since the alternative "sullied" would imply that Hamlet admits his own impurity, a notion that the Russian poet consistently rejects in his critical remarks and in his translations of key images of rot and decay.

Pasternak's translation of these disputed lines is in many respects similar to that of André Gide ("O chair trop massive! Si tu pouvais fondre, t'évaporer, te résoudre en rosée!"), who also chooses "solid" because of his belief in Hamlet's incorruptible moral and spiritual purity. Both Gide and Pasternak emphasize the spiritual Hamlet disgusted with the material world, an interpretation certainly justified by the original text. Gide, however, stresses the opposition grammatically by having Hamlet address his flesh ("Chair trop massive! Si tu pouvais...") and thus establishes a sharp split between body and soul not warranted by the original. Pasternak conveys the duality between the material and the spiritual chiefly through lexis. The spirituality of his Hamlet is implied in the disdainful words the prince uses to characterize his material self, "gruznyi kul' myasnoi," a phrase with much more contempt and cynicism than the original suggests. The adjective

"gruznyi," in addition to meaning "solid," also connotes heaviness and even clumsiness, and the phrase "kul' myasnoi," which is placed in the final emphatic position of the line, reduces the "solid flesh" of the original to a mere tattered bag of meat, a fleshy shell stripped of human or spiritual content.<sup>11</sup>

Hamlet's somewhat cynical use of the term "kul'" in the Russian version reveals the major difference between Gide's and Pasternak's view of Hamlet's spirituality. While both translators see Hamlet as a spiritual force in a corrupt world, Gide's Hamlet is closer to the Goethean image of the delicate and oversensitive prince whose spirituality leaves him too weak and unfit to combat the worldly evil around him. Pasternak's vision of Hamlet, however, is just the opposite; for him Shakespeare's hero is "self-assured," "a prince of the blood," and his spirituality strengthens rather than enfeebles him: "The sum of qualities with which he is endowed by Shakespeare

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<sup>11</sup> In the 1953 edition for children, Pasternak translates the original as "tugaya plot'," taut or tight flesh, which still retains his choice of "solid" over "sullied." The phrase does suggest the confinement implied in the original but without the pessimism and disdain for the material self in "kul' myasnoi," which is used in all other editions.

leaves no room for weakness; it precludes it" (Notes, p. 130). Pasternak's image of the spiritual yet strong tragic hero is often revealed by the forceful language which his Hamlet uses in the translation, such as the contemptuous "kul'" for flesh, or, a few lines later in the same soliloquy, the phrase "nizkii, grubyi musor" /low, coarse trash/ to render "things rank and gross in nature" which clutter the "unweeded garden" of Hamlet's world.

Hamlet's language in the English text, of course, is also quite forceful at times, and it is precisely in such passages that Pasternak often intensifies the original or adds even stronger language of his own in the translation. Probably the most vehement words uttered by Hamlet in the play occur in the soliloquy in which the prince steels himself for the confrontation with his mother:

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
 When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out  
 Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot  
 blood  
 And do such bitter business as the day  
 Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother.  
 O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever  
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.  
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural;  
 I will speak daggers to her, but use none.  
 (III, 2, 373-381)

In Pasternak's translation

Teper' pora nochnogo koldovstva.  
 Skripyat groba i dyshit ad zarazoi.  
 Seichas va mog by pit' zhivuyu krov',  
 I na dela sposoben, ot kotorykh  
 Otpryanu dnem. Itak, nas mat' zvala.  
 Bez zverstva, serdtse! Chto by ni sluchilos',  
 Dushi Nerona v grud' mne ne vselyai.  
 Ya budu strog, no ne beschelovechen.  
 Vse vyskazhu i bez nozha ub'yu. (p. 191)

/Now is the time of nightly magic; graves creak and hell breathes contagion; now I could drink living blood, and I am capable of doing things I recoil from during the day. So, my mother calls me. Without brutality, heart! Whatever happens, let not the soul of Nero enter my breast. I will be stern, but not inhuman. I will tell all and kill without a knife/.

My literal retranslation hardly does justice to the poetic accuracy of the Russian version and its effectiveness in conveying the barely restrained violence of the original monologue, which Pasternak successfully renders by a correspondingly vivid lexis of rage tempered by stringent vocalic harmony (Teper' pora nochnogo koldovstva/Skripyat groba i dyshit ad zarazoi; itak nas mat' zvala/Bez zverstva serdtse").

Yet Pasternak even intensifies the vehemence of the original lines in two instances. First of all, "hot blood" is rendered as "zhivuyu krov'," living blood, which is accurate enough yet still a bit more brutal

than the original, although metrical considerations may have dictated the use of the adjective. But in translating the line, "I will speak daggers to her, but use none," Pasternak's choice of the verb "ub'yu" in his version, "Vse vyskazhu i bez nozha ub'ya" is, even if used figuratively, much more vivid and suggestive of violence than the neutral verb "use" in the original. The verbal murder planned by Pasternak's Hamlet, it would seem, is nothing less than the utter liquidation of his mother's past sins in order to effect her total reform and repentance.

Pasternak also adds to the original text in certain passages to emphasize Hamlet's self-assurance and strong resolve to achieve his goal, such as in his translation of the last two lines of the prince's final soliloquy, in which Hamlet envisions Fortinbras' army bravely dying for motives far less serious than his own reasons for action:

O from this time forth  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth/  
(IV, 4, 65-66)

O moya mysl', otnyne bud' v krovi  
Zhivi grozoi ili vovse ne zhivi! (p. 209)

The first line of Pasternak's version is a fairly literal rendering, but the idea of "... be nothing

worth" is considerably amplified in his use of the word "grozoi," which adds a note of fierce intensity not found in the original.

The impassioned language of Pasternak's Hamlet in these cases serves to depict a tragic hero hardened for his task of revenge. Pasternak's Hamlet confirms this himself in the Russian version of a phrase from the soliloquy in which the prince states his staunch resolve to revenge his father's horrible murder:

Remember thee?  
 Yea, from the table of my memory  
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past.  
 (I, 5, 97-100)

Pomnit' o tebe?  
 Ya s pamyatnoi doski sotru vse znaki  
 Chuvstvitel'nosti, vse slova iz knig,  
 Vse obrazy, vsekh bylei otpechatki... (p. 150-151)

/Remember you? I'll wipe from the board of my memory  
 all signs of sentiment, all words from books, all images,  
 all imprints of the past./

Pasternak translates "all trivial fond records" as "Znaki chuvstvitel'nosti" /signs of sentiment, sentimentality/. "Fond" is glossed by Kittredge as "foolish" in this context, so Pasternak's phrase is either a simple mistranslation arising from his reading the word as "tender," "affectionate," or an intentional

deviation from the original, which is more probable since he also avoids rendering "trivial." In any case his translation of the phrase conforms to his image of a resolute tragic hero who would naturally eliminate any "sentiment" that might hinder him in his sacred duty.

Pasternak's choice of "chuvstvitel'nost'" almost seems an indirect rebuttal to the nineteenth century critics who fostered the Goethean view of the delicate prince whose sensitivity impedes action. But whatever the reason for his inability to act, be it oversensitivity, weakness, moral conscience, or excessive speculation, the fact is that Hamlet does delay in fulfilling his "heroic task." Pasternak never offers any explanation of his own for Hamlet's hesitation in his critical remarks nor does he intentionally distort his translation to emphasize one particular motive for the prince's delay. However, at times it seems that Pasternak is impatient with Shakespeare's hero and injects this into his translation by intensifying Hamlet's self-reproach in the soliloquies. For example, in the "rogue and peasant slave" soliloquy, Hamlet notes the heights of fictional passion the actor reaches as compared to his own lethargy:

Yet I,  
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak  
 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
 And can say nothing. No, not for a king,  
 Upon whose property and most dear life  
 A damned defeat was made. (II, 2, 551-556)

Pasternak translates this as

A ya,  
 Tupoi i zhalkii vyrodok, slonyayus'  
 V sonlivoi leni i ni o sebe  
 Ne zaiknus', ni pal'tsem ne udaryu  
 Dlya korolya, ch'yu zhizn' i vlast' smeli  
 Tak podlo. (p. 174)

/Yet I, dull and pitiable monster, loaf about in sleepy laziness, I don't say anything about myself nor lift a finger for a king whose life and power were dared so basely./

Hamlet stresses his laziness and inaction in the original by "...peak/Like John-a-dreams," yet Pasternak substitutes the simile (translated by Polevoi and others as "Van'ka rotozei") by a pleonasm: "...slonyayus' v sonlivoi leni." The translation is accurate and extremely effective since the combination of the consonants "s," "l," and "n," and the vowel /a/ seem to suggest phonetically the sleepy lassitude of the lexis even more than the original does. However, the pleonasm does place a bit more emphasis on the idea of Hamlet's laziness by the repetition of the root "lon-/len" (laze-), especially considering that the phrase is followed by "ni pal'tsem ne udaryu" (lift a finger), which Pasternak adds to the original for no

reason other than to accentuate Hamlet's inaction and lethargy. In the original the fragment beginning "No, not for a king..." actually follows from the previous sentence ending "...can say nothing," with the break in syntax indicating the agitation of Hamlet's troubled thought. Pasternak's addition of the idiom "pal'tsem ne udaryu" is merely gratuitous, since Russian syntax allows the same freedom that the English does in this case, as Lozinski's translation shows:

A ya .....  
 ... myamlyu  
 .....  
 I nichego skizat' ne v silakh. Dazhe  
 Za korolya, ch'ya zhizn' i dostoyan'e  
 Tak gnusno sgubleny. (p. 88-89)

/Yet I...hem and haw...and am unable to say anything.  
 Even for a king whose life and property were so vilely  
 ruined./

Pasternak's emphasis on Hamlet's laziness and inaction occurs again in his translation of the prince's words to the ghost, who reappears in the closet scene with Gertrude:

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
 That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by  
 Th'important acting of your dread command?  
 (III, 4, 107-109)

In Pasternak's translation

Lenivtsa l' syna vy prishli zhurit',

Chto dni idut, a on pod zluyu ruku  
 Prikazov vashikh strashnykh ne svershil?  
 (p. 198)

/Haven't you come to scold your son the lazybones  
 because the days are going by and he has not carried out  
 your terrible orders./

"Lenivtsa" (lazybones, idler) is not quite accurate for  
 "tardy," which Lozinski renders more faithfully as  
 "medlitel'nogo." In the original "tardy" at least  
 allows for the assumption that there could be one or  
 more reasons for Hamlet's hesitation. Pasternak's  
 Hamlet berates himself more sharply by using the term  
 "lazybones," which intimates that laziness is perhaps  
 the only cause for his indecisiveness, especially con-  
 sidering that Pasternak's view of the positive hero and  
 his sacred duty does not allow for any other (moral,  
 psychological, religious, or political) reason. The  
 word order in the lines is also inverted to place the  
 noun in the emphatic first position of the line.

Hamlet also underscores his inaction much more  
 strongly in Pasternak's translation of the "How all  
 occasions do inform against me" soliloquy

I do not know  
 Why yet I live to say, "This thing's to do,"  
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means  
 To do't. (IV, 4, 43-46).

Chto zh medlyu ya i bez kontsa tverzhu  
 O nadobnosti mesti, esli k delu  
 Est' volya, sila, pravo, i predlog? (p. 208)

/Why am I slow and why do I endlessly speak over and over again about the need for revenge if I have will, strength, right, and motive for the deed?/

In the original Hamlet wonders why he talks so much about his duty instead of actually doing it, since he has sufficient motive and means at his disposal, but in Pasternak's version the phrase "I do not know/ Why yet I live to say..." is considerably amplified: "Chto zh medlyu ya i bez kontsa tverzhu." The concept of hesitation, absent though implied in the original, is stated directly by the word "medlyu" and the expansion of the simple verb "say" to the hyperbole "bez kontsa tverzhu," to say over and over again endlessly.

While such additions to the original text betray the influence of Pasternak's critical views, his interpretation of Hamlet is reflected just as often by the omissions in his version of the tragedy. For example, puns are dramatically integral to our understanding of Shakespeare's hero, but Pasternak eliminates almost all of Hamlet's wordplay in his translation. The stylistic difficulty of translating puns seems to have been a minor factor in Pasternak's

decision to omit them, since he does attempt, often successfully, to render the wordplay of other characters such as Polonius or the gravediggers. Pasternak undoubtedly deemed verbal wit appropriate only for comic characters and not for the tragic hero, but his omission of Hamlet's puns stems from even deeper motives. Hamlet's puns often serve as an emotional outlet for his frustration and weakness in coping with the moral rot around him, and the cynicism, despair, and futility masked behind Hamlet's wordplay clash with Pasternak's image of the self-assured hero religiously dedicated to his divine mission.

Pasternak's emphasis on the strength, religious dedication, and incorruptibility of Hamlet not only alters the prince's character in his translation but also mitigates the tragic implications of Shakespeare's play. The implicit analogy between Hamlet and Christ that Pasternak notes in his own poetry and criticism is reflected in the aura of religious motifs surrounding Shakespeare's hero in his version of the tragedy; although these shifts in tone and lexis are hardly indicative of radical reinterpretation in his translation, they do create a cumulative impression of Hamlet that is clearly different from the original one. Pasternak's association of Hamlet and Christ suggests the possibility of purification and redemption through

sacrifice, concepts totally negated by the stark pessimism in the original tragedy, in which the pervasive evil cripples and eventually crushes Hamlet.

Although Pasternak never explicitly states in his translation that Hamlet's "velikaya zhertva" (great sacrifice) promises salvation, he does single out the "To be or not to be" soliloquy in his notes for its purifying and redeeming effects: "The way is opened by it for whatever is inevitable, and whatever follows is washed, redeemed, and lent majesty in advance not only by the spoken thoughts but by the ardor and purity of the tears which ring in it" (Notes, p. 132). In the next chapter we shall determine the extent to which Pasternak's Christian interpretation of the most important of all Hamlet's monologues filters into his translation of the passage.

CHAPTER XIPASTERNAK'S TRANSLATION OF THE  
"TO BE OR NOT TO BE" SOLILOQUY

Boris Pasternak's version of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy was revised more often than any other passage in his translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Basically there are two distinct versions of the important monologue: the original translation of 1941 (repeated with minor changes in the 1942 edition) and the final revision of the 1953 edition (repeated verbatim in 1956). The two intervening versions of 1947 and 1951 are essentially the same as the first translation, except for radical alterations in the passage beginning "For who would bear the whips and scorns of time...", in which Hamlet catalogues the evils of the world that man can avoid by suicide. As Vladimir Markov has noted, all Pasternak's revisions from the 1947 edition on were motivated more by political than aesthetic considerations. The extremely free version

of the lines in the 1947 edition is, as Markov indicates, "a lyrical confession camouflaged as translation,"<sup>1</sup> in which Pasternak alludes to the repression of himself and other artists under the Stalinist regime. The political sensitivity of Pasternak's translation is confirmed by the more literal versions of the lines in subsequent editions, which were undoubtedly revised because of pressure from government censors.

While all Pasternak's versions of these controversial lines in Hamlet's soliloquy will be examined in detail, the analysis of the rest of the soliloquy will be confined to the original version (1941) and the final revision (1953). As in the study of Gide's version of the passage, additional Russian translations will be referred to for the sake of comparison. For convenience the soliloquy will again be discussed in arbitrarily chosen sections which more or less correspond to new thoughts or variations on the basic theme as they arise in Hamlet's mind.

Pasternak's version of the famous first lines of the monologue, "To be or not to be, that is the question,"

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<sup>1</sup> "An Unnoticed Aspect of Pasternak's Translations," Slavic Review 20 (1961), p. 505.

is borrowed directly from Polevoi's translation, which has been used by all Russian translators of the play since 1836: "Byt' ili ne byt'; vot v chem vopros." While the opening line remains unchanged in all Pasternak's revisions, his two versions of the next four lines represent the greatest divergence in his treatment of the entire soliloquy:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them. (III, 1, 57-60)

Dostoino 1'  
Dushi terpet' ukoly i shchelchki  
Obidchitsy sud'by il' luchshe vstretit'  
S oruzh'em more bed i polozhit'  
Konets volnen'yam? (p. 177 -- The 1967 edition used throughout the essay contains the 1941 translation of the soliloquy except for the politically sensitive lines 69-76, in which the 1953 version is used).

/Is it worth it for the soul to suffer the pricks and fillips of fate the offender or is it better to meet a sea of troubles with arms and put an end to agitation?/

Dostoino 1'  
Smiryat'sya pod udarami sud'by  
Il' nado okazat' soprotivlen'e  
I v smertnoi skhvatke s tselym morem bed  
Pokonchit' s nimi? <sup>2</sup> (1953)

/Is it worth it to submit to the blows of fate or is it necessary to offer resistance and finish with them in mortal combat with a whole sea of troubles?/

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<sup>2</sup> V. Shekspir, Gamlet (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatur~~a~~, 1953), p. 111.

The later translation clearly deviates more from the original than the earlier one does. Perhaps the most striking lexical shift is Pasternak's rendering of "suffer" by "smiryat'sya," which is placed in the emphatic initial position of the line. The word appears in no other Russian translation of the passage, and it is not too far-fetched to suggest that Pasternak's equation of "to suffer" and "to submit," "to resign oneself" is a highly personal comment on the political status of himself and other repressed artists in the Soviet Union, perhaps even an allusion to his revision of the soliloquy to accord with the standards of government censors.

Despite the possible suggestion of personal emotion in "smiryat'sya," the verb is still adequate for the original term, unlike other elements in Pasternak's 1953 translation of these lines which fail to convey the dramatic effect of Shakespeare's text. The vivid imagery of "slings and arrows" is condensed to the more abstract "udarami" /blows/, and the adjective "outrageous" is completely omitted. In addition, the simple diction of "to take arms" is considerably altered in the extremely abstract and lengthy phrase "nado

okazat' soprotivlen'e" /to offer resistance/, which practically suggests the impossibility of the task by its sheer verbal weight.

The earlier version of the lines is smoother and more faithful yet still deviates significantly from the original. The grammatical form of the (noun) and (noun) of (noun) phrase is retained in Pasternak's rendering of "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" as "ukoly i shchelchki obidchitsy sud'by," but the shift from the objects themselves to their actions (ukoly /pricks/ and shchelchki /fillips/) not only eliminates the military imagery of the original (reinforced by "to take arms") but also diminishes the malevolent force of "fortune", since the Russian nouns indicate physical actions of a rather meager nature. For Pasternak's strong and confident Hamlet, "fortune" seems to inflict more social insult or mild annoyance than serious harm, which is further substantiated by the personification of "fortune" in this context as "obidchitsy," the offender who is not necessarily "outrageous."

Pasternak conveys only a trace of the martial imagery in the original by his use of "oruzh'em"

/arms, weapons/ in the translation of "to take arms against a sea of troubles" as "luchshe vstretit' s oruzh'em more bed" /better to meet a sea of troubles with arms/. The mixed metaphor has always been less problematic for the Russians than for the French, yet Pasternak's translation betrays, however slightly, a certain uneasiness with Shakespeare's association of war and sea imagery. The phrase itself is rendered fairly literally, but Pasternak's version of "... and by opposing end them" as "polozhit' konets volnen'yam" /put an end to agitations/ seems to offer a needless poetic justification of the "sea of troubles" metaphor by simply reinforcing it with the noun "volnen'yam" /agitations, anxieties/. Although the noun undoubtedly indicates "anxieties" or "troubles" in this context, the concrete meaning of "volnen'yam," derived as it is from the root "voln-" /wave/, also suggests rough or choppy seas. This is perhaps merely a slight addition to the original, but "volnen'yam" still seems a highly calculated image which portrays a speaker who is more a poet, careful and conscious of his craft, i.e., Pasternak himself, than a tragic hero whose troubled thought is expressed in a rapid flurry of clashing metaphors.

The dramatic effect of this conspicuous poetic craftsmanship is to create a more objective and less emotional relationship between Hamlet's feelings and his expression of them. Pasternak perhaps realized this and so eliminated "volnen'yam" from his 1953 revision of the phrase ( i v smertnom skhvatke s tselym morem bed/Pokonchit' s nimi), but his addition of the qualifier "tselym" (a whole) for sea leads to the same distortion. As A. Moses notes, "The use of the adjective 'tseloe' tends to emphasize the figurative use of the word 'sea'; the phrase 'a whole sea' is seldom used in referring to a real sea."<sup>3</sup> Whereas Gide's Hamlet often analyzes his feelings with the detachment of a philosopher, in Pasternak's translation the hero delineates his feelings with the polished nuance of a poet. Paradoxically, Pasternak's eager attempt to capture the poetry of the soliloquy makes his portrayal of Hamlet more a reflection of the poet-translator himself than a true image of Shakespeare's emotionally distraught prince.

Although it may seem that too much is read into Pasternak's rendering of a single image in the monologue,

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<sup>3</sup> "Boris Pasternak's Translations of Shakespeare," Diss. Yale Univ. (1966), p. 49-50.

further evidence of intentional poetic craftsmanship is found in his translation of the next section of the passage

To die, to sleep -  
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to., 'tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wished. (ll. 60-64)

Umeret'. Zabyt'sya.  
 I vse. I znat', chto ètot son -- predel  
 Serdechnykh muk i tysyachi lishenii  
 Prisushchikh telu. Eto li ne tsel'  
 Zhelaniya? (1941)

/To die. To be lost in oblivion. That's all. And to know that this sleep is the boundary, the limit of the heart-aches and thousand deprivations belonging to the flesh. Isn't this the aim of our desiring?/

Umeret'. Zabyt'sya.  
 I znat', chto ètim obryvaesh' tsep'  
 Serdechnykh muk i tysyachi lishenii  
 Prisushchikh telu. Eto li ne tsel'  
 Zhelaniya? (1953)

/To die. To be lost in oblivion. And to know that by this you break the chain of heart-aches and thousand deprivations belonging to the flesh. Isn't this the aim of our desiring?/

The grammatical identity of the two infinitives, "to die" and "to sleep," initially link the two concepts in Hamlet's mind. The dramatic effect of this analogy lies in the interplay between Hamlet's arbitrary association of "sleep" and "death" by means of syntax and the actual semantic contrast between the two concepts. As Hamlet further explores the analogy of

sleep and death, the differences between the two will outweigh the initial comparison he draws in the soliloquy.

The wide gap in meaning between everlasting non-existence and everyday rest is retained by all other Russian translators of the play who use the equivalent terms "umeret'" and "usnut',"<sup>4</sup> yet Pasternak sacrifices the force of the analogy by rendering "to sleep" as "zabyt'sya," since the Russian verb indicates not the general activity of sleeping but certain specific aspects of it, such as "reverie," "dozing," "losing consciousness," and "becoming oblivious." In addition to its dictionary meanings, "zabyt'sya" further narrows the gap in the original between the ideas of sleep and death because the word has long been used in Russian poetry to suggest the notion of

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<sup>4</sup> In Russian the grammatical identity between "umeret'" and "usnut'" is reinforced by the phonetic identity of the initial prefix "u-."

death or escape from reality. Perhaps the most salient literary echo for a Russian audience in Pasternak's choice of "zabyt'sya" is Lermontov's famous poem, "Vykhozhu odin ya na dorogu" /I walk out onto the road alone/, in which the poet expresses his desire for the mystical transcendence which death brings:

Uzh ne zhdu ot zhizni nichego ya  
 I ne zhal' mne proshlogo nichut'.  
 Ya ischchu svobody i pokoya;

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<sup>5</sup> Although Pushkin uses "zabyt'sya" most often to suggest the reverie or oblivion brought on by love, he also describes, in negative terms, escape from reality and self-deception by the same word, as in the poem "Knyazyu A. M. Gorchakovu": "Nel'zya mne vechnym zhit' obmanom/I schastiya ten', zabyvshis', obnimat'"/I cannot live by eternal deceit and embrace the shadow of happiness, while lost in reverie, oblivion/. In Lermontov's poetry, however, the word assumes positive connotations and is frequently used to suggest the romantic concept of death as a desired form of transcendence freeing man from dull and prosaic reality (as in "Vykhozhu odin ya na dorogu"). Alexander Blok expresses a similar wish in the final stanza of his poem "Druz'yam" /To Friends/: "Zaryt'sya by v svezhem bur'yane/Zabyt'sya by snom navsegda" /To be buried in fresh weeds, to fall into oblivious sleep forever/. Pasternak, unlike his contemporaries who disdained tradition in favor of a radically new poetics, was immersed in the classical poetry of Russia and so was undoubtedly sensitive to the connotations of a word such as "zabyt'sya," a key term in romantic verse.

Ya b khotel zabyt'sya i zasnut'.<sup>6</sup>

/I expect nothing more from life and do not regret the past at all; I seek freedom and peace, I would like to find oblivion and fall asleep./

Thus Pasternak's choice of "zabyt'sya" not only reduces the effect of the original infinitives but also suggests once again the tragic hero as poetic craftsman. I use the phrase "poetic craftsman" rather than "poet," since few would deny that Hamlet is the latter. However, Hamlet's poetic genius stems more from his spontaneous fusion of images and his innate ability to wring meaning out of the simplest words than from intentional design or knowledge of literary tradition. The association of sleep and death is a prime example of this ability, just as the subsequent lines are: "...And by a sleep to say we end/The heart-aches and the thousand natural shocks."

Pasternak's renderings of the simple verb "end" in this phrase illustrate the subtle distinction between Hamlet the poet in Shakespeare's play and Hamlet the poetic craftsman in the Russian version:

I znat' chto `etot son -- predel  
Serdechnykh muk i tysyachi lishenii, (1941)

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<sup>6</sup> Penguin Book of Russian Verse, ed. D. Obolensky (Baltimore: Penguin, 1962), p. 171. C. M. Bowra notes in The Creative Experiment (p. 130) that Shakespeare and Lermontov were Pasternak's favorite poets.

I znat' chto `etim obryvaesh' tsep'  
 Serdechnykh muk i tysyachi lishenii. (1953)

His earlier choice of "predel" /limit, boundary/ is preferable to "obryvaesh' tsep'" /you break the chain/ in the later edition since the single Russian noun, like the original verb, is placed at the emphatic final position of the line and also conveys none of the added suggestions of enslavement and bondage in the image of the "chain" (tsep'). In both versions, however, Pasternak substitutes explicit poetic devices, the spatial metaphor of "predel" in one, and the visual metaphor of "obryvaesh' tsep'" in the other, and thereby embellishes the simple idea behind the original lexis that death is merely a sleep which can seemingly terminate all our wordly suffering.

Although Pasternak embellishes his translation of the simple verb "end" with metaphors, he is curiously weak in rendering the images of wordly suffering, "heart-aches and thousand natural shocks," as "serdechnykh muk i tysyachi lishenii" /torments of the heart and thousand deprivations/. The phrase "serdechynkh muk" is adequate for "heart-aches," but "lishenii" may be yet another injection of Pasternak's personal feeling into the translation, since the "deprivations" the poet suffered in Soviet Russia --

loss of aesthetic freedom, peace of mind, etc. -- were just as overwhelming as the "shocks" by which Hamlet describes the suffering of mankind in the original.

Pasternak also has difficulty in rendering the complex syntax of this section which exemplifies the characteristic inversion of logical thought in the soliloquy. In normal word order the closing phrase of the section "... 'tis a consummation devoutly to be wished" would precede the lines

To die, to sleep  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
the heart-aches and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to ...

In both versions Pasternak divides the original lines into two distinct clauses. Pasternak's failure to convey the emotional syntax of the original is typical of most translators of Shakespeare's tragedy. Gide also uses two clauses (see Ch. 4) and in his critical remarks he attributes his failure to the rigidity of French syntax, but the inadequate versions of all Russian translations of the play seem to indicate that the flexibility of the English language is most responsible for the difficulties in conveying Hamlet's contorted syntax.

Another distinctive feature of Hamlet's syntax is his habit of repetition. In the next section of the monologue the initial fusion of "to die" and "to sleep" is restated but the repetition of the analogy triggers new associations in Hamlet's mind

To die, to sleep--  
 To sleep, perchance to dream, ay, there's the rub  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may  
 Come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
 Must give us pause; there's the respect  
 That makes calamity of so long life. (ll. 64-69)

In Pasternak's translation

Skonchat'sya. Snom zabyt'sya.  
 Usnut'. I videt' sny? Vot i otvet.  
 Kakie sny v tom smertnom sne prisnyatsya  
 Kogda pokrov zemnogo chuvstva snyat?  
 Vot ob''yasnenie\*. Vot chto udlinyaet  
 Neschast'yam nashim zhizn' na stol'ko let.

\*Both the 1941 and 1953 versions are the same except for the substitution of "razgadka" /riddle/ in the later version for "ob''yasnenie."

/To die. To fall into oblivious sleep. To fall asleep. And to dream? Here's the answer. What dreams will be dreamt in that deathly sleep when the cover of earthly feeling is removed? This is what prolongs the misfortunes of our life for so many years./

In the original soliloquy the infinitive "to die" appears twice and the infinitive "to sleep" three times as Hamlet examines the meaning of death from various perspectives of the analogy. Pasternak, again unlike all other Russian translators, sacrifices the

effect of Hamlet's emotional thinking by verbal association and repetition in his substitution of the synonyms "skonchat'sya" /to die/ (instead of "umeret'"), "snom zabyt'sya" /to fall into oblivious sleep/, and "usnut'" /to fall asleep/. The infinitive "skonchat'sya" is a slight verbal play on Pasternak's part, since the root "konch-" (end) refers back to the earlier phrases "...polozhit' konets volnen'yam" and "...pokonchit' s nimi" used to render "and by opposing end them," i.e., a sea of troubles. The infinitive "to sleep" is also not repeated as in the original; instead the earlier choice "zabyt'sya" is reinforced by "snom" /sleep/ and then followed by the general term "usnut'"<sup>7</sup> Aside from the strands of poetic tradition and verbal play woven into the three Russian infinitives, the use of synonyms to render the simple repetition of the original suggests a speaker who seems more concerned with the means of expressing concepts than with the significance behind them. Once again, the Pasternakian Hamlet in the

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<sup>7</sup> The sequence "zabyt'sya" and "usnut'" further suggests the possible allusion to Lermontov's poem.

soliloquy is more a poet than a tragic hero.

The phrase "ay, there's the rub" signals an abrupt transition in Hamlet's thought after the repetition of "die" and "sleep" sparks the suggestion of "dream" and its implications for the initial comparison. The image of the rub or obstacle in the path of a ball in a bowling game has presented difficulties for translators of Hamlet in all languages, but Pasternak's rendering of "vot i otvet" /here's the answer/ is a blatant mistranslation, which, however, accords with his overall interpretation of Hamlet. Lozinski's choice, "zatrudnenie" /difficulty/ and Polevoi's, "trudnost'" /difficulty/, are also abstract but at least intimate that Hamlet realizes his linkage of death and sleep is problematic. Pasternak's "otvet" is just the opposite; for his self-assured and confident Hamlet the contemplation of life and death has produced an "answer." The "To be or not to be" soliloquy may pose many complex philosophical questions but it certainly offers no final solution to them.

After interrelating "death," "sleep," and "dream" by the repetition of the grammatically isolated infinitive form, Hamlet explores the implications of the

associations by arranging the concepts syntactically within a sentence:

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
Must give us pause.

In Pasternak's version

Kakie sny v tom smertnom sne prisnyatsya  
Kogda pokrov zemnogo chuvstva snyat?  
Vot ob''yasnenie.

The syntactic relation between the words in Pasternak's translation are enhanced by the foregrounding of phonetic components. The deceptive comfort that the soothing dreams of deathly sleep offer is conveyed by the repetition of the consonantal cluster "s" + nasal (Kakie sny v tom smertnom sne prisnyatsya/Kogda pokrov zemnogo chuvstva snyat) and the near rhyme of "prisnyatsya" /dream/ and "snyat" /taken off, removed/, which phonetically links the concepts of dream and death (the participle "snyat" completes a clause which both in the original and translation is a metaphor for dying, "When we have shuffled off this mortal coil"). In this case Pasternak is able to take advantage of the dual meaning of the Russian root "s/o/n" as both sleep and dream. Pasternak's translation of the two lines is undeniably a poetic gem, but still the foregrounding

of sound similarity in Russian hints again at a pre-conceived aesthetic pattern that is somewhat alien to the more natural and emotional rhythm of the original sentence.

Pasternak experiences the same difficulty as other translators of the play in conveying the syntax of these lines, in which the subject clause is at some distance from the predicate "...must give us pause." The dramatic effect of this syntax is to portray the highly emotional development of Hamlet's argument. The deception of comfort after death, expressed by the excited flow of mostly nomosyllabic words, seems to suddenly dawn on Hamlet in full force, as signaled by the sudden shift in rhythm to the curt half-line, "must give us pause." The low, open vowels /ʌ/ and /ɔ/ in "must," "us," "pause" are responsible for halting the rapid tempo created by the predominantly monosyllabic lexis.<sup>8</sup>

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The difficulty of rendering Hamlet's syntax in this case can perhaps be illustrated by the one attempt to retain a single sentence "chto my, izbavyas' ot ètikh prekhodyashchikh bed, uvidim v tom smertnom sne ne mozhët ostanovit'sya nas." (D. Averkiev), Averkiev preserves the original syntax but the outcome is extremely awkward.

Pasternak, like most other translators of the play, sacrifices the original effect by separating the lines into two distinct sentences:

Kakie sny v tom smertnom sne prisnyatsya  
Kogda pokrov zemnogo chuvstva snyat?  
Vot ob''yasnenie ("razgadka" in 1953 edition).

Aside from the change in syntax, Pasternak's lexical choices for "pause" also deviate from the original, but even more interesting is the fact that the Russian terms "ob''yasnenie" /explanation/ in the early version and "razgadka" /riddle/ in the later version are directly opposite in meaning. The noun "ob''yasnenie" is consistent with Pasternak's use of "otvet" a few lines above, since both words depict a hero who feels that his analysis of death results in sure knowledge. Perhaps in the revision Pasternak realized that Shakespeare's Hamlet is less certain of his assumptions about the question of life and death.

The next section of the soliloquy consists of a long rhetorical question in which Hamlet catalogues the evils and suffering of life that provide overwhelming justification for the expediency of suicide:

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? (ll. 69-76)

Pasternak revised this section of the monologue more than any other part of his entire translation. As discussed in Chapter 8, Hamlet's list of wordly evils has traditionally been the most freely translated section of Shakespeare's Hamlet in Russia and has also been most adapted for indirect political comment. Pasternak's translation is no exception, although the first two versions are fairly close to the original:

A kto snes by unizhen'ya veka,  
 Gonitelya nasil'ya, spes' gluptsa,  
 Lyubov' bez razdelen'ya, volokitu,  
 Rugatelei prikaznykh i pinki  
 Nestoyashchikh, lyagayushchikh dostoinykh...<sup>9</sup>  
 (1941)

/Who would bear the humiliations of the age, the oppressor's violence, the fool's arrogance, unshared love, red tape, abusive departmental clerks (bureaucrats), and the good-for-nothings kicking the worthy./

A kto snes by unizhen'ya veka  
 Pozor gonen'ya, vykhodki gluptsa,  
 Otranutuyu strast', molchan'e prava,  
 Nadmennost' vlast' imushchikh i sud'bu  
 Bol'shikh zaslug pered sudom nichtozhestv...<sup>10</sup>  
 (1942)

/Who would bear the humiliations of the age, the infamy of oppression, the pranks of the fool, rejected passion, the law's silence, the haughtiness of the powerful, the fate of great merits before a court of mediocrities.../

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<sup>9</sup> Before published separately, the 1941 version first appeared in Molodaya Gvardiya, Vols. 5-6 (1940), p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> Gamlet (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1942), p. 105.

In both versions the (noun) and (noun) of (noun) phrase, "whips and scorns of time" is compressed into "unizhen'ya veka" /humiliations of the age/, which lends a certain Dostoevskian ring to the translation. In the 1941 version, the "oppressor's violence" (gonitelya nasil'ya) is a bit stronger than the original "the oppressor's wrong" and may even be a subtle allusion to the Stalinist purges (one suspects the shift from agent /"gonitelya," oppressor/ to action /"gonen'ya," oppression/ in the 1942 edition may have resulted from external pressure). Pasternak's translations of "law's delay" as "volokitu" /red tape/ and "insolence of office" as "rugatelei prikaznykh" /abusive clerks/ are accurate enough but also strike a modern chord that could not be missed by a Soviet audience aware of the evils of bureaucracy. The 1942 version of "law's delay" as "molchan'e prava" /law's silence/ can also be read as an even stronger condemnation of Soviet oppression.

Neither of these early versions, however, deviates from the original as much or voices political protest as explicitly as the 1947 version:

A kto snes by lozhnoe velich'e  
 Pravitelei, nezvestvo vel'mozh,  
 Vseobshchee pritvorstvo, nevozmozhnost'

Izlit' sebya, neschastnuyu lyubov' 11  
 I prizrachnost' zaslug v glazakh nichtozhestv...  
 (1947)

/Who would bear the phony greatness of rulers, the ignorance of the bigshots, the common hypocrisy, the impossibility to express oneself, the unrequited love and the illusoriness of merits in the eyes of mediocrities.../

Pasternak admittedly never aimed at literal translation but his version of these lines has little in common with the original. The revision sounds like an exact description of Pasternak's own fate and that of many other Soviet artists and intellectuals. As far as Pasternak is personally concerned, it fits his situation after the publication of A Second Birth, when, because of the "nevozmozhnost' izlit' sebya" /impossibility to express oneself/, he was producing almost nothing but translations.<sup>12</sup> The other phrases in the passage, "lozhnoe velich'e, etc.," as Markov notes, need no commentary.

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<sup>11</sup> Gamlet (Moscow: Detgiz, 1947), p. 86.

<sup>12</sup> It is interesting to note that one of the Shakespearean sonnets translated by Pasternak is #66, which contains the line, "Art tongue-tied by authority." Markov (p. 505) notes how often the very choice of foreign works to be translated reflects Pasternak's situation. One example is H. Kleist's Prinz Friedrich von Homburg, in which the sleep-walking hero, who absentmindedly examines a woman's glove during a military council, reminds one of Pasternak, preoccupied with his own vision of the world, while the Writer's Union distributed assignments to the "soldiers" of Soviet literature.

The boldness of this translation can perhaps be measured by Pasternak's version of 1953:

A kto snes by unizhen'ya veka,  
 Nepravdu ugnatatelya, vel'mozh  
 Zanoschivost', otrinutoe chuvstvo,  
 Neskoryi sud i bolee vsego  
 Nasmeshki nedostoinykh nad dostoinym... (1953)

/Who would bear the humiliations of the age, the oppressor's falsehood, the arrogance of bigshots, slow justice, and most of all the mockery of the worthy by the unworthy.../

Government censors were probably responsible for Pasternak's complete turnabout in this revision. The 1953 translation is very close to the original, although the "insolence of office" and "patient" are omitted. However, it is practically devoid of any political comment and much weaker than all the other versions, far blander, in fact, than Hamlet's lines are in the original.

The next section of the soliloquy is a second rhetorical question in which Hamlet affirms the necessity of suffering because of man's ignorance of the afterlife:

Who would fardels bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that the dread of something after death,  
 The undiscovered country, from whose bourn  
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
 Than fly to others that we know not of? (ll. 76-82)

All seven lines of the question comprise a single sentence that displays Hamlet's characteristically sinuous syntax, whereby the subject is qualified and requalified by subordinate phrases and appositives. Pasternak successfully retains the original syntax in his translation (the same in all editions):

Kto by soglasilsya  
 Kryakhtya pod noshei zhiznennoi plestis'  
 Kogda by neizvestnost' posle smerti,  
 Boyazn' strany, otkuda ni odin  
 Ne vozvrashchalsya, ne sklonyala voli  
 Mirit'sya luchshe so znakomym zlom,  
 Chem begstvom k neznakomomu stremit'sya.

/Who would agree, grunting, to drudge under the burden of life, if the uncertainty after death, the fear of a country from which no one returned, did not incline the will better to reconcile oneself with a known evil than to rush in flight to an unknown one?/

Russian translators have had less difficulty in rendering this contorted syntax than their French counterparts, but the versions of Lozinski and Averkiev illustrate by comparison the superiority of Pasternak's translation:

Kto by plelsya s noshei,  
 Chtob okhat' i potet' pod nudnoi zhizn'yu,  
 Kogda by strakh chego - to posle smerti --  
 Bezvestnyi krai, otkuda net vozvrata  
 Zemryn skital'tsam -- volyu ne smushchal,  
 Vnushaya nam terpet' nevzgody nashi  
 I ne speshit' k drugim, ot nas sokrytym?  
 (Lozinski, p. 95)

/Who would drudge with a burden in order to grunt and sweat under a tedious life, if the fear of something after death, the unknown region from which there is no

return for earthly wanderers, did not confuse the will, suggesting that we suffer our adversities and not hurry to others that are hidden from us?/

Kto by stal taskat'  
 Vse \ eti noshi i potet', i okhat'  
 Pod tyagostnoyu zhizn'yu, esli b strakh  
 Chego-to posle smerti, toi strany  
 Nevedomoi, iz-za granits kotoroi  
 Ne vozvrashchayutsya -- ne putal voli,  
 Ucha, chto luchshe nam snosit' zemnye bedy,  
 Chem brosit'sya k drugim, nam neizvestnym?  
 (Averkiev)<sup>13</sup>

/Who would begin dragging all these burdens to sweat and grunt under a painful life, if the fear of something after death, of that country from whose border no one returns, did not confuse the will, teaching us that it is better to bear earthly troubles than rush to others that are unknown to us./

Both Lozinski and Averkiev preserve Shakespeare's syntax but their versions are quite jerky and alien to the smooth flow of the original which Pasternak captures so well in his translation.

However well Pasternak approximates the stylistic effect of the original syntax in this case, his version still reflects a Hamlet who is more in accord with his personal vision of Shakespeare's hero. In translating the phrase "...puzzles the will/And makes us rather bear those ills we have," Pasternak omits the suggestion of Hamlet's bewilderment in "puzzles"

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<sup>13</sup> Cited by A. Dranov in "Monolog Hamleta 'Byt'il' ne byt'" *Russkie perevody XIX veka* /Hamlet's Monologue "To be or Not to Be": Russian translations of the XIX Century/, *Tetradi perevodchika* /Translator Notes/ (1969), p. 49.

and compresses the original two verbs into the phrase "sklonyala voli" /inclines the will/. The aim for concision may have dictated Pasternak's choice, but the elimination of "puzzles," just as the earlier use of "otvet" /answer/ and "ob''yasnenie" /explanation/, again suggests that Hamlet in the Russian version is self-assured in his knowledge and untroubled by the doubts and questions that vex Shakespeare's hero.<sup>14</sup>

Pasternak's translation of the lines, "And makes us rather bear those ills we have/Than fly to others we know not of, " as "Miryat'sya luchshe so znakomym zlom/Chem begstvom k neznakonomu stremit'sya /better to reconcile oneself with a known evil than rush in flight to an unknown one/ also hints at the self-conscious poetic craftsmanship that characterizes his translation of the monologue. Although the original lines are somewhat balanced in the English text (bear-fly, those ills-others, we have-we know not of), they are not expressed by the neat antithesis

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<sup>14</sup> Lozinski and Averkiev are both closer to the original: "smushchal voly" /disturbs the will/ (Lozinski) and "putal volyu" /confuses the will/ (Averkiev). Polevoi's choice of "trepeshchet volyu" /trembles the will/ is characteristic of his image of the enfeebled hero.

and rhetorical devices in Pasternak's version, such as the epanastrophe of the verb infinitives "miryat'sya" and "stremit'sya," the adjective "znakomy" and its privative form, and the repeated inflections of "zlom" and "begstvom." Pasternak is also the only translator who renders the word "bear" as "miryat'sya,"<sup>15</sup> which echoes his choice of "smiryat'sya" (1953 edition) for the verb in the line "...to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." For Pasternak submission and compromise were tantamount to suffering; his translations, in fact, represent his creative compromise between publishing his own officially unorthodox poetry or not writing at all.

Pasternak has probably injected more of his own personality into the translation of Hamlet's monologue than any other translator since Polevoi. Even Pasternak's critical remarks on the purifying effect of the soliloquy ("Notes") are more applicable to himself than to the play, since his translation may have provided a catharsis of sorts at a time when his own creative work was stifled by government

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<sup>15</sup>Most translators use the more neutral term "snosit'" /bear/ (Viskovatov, Zagulyaev, Averkiev, K. Romanov). Polevoi chooses the more emotionally charged term "stradat'" /suffer/.

oppression. Pasternak perhaps only hints at this precarious political status by certain lexical deviations such as "smiryat'sya" /submit/, "miryat'sya" /reconcile/, and "lishenii" /deprivations/, but he refers to it directly in such phrases as "nevozmozhnost' izlit' sebya" /impossibility to express oneself/. Hamlet in Pasternak's translation is at times as much an alter ego of the poet as the speaker of the "Hamlet" poem is to Zhivago.

Far less evident than political allusion is Pasternak's poeticization of Hamlet's monologue (admittedly this would be hardly noticed by an audience during performance). In his version of the passage, Pasternak has certainly achieved his goal of making a translation sound like Russian poetry in its own right,<sup>16</sup> yet in doing so he has still strayed slightly from the stylistic effects of the original. In Shakespeare's text Hamlet is intensely subjective; he deeply feels all that he discusses, as portrayed in his disorderly and winding syntax, his mixed metaphors, and constant repetition and reinterpretation of general concepts such as "sleep" and "death."

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<sup>16</sup> "Perevod nado sudit' kak russkoe original'noe proizvedenie." "Zametki perevodchika," Sochineniya, III, p. 191.

Pasternak, however, creates a certain distance between the speaker and his emotion by poeticizing the translation through rhetorical devices, phonetic play, elaborating original images and using words highly charged with specific associations in the poetic canon of his native language. The objectivity that Pasternak gives Hamlet in his translation is alien to the simplicity, spontaneity, and natural genius of Shakespeare's hero in the original, and is indeed closer to the poet's own aesthetic. Critics have noted the impersonality, the absence of the lyrical "I" in Pasternak's verse, in which the poet is treated as object rather than as subject.<sup>17</sup> Paradoxically, by objectifying the prince's emotion through the use of intentional poetic design in the translation, Pasternak directly identifies himself with the speaker yet creates, in turn, a Hamlet who views death more as a dispassionate artist than as a tragic hero.

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<sup>17</sup> See V. Erlich, The Double Image (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1964), p.135; R. Poggioli, "Boris Pasternak," Partisan Review (Fall, 1958), p. 17; G. Reavey, "A First Essay Towards Pasternak," Experiment, No. 6 (1930), p. 14.

CHAPTER XIITHE OTHER CHARACTERS IN  
BORIS PASTERNAK'S HAMLET TRANSLATION

Characters in a literary work are so inter-related that the interpretation of the protagonist(s) must of necessity influence our understanding of the other characters. Boris Pasternak's interpretation of Hamlet conditions his portrayal of not only the tragic hero but also of other characters in his translation of the play. As noted in Chapter 10, Pasternak often deviates from the original text in his translation to convey the notion of Hamlet's incorruptibility, a virtue precluded in the world of Shakespearean tragedy where innocence is impossible and corruption inevitable. The pervasive power of evil is presented in Hamlet most strikingly when it spreads to Ophelia, the purest and most innocent character at the Danish court. Driven insane by her father's murder at the hands of her beloved Hamlet, Ophelia rants and sings bawdy ballads whose sexual innuendoes clearly suggest that moral corruption has reached its peak in "tainting" her mind.

Pasternak, however, endows Ophelia with the same spiritual and incorruptible nature as his Hamlet by considerably altering her verses in the madness scene (IV, 5, ll. 21-73, ll. 164-198). In one song, for example, Ophelia vents her bitterness over the circumstances of her father's death by adding a word to a traditional ballad she sings:

White his shroud as the mountain snow  
Larded all with sweet flowers;  
Which bewept to the grave did not go  
With true love showers. (ll. 36-40)

We are to regard the negative "not," according to Kittredge, "... as Ophelia's insertion in the verse. She suddenly remembers that the words of the song do not agree with the facts of her father's burial, which was hasty and without the usual ceremonies."<sup>1</sup> The bitter confrontation between the innocent girl and the sordid injustice of a corrupt world reflected in her song is eliminated in Pasternak's version:

Belyi savan, belykh roz,  
Derevtso v tsvetu,  
I litso podnyat' ot slez  
Mne nevmogotu.

/A white shroud, a sapling of white roses in bloom,  
and I cannot bear to raise my face because of the  
tears./

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<sup>1</sup> The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, ed. G. L. Kittredge (1939; rpt. Lexington, Mass.: Xerox, 1967) p. 124n.

The implied accusation in the original verse is replaced by a mere expression of grief in the Russian text. Similarly, Pasternak expunges a whole section of a ballad dealing explicitly with a seduction scene:

By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
 Alack, and fie for shame!  
 Young men will do't if they come to't  
 By Cock, they are to blame.  
 Quoth she, "Before you tumbled me,  
 You promised me to wed."

He answers:

"So would I'd'done, by yonder sun,  
 If thou hadst not come to my bed." (ll. 58-65)

The original line suggests Ophelia's growing awareness of her own lost innocence and involvement in the corruption that surrounds her, a notion which is inconsistent with Pasternak's interpretation of the hero and the heroine of Shakespeare's tragedy.

In addition to the songs, Pasternak also alters some of Ophelia's incoherent ramblings in the madness scene. For example, Ophelia claims "Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may become" (ll. 43-44), a paradoxical remark which probably springs from her new realization that even she is susceptible to moral corruption. Pasternak translates the ambiguous statement as "Vot i znaem chto nas ozhidaet" (p. 210). The play between appearance and reality, between supposed

purity and actual corruption in the original is transformed by Pasternak into a mere allusion to her father's sudden death by murder or possibly her own madness. Even if the relative pronoun "chto" could refer to the inevitable depravity. "awaiting" Ophelia, Pasternak's decision not to use the verb "to be" reveals his uneasiness with the implications of the original phrase. Lozinski's version is much more literal and also more accurate: "Gospodin, my znaem kto my takie, no ne znaem chem mozhem stat'" (p. 150) /Lord, we know who we are, but do not know what we may become/.

Pasternak's insistence on Ophelia's indestructible innocence and goodness emerges in his translation of other character's observations about the heroine. For example, Claudius witnesses Ophelia's delirium and notes that "This is the poison of deep grief; it springs from her father's death" (l. 75). Pasternak omits the association of Ophelia with corruption by failing to render the image of rot and decay, "poison," in his version: "Skorb' ob ottse svela ee s uma" (p. 211) /Grief for her father drove her out of her mind/. On the other hand, Pasternak slightly over-emphasizes Ophelia's goodness when he translates the

Queen's comment, "Sweets to the sweet" (V, 1, 230), as she strews flowers over the heroine's grave, by a superlative form: "Nezhneishee -- nezhneishei" (p. 230).

Flowers are frequently associated with Ophelia throughout the play to characterize her guileless sweetness and purity. But even in the queen's elegy depicting Ophelia's drowning, the description of the various flowers collected by the heroine for her wreath is slightly vulgarized by the inclusion of phallic imagery:

There is a willow grows askant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.  
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make  
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.  
(IV, 7, 165-170)

In Pasternak's translation

Nad rechkoi iva svesila seduyu  
Listvu v potok. Syuda ona prishla  
Girlyandy plest' is lyutika, krapivy,  
Kupav i tsveta s krasnym khokholkom,  
Kotoryi pastukhi zovut tak grubo,  
A devushki -- nogtyami mertvetsa. (p. 223)

/A willow lowers its grey leafage over a stream. There she came to weave garlands of buttercups, nettles, lilies, and flowers with red tuft, which shepherds call a coarse name, and young girls -- the fingernails of a dead man./

Pasternak again preserves the image of eternally pure Ophelia by diluting the phallic symbolism in his substitution of "tsveta s krasnym khokholkom" /flowers with red tuft/ for "long purples" and "nogtyami" /fingernails/ for "fingers."

Pasternak also uses floral imagery in one of his own poems "Uroki angliiskogo" /English Lessons/ (in My Sister Life) to suggest the same conception of purity and innocence in the deaths of Ophelia and Desdemona. The final three stanzas, which deal with Ophelia's suicide, are presented below:

Kogda sluchilos' pet' Ofelii --  
 A zhit' tak malo ostavalos' --  
 Vsyu sush' dushi vzmelo i svevalo,  
 Kak v buryu stebli s senovala.

Kogda sluchilos' pet' Ofelii,  
 A gorech' grez ostochertela,  
 S Kakimi kanula trofeyami?  
 S okhapkoi verb i chistotela.

Dav strast s plech otlech', kak rubishchu,  
 Vkodili, s serdtsa zamiran' em,  
 V bassein vselennoi, stan svoi lyubyashchii  
 Obdat' i oglushit' mirami. (Sochineniya, I, p. 21)

/And when Ophelia was moved to sing, and hardly any time remained for living, all her parched soul was tossed and swept as in a tempest stalks of straw are scattered.

And when Ophelia was moved to sing, too weary to bear the bitter fruit of dreams, with what fine trophies did she sink? With willow and celandine her bosom heaped.

Like shreds, from shoulders passion shrugging, they  
 (i.e. Ophelia and Desdemona) entered, stopping in  
 their hearts, the universe -- that pool immense, in  
 worlds to drench and daze their forms all loving./<sup>2</sup>

As A. K. France notes, "Pasternak wrote of Ophelia going  
 to her death 's okhapkoi i chistotela' (with an armful  
 of willow and celandine), the latter consisting of  
 'chist-', which means 'pure, clean, clear' and  
 '-tela', 'body'."<sup>3</sup> Pasternak's verbal play on the  
 root morphemes of the word serves to reinforce the  
 image of purification and cleansing in death which is  
 affirmed in the last stanza of the poem.

In his own poetry and in his translation of  
Hamlet, Pasternak follows in the mainstream of Russian  
 poetic tradition in which Ophelia is seen as the epitome  
 of the innocent, suffering victim. Afanasy Fet, in his  
 "medodies" to Ophelia, uses the flower imagery of the  
 queen's elegy to unite the themes of love, death, and  
 poetry; Alexander Blok elaborates on the theme of the  
 suffering artist in his poems on Hamlet and Ophelia ("Ya

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<sup>2</sup> "English Lessons," The Poetry of Boris Pasternak,  
 trans. G. Reavey (New York: Capricorn, 1959), p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 216.

Gamlet; kholodeet krov'"; "Pesnya Ofelii"), in which he imagines himself as Hamlet worshipping Ophelia, who is associated with his feminine ideal, the "prekrasnaya dama" / beautiful lady/. Anna Akhmatova and Marina Tsvetaeva are concerned with Ophelia's frustrated love for Hamlet, yet also depict her as a symbol of all suffering mankind. Both poets are preoccupied with the mythological associations of water in Ophelia's drowning which Pasternak also develops in his own work. In fact, the repeated water imagery relating to Lara in Doctor Zhivago owes much to Pasternak's view of Ophelia, especially considering the connection the poet establishes between Hamlet and Zhivago in the novel.

Pasternak's interpretation of Hamlet also conditions his portrayal of another character who is even more significant in the play than Ophelia -- the ghost of Hamlet's father. As J. Dover Wilson maintains, the ghost is "the linchpin of the play,"<sup>4</sup> since all Hamlet's actions and stratagems after the apparition

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<sup>4</sup> What Happens in Hamlet (1935, rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967), p. 52.

of the ghost are designed to prove its divine origin and thus the truth of its revelation. While Hamlet himself initially believes "It's an honest ghost I've seen" (I, 5, 138), in less agitated moments he wonders if "The spirit that I have seen/May be a devil (II, 2, 584-585). Legions of critics have provided endless reams of evidence to support one or the other side of the question. Eleanor Prosser, for example, bases her assertion of the ghost's demonic nature on Elizabethan conceptions of the supernatural and determines that Hamlet was ultimately deceived by a spirit who asks only for a very un-Christian private blood revenge: "This ghost is not appealing to Hamlet's virtue; it is not arousing his determination to serve the justice of God. It is doing everything possible to arouse nausea and loathing. Shakespeare made the ghost act like a devil because he wanted the audience to notice that it is a devil."<sup>5</sup> However convincing either the ghost's demonism or divinity seems to various critics, in Shakespeare's tragedy the spirit of Hamlet's father is

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<sup>5</sup> Hamlet and Revenge (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 135.

at best ambiguous. Pasternak, however, unquestioningly accepts the ghost as a messenger of divine justice. This assumption necessarily leads to significant changes in his treatment not only of the hero but also of the ghost itself.

First of all, Pasternak portrays the ghost as a much more positive figure from the very outset of the play. For example, in the opening scene the word "stalk" is used by the two sentries to describe the ghost's movement. In this context the English term suggests not only a sense of haughty pride and majesty but also a sinister, threatening hunter stealthily tracking some unknown prey. When Bernardo screams, "See, it stalks away!" (I, 1, 50), Pasternak conveys simply the departing motion in his rendering, "Ukhodit proch'" (p. 127). A precise equivalent for a word so full of connotation is undoubtedly difficult to find in any language, but even André Gide's version "Il se retire fièrement," while sacrificing the concision, still retains some of the original meaning. But when Marcellus relates that "Thus twice before, and jump at this dread hour/ With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch" (I, 1, 65-66). Pasternak's

translation of "martial stalk" totally eliminates the suggestion of a bellicose and ominous manner and instead retains only the air of grandeur and pride: "V takoi zhe chas takim zhe vashnym shagom/Prosledoval on dvazhdy mimo nas" (p. 128) /At the same hour with the same grand, important stride he twice walked past us/. Lozinski , on the other hand, chooses to convey the hint of foreboding in the original: "Tak on dvazhdy v ètot mertvyi chas/Proshel pri nashei strazhe groznym shagom" (p. 13) /Thus did he walk by our watch with a threatening stride, twice at this deathly hour/.

The same root, "vazh-," is repeated in Pasternak's translation by Hamlet after he has heard the harrowing tale of his father's ghost. In the original Hamlet excitedly tells Horatio "Touching this vision here/It is an honest ghost" (I, 5, 137-138), indicating his belief that the apparition is not a demon in disguise but a genuine spirit from heaven. Pasternak translates the lines as "...o prizrake skazhu/Chto èto dukh, dostoinyi uvazheniya" (p. 152) /About this ghost I say it is a spirit worthy of respect/. His version certainly conveys the idea of divine authenticity accurately enough but it also adds a reverential touch absent in the original by the word "uvazheniya."

Hamlet's added reverence for his father's spirit in the translation is consistent with Pasternak's religious interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy and its hero. As in his portrayal of Hamlet by religious motifs, Pasternak also peppers the ghost's speeches with an array of biblical allusions not warranted by the English text. His translation of the ghost's command to Hamlet, "Taint not thy mind," as "Ne oskvernyai dushi," which is discussed in Chapter 10, clearly has a sacrosanct ring. Pasternak also renders the ghost's opening words to Hamlet in a similar vein:

My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulph'rous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself. (I, 5, 2-4)

Nastal tot chas,  
Kogda ya dolzhen plameni geeny  
Predat' sebya na muku. (p. 148).

/That hour has come, when I must give myself to the torment of the flames of Gehenna./

The (adjective) + (adjective) + (noun) phrase, "sulph'rous and tormenting flames" represents a typical Shakespearean device by which a noun is described by adjectives indicating both its substance and effect. Pasternak achieves compression by rendering the phrase "plameni geeny" /flame of Gehenna/, but in doing so he substitutes an explicit biblical allusion for the original images. The term Gehenna, the valley in

Jerusalem symbolizing the sufferings of hell in the Judaic and Christian traditions (Isiah 66:24; Mark 9:47), adequately captures the original sense of "tormenting flames," but Pasternak's choice establishes a religious tone in the ghost's language from his very first lines.<sup>6</sup> The tone is further reinforced when Pasternak translates the ghost's lines about the murder:

Thus was I sleeping, by a brother's hand  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 ... sent to my account  
 With all my imperfections on my head (ll. 74-79)

as

Tak byl rukoyu brata vo sne  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 ... poslan vtoropyakh na Strashnyi Sud  
 So vsemi prestupleniyami na shee. (p. 150)

/Thus was I in sleep by a brother's hand...sent to Judgment Day with all my crimes on my neck./

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<sup>6</sup> Pasternak uses the word again in the following scene in which Ophelia recounts how Hamlet entered her room in a frenzy, "kak bud'to vypushchen iz-pod zemli/Porasskazat' ob uzhasakh geeny" (p. 157) /as if he had been loosed from underground to speak of the horrors of Gehenna/. Lozinski uses the more general term "ad" in his version (p. 60).

Pasternak renders "account" by another biblical allusion, "Strashnyi Sud," the Russian equivalent for "Doomsday," "Last Judgment." His choice of the phrase again provides an example of his free adaptation of the original to his own religious interpretation of the tragedy.

Another subtle alteration of the original text concerns a reference to the sins committed by the dead king during his life. Hamlet's father tells his son that he must suffer in purgatory because of the "...foul crimes done in my days of nature" (I, 5, 12); Pasternak, just as in his treatment of Hamlet and Ophelia, eliminates the imagery of corruption in the adjective "foul" by his rendering of the phrase as "zemnye okayanstva." The noun "okayanstva" adequately captures the original tone, since it has much harsher connotations than Lozinski's choice of the more general term "prestupleniya" /crimes/. The word, however, does have an added religious aura, since it suggests not only the action of committing sins but also the state of curse and damnation by a higher power which arises from them.<sup>7</sup> In addition, "okayanstva" is an obsolete term,

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<sup>7</sup> See V. Dal', Tolkovyi slovar' (1881; rpt. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo 1956), II, p. 661.

in fact, one of the rare cases of archaisms in Pasternak's otherwise modern translation of the play. Pasternak undoubtedly put such a term in this context to reinforce the air of impersonal majesty and deep solemnity in the king's language.

Shakespeare's Hamlet, like all his plays, is marked by a mixture of styles which ranges from the solemn tones of the ghost's speech to the simple conversational buffoonery of the gravediggers. Soviet critics Efim Etkind and Mikhail Morozov have noted Pasternak's capacity for capturing distinct voices in his translations of Goethe's Faust and the Shakespearean tragedies.<sup>8</sup> His use of colloquial speech and peasant dialect for characters such as the gravediggers, the nurse in Romeo and Juliet, and the gatekeeper in Macbeth certainly represent an appropriate adaptation of the original to the Russian milieu, but in other cases he extends this simplicity of speech to

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<sup>8</sup> E. Etkind, Poeziya i perevod (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1963) M. Morozov, "Yazyk i stil' Shekspira," Izbrannye stat'i i perevody (Moscow: Sovetskii Pisatel' 1955).

Shakespearean characters who are clearly of more elevated station in the original.<sup>9</sup>

Shakespeare's Polonius, for example, epitomizes the official style of the Danish court. The formal rhetoric and lofty diction of his speech serve to mark by contrast the pomposity and artificiality of the character and the court he represents. Pasternak, on the other hand, loses the contrast by simplifying Polonius' language with various terms of endearment, diminutives, and colloquialisms which reduce the councilor to a less pompous, homelier and simpler figure than the original suggests. While the endearing terms "dochka" and "dochurka" (daughter) may be excusable when Polonius addresses Ophelia, his use of diminutives is clearly out of place in the following exchange with the servant Reynaldo who is about to

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<sup>9</sup> Etkind comments at length on the simplification of the hero himself in Pasternak's translation of Faust. Not only is the hero's speech sprinkled with colloquialisms and peasant turns of speech, but the character is considerably simplified by Pasternak's stylistic shifts.

spy on Laertes in Paris:

- Pol.        You shall do marvellous wisely, good  
             Reynaldo,  
             Before you visit him, to make enquire  
             Of his behavior.
- Reyn.       My Lord, I did intend it.
- Pol.        Marry, well said, very well said. Look you,  
             sir,  
             Enquire me first what Danskers are in Paris..  
             (II, 1, 3-7)
- Pol.        Da bylo b khorosho  
             Do vashego svidaniya, golubchik,  
             Raznyukhat' tam, kak on sebya vedet.
- Reyn:       Ya èto sam khotel, milord.
- Pol.        Pokhval'no. Ves'ma pokhval'no.  
             Vidite, druzhok, sperva sproshte  
             pro datchan v Parizhe... (p. 154-155)

/Pol. It would be good before your meeting with him, my dear fellow, to sniff out there how he's behaving. Reyn. I wanted to do that, my lord. Pol. Good, very good. See to it, friend, that you first ask about the Danes in Paris.../

Pasternak's substitution of the endearing forms "golubchik" and "druzhok" for "sir" and "good Reynaldo" hardly conveys the tone of the chief court councilor addressing and underling. The earthy expression "raznyukhat' tam," to sniff out, is also definitely remote from the formal verb of the original, "make inquire."

Pasternak's simplification of Polonius' character also extends to his rendering the courtier's syntax, which in the original enhances the formal tone of his affected language through its elaborately inverted word order, appositive phrases, and relative clauses. A prime example is the contorted syntax by which Polonius advises Reynaldo to unearth Laertes' activities

Mark you,  
 Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
 Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes  
 The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured  
 He closes with you in this consequence:  
 'Good sir', or so, or 'friend'... (here Polonius  
 is so confused by his winding syntax that he comically  
 forgets what he wanted to say) (II, 1, 41-47)

We compare the translations of Pasternak and Lozinski:

Vash sobesednik totchas soglasitsya  
 I esli tozhe zamechal za nim  
 Podobnye prodelki, nepremenno  
 prervet vas, skazhem, na takoi maner:  
 "Ser", skazhet on, il' 'moi drug'... (Pasternak,  
 p. 156)

/Your interlocutor immediately agrees, and if he also noticed similar pranks, he'll certainly interrupt you, let us say, in such a manner: 'Sir', he'll say, or 'my friend'./

Vash sobesednik, esli zamechal  
 Chto yunosha, kotorogo vy nazvali  
 Povinen v vysheskazannykh prostupkakh,  
 Naverno, vam otvetit tak:  
 'Mileishii' ili 'Moi drug'... (Lozinski, p. 57)

/Your interlocutor, if he has noticed that the youth whom you have named is guilty of the aforementioned delinquencies, will surely answer you thus: 'Most gracious sir' or "My friend'.../

The totally straightforward syntax of Pasternak's version is far from the effect of the original, whereas Lozinski's translation at least retains the relative clause and some inversion, in addition to his rendering the pompous adjective "prenominate" accurately as "vysheskazannykh."

However, Pasternak is fairly accurate in conveying the aphoristic phrases of worldly advice Polonius imparts to his son Laertes before his departure, but this is mainly because the repetition of syntactic balance and lexical contrast suggests the form of the homely proverb characteristic of Russian peasant speech. Even so, the more down-to-earth tone of Pasternak's Polonius is evident from his translation of the opening lines of the passage:

My blessing with thee,  
And these few precepts in thy memory  
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no  
tongue,  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act. (I, 3, 57-60)

Stan' pod blagosloven'e  
I zarubi-ka vot chto na nosu.  
Zavetnym nyslyam ne davai oglaski,  
Nesoobraznym --khodu ne davai. (p. 142)

First of all, Pasternak renders Polonius' formal

injunction concerning Laertes inscription of precepts into his memory by the earthy Russian idiom, "Zarubi-ka vot chto na nosu" (literally, notch this on your nose), loosely translated as "put this in your pipe and smoke it." The particle "-ka" also functions to soften the command and thus narrows the social distance between the councilor and servant further than in the original. Lozinskii's version, "V pamyat' zapishi moi zavety" /Inscribe my precepts into your memory/, is syntactically and lexically closer to the sense of Shakespeare's text. Pasternak, however, does capture the syntactic balance and lexical contrast of Polonius' first axiom, "...Give thy thoughts no tongue/Nor any unproportioned thought his act," but his translation still suggests the homely flavor more typical of a peasant than a statesman in his use of the colloquial phrase, "khodu ne davai." Lozinskii retains the axiomatic balance of the original without the colloquial reduction of tone: "Derzhi dal'she mysl' ot yazyka/A neobdummanuyu mysl' ot deistvii" /Keep the thought from the tongue and the unreflected-upon thought from action/. The privative past participle "neobdummanuyu" is also just as

pompously polysyllabic as the original "unproportioned."

Pasternak also gives Polonius' speech a rather elliptical quality that is characteristic of peasant syntax, such as in his translation of the old courtier's advice to Ophelia:

Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
 Believe so much in him that he is young,  
 And with a larger tether may he walk  
 Than may be given to you. In few, Ophelia,  
 Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,  
 Not of that dye which their investments show,  
 (I, 3, 122-128)

Puskai tvoei besedoi dorozhat  
 Ne toropis' navstrechu, tol'ko kliknut.  
 A Gamletu ver' tol'ko v odnom,  
 Chto molod on, i men'she v poveden'e  
 Stesnen, chem ty; tochnei -- sovsem ne ver'.  
 A klyatvam i podavno: Klyatvy -- svodni.  
 Ne to oni, chem kazhutsya izvne. (p. 144)

/Let people value your conversation, don't rush to meet 'em as soon as they call. As for Hamlet believe only one thing, that he's young, and less shy in behavior than you; more to the point, don't believe him at all. And so much the more for his vows: Vows are brokers. They aren't what they seem from without./

Pasternak's compressed, elliptical version of "Set thy entreatments at a higher rate/ Than a command to parley..." as "Ne toropis' navstrechu, tol'ko kliknut" eliminates not only the formal diction and syntax of the command but also the imagery of finance that permeates the original passage and serves to emphasize the courtier's wordly background. Lozinski's version,

while not as formal as the original, still preserves some of the original imagery: "Tseni svoyu besedu podorozhe/Chem vtrechu po prikazu" (p. 47) /Value your conversation more dearly than a meeting by order./

The injunction "Do not believe his vows" is also replaced in Pasternak's version by the curt, colloquial dismissal in the word "podavno" /so much the more/. The syntax of the lines, not very complex in the original, is simplified even more in Pasternak's translation; the subordinate clause, "for they are..." and the elaborate prepositional phrase qualifying "brokers" are replaced by three simple clauses connected only by the repetition of the noun "klyatvy" and a pronoun: "Klyatvam i podavno: klyatvy -- svodni/ Ne to oni chem kazhutsya izvne." Lozinski 's version is more literal but also closer to the original syntax: "No klyatvam/Ego ne ver', zatem chto eto svodni/Drugogo tsveta chem na nikh naryad" (ibid.) /But don't believe his vows, since they are brokers of a different color than the costume on them/.

Pasternak's striking tonal shifts in rendering Polonius' language represent the most consistent and most significant changes in his portrayal of all the characters discussed in this chapter. While the lexical deviations in his treatment of Ophelia and the ghost

are basically minimal and serve only to narrow the range of ambiguity in the original text, Pasternak's radical alterations in the lexis and syntax of Polonius' clearly reduce the councilor to a simple, peasant-like character of only minor significance in the play. Although Polonius is a secondary figure, he is clearly representative of the hollow artificiality and deceptive rhetoric of the corrupt court and as such he is integral to our impression of the subterfuge, verbal or otherwise, which undermines Hamlet in the tragedy. Pasternak completely ignores Polonius' function in his translation, and in doing so he diminishes the Russian spectator's conception of one aspect of the external forces Hamlet struggles to overcome in Shakespeare's tragedy.

CHAPTER XIIIVERSE STRUCTURE IN PASTERNAK'S HAMLET TRANSLATION

Boris Pasternak, like André Gide, recognized the importance of rhythm in Shakespeare's work: "Shakespeare's rhythm is clearest in Hamlet, where it serves a triple purpose. It is used as a method of characterization, it makes audible and sustains the prevailing mood, and it elevates the tone and softens the brutality of certain scenes."<sup>1</sup> Pasternak's remarks reveal his awareness that rhythm is inseparable from meaning in a poetic text; it functions together with all other stylistic components (lexis, syntax, etc.) to actualize the structure of the text and thus create poetic effect. The contribution of rhythm to overall effect is determined, according to the Russian poet Andrei Bely, by the interaction between the abstract metrical pattern and the deviations from the pattern.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sochineniya, III, p. 165

<sup>2</sup> Simvolizm, (Moscow, 1910), p. 396

Bely anticipates the Czech structuralists who see rhythm resulting from the dialectical tension between the "automatization" (metric pattern) and "foregrounding" (deviation) of the linguistic phenomena in verse. Shakespeare was primarily responsible for refining English blank verse in his dramas because of his frequent deviations from the metric scheme. His flexible use of enjambment and cesura and his constant displacement of stress help create various rhythms for the wide range of effects that Pasternak lists in his remarks on Hamlet.

Shakespeare's blank verse has usually been translated into Russian by its exact equivalent, unrhymed iambic pentameter, a scheme which was first used in Russian by Vassili Zhukovsky in his translation of Schiller's Die Jungfrau von Orleans and further developed by Alexander Pushkin in Boris Godunov and the Little Tragedies, works heavily influenced by Shakespeare. The Russian meter is much more pliable and adaptable to Shakespearean translation than the French alexandrine is, yet translations of Hamlet in Russian reveal a wide divergence in the use of verse for dramatic effect, as a comparison of Pasternak's and Lozinski's versions will illustrate throughout the chapter.

Pasternak and other critics have noted that Shakespeare's characters are sharply differentiated by the rhythm of their speech. Rhythm, according to Pasternak, is essential to Shakespeare's portrayal of Hamlet:

So vivid is the rhythmic characterization of Hamlet himself that it creates the illusion of a leitmotif, as though a musical phrase were reiterated at his every appearance on stage. The very pulse of his being seems to be made audible. Everything is contained in it: his inconsistent gestures, his resolute stride...as well as the way in which the thoughts he utters in the monologues leap and take flight, the mocking arrogance of his ripostes to the courtiers who mill around him...<sup>3</sup>

As Pasternak's remarks suggest, Hamlet's rhythm in the original considerably varies according to the dramatic context in which his lines are spoken. His first address in the play, spoken to his mother in public, provides only a glimpse of the outrage and grief that will later pour out without restraint in the soliloquies:

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief  
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play,  
But I have that within which passeth show--  
These but the trappings and suits of woe. (I, 2,  
77-86)

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3

Sochineniya, III, p. 196

The dramatic effect of the barely repressed emotion in this case stems from the tension between the public display of self-control and the private urge toward anger and sorrow. This tension is achieved in language by a conflict between a balanced structure and elements within that structure that strain to upset the balance.

For example, lines 77-82 exhibit a high degree of rhetorical control because of the anaphora "nor" and "no" and the use of the identical syntactic forms in each line (adjective + noun + preposition + /adjective/noun). Consonant modulations further foregrounds the measured cadence of the lines. While nasals, liquids, and spirants occur in the line "Nor customary suits of solemn black," spirants and glides dominate the following line: "Nor windy suspiration of forced breath." The "f" in "forced" carries over to the next line in "fruitful river," and in turn its voiced counterpart "v" in "river" is then foregrounded in the subsequent line: "Nor the dejected havior of the visage."

The metric pattern is fairly regular in the lines, although the deviations from the meter hint at the strong emotion which Hamlet barely contains throughout the passage. The metric weight is displaced to the

end of the line "Nor windy suspiration of forced breath" by the spondee in the final foot, "forced breath," in which the two consecutive stresses interrupt the otherwise regular rhythmic pulse and thus betray a slight rise in Hamlet's emotion. The tension is also conveyed by sound modulation in the line. The predominant spirants and glides lend a fluidity to the verse which is somewhat checked by most of the vowels, which assume a short, clipped quality since they are followed by consonant clusters ("Nor windy suspiration of forced breath").

The metric deviation that conveys Hamlet's increasing emotion is carried over to the next line by the shift to a trochee in the first foot "Nó, nõr thë fruitfúľ ríver ĩń thë éye." Hamlet's repetition, in this case of negative forms, is a characteristic device used by Shakespeare to indicate emotional intensity, according to A. C. Bradley.<sup>4</sup> An offshoot of this device

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<sup>4</sup> Shakespearean Tragedy (New York: Fawcett, 1964), p. 125-126. Bradley adds that Hamlet's habit of repetition is another subtle means by which Shakespeare individualizes his hero.

is "repetition by complement"<sup>5</sup> or the use of synonyms where a single word would suffice. This emotional use of synonyms occurs in the line "Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief," in which the successive nouns create a spondee (móods, shápes) that again deviates from the metrical pattern and thus suggests Hamlet's momentary lapse in restraining his grief.

The rhythmic tension in Hamlet's opening lines is undoubtedly complex and difficult to render in translation. Pasternak has two versions of the passage, and the revision may have been partly conditioned by his awareness of the dramatic effect of the original meter:

Ni `etot  
 Suroviy plashch, ni plat'ya chernota,  
 Ni khriplaya preryvistost' dykhan'ya,  
 Ni dazhe slez podatlivyi potok  
 I vpalost' chert, i vse podrazdelen'ya  
 Toski ne v silakh vyrazit' menya.  
 Vot sposoby kazat'sya, ibo `eto  
 Lish' deistviya, i ikh legko sygrat'  
 Moya zhe skorb' chuzhdaetsya prikraş  
 I ikh ne vystablyaet napokaz. (1941, p. 133-134)

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<sup>5</sup> Harley Granville-Barker's term in Prefaces to Shakespeare: Hamlet (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), p. 169. Among the numerous examples in the play, Granville-Barker lists "book and volume," "grunt and sweat," "slings and arrows," and "fit and seasoned."

/Not this unbleached coat, nor the blackness of my dress, nor the hoarse brokenness of breath, nor even the flow of tears and sunken features, nor all subdivisions of sorrow can express me. These are ways that seem, since they are only actions, and it is easy to play them; my grief shuns adornments and is not put up for show./

Ni mrachnost'  
Plashcha na mne, ni plat'ya chernota  
Ni khriplaya preryvistost' dykhan'ya,  
Ni slezy v tri ruch'ya, ni khudoba,  
Ni prochie svidetel'stva stradan'ya  
Ni v silakh vyrazit' moei dushi.

(The remaining lines are the same as the earlier version). (1953, p. 23)

/Not the darkness of the coat on me, nor the blackness of my dress, nor the hoarse brokenness of breath, nor tears in three streams, nor thinness, nor other evidences of suffering can express my soul./

Pasternak approximates the sound modulation of the original fairly well in both versions, although the revision is a bit more successful. His change of "Ni ètot/Surovyi plashch" to "Ni mrachnost'/Plashcha na mne" foreground the consonance of spirants more from the very first lines of the passage. The use of alliteration in the earlier version (podatlivyi potok/I vpalost' chert i vse podrazdelen'ya) is somewhat retrenched in the revision to "svidetel'stva stradan'ya," but the overall loss is minimal.

Pasternak also maintains the original tension between modulated consonants and vowels in his rendering of "Nor windy suspiration of forced breath" as

"Ni khriplaya prervyistost' dykhan'ya." The spirants "s" and "kh" and the glide "r" create a steady, rolling flow which, like the original rhythm, is somewhat retarded by the short, high vowels "i" and "y" (Ni kriplaya dykhan'ya).

In the revision Pasternak principally gains greater metrical variation to approximate the dramatic effects of the original deviations. Metrical deviations from iambic pentameter in Russian, however, assume other forms than in English because of differences between the two linguistic systems. Since English is basically a monosyllabic language, the chief characteristic of its binary meters is the displacement of stress, such as in Shakespeare's shift to a trochee within an iambic line. Russian, on the other hand, is a polysyllabic language in which each word, regardless of length, receives only one full stress. Thus deviations from Russian binary meters occur most often in the positioning and number of stress omissions in a line.<sup>6</sup> A scansion

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<sup>6</sup> Viktor Zhirmunskii and Boris Unbegaun both agree on this basic distinction between Russian and English binary meters. Zhirmunskii, Introduction to Metrics, trans. C. F. Brown (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), pp. 82-84; Unbegaun, Russian Versification (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 41.

of Pasternak's translation of Hamlet's lines illustrates his use of stress omission to render the metrical deviations of the original text

Nĭ mráchnost'

Pláshchá nă mné, nĭ plát'ya chěrnótá  
 Nĭ kripláya prérývĭstost' dýkhan'ya  
 Nĭ slézý v trí rúch'ya, nĭ khudóba,  
 Nĭ próchie svidetel'stva strádan'ya  
 Nĭ v sílakh' moei dushi.

Syntactically Pasternak alternates the length of noun phrases in every other line; in the first and third lines one phrase comprises an entire line, whereas the two intervening lines are divided by cesuras into two phrases of varying lengths. Corresponding to the syntactic interchange is an alternation in the metric scheme. As the scansion shows, the first and third lines are regular except for the stress omission in the fourth foot, while in the other two lines in question the stresses are omitted in the second and fourth feet. However, even in such departure from the normal metric scheme, Pasternak's rhythm creates more the balance than the tension of the original, since his deviations begin to form a pattern of their own. Pasternak's alternation between one and two stress omissions in every other line is more like the rhythmic

swing of a pendulum than the sudden tugs on a taut but otherwise stable wire suggested by the original rhythm.

The most significant metrical deviation occurs in Pasternak's translation of "That can denote me truly" as "Ni v sílakh výrážit' móei dúshí." In order to compensate for the censura after "truly," which denotes the break in Hamlet's listing of the appearances that a man can put on, Pasternak interrupts the pendulum pattern of the preceding lines by shifting the stress omission to the third foot (in itself a rare occurrence for such omission in Russian iambic pentameter<sup>7</sup>).

Although Pasternak does not quite convey the dramatic tension of the original in his translation, he still captures the balanced syntaz and measured cadence of Shakespeare's lines more than Lozinski does in his version:

Ni plashch moi temnyi,  
 Ni `eti mrachnye odezhdy, mat',  
 Ni burnyi ston stesnennogo dykhan'ya,  
 Net, ni ochei potok mnogoobil'nyi,  
 Ni gorem udruchennye cherty  
 I vse oblich'ya, vidy, znake skorbi  
 Vyrazyat menya (pp. 22-23)

/Not my dark coat, nor these black clothes, mother, nor the rough moaning of constrained breathing, no, nor the copious flow in the eyes, nor features depressed by grief, nor all aspects, forms, signs of grief express me./

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According to Zhirmunskii, op. cit., p. 52.

While Hamlet's turbulent feelings are restrained in his public utterances at court, they are given full rein in the soliloquies. Shakespeare conveys Hamlet's outbursts of emotion by a proportionally greater deviation from the metrical scheme. The contrast between Hamlet's public and private self is nowhere more evident than the opening lines of his first soliloquy, occurring almost immediately after the address to his mother cited above:

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,  
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,  
 Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,  
 How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
 Fie on't, ah, fie, 'tis an unweeded garden  
 That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature  
 Possess it merely. (I, 2, 129-137)

Hamlet's soliloquy contains far more deviations from the metric pattern than the previous passage. Shakespeare uses stress displacement in these lines more frequently and more emphatically, such as in the shift to a trochee in the first foot of the line, "Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew." The pause after "thaw" also places additional emphasis on the verb, since cesuras usually occur in the middle of the line in English blank verse and are thus foregrounded in such positions as the very beginning or end of a line.

In addition to Shakespeare's unusual positioning of *censuras* in the soliloquy, Hamlet's habit of repetition, a signal of intense emotion, is also foregrounded because the repeated elements constantly break the rhythmic flow. Repetition, in fact, is the dominant element of these seven lines. Hamlet repeats two exclamations and both instances also displace the normal stress pattern of the lines. A spondee occurs in the line ending "O God, God," while the line starting "Fíe ōn't, aň, fíe" shifts to a trochee in the initial foot.

Hamlet's habit of "repetition by complement" is also foregrounded by its disjunction of the metrical scheme. The shift to a trochee produced by "thaw" in the initial position of the line emphasizes the use of the three verbs "thaw," "melt," and "resolve," which all intensify Hamlet's desire to be rid of his material self. Similarly, Hamlet teems with synonymous adjectives to describe the negative aspects of life in the lines "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable/ Seem to me all the uses of this world!", in which the two monosyllabic words, "stále, flát," form a spondee.

These two lines also illustrate another device used frequently by Shakespeare in the soliloquies: enjambment, or the run-on of one line to the next that creates tension between the onward movement demanded by the syntax and the sense of completion signaled by the end of the line. Enjambment creates an increased awareness of the grammatical relationships between the elements separated by the metric pattern, in this case between the four predicate adjectives in "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable" and the verb "seem" in the following line. The verb "seem" is further foregrounded since it is stressed and thus forms a trochee in the first foot. Shakespeare undoubtedly emphasizes the word through enjambment and stress displacement because it bears significant thematic implications in the play, in which the conflict between appearance and reality is at the heart of Hamlet's tragedy.

Pasternak again has two versions of this passage from Hamlet's first soliloquy:

O esli b`etot gruznyi kul' myasnoi  
 Mog isparit'sya, sginut', stat' rosoyu!  
 O esli by predvechnyi ne zanes  
 V grekhi samboubiistva! Bozhe, Bozhe!  
 Kakim nichtozhnym, p~~o~~l'skim i tupym  
 Mne kazhetsya ves' svet v svoikh zateyakh.  
 Glyadet' toshnit! On odichalyi sad  
 Gde net prokhoda.

/O if this heavy bag of flesh could evaporate, vanish,  
become dew! O if the Everlasting had not put down sui-  
cide as sin! God, God! How paltry, flat and dull all the  
world seems to me in its enterprises. It makes me  
sick to look! It's a wild garden that can't be passed  
through./

O esli b ty, moya tugaya plot',  
Mogla rastayat', sginut', isparit'sya!  
O esli by predvechnyi ne zanes  
V grekhi samoubiistva! Bozhe, Bozhe!  
Kakim nichtozhnym, ploskim i tupym  
Mne kazhetsya ves' svet v svoikh stremlen'yakh!  
O merzost'! Kak nevyopoloty sad,  
Dai volyu travam -- zarastet bur'yanom (1953, p. 25).

/O if you, my taut flesh, could thaw, vanish, evaporate!  
O if the Everlasting had not put down suicide as sin!  
God, God! How paltry, flat, and dull all the world  
seems to me in its strivings! O abomination! Life an  
unweeded garden where the grass grows freely, it be-  
comes tall weeds (bur'yanom)./

Both of Pasternak's versions are more regular than  
the original. The censuras are not as unusually  
positioned, except perhaps for the revision of "'Tis  
an unweeded garden/That grows to seed" as "Kak nevy-  
poloty sad/Dai volyu travam -- zarastet bur'yanom."  
Pasternak renders enjambment by retaining the original  
word order, such as in his version of "Or that the  
Everlasting had not fixed/His canon 'gainst self-  
slaughter" as "O esli by predvechnyi ne zanez/V grekhi  
samoubiistva." However, in translating the lines  
"How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable/Seem to me  
all the uses of the world," the enjambment is somewhat

retained by using its equivalent "kazhetsya" as the second word in the line (Mne kazetsya ves' svet...), a position which accommodates it to the regular metric pattern.

Pasternak, however, does substitute a rare stress shift in his 1941 translation of "Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew" as "móg ĭspărit'syá, sgínút', stát' rósóyŭ," but the substitution of "mog" for "thaw" in the position of deviance shifts the emphasis away from the force of the verb to the impossibility ("mog"-could) of fulfilling the desired condition.

Pasternak eliminates Hamlet's dramatically significant repetition in both versions, although he does manage to render the exclamation "O God, God" as "Bozhe, Bozhe." The effect of the original repetition and its rhythmic function as metrical deviations stem largely from the fact that the repeated elements are monosyllabic. Any literal rendering of this repetition in a polysyllabic language like Russian would seem more long-winded and cumbersome than emotional. Pasternak thus compensates for the intensity of Hamlet's repetition by substituting emotionally charged lexis, such as in his versions of the exclamation "Fie on't, ah, fie" as "glyadet' toshnit" /it nauseates, makes me sick to

look/ and "O merzost'" /O loathesomeness, abomination/.

To some degree Pasternak maintains the rhythmic contrast between Hamlet's public voice in the previous lines cited and his private self in this soliloquy by the omission of stresses in translating both passages. In the first passage Pasternak established a metric pattern that regularly alternated the position of stresses in every other line. However, as the scansion of both versions of the soliloquy indicates, the number and position of stress omissions from line to line varies quite randomly in order to approximate the effect of Shakespeare's metrical deviations in the original:

Ů eslí b étót grúznýi kul' mýasnói  
 Móg íspárit'sya sginút', stat' rósoyú!  
 Ů eslí bý přédvechnyi né zanes  
 V grékhi samoubiistvá! Bózhě, Bózhě!  
 Kákím níchtózhným, plóskím í túpým  
 Mně kázhetsya vés' svét v svoikh záteyakh  
 Glyádet' tóshnit! (1941)

Ů eslí b tý, móya túgayá plot'  
 Mógla rástayát, sginút', stat' rósoyú!  
 Ů eslí bý přédvechnyi né zanes

V grekhi sámoubiistvá! Bozhé, Bozhé!  
 Kákím níchtozhným, plóskím i túpým  
 Mné kázhetsya vés' svét svoikh stremlén'yakh!  
 Ó merzóst' ! (1953)

Although Pasternak succeeds in capturing Hamlet's contrasting rhythms in the public address and the soliloquy, his varied stress patterns are still not quite as effective as Shakespeare's rich and diverse devices for metrical deviation in the original text.

Like other Russian translators of the play, Pasternak has far less difficulty in rendering another verse component in Shakespeare's Hamlet: the rhymed couplet. Although Shakespeare abandoned rhyme in his later dramas, the rhymed couplet still plays a wide variety of roles in Hamlet. The transference of Shakespeare's rhyme in Russian translation is facilitation by the extremely rich rhyme lexicon the language provides. As Jiří Levý notes, Russian is a "synthetic" language whose declensions and conjugations present innumerable possibilities for rhyme formation. English, on the other hand, is an "analytic" language whose non-inflectional system and majority of monosyllabic words offer a

limited capacity for linkage by phonetic identity.<sup>8</sup>

Pasternak exploits the wealth of rhyme formation in Russian in his own work, especially his earlier poetry. Many critics view him as one of the most daring and ingenious innovators in twentieth century Russian poetry.<sup>9</sup> He experimented with unusual rhymes such as a gerund form with a noun (dusha-dyshav), a rare practice that was considered "unRussian" by purists.<sup>10</sup> However, by the time of his first Hamlet translation (1940), Pasternak had renounced the excesses of his earlier style and returned to traditional rhyme patterns. In the Zhivago poems, as Reavey points out, Pasternak is more dependent on the rhyme of substantives and verbs than

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<sup>8</sup> Die literarische Übersetzung, pp. 216-217. As Levý notes, the English word "love," for example, can only rhyme with "glove," "dove," and "above," and with certain eye rhymes as "move," "prove," etc. Compare the rhyming possibilities of its Italian equivalent that is conjugated, "amo."

<sup>9</sup> Among them George Reavey, "Boris Pasternak: The Man, The Poet, the Theorist of Beauty" in The Poetry of B. Pasternak 1914-1960 (New York: Capricorn, 1959), C. M. Bowra, The Creative Experiment (New York: MacMillan, 1967), and Andrei Sinyavsky, "Boris Pasternak" in Boris Pasternak: Modern Judgments (London: Aurora, 1969)

<sup>10</sup> Reavey, op. cit., p. 76.

gerunds, adjectives, and adverbs.<sup>11</sup> The majority of Pasternak's rhymes in the Hamlet translation involves the union of the same parts of speech or at most of a noun and a verb, a common rhyme pattern in Russian poetry. The rhymed words in Pasternak's translation are usually polysyllabic, which is a natural outgrowth of the target language involved, just as is Shakespeare's predominant rhyming of monosyllabic words in English.

Rhymed couplets fulfill a variety of technical functions in Shakespeare's plays. At the end of a blank verse speech a rhymed couplet may express contrast, mark a climax, or form a conclusion to all that preceded. Rhyme can also signal a character's exit or serve as a cue for another's entrance. Most of the rhymes in Hamlet, however, occur at the end of a scene where they are used to bring down an imaginary curtain on the action.

Rhyme, however, is a complex verse component that conveys dramatic effects ranging far beyond the merely technical. The mere repetition of sound elements does not produce an aesthetic response; rhyme, as Roman Jakobson maintains, involves not only the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

phonetic, but the semantic relationship between the units rhymed.<sup>12</sup> Rhyme then is not simply an ornament in Shakespeare's blank verse but an integral component that interacts with all the other stylistic elements of the text to create the overall dramatic impact.

Rhyme produces its dramatic effect by a dialectical process. The phonetic identity between the rhymed elements foregrounds their difference in meaning. But the very existence of this phonetic identity provides a basis for comparison of the lexically contrasted elements, out of which a synthesis is forged that suggests new meaning and implications for the text. For example, Hamlet closes his opening speech to Gertrude about the difference between "seems" and "is" with a rhymed couplet that provides a terse commentary on the distinction he has drawn:

These indeed seem,  
For they are actions a man might play,  
But I have that within which passeth show,  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe  
(I, 2, 83-86)

The phonetic identity between the rhymed elements suggests the difficulty in distinguishing real "woe" from its "show"; the lexical contrast in the

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<sup>12</sup> "Les Chats de Baudelaire," L'Homme, II (1962), p. 8 (with Claude Lévi-Strauss).

context of the preceding lines foregrounds the distinction Hamlet insists upon between true sorrow and its outward and undoubtedly false expression. The contrast in the rhyme of "show" and "woe" is a variation on Hamlet's dichotomy of "seems" and "is" at the opening of the speech and by extension emphasizes the larger thematic conflict between appearance and reality pervading the tragedy.

The dramatic effect of the original rhyme is somewhat diluted in Pasternak's translation

Vot sposoby kazat'sya, ibo èto  
 Lish' deistviya, i ikh legko sygrat',  
 Moya zhe skorb' chuzhdaetsya prikras  
 I ikh ne vystavlyaet napokaz. (1941, p. 133)

/These are methods of seeming, because they are only actions and it's easy to play them, but my grief shuns adornments and does not put them up for show./

The two rhymed elements, "prikras" /adornments/ and "napokaz" /for show/, relate to only one word of the original rhyme, "show." "Woe" is rendered by "skorb'" but the Russian noun is not as pointedly juxtaposed to the concept of show and appearance as in the original. Pasternak's rhyme merely repeats the idea of "show" and thus functions only as a means of emphasis and not of contrast as in the original lines.

Pasternak's rhymes in the Hamlet translations at times betray his personal interpretation of the play to the degree that the semantic relationships of the original rhyme are altered. One of the best examples of this is Pasternak's version of Claudius' rhyme ending the scene in which he and Polonius plot to exile Hamlet:

Pol.: To England send him, or confine him where  
Your wisdom best shall think.

King: It shall be so.  
Madness in great ones must not unwatched  
go. (III, 1, 186-189)

Pol.: Soshlite v Angliyu, ili sazhaite  
Kuda rassudite.

King: Byt' po semu.  
Vliyatel'nykh bezumtsev shlyut v tyur'mu.  
(p. 180)

/Pol.: Send him to England or put him where you think best; King: It must be so; influential madmen are sent to prison./

The rhyme in the original functions technically to signal the end of the scene but it also emphasizes the king's firm resolve to be constantly on guard against his adversary Hamlet. This determination is expressed by the formal tone of the closing lines that is created by verb inversion ("...must not unwatched go") and the rhyme of monosyllables. The rhyme of "so," the adverb denoting "as prescribed or professed," with the last

word of the line "Madness in great ones must not un-  
 watched go," stresses that the king's final words in  
 the scene are not merely a statement but a vow of  
 vigilance.

Pasternak's rhyme is just as terse and formal  
 in tone as the original. The abruptness of Shakespeare's  
 rhyme of the monosyllables "so" and "go" is adequately  
 matched by Pasternak's disyllabic choices "semu" and  
 "tyur'mu." The phrase "Byt' po semu," which translates  
 "it shall be so," is appropriately sententious, unlike  
 Lozinski's less formal version: "Da, net spora" /Yes,  
 there's no quarrel, i.e., with Polonius' suggestion/.  
 However, Pasternak significantly alters the original  
 meaning in translating the final line as "Vliyatel'nykh  
 bezumtsev shlyut v tyur'mu." The adjective "Vliyatel'-  
 nykh /influential/ limits the scope of the original term  
 "great," and the rhyming word of the original, "go,"  
 is replaced by "tyur'mu" /prison/. Political inferences  
 can probably be drawn from the original, but Pasternak's  
 choice of the rhyme "po semu-tyur'mu" states any such  
 suggestions in most explicit terms. Whereas Claudius  
 expresses only extreme wariness of Hamlet in the ori-  
 ginal, in Pasternak's version the king openly proposes

a tyrannical measure to control "madness in great ones." Lozinski's rhyme is closer to the original sense: "Da, net spora/Bezum'e sil'nykh trebuet nadzora" (p. 101) /Yes, there's no quarrel, the madness of strong ones requires surveillance./

Pasternak's concern for the proper translation of rhymed couplets in Hamlet is best illustrated by his various revisions of Hamlet's famous rhyme ending the scene in which he first confronts the ghost:

The time is out of joint; O cursed spite  
That ever I was born to set it right! (I, 5, 189-190)

The rhyme in this case epitomizes the dilemma not only of Hamlet but of many other heroes in tragic drama. The union of "spite" and "right" foregrounds the relationship of the tragic hero to the dramatic situation. The phrase "Cursed spite" was a common Elizabethan expression for bad luck, and it is the sorry lot or "spite" of the tragic hero that he or she is an instrument designated by fate to undergo suffering and thus restore proper balance to an initial condition of upheaval, to "right" the wrongs around him. In Hamlet's case, the Kittredge notes, "the hero is resolved to avenge his father, but he's too civilized to welcome the duty that the savage code of his nation and time imposes on him" (p. 39).

The rhyme is "spite" and "right" is dramatically significant since it is the first time in the play that Hamlet acknowledges the duty and conflict confronting him. To convey the force of Hamlet's lines, the translator must retain some phonetic relationship between the concept of "spite," Hamlet's allotted role, and that of "right," a restored balance in the initial situation which the hero brings about. Many Russian translators have eliminated the rhyme altogether; most who retain it have failed to convey the semantic relationship of the original rhymed words, such as the versions of Anna Radlova and Mikhail Lozinski:

Vek vyvikhnut -- O zlobnyi zhrebii moi  
Vek vpravit' dolzhen ya svoei rukoi! (Radlova)

/The age is out of joint -- O wicked is my fate that I  
must set it right with my own hand!/  
/

Vek rasshatalsya -- i skvernei vsego,  
Chto ya rozhden vosstanovit' ego! (Lozinski)

/The age has been shattered, and worse of all that I  
was born to restore it!/  
/

Radlova's rhyme of "zhrebii moi"/my fate/ and "svoei rukoi" /by my own hand/ merely emphasizes Hamlet's role in the tragic conflict. Lozinski's version suggests the relationship between Hamlet's private fate and its beneficent public role, but only in syntax and not in rhyme. The union of the words "vsego" /of all/ and "ego" /it, referring to "vek," age/ is in

itself ineffectual; the relationship depends primarily on the words immediately preceding them, "skvernei vsego" /worse of all, i.e., cursed spite/ and "... vosstanovit' ego" /to restore it, i.e. to set it "right"/.

Pasternak's first version of the rhyme is hardly an improvement on those of Radlova and Lozinski:

Vek vyvikhnul sustav. Bud' proklyatyi god  
Kogda prishel ya vpravit' vyvikh ètot. (1940)

/The age has dislocated its joint. Be the year accured when I arrived to set this dislocation back in order./

The rhyme of "god" /year, i.e., when Hamlet was born/ and "ètot" /this/ conveys none of the tragic implications of the original. Pasternak is much more successful in the 1942 version:

Pazlazhen zhizni khod, i v ètot ad  
Zakinut ya, chtob vse poshlo na lad!

/The course of life is in discord, and into this hell I was thrown so that all will come to good!/  
/

The linkage of "ad" /hell/ and "lad" /good/ does not directly convey the contrast between Hamlet's ill-fated role and its auspicious consequences, but the interaction of syntax and rhyme in the translation still approximates the dramatic effect of the original. Through inversion the phrase referring to Hamlet's fate, "zakinut ya" /thrown was I/ stands between

i v ètot ad" /into this hell/ and "na lad" /to the good/. The syntactic inversion and the rhyme of two monosyllabic words almost directly opposite in meaning both function to foreground the fact that Hamlet is the intermediary by which the initial dramatic situation is transformed from "ad" /hell/ to "lad" /good/.

Pasternak weakens the semantic relationships in his final revision (1953):

Porvalas' dnei svyazuyushchaya nit'  
Kak mne obryvki ikh soedinit'!

/The binding thread of the times is torn; How must I join their fragments?/

The verb "soedinit'" /to unite, join/ is effective for "right" in "set it right," but the Russian word is juxtaposed in rhyme to "nit'" /thread/, which refers not to Hamlet's own bad fate but to the communal stability that has been upset. As the lexis of the lines suggests, Pasternak sacrificed the effect of rhyme in order to elaborate the original imagery of the "joint" in "The time is out of joint."

Pasternak conceded in a letter to the Shakespearean critic Mikhail Morozov that "the couplet, 'the

time is out of joint,' etc., never gave me peace."<sup>13</sup>

His revisions of these and other lines in Hamlet reveal his sensitivity to the dramatic effects of Shakespeare's blank verse and his constant efforts to convey their full stylistic value in translation. It is impossible to capture every stylistic element of the original verse in a foreign language; however, by his use of sound modulation, rhyme, and various patterns of stress omission in iambic pentameter, Pasternak creates rhythmic effects which justify his own view that "the translation can be judged as an original Russian dramatic work because, above all, it has that deliberate freedom without which we cannot approach great things."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Mne dvustrochie "The time is out of joint" nikogda ne davalo pokoya." Cited in "K perevodam shekspirovskikh dram (iz perepiski Borisa Pasternaka)" /Translating Shakespeare's Dramas (from the Correspondence of B. Pasternak/, Masterstvo Perevoda (1969) p. 345.

<sup>14</sup> "Rabotu.. nado sudit' kak russkoe original'noe dramaticheskoe proizvedenie, potomy chto...v nei bol'she vsego toi namerennoi svobody, bez kotoroi ne byvaet priblizheniya k bol'shim veshcham." Sochineniya, III, p. 191.

CONCLUSION: TWO APPROACHES TO HAMLET

There are countless studies written on the subjects of "A as Translator" or "A as Translator of B." While they are often interesting in themselves, such works usually result in broadening our understanding of A, B, or both but contribute little to the study of literary translation itself. While the subject of this study is Shakespeare in the translations of André Gide and Boris Pasternak, its primary intention is to focus on the original and the translations as test cases for a methodology of analyzing literary translation.

The study is greatly indebted to Jiří Levý's ~~work on literary translation~~ work on literary translation. Levý has created a substantial foundation for a systematic analysis of artistic translation which can range far beyond studying the mere substitution of verbal devices in a text and which aims to determine how effectively the aesthetic value of the original is transmitted into a foreign culture. Levý concentrates on the complex interaction among the various linguistic strata of the original

and the translation, but in doing so he avoids the pitfalls of the purely linguistic method by also considering the important role of the translator's personality in the process.

While this combined approach offers excellent possibilities for studying literary translation, it poses major problems in the actual analysis of the components in an original and a translated work. It is often very difficult to determine whether specific stylistic elements in a translation are chosen because of the exigencies of the target language structure or because of the translator's personal stylistic preferences.

Gide's Hamlet illustrates the problem well. The history of Hamlet translations in France testifies to the resistance of the French language to many of the linguistic liberties of Shakespeare's English. However, the degree of the French intransigence to Shakespeare varies from translator to translator. Gide's version of Hamlet was compared to those of François-Victor Hugo and Yves Bonnefoy in this study in order to determine the degree to which the structure of the French language itself or Gide's particular stylistic traits within that structure are responsible for many of his choices in

the Hamlet translation.

For example, a comparison of the three translations has shown that, indeed, the nature of the language is primarily responsible for French translators' difficulties in certain cases, such as rendering Shakespeare's daring word formations and combinations of concrete and abstract qualities within a single phrase.

The difficulty that Gide and his predecessors had in rendering Hamlet's contorted syntax in the soliloquies would seem to prove that French syntax is also unable to accommodate Shakespeare's word order in translation. Yves Bonnefoy's version of Hamlet, however, serves as an example that the structure of a language can too readily be held responsible for failures of translation. As illustrated by various cases in the study, the great elasticity of Yves Bonnefoy's free verse in translating Hamlet proves that possibilities do at least exist in French for approximating the syntactic liberties of Shakespeare's style.

A similar pitfall occurs in assessing the French tendency to abstraction in the translation of a Shakespearean text. The French language, as the linguist Charles Bally noted, favors substantive

constructions, which create a certain sense of abstraction, but once again the use of these constructions varies from translation to translation. As examples in the study indicate, Gide's use of substantives and circumlocutions for the original verbs in Hamlet is not conditioned by the exigencies of his native language but by his overwhelming preference for those constructions, as evidenced by their predominance in his own artistic writings. While Hugo and Bonnefoy are often unable to render Shakespeare's verbs adequately in their Hamlet translations, they still do not rely on noun phrases as much as Gide does and thus they avoid much of the abstraction that weakens his version of the play.

The problem of determining whether a translated element is conditioned by the exigencies of the target language structure or by a translator's own preference is complex in Gide's case because of his attitude toward the French language. The particular inclinations of his native language became firmly rooted stylistic traits of his own, so that, for example, he prefers a substantive form to translate verbs in cases where French verb equivalents are available.

Gide's occasional complaints about the intractability of his native language are misleading if taken out of context. Gide deprecates the syntactic rigidity and weak evocative power of French only when he is involved in translating a foreign work. Paradoxically, Gide's dissatisfaction with French is caused by his deep commitment to the language and the literary tradition it embodies. Despite his admiration of Shakespeare, Gide clearly prefers the "preciosité" and "clarité" of Racine. This is ultimately responsible for the tension which characterizes his translation of Hamlet -- a desire, on the one hand, to accommodate the French language to Shakespeare's English, countered on the other hand by a Voltairean aversion to a style which is so alien to his native literary heritage and personal stylistic tastes.

In the case of Pasternak's Hamlet translations, the problem of attributing reasons for stylistic choices to either the structure of Russian or the personal preferences of the translator is somewhat less complex. The Russian language generally allows greater flexibility in word formation and syntax than French does and thus accommodates Shakespeare's English

more easily in translation.

However, the greatest single problem that a Russian translator of Shakespeare or any English poet has in translation is the sheer length of Russian words in comparison to corresponding English terms. As numerous examples throughout the essay indicate, Pasternak was extremely sensitive to this major obstacle in conveying the concision which he felt to be the superior virtue of Shakespeare's poetry.

Pasternak's approach to the structural difficulties involved in translating from English is quite different from Gide's. Whereas Gide's substantial grounding in the stylistic traits of French prevented him from adequately translating many of Shakespeare's devices in Hamlet. Pasternak consciously strove to counter the distinctive features of his own language that are most alien to Shakespearean English.

In order to compensate for the polysyllabicity of Russian, Pasternak often rearranged and condensed entire passages in the Hamlet translation. As a result his version is much freer than Gide's Hamlet. Pasternak's much wider deviation from the original text is basically a sound approach, considering the nature

of the linguistic difficulties involved, yet it is one that also entails substantial risk, since his overriding desire to achieve concision often forced him to sacrifice stylistic effects essential to the dramatic impact of Hamlet.

The choices made by Gide and Pasternak in translating Hamlet reflect not only the interaction between the languages involved and the translator's personal stylistic preferences but also their interpretation of the main hero. Hamlet provides an excellent test case for studying the process of interpretation in literary translation, precisely because the play and its hero lend themselves to so many divergent readings. As the study illustrates, a translator confronted with a text as ambiguous and rich in meaning as Hamlet must inevitably make choices that will narrow the range of possible interpretations.

In translating Hamlet neither Gide nor Pasternak have distorted or radically altered the image of Shakespeare's hero but many of their lexical deviations from the original text establish patterns that subtly express their personal views of Hamlet's character. It is not surprising that the interpretations that emerge in their translations accord with the remarks on

Hamlet's character expressed in their criticism of the play. What is most striking, however, is that two authors translating the same text at about the same period of time could create such totally opposite images of Hamlet in their translations of the play. Gide's shifts in lexis and syntax serve to convey the nineteenth century image of Hamlet as a weak, philosophical, indecisive hero unfit for the task of revenge imposed on him. Pasternak's Hamlet, on the other hand, is surrounded by an aura of religious motifs designed to depict the figure of a strong, self-assured, Christ-like hero hardened for revenge and ready to sacrifice himself to his sacred duty.

The wide disparity between Gide's and Pasternak's interpretations of Hamlet in their versions of Shakespeare's tragedy illustrate the protean forms that an original work can assume in translation because of the translator's critical attitudes. Translation, as D. G. Rossetti noted, is "perhaps the most direct form of commentary," mainly because its very nature dictates the selection of specific features of the original for emphasis. The methodology tested in this study can provide a systematic method for determining these points of interpretive emphasis in translation and their implications for transmitting the

aesthetic value of the original. The knowledge that such a systematic method furnishes will not only shed light on problems of artistic translation, a long neglected branch of literary study, but will also offer new insights into the original works themselves by pinpointing new relationships that habitual observation has obscured.

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