Pushkin and Romanticism

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Pushkin is a poet of the romantic era. His very image in Russian cultural self-consciousness as the "first" national writer, the "founder" of modern literature and literary language, carries an aura of Romantic messianism. In this sense, his idealized role corresponds quite well to that of Goethe, Adam Mickiewicz, Alessandro Manzoni, Taras Shevchenko or Aleksis Kivi in their respective national cultures. Pushkin began his artistic career as a younger contemporary of Zhukovskii, Batiushkov, and Chaadaev, and ended it as an elder contemporary of Gogol and Tiutchev, Belinskii and Shevyrev, Kireevskii and Odoevskii. When Pushkin wrote and published his first poems in the mid-1810s, it was time when the romanticism took its initial steps on the Russian literary stage; Pushkin's early works, first and foremost Prisoner of the Caucasus and The Fountain of Bakhchisarai, laid the foundation for polemics between the Russian "classics" and "romantics" in the middle of the 1820s[i]--an echo of similar polemics that took place in Germany at the turn of the century[ii] and in France in the early 1820s.[iii] The last years of Pushkin's literary career was a time when a romantic national self-consciousness, historiography, aesthetics, and literary criticism had already fully developed in Russia. In the final years of the poet's life, and especially after his death, his image as a person and artist attained mythologized features among his romantic contemporaries as an embodiment of national character (*narodnost'*) and, at the same time, of the organic universality--the essential attributes of a romantic genius. Kireevskii's article of 1828 laid the foundation for a rich national tradition of treating the universality of Pushkin's genius, his capacity to recreate in his images any epoch and culture, as the quintessential manifestation of Russian national character, just as

the German romantics saw in the organic universality of Goethe the highest accomplishment of German spirit.[iv] This idea (so characteristically romantic) was further elaborated in Gogol's Arabesques (1835), where Pushkin was called a "Russian character in its full realization, such as it may come to life, perhaps, two-hundred years from now." Belinskii's role in the erection of a romantic monument to Pushkin was also significant. In his monumental The Works of Alexander Pushkin (*Sochineniia Aleksandra Pushkina*, 1841-43), Belinskii painted, fully in the spirit of romantic (Hegelian) historiography, a panorama of the development of all of Russian literature of the "pre-Pushkinian epoch," from Lomonosov to Batiushkov, as a natural historical progression that paved the way for the appearance of Pushkin. Belinskii's famous definition of Eugene Onegin as an "encyclopedia of Russian life, and a quinessentially national work," in spite of its later interpretation as a formula of the realistic novel, was in fact grounded in the typically romantic categories of organic all-inclusiveness and nationally colored "vividness" (*zhiznennost'*), bringing to mind F. Shlegel's characterization of Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre.[v]

Yet one must not rush to the conclusion that Pushkin was a "romantic," in whatever conventional sense of the word, from the mere fact that all of his life and creative work--including his posthumous mythologization--belonged to the romantic era. Of course, no single formula would enable us to pronounce with certainty what romanticism is and what it is not, and who does and does not belong to it. The very essence of romanticism consists in contradictory diversity, in the "dialectical" (using the language of romantic metaphysics) collision of different ideas and voices. However, Pushkin is an exceptional case even by the standards of diversity of the romantic epoch. He stands out among many of his Russian and European contemporaries both in regard to the sharpness of collisions between different perspectives and stylistic modes one can discern in his poetic discourse, and to the inconspicuous smoothness with which all those contradictions coalesce into a harmonious whole. The shining surface of Pushkin's creations makes almost invisible the multitude and diversity of threads out of which they had been woven, and all fissures in their fabric.

Within the diverse universe of Pushkin's art, one can easily note both reflections of and direct exchange with many of his romantic contemporaries, such as Goethe, Byron, Mickiewicz, Bulwer-Lytton, Walter Scott, Benjamin Constant, Hugo and Stendhal.[vi] But alongside the obvious resemblances, one can always note just as obvious differences that make any analogy tangential at the best. Pushkin's own pronouncements about romanticism, mostly skeptical, as well as his attempts to draw a line between what he calls "true romanticism" and the ideas, presumably false, currently circulating on this topic, more likely cloud the issue than help understand his position.[vii] These statements usually have the air of impulsive responses to some transient (usually negative) aesthetic or personal impressions. They often contradict one another and sound enigmatically elliptical, leaving later commentators with almost unlimited freedom to conceptualize them in whatever way they seem it fit.[viii]

But the obstacles that the modern scholar faces in approaching the problem "Pushkin and Romanticism" are not limited to the contradictory and evasive character of the subject itself. There is another kind of difficulty that arises not so much from Pushkin's art itself as from Pushkin studies, especially those from the Soviet period. Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, but especially the 1920s, the picture of the history of Russian literature submits more and more to the idea of historical determinism, derivative from Hegelian philosophy of history, particularly under its positivist interpretation. From such a perspective, the entire history of literature appears as a set of aesthetic epochs coming and going one after another in a fixed succession that signifies the universal path of aesthetic progress. The literary train of any nation travels along the predetermined route. Sooner or later, depending on how "advanced" or "backward" the national culture is, the train of its literature would pass the stations "baroque," "classicism," "sentimentalism," "romanticism," before reaching the final destination known as "realism."[ix] For a positivist mindset, not only realism is the final aim of history of art, but the entire history is seen as a process of the continual growth of "elements" of realism on the way toward the realistic ideal. Marxism, especially of its Soviet breed, employed this approach

with such insistency and bluntness that the determinist mode of thinking left its imprint even on scholars far from an orthodox Marxist ideology, such as Iu. N. Tynianov and Iu. M. Lotman. A rigid stereotype took shape, according to which the transition from romanticism to realism was understood as a step forward along the way of aesthetic progress, something in a way of a promotion to the next literary rank. It was taken for granted that every writer would strive to come as close to this ultimate goal as his personal creative resources, and those of his time, would allow him. From such a perspective, it goes without saying that Pushkin, in his capacity of the preeminent national poet, must have excelled in this race.[x]

This attitude runs in the face of an obvious fact that social realism as a particular ideological, intellectual, and aesthetic epoch did not appear on the literary scene earlier than the 1840s [Wellek 1963], and that the term itself became established in France only towards the beginning of the 1850s, and in Russia a decade later (its precursor, "natural school," the term used by Russian critics in the 1840s, still bore a tangible imprint of the romantic organicism). For Pushkin and his contemporaries in the 1820s and early 1830s, the term *réalisme* could hardly have any meaning, and the word itself, I venture to guess, might have seemed to him a bit funny or insipid.[xi] Nevertheless, the idea that Pushkin's relations with romanticism are limited to the first ten years of his writing, that by the mid-1820s he "overcame" the conventionality of romantic poetics and fully attained a "realistic style," occupied, until quite recently, almost a universal place in scholarship on Pushkin and his epoch.[xii] While the idea of Gogol as realist had been thoroughly undermined by critics of the symbolist generation in the beginning of the twentieth century, the vision of Pushkin's realism had remained intact and came into a full swing in the Soviet period.

An early work by Meilakh [1937] represented an extreme position in treating Pushkin's ostensible development from romanticism to realism. Meilakh summarily condemned romanticism as a "reactionary" movement. This meant that Pushkin's development, from very first steps, was directed towards overcoming the reactionary inheritance of romanticism. Later, in his second book on Pushkin [1958], Meilakh tempered the ideological militance of his earlier

view. But his early approach, it seems, served as a provocative stimulus for Gukovskii's article of 1941, out of which grew a fundamental (although never completed) study on the relationship of Pushkin to Zhukovskii and his other romantic predecessors (1965). While Gukovsky's position was more balanced, he in a way shared with Meilakh a fundamental historical pespective. Gukovskii saw in romanticism a combination of two currents: "conservative" (elegiac, mostly of German origin) and "revolutionary," stemmed from the civic poetry of French revolution. According to Gukovskii, what the early Pushkin did was not so much "overcoming" the reactionary nature of romanticism as synthesizing its backward elegiac and progressive civic aspects.[xiii]

Gukovskii's book offered a wealth of insightful observations on how Pushkin, on the one hand, learned from Zhukovskii, and on the other, crossed over into stylistic domains that originally had been completely alien to him and his circle. Yet, despite a successful ideological apology of romanticism, Gukovskii's historical approach remains in the grips of determinism. Although romanticism is rescued from accusations of being altogether reactionary, it is portrayed as a phenomenon whose meaning consists in being a herald of and precursor to the imminet advent of realism. Pushkin's creative path as a whole is defined by the signposts of the universal historical development: first, the full realization of the artistic potential of Russian romanticism, by means of its inoculation with a healthy dose of "progressive" French influence; then, after romanticism has fulfilled its historical mission on Russian soil, the transition to the "realist style." According to Gukovskii, Pushkin overcame a substratum of romanticism the same way as most of the greatest Russian writers of the succeeding generation did, particularly Gogol', Nekrasov, Turgenev, and Dostoevskii; only Tolstoy sprung into literary life already as an accomplished realist [Gukovskii 1965, p. 17]. The date of Pushkin's transition to realism is given with an unequivocal precision: 1825. Analyzing Imitations of the Koran, Gukovskii notes that its images are depicted as if from the point of view of an "inhabitant of the desert"; this "objectivization" of vision, grounded in an ability to reach beyond the subjective world of the author, is taken as a sign of the work's fledgling realism [pp. 289-91]. Ironically, it is Pushkin's

ability to see the world from many different points of view, even the most exotic ones, that indicates for Gukovskii Pushkin's transition to realism, while in the eyes of romantic critics that very feature, called "proteianism," had earned Pushkin his reputation as an absolute romantic genius. Another sign of Pushkin's transition to realism for Gukovskii is the typization of characters. The hero of Prisoner of the Caucasus was "already" invested with an individual character but not presented "yet" objectively as a recognizable social type; that final step was to be taken in Eugene Onegin.[xiv]

In numerous later works of the Soviet period, Pushkin's transition from romanticism to realism is pinpointed with a truly scientific precision, although the date occasionally varies slightly: 1825, 1824, sometimes even 1823. For instance, Fomichev [1986] presents Pushkin's entire career as a series of successive distinct periods: "romanticism" (1820-23), the "formation of realism" (1823-28), "Boldino realism" (1828-33), and finally, "documentary realism" (1834-37). One may wonder whither Pushkin could have stepped next along the ladder of literary progress had he lived another few years? Bondi [1983] declares the time of Pushkin's "crisis of romanticism" to be 1823-24. Here he follows the idea of Medvedeva's earlier work [1941], in which the crisis of romanticism was connected with Pushkin's disillusionment with the revolutionary movements in Greece and Italy. Since the essence of Pushkin's romanticism, according to Bondi, consisted in the "irreconcilable contradictions between the noble dream and reality" [p. 9], the crisis of the poet's "revolutionary worldview" naturally carried with it a crisis of "romantic worldview" [p. 17].

On the whole, the authors taking such an approach understand by Pushkin's romanticism the style of his "Southern poems,"[xv] while associating the "formation" or "birth" of realism with Eugene Onegin, Boris Godunov, and perhaps to the greatest extent, Count Nulin. Individual disagreements concern only the first chapter of Eugene Onegin, which was begun in 1823. Sidiakov [1978], for example, sees in the first two chapters of the novel in verse more similarity to the narrative style of the last of the Southern poems, The Gypsies, while the subsequent chapters are moving closer to Count Nulin, that emblematic example of Pushkinian realism.

Makogonenko, however, would not give up on the early chapters of Onegin; he cites the negative and somewhat bewildered responses of several of Pushkin's contemporaries to the appearance in print of the first chapters of the novel as the sign that "Pushkin was writing a realistic work in a romantic epoch," and therefore could not be understood by his contemporaries [Makogonenko 1987, p. 342]. Even more radical claim is set forth by Turbin: "Pushkin conceived of Eugene Onegin as if he were already familiar with its definition by Belinskii" [Turbin 1996, p. 9]. This formula of aesthetic determinism is worthy of taking a place beside Osip Brik's famous dictum that if Pushkin had never been born, Eugene Onegin would have been written anyway [Brik 1923].

The years of 1823-24 were for Pushkin indeed the time of an aesthetic and psychological breaking point, one of many that permeated his short but tumultuous literary career. An insightful account of this moment in Pushkin's personal and artistic development, projected on a broad literary and political context of the epoch, has been given in Lotman's biography of the poet [Lotman 1982, Chapter 3]. What is to be questioned, though, is the universal conviction that this crisis marked a watershed between Pushkin's romantic style and his subsequent transition to realism, the idea which Lotman shares with many less sensitive critics.

Speaking in general, a dizzying volatility and playful subversiveness of Pushkin's meaning is quite alien to the aesthetic premises of realism. Perhaps, the best evidence of the historical incongruity of the idea of Pushkin's transition to realism is the further evolution of Pushkin in the 1830s, which, of course, was also punctuated with some later "breaking points." Most of what Pushkin produced in the last seven or eight years of his life show a significant departure from the "realist" ideal that his biographers see in his works of the mid- and late 1820s. His prose is invariably built as an intricate play with various genres, literary models, and narrative cliches;[xvi] the Little Tragedies, with their intensely introspective character, remind more than anything of Georg Büchner's dramas; a dense intertextual fabric and mythological imagery permeats his later narrative poems, such as The Bronze Horseman[xvii] and Andzhelo[xviii]; and finally, Pushkin's late lyrical poetry somehow manages to combine a poignantly personal

intonation with openly exhibited literary conventionality and stylization.[xix] Many critics simply choose to overlook this paradox, which of course is a paradox only if one insists that Pushkin has grown into a full-fledged realist all along since 1823-25. Others have tried to resolve this pseudo-problem by adding various qualifying epithets to the title of Pushkin the realist. Thus, Makogonenko [1982, p. 143, footnotes], following Vinogradov's earlier definition [1936, p. 105] of the style of "The Queen of Spades" as "symbolic realism," declares all Pushkin's writing of the 1830s to be manifestation of this particular breed of realist art. Much has also been written about how Pushkin's realism could be "mixed" with elements of romanticism--or, in another version, how his romanticism was combined with elements of realism [Fridman 1980, Chapter 7; Gurevich 1993, pp. 40-41, 107-108].

At the heart of the idea that Pushkin, once he passed through physical and literary adolescence, naturally grew into a realist, lies a superficial view of romanticism, one which reduces this phenomenon to a few of its external accessories. An indictment of romanticism as an immaturely "individualist" and "schematic" art typically contains such articles as its penchant for the exotic, unusual and supernatural; exaltation and naive hyperbolism in depicting emotions; treating reality through the prism of the narrator's subjective position rather than as an object of artistic investigation; and finally, an effusive style, replete with irony and paradoxes, by which a flamboyant subjectivity of the author and his literary *alter ego* is expressed. Viewed from such a perspective, romanticism does look as a perpetual literary adolescent, naively absorbed in his own emotions, unbalanced and immature, one who has yet to grow up in order to overcome individualism and start facing "real life"--in other words, to turn into a "mature" realist art.

We owe this view of romanticism to the portrait that was created by its ideological and artistic antagonist--positivist philosophy and realist aesthetics of the middle and second half of the nineteenth century. Each succeeding artistic movement strives to cast their predecessors into a simplified mould that looks patently inadequate and a little bit foolish. It happens in part due to the polemical fervor, but to a large extent simply because the new generation has already lost touch with the spiritual foundations of the previous epoch, and tends to judge it by its outward

features, often exhibited in an overblown way in works of epigons. If the acsending movement becomes powerful enough, the image it created of its predecessor remains in the memory of succeeding generations even after the movement itself has already left the cultural scene. Romantics themselves could be held responsible for a superficial and deflated image of their predecessors whom they called “false classicism,” an image which even today influences our perception of the neoclassical epoch. Likewise, romanticism as a comprehensive philosophical and aesthetic phenomenon has in turn practically vanished behind the sterile caricature which later positivist critics have passed to the posterity. In the latter case, the situation turned out to be particularly dramatic due to the powerful resurgence of positivist consciousness and determinist view of history in the Soviet time.

A positivist caricature of romanticism obstructs the view of its philosophical, aesthetic and ideological foundations that underlied peculiarities of its stylistic attire. The romantic movement had been founded upon such fundamental intellectual achievements as the critique of philosophical rationalism, from Descartes to Kant, put forth by the German romantic metaphysics (Fichte, F. Shlegel, Shelling); the idea of an open-ended and self-subversive ("ironic," as romantics called it) nature of modern art, coupled with perception of a modern artist as one blessed and cursed at the same time by his ability to reflect upon his own creation (Shiller); a radically new understanding of the relation between language and thought (Herder, Humbolt); an awareness of the "dialectical" tension in relations between the inner world of an individual and his natural and social environment; and last but not least, a dramatic erosion of the dividing line between "life" and art, that is, between the real-life experience of the author as a human being and his creations.

If one understands by Pushkin's romanticism only an exotic local color,[xx] flamboyant manner of expression, "Byronic" individualism, hints at a mysterious unrequited "concealed love" (akin with Beethoven's *unsterbliche Geliebte*) that ostensibly casted its spell on the poet's entire life,[xxi]--then, of course, it would be only natural to conclude that Pushkin largely outgrew such "romanticism" by the middle of the 1820s.

Yet if we turn to the deeper ontological, aesthetic and psychological dimensions of romantic culture, then Pushkin's place in it and the direction of his evolution seem far less obvious. From such a perspective, Pushkin's art of the early 1820s can be seen as a swift and brilliant adaptation of some extraneous romantic postures and modes of expressions. That was apparently what Sipovskii [1916] had in mind when he spoke of Pushkin's romanticism as a quest for purely formal "freedom." However, Pushkin's later development brought him closer to the genuine romantic spiritual world. It is his works of the late 1820s and the 1830s that show an organic, deeply individual mastering of fundamental categories of romantic thought and aesthetics.

In this sense, Pushkin's evolution reflected the path by which Russian literature in general joined the world of European romanticism. For all easiness and formal brilliance with which Russian authors had mastered formal accomplishments of the new literary trend in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, their awareness of romantic metaphysics, philology, philosophy of history, and ability to express these deeper aspects of romanticism through the medium of art emerged gradually and slowly. By the early 1820s, most of the genres and stylistic tenets of romantic art have been securely established on the Russian soil. The appearance of the Russian elegy, historical and mystical ballad, informal poetic epistle, imitations of the folkloric discourse, "orientalist" exoticism, the Byronic poetic monologue, and finally, of the polemical style permeated with obligatory gibes at the "pseudo-classics," closely followed in time British and German models, and took place simultaneously with or even a little ahead of corresponding events on the French literary scene.[xxii] But the romantic national self-consciousness, the romantic idea of the "poetry of life," the romantic struggle of thought with language, romantic self-reflexion--all fundamental categories with which British and German romanticism had sprung into life at the turn of the century--became a driving force of Russian literary development much later: in the 1830s, and in some respects as late as the 1840s.[xxiii] Pushkin's role in this process of "overcoming" the brilliant simulation of romantic art and coming to terms with deeper aspects of romantic culture was indeed great but by no means straightforward.

A similar pattern can be seen in the development of understanding of Pushkin's relation to romanticism in the works of Pushkin scholars. Much has been written about the stylistic and narrative veneer of romanticism that Pushkin exhibited in his "Southern poems"; yet the question of Pushkin's relation to spiritual and aesthetic foundations of romantic consciousness still remains largely unexplored. As a result, until recently virtually all discussions of Pushkin's romanticism, instead of addressing Pushkin's artistic individuality as a whole, had been specifically targeted to his earlier works.

One should credit Fridman [1980] for having been one of the first (and perhaps the very first in Soviet Pushkin studies) among those who preferred to speak of Pushkin's romanticism, at least as a matter of principle, in relation to all of his work, thereby avoiding a terminal date by which the poet ostensibly "overcame" his romantic phase. However, Fridman's understanding of romanticism, although ingenuous, looks somewhat limited. He sees in romanticism first and foremost the "freedom-loving romanticism of the passions," a movement that grafted the earlier classicist, ethical notion of “passions” onto the new concept of the individual character [pp. 180-181]. As a result, in spite of declared broader view of Pushkin’s romanticism, Fridman in fact rarely goes beyond the fateful 1825 in his observtions, referring to Pushkin's later works generically as ones representing a "mixture" of romanticism and realism. Another interesting early attempt to define features of Pushkin’s romanticism in a broader perspective can be found in Korovin's study [1979]. Korovin formulated several important categories, such as the problem of the romantic ideal, creation of an integral image of the lyric hero, alongside with certain aspects of poetic style, that linked all Pushkin's lyrical poetry to romantic aesthetics at large; yet his survey also stops at the end of the 1820s. Altogether, it seems fair to say that with the only exception of Terras [1980], to whom I will return a little later, works addressing the problem of Pushkin and romanticism in a comprehensive way have begun appearing only in the 1990s, both in Russia and the West.

The most extensive among them is Greenleaf's book [1994]. Greenleaf shows a deep similarity, if not a direct line of succession, between many features of Pushkin's artistic world

and that of the early Jena romantics united around the journal Athenaeum (1798-1800). Another philosophical and aesthetic source of Pushkin's romanticism, according to Greenleaf, traces back to those phenomena of the French Enlightenment that had a direct influence on *Athenaeum*, first of all, to Diderot.[xxiv]

Greenleaf focuses on several concrete aesthetic categories that draw Pushkin closer to European pre-romanticism and early romanticism. These categories include: 1) the heterogeneity of the authorial voice, resulting in the fragmentation of the author's personality as it is presented to the reader; 2) fragmentariness as a principal feature of the literary text; c) romantic irony, understood not merely as a sarcastic posture à la Byron but in a deeper philosophical sense, as awareness of a non-conclusive nature of any artistic expression. Here Greenleaf is speaking, of course, not only about the "Southern poems," but about Pushkin's entire poetic world. Moreover, it is precisely in Pushkin's mature work in which these categories receive a full development. A useful addition to this list can be the category of "distancing" as it is defined by Stephanie Sandler [1989]: an ability to present all experience as lived through directly and immediately, and, at the same time, as reflected upon, as if from a distance.[xxv] Similar features in Pushkin's lyrical poetry have been singled out in Smirnov's book [1994], although Smirnov is not as specific as other authors named here in indicating their genesis in the philosophy of early romanticism.

The fact that the problem "Pushkin and romanticism" has become to emerge in its full dimensions only in recent studies does not mean, of course, that the features of Pushkin's creative identity relevant to this problem had not received attention of scholars before. The recent works I have mentioned would be impossible without profound insights into the nature of Pushkin's poetic style that can been found in the earlier scholarship, most importantly, in works by Tynianov, Vinogradov, and Lotman. What those studies lacked, however, was a historical perspective that would make it possible to project Pushkin's art into the context of contemporary European romantic culture.

For instance, the plurality of styles and codes of Pushkin's literary behavior has attracted a great deal of attention, beginning with the idea of Pushkinian "proteanism" initiated by his romantic contemporaries. Vinogradov [1941, pp. 242-43] offered profound insights into the creative processesin Pushkin's poetic language in which new meanings were constantly being created by cross-pollinations between "different social, private, and stylistic contexts."[xxvi] Tynianov emphasized the "eclectic attitude towards the subject matter" in the meaning of Pushkin's word, a semantic bricolagere, so to say, out of which the word emerges more as a carrier of an associative "color" or "tone" than as a bearer of a denotative meaning [Tynianov 1969a, pp. 130-131]. The kaleidoscopic quality of Pushkin's style, his penchant for the imitation of carefree, thematically and stylistically volatile "chatter," characterized by continual slippage from one subject or tone to another, has been pointed out in regard to various genres and periods of Pushkin's oeuvre: his poetic epistles [Grekhnev 1978],[xxvii] Eugene Onegin and such narrative poems as Count Nulin and Little House in Kolomna [Gurvich 1977; Chumakov 1978; Khaev 1979],[xxviii] some earlier poems that anticipated the style of Onegin: Ruslan and Liudmila [Blagoi 1950], and The Gabrielade[xxix] and also, Pushkin's correspondence [Stepanov 1963].[xxx]

Lotman great achievement in this line of studies consisted in rising the level of analysis of Pushkin's stylistic pluralism from stylistic and semantic observations of single words and expressions to the question of narrative organization of the poetic text as a whole. He sees in a blend of incompatible, even opposite points of view, values, and implicit cultural "codes," pointing to one or another interpretation of events, an unalienable feature of Eugene Onegin's narrative strategy. Lotman defines this complex narrative play, masked by an authorial pose of "carelessness" and "laziness," as the "principle of contradiction" [Lotman 1975].[xxxi]

However, the classical studies that exposed and explored the pluralism and volatility of Pushkin's style, did so without referring to the corresponding categories of romantic aesthetics. On the contrary, Lotman saw in the "principle of contradiction" the means that enable Pushkin to break out from existing literary codes toward "reality," in other words, from romantic conventions toward realism. According to Lotman, Pushkin's contradictions, unlike romantic

irony, are not relativist but grounded in contradictions of the objective world; the clash of contradictory literary codes exposes the relativity of each of them, and in the last count, of any "literariness," thus giving the reader a chance of coming into contact with the objective reality that stays above and beyond all of the codes [Lotman 1989, pp. 192-195]. Likewise, Chumakov sees in the openness of form and the ambivalence of values in Onegin the literary vehicle that enabled Pushkin's novel "to model the universe, or become its reminiscence" [Chumakov 1978, p. 89]. These observations as of themselves are well appointed. Indeed, Eugene Onegin ends with the image of the "novel of Life" that symbolically supercedes and takes over a literary tale; following the example of his exiled friends, whose abrupt departure from the “feast of life” made them unable to see Onegin to its conclusion, the author now decides to part with his hero in a similarly abrupt maner.[xxxii] Yet, as Bocharov justly notes [1974, p. 102], the motif of an all-encompassing "novel of Life" itself dates back to the early romantics, in particular, to Novalis.

For Lotman, the "dialogism" of Pushkin's style, that is, the simultaneous presence of disparate voices, is a phenomenon directly opposite to the "monologic quality" of romanticism [Lotman 1989, p. 230]. One can agree that plurality of perspectives typical for Pushkin’s writing is a phenomenon far more radical the “Byronic” sarcastic tone which had served for Pushkin as a model. As Greenleaf notes [1994, p. 21], despite all of his capricious shifts in intonation, in the end Byron always allows the reader to obtain a sense of the author's own position, while Pushkin's readers can never be sure about his. In a similar vein, Bayley observes that Pushkin, in regard to the "absolute nature" of his relativism, went farther than such notoriously "playful" authors as Voltaire and Byron. While they were inclined to exempt their authorial selves from an ironic subversion, Pushkin’s subversive play with literary modes and styles amounted to a "play with playing” that undermined the idea of subversion itself [Bayley 1971, p. 7].

However, an overly sarcastic “Byronic” posture has only a superficial relation with the concept of romantic irony. If taken in a more deep philosophical sense, as it had been formulated by F. Schlegel, this concept reveals at its core an awareness of a limited and relative nature of any artistic endeavor; the transcendental ideal is destined ever to remain unattainable, precisely

because it is transcendental. The infinite transformations of the author's self-presentation and points of view allow not so much to express the inexpressible as to sense the depth of its inexpressibility. The essentially romantic nature of the "principle of contradiction" and semantic plurality has been emphasized in several of the later Pushkin studies. Grekhnev [1994, chapter "Pushkin and the Inexpressible,'" pp. 380-96] has subtly formulated the difference between Zhukovskii and Pushkin in this regard: the former plunges unreservedly into the otherworldly spheres, while Pushkin conveys the feeling of the inexpressible only indirectly, through hints that "twinkle" from behind the irreproachable smoothness of the surface of his verse. Smirnov [1994, pp. 89-91] has also connected the plurality of Pushkin's lyrical masks and the fragmentariness of the poetic subject of his lyrics with the romantic impulse towards an absolute ideal that can never be attained. The picture of Pushkin's "romantic universality" offered by these two authors is not complete, however, without a link with early German and British romanticism. It should be emphasized that the process of "overcoming" Voltaire, Byron and Zhukovskii brought Pushkin closer not to the future realist novel but to poetic metaphysics of Wordsworth and Norvalis.[xxxiii]

Pushkin's links (in particular, during the last ten years of his life) to early European romanticism, explored in some recent works, gives an additional meaning to the view of Pushkin as an anachronistic phenomenon in the context of European culture of the 1820s--an argument that has been made by several scholars. According to this view, Pushkin may be seen, in the general European context, as perhaps the last peak of the epoch *d'ancient régime*--the epoch of Rousseau, Mozart and Stern--rather than as a "founding father" of the literature and language of the late modern times. There exists a vast critical literature exploring Pushkin's roots in various literary traditions of the eighteenth century, from Voltaire and Stern to Russian odic poetics and André Chénier. No small amount has been written on anachronistic traits in Pushkin's social and literary behavior that earned him and his friends the mocking label of "literary aristocrats" among their literary adversaries who kept closer to the tastes of their times.[xxxiv] But a full credit for raising this problem in a wider historical and literary context belongs, as far as I can tell, to Viktor Terras [1980].[xxxv] Terras goes in his observations beyond the question of the impact on

Pushkin of his various predecessors, to argue that Pushkin's art and personality as a whole bore many traits of the passed century. From this perspective, Terras sees the artistic evolution of Pushkin, paradoxically, as a prolonged "path towards romanticism." This view on Pushkin comes in accord with a more general idea about the belated nature of the Russian and French romanticism, in comparison to its development in Germany and England.

One should not, however, understand this perspective in a sense that what happened on the Russian literary scene in the 1820-1830s simply repeated the process thad had evolved in Germany and England in the 1790-1800s. Such a view would be merely a reformulation of the positivist picture of literary progress evolving in the same direction, albeit at a different pace, in all cultures. A picture of Pushkin the relic of the old regime gradually moving toward the values of early romanticism of the turn of the nineteenth century would hardly be more illuminating than that of Pushkin the champion of literary progress getting a prize in the race toward realism.

Pushkin's relation to the European romantic world was neither that of overcoming it nor catching up with it, or rather, it managed to comprise in itself both of these mutually exclusive perspectives. The poignant uniqueness of Pushkin's artistic individuality consisted in combining, with a perfect ease and naturalness, some strikingly outmoded features with an acute sense of the trends and conflicts of his time. This unique combination seems to me a key to the question of Pushkin's relations with romanticism. One can say that the alternative pictures of the Pushkin outgrowing romanticism and overstepping the boundaries of its aesthetics and world view, and the Pushkin gradually evolving throughout his career towards the spiritual and aesthetic world of the early romantics of the turn of the century, are both touching the truth, and at the same time both getting off the target if considered separately. Pushkin's relations with the world of the romantic aesthetics of his time was as paradoxical, as eluding any straightforward resolution, as his celebrated ability to transform any seemingly irreconsilable opposites into a unity.

On the one hand, Pushkin's mature poetic and prosaic style can be seen as one of the most radical manifestations of characteristic traits of the romantic aesthetics--so radical that it could

hardly been fully accomodated within the boundaries of the romantic world. Pushkin goes further than many of contemporary romantic poets in respect to the inconclusiveness of his meanings and heterogeneity of his literary fabric. In Pushkin's artistic world, often in a single text, the styles of French and Russian classicism, modern romantic discourses, a stylized image of classical antiquity, Biblical imagery, Russian folklore, and the playful modes of a salon conversation all find their natural place. He also goes further than most of his fellow travelers in the degree to with he is mixing up and fusing together the mean and the sublime, pathos and irony, cynical buffoneery and confessional intimacy. Finally, Pushkin stands out among his contemporaries in regard to the directness with which he invests his intimate personal experiences--including shameful and humiliating ones--into his creation.

Yet on the other hand, Pushkin does not go as far as most romantics in breaking with literary conventions for the sake of the individuality of expression. In contrast to his unequivocally romantic contemporaries, Pushkin does not allow the dramatic contradictions that he finds in his soul to break through the surface of literary decorum. In all circumstances, he maintains a "good-mannered" literary persona, the one for whom an unconstrained elegance, a carefully polished carelessness of expression, an ability to say on any subject as little as possible (or much *less* that one would think it possible) remain the unquestioned laws of a civilized aesthetic behavior.

We will look further into the ambiguity of Pushkin's relations with romanticism by examining three fundamental categories of romantic consciousness and aesthetic: 1) the role of language in general, and resources of poetic language in particular, as the means of expression; 2) the relation of the author to his implied reader, and 3) the presentation of authorial self in his writings.

Pushkin fully shared such characteristic traits of romantic consciousness as the contradictory, dialectical nature of poetic thought, vacillation between the sacral and the demonic, tormentig uncertainty about what is truth and what a deceptive apparition. For all of

that, however, he was never forgetting his role as a "man of letters," in an outmoded (from the perspective of romanticism) sense of the word. His literary attire always remains true to the ideal of the "old regime" in regard to its aultless execution and elegant simplicity. Pushkin shuns away from such violations of literary good manners as a dishevelled style, uneven narrative pace, emotional and rhetorical hyperboles, pleonastic or deliberately ponderous manner of expression--all those features by which a romantic author strives to convey the acuteness of spiritual cataclysms and moral dilemmas that overcome him alternatively with excitement and despair.

Anyone who has seen Pushkin's draft manuscripts is familiar with endless alterations that densely cover every page; disparate versions pile in layers one on top of the other, spread in all directions, extend to every speck of an empty space on the sheet of paper. But this impetuous struggle with words never reveals itself in the final product. Pushkin seems to be oblivious of complaints, central to creative self-consciousness of a romantic, about the impotence of language. He remains unperturbed by the inability of words to capture truth, by the idea that any thought, once expressed, becomes a lie. The true romantic shares Hamlet’s dismay upon seeng on the page nothing but "words, words, words." But as far as Pushkin is concerned, all his efforts, all his struggle with language--hidden from eyes of a stranger--is directed precisely toward finding the "words" that he needs. Whatever processes of overcoming and undermining the available means and conventions of literary expression can be seen in the depth of Pushkin's discourse, they are not paraded before the reader. On the contrary, Pushkin willingly draws from the existing resources. The easy accessibility, even outright banality of many images, idioms, rhymes, literary allusions, narrative devices that he employs does not seem to bother him. At times, he would take a gibe at a hackneyed rhyme or a trite image, delighting critics with a parodyed use of the rhymes "*morozy-rozy*" or "*sladost'-mladost*," or with a mock-classicist “introduction” of the novel's hero that appears close to its end. One should not forget, however, that such mockery itself had become generic at least since the times of Fielding, Stern, and Diderot. What is remarkable is that those gibes do not preclude Pushkin from using elsewhere the same or similarly banal expressions without any subversive comment. For instance, the

rhyme *roze-moroze* shows up unabashedly in the poem "Zima. Chto delat' nam v derevne?", a few years after it had been sent with such ostentaciousness to a poetic trash bin in the Fouth Chapter of Onegin:

> No buri severa ne vredny russkoj roze.
> Kak Ωarko pocaluj pylaet na moroze!
>
> But the storms of the North are not harmful for the rose of Russia.
> How hot is the flame of her kiss in the frosty air!

(What links this "eager" usage of the trite rhyme to a parodic one is that in both the images of the "rose" and the "frost" enter into a paradoxical symbiosis, instead of expected contrast).

Or consider the following lines describing Lenskii's instant death:

> Njve yfpfl jlyj vuyjdtymt
> D ctv cthlwt ,bkjcm dlj[yjdtymt6
> Dhf;lf6 yflt;lf b k.,jdm6
> Buhfkf ;bpym6 rbgtkf rhjdm7
>
> Only one moment earlier
> this heart had throbbed with inspiration,
> enmity, hope, and love,
> life sparkled in it, blood boiled.

The sincerity, even pathos in the narrator's voice is undeniable. Yet these lines are conspicuously made from the trite literary material drawn from the common stock of elegiac poetry. Certainly the rhymes *mgnoven'e-vdokhnoven'e* and *krov'-liubov'* are not any fresher than those Pushkin exhibited for readers' mockery elsewhere in the novel. Not losing in the least their tone of sincere sympathy and regret, these words simultaneously convey an ironic imitation of Lenskii's poetic style: this is what the killed poet might have pronounced on the occasion of his own death. Lenskii's own voice creeps into the emotional dialog between the mournful narrator and sympathetic reader, as if he were speaking to us from beyond the grave, in full accordance with the laws of elegiac metaphysics. Perhaps, it is exactly this paradoxical duality that imbues the verses with poignant melancholy, making the unbearable banality of the literary material used in them invisible to the reader. Conventional poetic material is placed in such a

context that overcomes its trivial "literariness." On the other hand, when Pushkin does offer unexpected word combinations or exhibit esoteric stylistic colors, he takes care of making them inconspicuous by creating a context that would deemphasize or counterbalance an outstanding expression. It is as hard to discern poetic “difficulties” on the glossy surface of Pushkin’s verse as to come to realization that nany of his penetratingly direct poetic pronouncements contain in themselves virtually nothing but a common currency of poetic language.

Pushkin's works possess the immediacy of an artifact. They are created to be looked "at" rather than "through." A poem means exactly what it is; but just *what* this "is" is, may become an object of endless and inexhaustible reflection--or it may be accepted unconditionally, as something self-evident. Like a classical statue, Pushkin’s poem readily yields itself to a view from any perspective--and, like a classical statue, it remains all along hermetically enclosed in itself as an ideally whole artistic object. This impression of alienated wholeness is not contradicted by the fact that a great number of Pushkin's works have been left, deliberately or unintentionally (one can hardly ever say with certainty) in the state of excerpts or fragments. The fragmentariness and somewhat enigmatic ellipticity only enhances the plastic self-sufficiency of the piece that we happen to have in our possession.[xxxvi]

The readers are left to decide for themselves what lies concealed behind this flawless exterior. Peering into the smooth surface of Pushkin's verse, one discerns a bottomless succession of layers of implied meaning, a multitude of diverse avenues of possible reading, throngs of contradictory hints and inconclusive allusions, dizzying intersections and collisions of disparate perspectives and conflicting interpretations. The interpretative process may evolve with no end in sight; each noted allusion, registered correspondence of images, discovered detail of a literary or real-life context may alter the entire picture, as if by a turn of a kaleidoscope; with each new twist, the previously reached understanding turns out to be relative and inconclusive. Yet all this dizzying journey along the landscape of Pushkin's discourse, for all its inherent resemblance to the most radical examples of romantic writing, proceeds behind the façade of an elegant artifact, a verbal equivalent of a neoclassical statue or rococo miniature. When dealing

with Pushkin, the reader always has an option which he does not have when confronting a “real” romantic: an option to overlook all virtual abysses and crevices in the poetic landscape of Pushkin’s text and to take it as an object of unreflective aesthetic enjoyment, self-evident and self-sufficient in its harmonious elegance.

As we have seen, an ambiguity and plurality of meaning is typical for works infused with romantic irony. But romantic irony always contains an appeal to the implied reader. The author-romantic takes care of garnishing his discourse with signals indicating its ironic and subversive nature. These signposts prompt a receptive reader to imminent traps and impediments he is supposed to overcome on his literary journey. Romantic irony hardly makes any sense without the reader’s awareness of its presence. To be sure, the romantic author never misses an opportunity to ridicule a “philistine” who is going to be bewildered by his paradoxes; but he is doing so in an implied alliance with a sympathetic reader who, unlike the “philistine,” would understand perfectly well what all those paradoxes and shifts of tone are about. By laughing together at the frustrated or outraged “philistine,” the author and his reader assert their spiritual kinship.

Ambiguity of Pushkin’s discourse is of a different kind. It is exclusionary rather than inclusive. Pushkin's works do not play “hide-and-go-seek" with the reader; they simply do not bother to offer a reader any clue to what he is supposed to seek, and what he may eventually find. One cannot detect on the immaculately clean and clear surface of Pushkin’s text any indication that its message may imply somesing that goes far beyond, and possibly in the direction opposite to what looks as its self-evident meaning. A circle of readers implicitly summoned by a romantic work is democratic by nature: anyone capable of a true feeling and understanding, anyone initiated into the world of romantic irony, is welcome into it. But who belongs to the circle of readers appealed to and implied by Pushkin’s work?--anybody, and nobody. An easy-going affability with which Pushkin’s text offers itself to a reader’s enjoyment underlines its aristocratically exclusionary nature. The multidimensionality of Pushkin's meaning often stems from its intimate connection to various hermetic circles each of which has an

exclusive access to some of its different dimensions: a group of close literary or political associates, schoolmates, members of a salon, or simply a company of people gathering each evening to play cards and trade jokes. To a reader who is not privileged to be a member of those circles, semantic implications inherent to them remain virtually invisible. What looks like a completely ordinary poetic expression may turn out to be a quote from a private conversation or a letter from a mutual friend, imbued with peculiar associations for those who partook of that private exchange. An innocently sounding epithet may contain to the initiated a hint at a person or situation that, if recognized, would radically transport the entire meaning of the poem. A transparent literary allusion that as such could be understood by a wide range of readers may in fact carry in itself a private history of how this particular allusion had been used within a certain company, under certain circumstances. No amount of literary sensitivity or general knowledge on the part of the reader would allow him to penetrate into this world of implied paradoxes and hidden, often acutely sarcastic shifts of meaning, unless he carries a membership card of a certain hermetic circle for which, and for which only, those paradoxes were supposed to make sense.

In the last chapter of Eugene Onegin an "over-starched upstart" (*perekrakhmelennyi nakhal*) is fleetingly depicted, whose appearance and speech manner are comically inadequate to a refined atmosphere of the aristocratic salon in which he has found himself by a whim of chance. Nothing, however, gives him any reason to suspect the true nature of the role he is playing in this gathering; those who understand it, understand it silently, behind the upstart's back: I molça obmenennyj vzor Emu byl obwij prigovor ["And a silent exchange of glances / Sealed his sentence among the all present"]. This silent solidarity of understanding within the circle of "one's own," coupled with the silent exclusion of the unfitting stranger, is emblematic for Pushkin's artistic nature.

Such literary posturing may strike an unsympathetic reader as petty. It did look alien to the spirit of "new times", i.e., the epoch following Napoleonic wars and political tumults of the early 1820s that punctuated the universal demise of the aristocratic culture of the passed century.

Those critics who mocked Pushkin and his circle as literary aristocrats--Bulgarin perhaps most effectively among them--should not be completely denied credit. This attitude was not to a small extent responsible for a progressing alienation of Pushkin from a large part of the Russian public throughout the last ten years of his life. An aristocratic exclusiveness and nostalgia might evoke analogies not with Shelly or Wordsworth, Hoffmann or Goethe, but rather with Vigny or Lamartine--the authors Pushkin himself treated with disdain.

However, Pushkin does not fit into an aristocratic aesthetic mold in the same way as he does not fit into any mold to which his art is tangentially related. Pushkin's muse, unlike that of a salon insider, belongs to a multitude of circles, often mutually exclusive. No single company, however intimately close to the author, can claim a full possession of the meaning of his poetic message. An initiated reader, upon receiving a private hint, may feel privileged over all the rest for whom this semantic ball-game remains invisible; but there is no guarantee that a totally different ball-game, to which he has not been invited, is not simultaneously evolving invisibly to himself. Reading and rereading Pushkin's text, one always has a chance to run upon a discovery that one's understanding of it had been hisherto devastatingly inadequate, that the role he had played vis à vis that text was that of the "over-starched upstart" oblivious of what was going on, silently, right under his nose. Yet each of different versions of the poetic message received by different addressees looks transparent. Nothing seems to be wanting, there is no "agrammatism" (using M. Riffaterre's term) of a type that usually indicates the presence of a hidden allusion in a romantic or modernist work. The reader does not feel any need to reach beyond what looks a full and complete poetic message. Moreover, the reader--each reader--may sense in that message, as he perceives it, signs of a special, intimate proximity to himself, as if the work was specifically addressed to him. A member of a certain societal cirlce, a childhood friend of the author, a literary ally, a poet of a later generation for whom Pushkin becomes an inalienable part of his identity, a Pushkin scholar who has examined every letter in the author's draft manuscripts, a historian of culture who has familiarized himself with the most minute details of the political and literary life of Pushkin's epoch, a commentator thoroughly acquainted with the idiomatic

infrastructure of eighteenth century French literature that served as a substratum for Russian literary language, and finally, simply a "cultured" Russian reader who remembers much of Pushkin's verse by heart--all of these, and an infinite number of other implicite circles of readership can claim their private accesses to Pushkin's message, often coupled with a condescending attitude toward the outsiders. The Pushkinian text intimately appeals to each reader and at the same time inconspicously slips away from him. For each circle of its addressees, it offers a poignantly direct, personalized message, whereas it silently passes over the boundaries outlining any particular circle of understanding.

Rnj , yb ,sk ns6 j vjq xbnfntkm6
Lheu6 ytlheu6 z [jxe c nj,jq
Hfccnfnmcz ysyt rfr ghbzntkm7
Ghjcnb7 Xtuj ,s ns pf vyjq
Pltcm yb bcrfk d cnhjaf[yt,ht;ys[6
Djcgjvbyfybq kb vznt;ys[6
Jnlj[yjdtymz jn nheljd6
:bds[rfhnby6 bkm jcnhs[ckjd6
Bkm uhfvvfnbxtcrb[jib,jr6
Lfq <ju6 xnj, d 'njq ryb;rt ns
Lkz hfpdktxtymz6 lkz vtxns6
Lkz cthlwf6 lkz ;ehyfkmys[cib,jr
{jnz rhegbwe vju yfqnb7
Pf cbv hfccnfytvcz6 ghjcnb2

Whoever you are, my reader--
--a friend or a foe,--I'd like
to part with you as friends today.
Fare thee well. Whatever you have searshed for
in these carefree lines of mine:
memories of tumultuous past,
a rest from your labor,
vivid pictures, or witticisms,
or grammatical transgressions,--
God grant that in this little book
you could find at least a grain
for your entertainment, your dreams,
for the needs of heart, for journalistic gripes.
On that we'll part. Farewell!

(Eugene Onegin Ch. VIII, 49)

Romanticism, by making the author the ultimate subject of his creation, has blurred the line dividing “life” from “literature” or, to use Goethe’s famous formula, “truth” from “poetry.” For a romantic artist, every moment of his life belongs to his artistic mission. The “text” of his life, if not entirely turns into a work of art (that ultimate step will be made a century later by modernism), at least becomes a draft of it. A longing--never fully satisfied--for finding a perfect synthesis of “poetry” and “truth” underlies all vicissitudes of the poet’s real-life experience and creative endeavors.

Pushkin shared with romantics the trend toward individualization and personalization of art. For him, as much as for them--and unlike most of their eighteenth-century predecessors--writing has become a deeply personal matter, an integral part of the poet's personality and life experience. The directness of Pushkin's personal presence in his writings, the truthworthiness of his confessions about his experience and his feelings is difficult to match. For all of this, he shuns away from any signs of exaltation; even most dramatic of his confessions do not erupt into impetuouss outbursts of passion or repentance, or if they do, the author's tone promptly returns to an easy-going, naturalness, or rather its well-groomed literary presentation, as if shrugging off a passionate moment. The tension between "poetry" and "truth," so important for the romantic consciousness, does not arise in Pushkin’s writing. His depictions of nature, daily life, human relations are always shiningly lucid, psychological details are applied with a penetrating precision, asides to the reader exude a good-natured spirit of confidence in the reader's understanding. These are well-known properties of Pushkin's poetic and prosaic diction, on the strength of which he gained his reputation as the first champion of realism. Yet if Pushkin can be credited with overcoming the starry-eyed side of romanticism, he achieved this more as a person of the pre-romantic era, for whom the gulf between the subjective and the objective, between the internal world of the individual and its outer manifestations, between the idea and its expression, simply does not exist, or at least does not pose such a fateful dilemma as for most of the romantics. In Pushkin, life expeience, spiritual struggles, upsurge of passions never try to show

themselves by tearing through the fabric of iliterary conventions in which they are clothed. Pushkin's "poetry" *is* his "truth."

Paradoxically, it is precisely Pushkin's "literariness," i.e., his total immersion in the matters of word, image, poetic prosody, style and genre, that renders an authenticity to his authoreal voice and bestows an aura of personal immediacy on social, intellectual and emotional experience that finds expression in his poetry. The deeply personal nature of his images and their polished literariness do not contradict one another but, quite the opposite, are closely linked. In Pushkin, the confluence of personal experience and its expression in art reaches such a level that makes one suspect that for him no real-life experience exists outside of literary modalities; at least, one can discern no discrepancy between the former and the latter.

This makes his poetic pictures so sharply focused, so soberly and mercilessly clear, and, if one considers all potentials of their meaning, so deeply subversive and self-undermining that even most tempestous romantic revelries begin looking tame in comparison. Pushkin's poetic vision is devoid of the exalted idealism that can be sensed behind even the most misanthropic romantic pose. In his work confession and cynical mockery, the high and the low, heaven and hell do not struggle with one another, as in the soul of the romantic subject, but form an inseparable (one is tempted to say "organic") whole. The easiness with which they may at any moment turn out to be reflections and paraphrases of each other is profoundly disturbing. As if confronted with a magic mirror, the exalted and beautiful suddenly recognizes itself in the shameful and ugly; what seemed to be a moving confession, reveals itself as a parody or a hidden cruel joke. But in the same token, an ugliness may reveal in itself hidden sublime features; a mockery can become a way of telling the otherwise unutterable truth.

One can discern in all these unhindered shifts of perspective traits of the analytical paradoxalism of the eighteenthth century. Yet brilliant and intentionally shocking paradoxes, so typical for the epoch of the Enlightenment, largely had an anonymous, generalized character. They were usually aimed at the world at large rather than at the intimate whorld of the author, at the nature of humanity in general rather than the author’s personal character (in his time,

Rousseau had stood alone as an exception in this regard). The personalization of the poetic voice, treatment of a work of art as a fact of its author's life--those were achievements of the romantic era in which Pushkin partook. But, while having fully reached the degree of personal directness typical for romantic art, Pushkin never shed off the merciless lucidity and detached playfulness typical for the previous epoch. Pushkin plays with words in the eghteenth-century fashion: with such unconstrained freedom and brilliant agility as if for him they indeed were "only" words bearing no direct connection to him as a living being. Yet as a man of the new time, he has an acute sense of the ability of an uttered word to become a personal event. As he once remarked to Gogol (if we believe Gogol"s testimony): "The poet's words are his deeds" (*Slova poeta sut' uzhe ego dela*).[xxxvii]

In the last count, the answer to the question about Pushkin's relation to romanticism has to remain inconclusive. What has become clear, mostly due to the studies of the last decade, is that the scope of this problem by no means can be confined to a few early years of Pushkin's career when he demonstrated a masterly adaptation of certain flamboyant features of romantic imagery and style. It was in Pushkin's mature writings of the late 1820s and the 1830s where he came close to most fundamental spiritual concerns, aesthetic goals, and psychological underpinnings of the romantic world. However, no matter how liberally one would apply the notion of a "romantic writer" to the European literary world of the first third of the nineteenth century, Pushkin will not fit into this notion without some undermining reservations. In many respects, he surpasses romantic culture of his time, in the sense that he carries some of its formative features to a further extent than most or all of the romantic authors were prepared to do. In regard to his ability to sense and to live through the intellectual, aesthetical, and psychological shifts of his time, Pushkin was next to nobody on the contemporary European literary scene. But at the same time, he was as unique in the extent to which the world of aristocratic culture of the previous century was ingrained in his personal and creative consciousness--the world that was in many respects the antipode of romanticism, the world

which the romantics, on their rise, mocked, caricatured, and tried to push into oblivion. Pushkin's paradox consists in the fact that some of his outmoded features were precisely those that allowed him to stay at the cutting edge of his time, leaving behind many things cherished by his contemporaries.

In the final count, we may have to concede that Pushkin did reached beoynd and ahead of the romantic world in which he lived. But whither led the road on which he "overcame" so many of his contemporaries? Certainly not to the next station on the linear scheme of literary progress. Perhaps it simply led nowhere, in a direction in which no direct succession was possible.

The image of Pushkin as a literary messiah, who laid the foundation for the national literature, bears on it the stamp of such a duality. On the one hand, this image is directed toward the future, ensuring Pushkin’s participation in all subsequent vicissitudes of Russian literature and literary language. But on the other hand, this image suggests something separated from historical time, something irrevocably receding into a legendary past. This combination of the intimate link to and unbridgeable detachment from the posterity gave Pushkin’s legacy an exceptional, almost mysterious power of attraction and influence. The very unattainable nature of the Pushkin phenomenon makes it impossible to avoid it and evade his presence. It is as if he directly communicated with each generation, taking part in their endeavors and beliefs--and at the same time, was doing so from the perspective of the irretrievable "golden age." In complete agreement with the character of his creative identity, Pushkin simultaneously appeals and slips away; while becoming engaged in an intimate dialogue with everyone with the personal directness of a typical romantic, he never leaves the statuesque neoclassical posture of detached opennes.

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[i] I refer first of all to the programmatic articles of Bestuzhev [1823] and Viazemskii [1824]. These views were quickly answered in the articles of N. I. Grech, M. A. Dmitriev, F. V. Bulgarin, B. M. Fedorov. The strongest polemic reply to the advocates of the "new school" was given in the well-known article by Kiukhel'beker [1824]. Much of the original polemics evoked by Pushkin's "Southern poems" has been recently reprinted in a volume Pushkin v prizhiznennoi kritike [1996].

[ii] Most important, the collective "Athenaeum Fragmente" (F. Schlegel, A.-W. Schlegel, Novalis, F. Schleiermacher), originally published in Athenaeum Vol. 1. Pt. 1 (Berlin, 1798).

[iii] Stendahl, Racine et Shakespeare (1823).

[iv] The idea of a parallelism between the figures of the two poets, each staying as an emblematic representation of his respective national tradition, laid the foundation for he imagery of Baratynskii's elegy "On the Death of Goethe" (*Na smert' Gete*, 1832). Baratynskii's image of Goethe as an ultimate sage to whose vision all the spheres of universe are open, is built upon transparent reminiscences from Pushkin, notably "The Prophet" (*Prorok*).

[v] F. Schlegel, "Über Goethes Meister." Athenaeum, Vol. 1, Pt. 2 (Berlin, 1798).

[vi] Scholarly literature dedicated to Pushkin's dialogue with his romantic contemporaries in the West is vast. I will name only works that either have appeared recently or were not included in

previously done survey. On the problem "Pushkin and Mickiewicz": [Lednicki 1955], [Knigge 1984], [Tarkhov 1977]; "Pushkin and Byron": [Vikeri 1963]; "Pushkin and Chateaubriand": [Karlinsky 1963]; "Pushkin and Constant," "Pushkin and Stendhal": [Vol'pert 1980]; "Pushkin and Bulwer Lytton": [Petrunina 1980].

[vii]Sipovskii [1916] was the first to note that while Pushkin fully shared with romantics an "emphasis on individualization" in the work of art, his theoretical statements about romanticism are continually wavering and inconclusive, except a commitment to the freedom of poetic form. A contrast between the vagueness of Pushkin's positive criteria of romanticism and his numerous negative and polemical pronouncements on the issue has also been noted by Fleishman [1968].

[viii] Gurevich [1993] sums up an interesting survey of Pushkin's views on romanticism by concluding that the essence of those views consisted in a struggle with French classicism (pp. 35-37). Such a depiction seems to me too consistent. Likewise, my own survey of Pushkin's dialogue with Kiukhel'beker concerning "true" romanticism was affected by a desire to lend Pushkin's position an intellectual integrity which, it seems, it did not have [Gasparov 1992, pp. 67-73].

[ix] Noting the inappropriateness of such an approach in relation to Pushkin's style, Leslie O'Bell [1984] has ironically remarked: " . . . style concepts do not march forward in his work like the periods of Marxist historical-economic development" (p. x).

[x] Vinogradov's statements in which he warns against heralding "realism" too quickly in the literature of the 1820s and 1830s, stand out on a general background of works of the Soviet period that one way or another are affected by a overly determinist historical perspective.

[xi]The oldest French dictionary in which I could find the word r*éalisme* was from 1839 (Dictionnaire des dictionnaires, Bruxelles); even here, however, the word relates exclusively to the field of scholastic philosophy: "réalisme - système des réalistes." The Dictionnaire général et grammatical des dictionnaires française (Paris, 1845) gives the same definition. In earlier dictionaries the word *réalisme* is not included at all, and the related philosophical movement is mentioned only in conjunction with the word *réalistes* [J.-Ch. Laveaux, Nouveau dictionnaire de la langue fraçaise (Paris, 1820); Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française, 6 ed., (Paris, 1835), etc.; the eighteenth century Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences treats the term in a similar way]. We find traces of a new usage in Dictionnaire national ou dictionnaire universal de la langue française (Paris, 1846); although the word *réalisme* is again defined as a philosophical term, at the end of the dictionary entry a quote from Theophile Gotiér is given, without commentary, that illustrates the new meaning: "l'amour de réalisme et de la verité dans l'art." And finally, in 1860 we find an explicit definition of the new concept: "réalisme - reproduction exacte de la nature" (M. P. Poitevin, Nouveau dictionnaire universel de la language française, Paris).

[xii]Belinskii's articles on Pushkin developed the teleological picture of the evolution of literature as development from the "pre-Pushkin" era, as a sort of preparatory phase, through "Pushkin's era," toward the "natural school." More recently, this view has found theoretical support in the works of Gukovskii [1957], Bondi [1983], and others. Such an approach nearly became a general beckground for explaning the evolution of Pushkin's style in critical biographies written between the 1950s and the late 1980s. See, for example, Blagoi [1955]; Tomashevskii [1961]. This view,

however, is becoming increasingly anachronistic in the context of works published over the last decade, of which I will speak in more detail below.

[xiii] Gukovskii's idea of synthesis by Pushkin of the elegiac and civic elements of European poetry echoed Tynianov's observation of Pushkin's role on Russian literary scene in the early 1820s; according to Tynianov, Pushkin's principal achievement consisted in grafting the heroic style of the "young archaists" (Ryleev, Katenin, Kiukhel'beker) onto the elegiac poetics of the Karamzinian school [Tynianov, 1929; 1934].

[xiv] A similar approach can be seen in Tomashevskii's survey of Pushkin's life and works. Tomashevskii shares with Gukovskii both the timetable for the advent of Pushkin's realism (1825), and the idea that the decisive sign of that development was Pushkin's transition to realistic typization, away from "schematism" and "individualist veneer" of romantic characters [Tomashevskii 1990, Book 2, pp. 27-40].

[xv]In the work of Iu. Mann, which contains many extremely interesting observations on both genreal aesthetic principles and particular devices and imagery of Russian romanticism, Pushkin is featured, quite characteristically, solely as the author of the "Southern poems." In Mann's opinion, the entire development of the tradition of the romantic poem in the 1820s and 1830s that followed Prisoner of the Caucasus did not have a direct relation to Pushkin: for him, it was already "yesterday" [Mann 1976 & 1995].

[xvi] Debreczeny [1983] places Pushkin's prose into an actual context of his epoch which is far from any idea of "realism." In a recent study Terras [1993] takes an even more radical position on this issue; he arguess that, Pushkin's prose, due to its anachronistic features, remained isolated in the context of the 1830s marked by the advent of the "natural school."

[xvii]Maimin [1969] has noted a connection between The Bronze Horseman and the aesthetics of the Lovers of Wisdom.

[xviii]As Lotman [1973] has shown, Andzhelo contains a personally colored denunciatory subtext; this aspect, however, lends the poem archaic traits (in the spirit of Dante's political allusions), rather than features of a work of realism.

[xix]The image of the "mature" Pushkin-lyricist as a realist reaches grossly exaggerated proportions in the work of Iezuitova [1969]. According to this work, Pushkin's lyrics of the 1830s, as well as those of Tiutchev, Baratynskii, Kol'tsov and Lermontov ("in the final phase" of the latter's evolution), signify the "victory of realism." This thesis, proclaimed at the beginning of the article, stays in agreement with the later description of the mass poetry of the 1830s as a struggle between two movements--a progressively romantic one, that followed Pushkin's lyrics of the previous decade, and a reactionary romantic one, inspired by the "reactionary" criticism of Pushkin's poetry as one devoid of serious content and disconnected from its time. All these literary vicissitudes, however, are heading to a mandatorily optimistic conclusion: "Pushkin's own creative evolution, having developed along the course of realism, stayed far ahead of the common rate of poetry's development, yet, even though it was far from fully accessible to contemporary poets, it made an undoubtable impact on the evolution of poetry in the 1830s" [p. 91].

[xx]In Gukovskii's opinion, the "oriental" style functioned, from 1800 to the 1820s, as the "style of freedom." At the same time, it reflected an "earthly ideal of passions and pleasures" [Gukovskii 1965, p. 258]. Grossman [1928] points to the "strange, semi-fantastic character" of Pushkin's situation in Kishinev: the life of the city itself bore some traits of an eastern fairytale. Recently, the place of Pushkin's "orientalism" in the aesthetics of European romanticism has become the subject of several studies. See in particular [Sandler 1989], [Greenleaf 1994], [Ram 199**?**].

[xxi]Attempts to identify a "secret love," hints at which are scattered throughout many of Pushkin's works, have amounted to not a small branch of the industry of Pushkin studies of this century. The list of candidates proposed by different scholars, from Gershenzon, Shchegolev, and Tynianov to Lotman, Lednicki, and a crowd of contemporary Pushkinists, could compete with the list of Leporello, if not numerically, at least in terms of diversity of ladies' age, appearance, and social station. Many of the works of this provenance were recently collected in a special volume: Utaennaia liubov' Pushkina. An attempt to solve a typically romantic "life-creation" problem in a positivistic spirit is quite characteristic.

[xxii]For a discussion of the relatively belated character of French and Russian romanticism, in comparison with English and German, see Garrard [1973].

[xxiii]Terras [1980] offers an inhsightful observation of an uneven pace with which various aspects of romantic culture developed in Russi.

[xxiv] Another recent work in which a link between Pushkin's poetics and Jena and Weimar romanticism has been indicated is [Kibal'nik 1993; see especially Part II: 4, 5 and the Conclusion]. Even wider connections between the early romantic culture and Pushkin are suggested in [Makhov 1993].

[xxv]Sandler's article [1992] on the motives behind nostalgic remembrances in Pushkin serves as an interesting supplement to her book.

[xxvi]This idea of Vinogradov's has received further de velopment in studies of Pushkin's language by Grigor'eva [1969] and Ivanova [1969]. See also Gasparov [1992, Conclusion].

[xxvii]According to Grekhnev, a shift in tone, akong with a "shift from one subject matter to another," is a typical trait of the genre of the epistle (p. 38).

[xxviii]For example, Khaev formulates a "principle of uncertainty" in the narration of Onegin, the essence of which consists in a "matabolism and of stylistic transformations" (p. 101). In a similar manner, Gurvich points to the uncertainty of the position of the author that results in a plurality of possible evaluations.

[xxix]Briusov [1929] was the first to identify the significance of The Gabriiliad as a work whose narrative style paved the way for the stylistics of Eugene Onegin.

[xxx]While identifying such characteristics of Pushkin's poetry such as a "kaleidoscopic quality of style," or an imitation of "playful chatter," Stepanov nevertheless comes to the conclusion that these qualities of Pushkin's epistolary style paved the way for his "realistic prose" (p. 100). One

can ask, why it should be just prose and not, for example, Eugene Onegin? Is it only because his letters (on the whole) are written in prose?

[xxxi] Lotman's idea has been applied in a series of later studies devoted to other works by Pushkin, for example, The Bronze Horseman [Knigge 1987].

[xxxii]See the analysis of the finale of the novel from this perspective [Gasparov 1992, pp. 267-282].

[xxxiii]In addition to the works already mentioned in this regard, I would like to mention an article by Barta [1988], who draws a parallel between Pushkin's properties as a stylistic "chameleon" and the British romantics.

[xxxiv]The problem of describing Pushkin's creative identity within the context of "polite society" has been addressed by Todd [1986].

[xxxv] Even earlier, neoclassical features of Pushkin's drama were pointed out by Karlinskii [1982, p. 312.

[xxxvi]Greenleaf [1994] considers fragmentariness one of the central problems of Pushkin's literary aesthetics.

[xxxvii]Gogol [1844].