

The Living Memory of Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Champion of the Creative Dialogue Among Poetic Minds

by Rachel B. Douglas

Alexander Pushkin is alive in the mind of virtually every Russian person, and in the minds of foreigners, who have encountered him upon making even the slightest effort to learn the Russian language, or have met a shadow of his thought, filtered through translation. Pushkin's beautiful language is the core of literate Russian, which he made more powerful by bringing into Russian the ideas he shared and developed with the collaborators, living and dead, from far-flung times and places of human history, who peopled his own mind.

A national hero and a universal genius, Pushkin embodies the Classical idea in Russia. He was the soul of the Classical movement in Russian culture, which he sparked and advanced and helped to organize.¹

The special place of Pushkin in Russia, the intensity of a Russian person's relationship with Pushkin, will startle someone unaccustomed to the mental habit of holding conversation with past thinkers, or unacquainted with this poet,



as it did the present writer as a youngster several decades ago. I had a campaign-style button with a cartoon of Pushkin on it, although I didn't know who it was, pictured in the caricature with wild hair and enormous eyes. A visitor to our house, a lady Russian teacher from a different Slavic country, saw my button and exclaimed, "Pushkin! I *love* Pushkin!," with an ardor that piqued my curiosity about the person who inspired it. Some years later, immersed in Russian at a summer school where the language was the slow, well-ordered speech of the resident native speakers, elderly Russian emigrés of the first and second waves,² I encountered that passion again. The artist Ye. Klimov painted my portrait and, as he worked,

'The Bronze Horseman'—
Equestrian statue of Tsar
Peter I, Senate Square,
St. Petersburg, by
E.M. Falconet



he confided in almost a whisper, "When I was a boy, I met a man, who saw Pushkin *when he was alive!*" The phrase in Russian was spine-tingling: "... *kotory videl zhivogo Pushkina!*" Our conversation was in 1972, that is, 135 years after the poet's murder.

When Pushkin lay dying of wounds suffered in his duel with Georges D'Anthès, Jan. 27-29, 1837 (Old Style; Feb. 8-10 by the Gregorian calendar), such a crowd of thousands upon thousands of Russian people kept vigil in the streets outside his St. Petersburg apart-

Что в имени тебе моем?

Что в имени тебе моем?
Оно умрет, как шум печальный
Волны, плеснувшей в берег дальный,
Как звук ночной в лесу глухом.

Оно на памятном листке
Оставит мертвый след, подобный
Узору надписи надгробной
На непонятном языке.

Что в нем? Забытое давно
В волненьях новых и мятежных,
Твоей душе не даст оно
Воспоминаний чистых, нежных.

Но в день печали, в тишине
Произнеси его тоскуя;
Скажи: есть память обо мне,
Есть в мире сердце, где живу я . . .

'What Is There for Thee . . .?'

What is there for thee in my name?
For it will die, like the sad slapping
Of waves, at a far coastline lapping,
Like cries at nighttime on the plain.

On mem'ry's page the trace it burned
Is dead—the unfamiliar diction,
The pattern of a tomb inscription
In language foreign and unlearned.

What's in it now? So long forgot,
In turmoils new and wild surrender,
Unto thy soul it will give nought,
No recollections pure and tender.

But, on a day of silent grief,
Pronounce it then; thy want confiding,
Say this: A mem'ry of me keeps,
There's one heart, somewhere, I abide in.

—A.S. Pushkin, 1830

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ment that the regime, fearing political disturbances, shifted the funeral from St. Isaac's Cathedral to a small church, with admission by ticket only. "In those two days," wrote the poet Anna Akhmatova in *A Word About Pushkin*, "his house turned into a shrine for his Motherland, and a more complete, radiant victory the world has never seen."³ His body was sent away by wagon in the dead of night, to be buried near his mother's estate in Pskov Province. Today, the apartment is a national museum. At the place of the fatal duel, people still pause to read the inscription carved on a memorial stone.

Generations of Russians learned to read, reading Pushkin, especially during the Soviet period. Typical is a poetical primer for elementary schoolers, published in Moscow in 1972. "Because you are not so little any more," the editor addresses the children, "it is time for you to know who Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin was, and when he lived. He was born long ago, in 1799, in Moscow. He wrote such verses, tales, and stories, as no one had been able to write before him. . . . You will grow up, and your Pushkin will always be with you. First, this book of verses, or his fairy tales. Then another—a book of longer poems, then a book of stories, and another, and another. When you're all grown up, don't forget to read the poet's letters, which are really interesting. Pushkin will be with you all your life. . . ."⁴

In the essay "Pushkin and the Children," Anna Akhmatova talks about how a mental life of communion with Pushkin had given Russian people beauty and a sense of decency, even during the political terror of the 1930's. "Pushkin's verses gave children the Russian language in its most perfect magnificence, a language which they may never hear or speak again, but which will remain with them as an eternal treasure."⁵

The subjects of Pushkin's writing are the eternal ideas—truth, beauty, justice, mercy, love, freedom, commitment to a mission of doing good. Lawfully for a poet who, in his work, was transforming a language, he devoted special attention to "genius"—the nature of the creative motion of the individual mind. Exploring the paradoxes of leadership in Russian history, Pushkin pioneered the realm of Classical tragedy in the Russian language, with his drama *Boris Godunov* and his studies of

Tsar Peter the Great. He was a master of the acerbic epigram, aimed at political or cultural foes. He was one of the great story-tellers of all time.

The Time for a Classical Movement

Pushkin created Russian anew as a literary language, a nation-builder's language, in which a speaker or writer could express such universal ideas with great power and beauty. Employing Classical verse forms in combination with the spoken language of the people, Pushkin amplified the power of the ancient Indo-European linguistic roots that are preserved in Russian. He was self-conscious in his work, insisting that the "popular" (*narodny*) quality of a language will flower when it is elevated to express profound ideas. This principle, by which Pushkin accomplished the transformation of Russian, had been Dante Alighieri's principle when he composed his great *Commedia* in the Italian vernacular at the beginning of the Fourteenth century, providing for the population an enriched, more powerful language as the moving force for the development of the nation.⁶ The poet's transformation of the common language gives an impetus to the creation of the modern nation-state, as happened with Dante and Shakespeare. The same principle is encountered in the musical development of folk themes by Ludwig von Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, and others.⁷

Thus, Pushkin worked in the way, expounded by Friedrich Schiller in his 1789 lecture, "What Is, and to What End Do We Study, Universal History?":

All preceding ages, without knowing it or aiming at it, have striven to bring about our human century. Ours are all the treasures which diligence and genius, reason and experience, have finally brought home in the long age of the world. Only from history will you learn to set a value on the goods from which habit and unchallenged possession so easily deprive our gratitude; priceless, precious goods, upon which the blood of the best and the most noble clings, goods which had to be won by the hard work of so many generations! And who among you, in whom a bright spirit is conjugated with a feeling heart, could bear this high obligation in mind, without a silent wish being aroused in him to pay that debt to coming generations, which he can no longer discharge to those past? A noble desire must glow in us to also make a contribution out of *our means* to this rich bequest of truth, morality, and freedom which we received from the world past, and which we must surrender once more, richly enlarged, to the world to come, and, in this eternal chain which winds itself through all human generations, to make firm our ephemeral existence.⁸

A NOTE ON RUSSIAN TRANSLITERATION

Two systems for the transliteration of Russian into English are used in this article. Bibliographical references in the notes are given in the Library of Congress system. In the article, the transliteration is modified to better approximate Russian pronunciation.

After hearing how Pushkin picked up the “eternal chain” from the ancients and the Classics, in his verse and prose writing, it will be no surprise to learn that he also became his generation’s leading historian of Russia.

In 1799, the year of Pushkin’s birth, Russia was ripe for a national poet to lead a Classical movement in the country. It was eighteen years since the American War of Independence from Great Britain had been won, during which interval the French Revolution of 1789 was corrupted by British-steered Jacobin terrorists, setting the stage for the devastation of Europe in the Napoleonic Wars. There was a full-blast offensive by leading oligarchs, to extirpate the virus of American republicanism from the European continent, and to stamp out the scientific and philosophical heritage of Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), in favor of “Enlightenment” reductionism. For reasons of the successes of Leibniz’s worldwide movement in science and statecraft, Russia was a major player in these conflicts.

From the time the Russian delegation to the Ecumenical Council of Florence (1437-1439) was arrested upon return to Moscow until the reign of Tsar Peter I (“the Great,” r. 1682-1725), Russia was relatively isolated from Europe. “The great epoch of the Renaissance had no influence here,” observed Pushkin. The theological and philosophical debates at the Council of Florence, unfolding under the guidance of Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa and his allies, had laid the basis not only for the reunification of Christendom, including Russia and the rest of the Orthodox East, but for the emergence of a new type of nation-state based on education of the qualities of man as *imago viva Dei*, the living image of God. In the subsequent centuries-long contest between the nation-state and the landed and financial oligarchy, centered in Venice before the removal of Venetian forces to new power bases in Britain and The Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, two of Venice’s first countersteps against the nation-state movement were to engineer the fall of Byzantium’s capital, Constantinople, to the Turks (1453), and to cultivate in Russia a force that would be alien to and employable against Western Europe. The course of Venetian manipulation of Russia’s development was blazed by the Russian Orthodox Church’s declaration of autocephaly in 1448, and the 1472 marriage of Sophia Paleologue, niece of the last Byzantine emperor, to Ivan III, Grand Duke of Muscovy. Sophia came to Moscow with a position paper from the Signoria of Venice, telling Ivan that “for reason of cessation of the imperial line on the male side, [the legacy of Byzantium] should belong to your highness as a result of your favorable marriage.” This imported notion became the ideology of “Moscow the Third Rome,” which was further consolidated when Sophia’s grandson, Ivan IV, crowned himself “Tsar,” or “Caesar” in 1547.

In the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth centuries, Peter the Great’s modernizations jolted Russia into closer relations with Europe. The third full-fledged Tsar of the Romanov dynasty, after his grandfather Michael (r. 1613-1645) and father Alexis (r. 1645-1676), Peter came to power through the tumult of a struggle with his half-siblings at the end of Alexis’ reign. Until taking full power in 1689, when his half-sister Sophia was dismissed as the regent for himself and his half-brother and co-Tsar, Ivan V, Peter was raised outside of Moscow, in the care of his mother and the company of Dutch and German shipbuilders and other craftsmen.

In 1696, he undertook an embassy to Europe to study shipbuilding and industrial techniques in Holland and England. On the way, he was hosted at Hanover by Sophie, the Electress of Hanover, and her daughter Sophie Charlotte, the Electress of Brandenburg, who were Leibniz’s patron and student, respectively, and were among the philosopher’s closest allies on the continent. Leibniz met Peter in person in 1712 and was appointed as Councillor of Justice for the Russian state—as “Russian Solon,” he exclaimed, after the famous law-giver of ancient Athens. Leibniz hoped that an industrially and scientifically developing Russia would be a bridge between Europe and the high culture of China in the Far East. Peter adopted from Leibniz his projects for the Academy of Sciences, founded in 1725 at the new city of St. Petersburg on the Baltic Sea; the council of senior advisers called the Senate; and the organization of the government into nine collegiums (Foreign Affairs, Revenues, Justice, Expenditure, Financial Control, War, Admiralty, Commerce, Mining and Manufactures), in place of the previous thirty-five government offices.⁹

The number of iron foundries in Russia rose from 17 in 1695 to 69 in 1725, the year of Peter’s death. Russia opened up factories to produce gunpowder, lumber, paper, textiles (including silk and sailcloth), leather, and glass. It became a relative powerhouse of industry, producing as much iron as did England by 1725, and, by 1785, more than the rest of Europe combined. Peter launched large infrastructure projects, including the Volga-Neva canal, which made it possible to ship freight by inland waterway from the Caspian Sea to the Baltic. Russia was a military force to be reckoned with on the continent during the Eighteenth century.

Nation-State vs. Oligarchy

Peter’s reforms were complex and contradictory, insofar as the build-up of state institutions and projects was financed by new forms of taxation that strengthened the institution of serfdom, under which peasants were bound to the land. Serfdom had been consolidated in Russia

only in the previous century and a quarter, after Ivan IV's 1581 decree restricting peasants' movements. Under Peter, the power of landowners over the serfs increased in most regions. Peasants were also subject to conscription into the armed forces or labor brigades for twenty-five years, that is, essentially for life. The "service nobility" policy, under which hereditary nobles had to serve the state and, in principle, non-nobles could attain nobility through state service, entailed a Table of Ranks, which became a framework for the notorious Russian bureaucracy under future, less visionary Tsars.

Thus, by the time of Catherine the Great (born Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbst, r. 1762-1796 as Tsarina Catherine II), over ninety percent of the Russian population—some twenty million people—still lived in serfdom. The insurgency against the state, led by Yemelyan Pugachov in the 1770's, gained broad support among peasants as well as the militarized horsemen, the Cossacks, as had Stenka Razin's uprisings a century before.

During the reigns of Peter's niece Anne (r. 1730-1740) and daughter Elizabeth (r. 1741-1762), European powers had sought Russia as an ally, and influence among leading Russian factions. Venetian and British oligarchs, especially, strove to reassert control over the political and cultural processes in the country.

At the same time, the Leibniz tendency in the Academy of Sciences continued to be strong, despite numerous counteroperations. Franz Aepinus, a member of the Academy, drafted the Declaration of Armed Neutrality during the American War of Independence. In the League of Armed Neutrality, established thereby, Russia joined with Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands, and other powers to defend neutral shipping by force of arms, allowing the delivery of naval stores to the Americans by France, among other benefits. Although Catherine the Great had come to power with backing from agents of the old Venetian financial oligarchy, the Orlov brothers,¹⁰ and was inclined to ally with her "most devoted Brother George" (King George III of England), the skillful diplomacy of French Foreign Minister Choiseul and certain of his allies inside Russia maneuvered the Empress into signing the treaty. Persistent British attacks on Russian ships helped make their case.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Russia's orientation would swing full circle from the temporary alliance between Tsar Alexander I and Napoleon, contracted at Tilsit in 1807, to the life-and-death struggle of Russia against Napoleon's invading Grand Army in 1812. The leaders of the Classical movement in Germany, including Schiller and his in-laws, Wilhelm and Ludwig von Wolzogen, involved themselves in the struggle for the soul of Alexander I (ruled 1801-1825), the grandson of Catherine

II, and, later, in designing Bonaparte's defeat.¹¹ The leadership of the Prussian reformers and military scientists was crucial in crafting the defeat of Napoleon, but when it came to the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815, Freiherr vom Stein echoed Schiller's observation about the French Revolution, that "a great moment found a little people," lamenting that there was very poor material to work with in diplomatic efforts to shape the post-war order. At the Congress, Alexander was ensnared in an agenda of prayer sessions and parties, under the influence of a cabal of foreign confidants, leaving Russian diplomacy in the hands of the Venetian Giovanni Capodistria, Napoleon's cousin Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo, and their confederate, Count Karl Nesselrode, all of them foreign-born officials of the Russian Foreign Ministry, whose efforts yielded for Russia the role of "gendarme of Europe" in the Holy Alliance.

Just when Russian youths, who had marched all the way to Paris during the war, or had attended university in Europe, were in ferment over ideas about nation-building, from America, from Germany, as well as from France (the scientific concepts of the Classical movement there, not only radical Jacobinism), the Russian Empire was assigned the role of enforcer of "balance of power" politics in Europe. Tsar Alexander I, who had begun his reign with projects for the reform of government and, especially, education, ended it as a tool of Castlereagh's Britain and Metternich's Austria, the details of Russia's status being negotiated by his State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Capodistria.

This political tension of post-Congress of Vienna Russia, lasting until Britain's assault on its erstwhile ally with the Crimean War in 1854, spanned the era of Pushkin's life, and determined the social environment in which he would work. It challenged him to write tragedy, and it set the stage for his own tragedy.

Language and Education

When Pushkin was born, the language of the court and of most intellectual discourse was French, and not the Russian vernacular—a situation similar to that which had confronted Leibniz in regard to French and Latin in Seventeenth-century Germany. In "On the Reasons, Retarding the Progress of Our Literature," an unpublished memorandum written in 1823, the young Pushkin would take note of the conceptual challenge of breaking the dominance of a foreign language:

The general use of the French language and neglect of Russian is customarily considered to be one of the reasons, retarding the progress of our literature. All of our writers complain about this, although they have no one to blame



G.W. Leibniz (above) sought a developed Russia, as a bridge between Europe and China.

Peter I (the Great) appointed him Councillor of Justice for the Russian State. **Right:** Peter I supervises construction of his new city of St. Petersburg.



but themselves. Except for those who are working on verse, the Russian language could scarcely be attractive for anybody. We have neither literature nor books, but from infancy we derive all our knowledge and ideas from foreign books, and we have gotten used to thinking in a foreign language; the enlightenment of our age requires important objects for thought, as food for minds, which can no longer be content merely with brilliant games of the imagination and with harmony; scholarship, politics, and philosophy, however, have yet to be expounded in Russian. We have no metaphysical language at all, and our prose is so undeveloped, that even in simple correspondence we are forced to create turns of phrase, in order to explain the most ordinary concepts; and we, in our laziness, are more than willing to express ourselves in that foreign language, the mechanical forms of which were formed long ago and are known to everyone.¹²

In the middle of the Eighteenth century, Russian scientists had taken up the task of composing in literate Russian. Among them was Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765), the brilliant researcher in chemistry and physics, who worked in parallel with, and gave close attention to, the experiments of Benjamin Franklin and his collaborators on electricity. Pushkin held Lomonosov in high esteem as “the great man,” who carried Russian intellectual life forward between the reigns of Peter I and Catherine II, and wrote about Lomonosov in 1834, “He founded our first university. Better put, he was our first university.”¹³ Pushkin regretted, however, the channel into which Lomonosov had directed Russian writing. He wrote prose as well as odes in Russian, about which Pushkin sorrowfully reflected:

The monotonous and oppressive forms, into which he poured his thoughts, make his prose tedious and heavy. He made this half-Slavonic, half-Latinate scholastic grandeur obligatory; fortunately, Karamzin freed the language from the yoke of foreign domination and gave it back freedom, returning to the living founts of popular speech. Lomonosov had neither feeling, nor imagination. His odes, written on the model of contemporary German poets, long since forgotten in Germany, are tedious and overblown. His detrimental influence on our language is still felt. Bombast, over-sophistication, the departure from simplicity and precision, and the absence of any popular element or originality—these are the traces, left by Lomonosov.¹⁴

The cited Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1826) was the historian, whose twelve-volume *History of the Russian State* was to be a rich source of ideas for Pushkin. Karamzin also experimented in *belles lettres*, composing the prose tale *Bednaya Liza* (*Poor Liza*) and other stories in the French sentimental style. Admiral Alexander Shishkov (1754-1841), later State Secretary and education minister, led a counter-offensive through his “Conversation Society of Lovers of the Russian Word” (“*Beseda Lyubitelei Russkogo Slova*”), which sought to ban gallicisms and other foreign infiltrations from Russian writing. The war between these two tendencies was at the forefront of Russian cultural life, in the first decades of the Nineteenth century.¹⁵

This same Karamzin wrote verses in jest on the eve of the new century, titled “Prophecy for 1799, found among the papers of Nostradamus,” which predicted that “this year” would be born “the new Pindar” in Russia. “Little



Pushkin's father (bottom right) was descended from six centuries of Russian nobility, and his mother (top right) was the granddaughter of Ibrahim Hannibal (above), a North African prince whom Tsar Peter I adopted as a godson.

Map: *European Russia in the 1830's. Among the Pushkin family estates were Mikhaylovskoe, near Pskov, and Boldino, south of Nizhny Novgorod.*



did he suspect,” writes the modern Pushkin specialist Irina Bagration-Mukhraneli, “that his invention would come true, and that his verse applied to the newborn nephew of his friend the poet Vasili Lvovich Pushkin, Sergei Lvovich Pushkin’s son Alexander.”¹⁶

Alexander Pushkin was born in Moscow on May 26 (June 6), 1799. His father’s family history could be traced back through 600 years of the Russian nobility. His mother, Nadezhda Osipovna Hannibal, was the granddaughter of Ibrahim (Abram) Hannibal, a prince from northeast Africa, who was kidnapped and given to Tsar Peter I in 1705, at the age of eight. Adopted by Peter as his godson, Ibrahim Hannibal was educated in France as a military engineer, and lived out his life in the Russian state service; Peter gave him a large estate near Pskov, land that was later inherited by Pushkin’s mother.

The poet’s father, Sergei Pushkin, and his Uncle Vasili were both men of letters. The family belonged to the old nobility, but was not well off. Pushkin’s parents were sometimes eccentric (one year, his mother didn’t speak to him), but the company they kept was lively for a child. Baron M.A. Korf, a schoolmate of Pushkin, recalled, “The Pushkins’ house was always in chaos and something was always lacking, from money right down to glasses to drink from. If two or three extra guests came for dinner, they always had to send to the neighbors for tableware.”¹⁷ Never lacking, was discussion of burning issues of literature and culture, and access to books. Pushkin’s father taught him French, starting by reading

the plays of Molière aloud to the child. Alexander Pushkin learned to speak, write, recite from memory and make puns in French. By the age of eleven, he was reading his way through his father’s library of French classics, as well as the books of their neighbor, Dmitri Petrovich Buturlin, an amateur actor and owner of one of the best private libraries in Russia. He had plunged into history, reading Plutarch’s *Lives*. He was improvising plays in French verse, which he staged before the critical eye of his sister, Olga.¹⁸

The habits of delight in word-play and improvisation, acquired in childhood, never left Pushkin. At the same time, as a child he met some of the most serious writers of the day. His father recalled, “In his very earliest years, he showed great respect for writers. Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin was not the same as the others. One evening, N.M. was visiting me and stayed late; the entire time, Alexander sat across from him, listening as he talked, and never taking his eyes off [Karamzin]. He was six years old.”¹⁹

Pushkin learned Russian chiefly from his maternal grandmother, Maria Alekseyevna Hannibal (née Rzhnevskaya, from another old Russian noble family), who had an unusual command of the language for a woman in this period. His nursemaid, Arina Rodionovna Yakovleva, was a serf from one of the Hannibal villages; her fairy tales, told to Pushkin as a boy, and their renewed acquaintance during his exile to his mother’s estate in 1824-1826, gave the poet his richest source of

Russian as it was spoken in the countryside.

The Lycée

Pushkin spent six years, beginning October 19, 1811, as a member of the first class of the Imperial Tsarskoye Selo Lycée, an institution animated by the Classical pedagogy of the Ecole Polytechnique in France and the Humboldt education reforms instituted in Germany in the same period.²⁰

I.I. Martynov, a Ministry of Education department chief and former seminary classmate of State Secretary Michael Speransky, presented the Tsar with the first draft of statutes for a Lycée in 1808. The outlined curriculum was weighted towards languages, physical sciences, and mathematics. It proscribed rote memorization and stressed the development of the capacity for thought. Speransky said later that he had written the core of the plan by uniting elements of a Cadet Corps program with the thirty-subject curriculum used at a school attached to Moscow University. Minister of Education Count Razumovsky attacked this plan by trying to play on the Tsar's fears about the French Revolution, warning that the youth would be confused by instruction on "philosophical opinions on the soul, ideas, and the world."

In Razumovsky's opinion, a Russian diplomat or civil servant had no need for chemistry or astronomy, not to mention Greek. Attempts to block a Classical curriculum, did not succeed, however. When the Lycée opened, it was staffed by graduates of university courses in Germany and France, and initially led by Vasili F. Malinovsky (1765-1814), a close student of American political and economic thought, and Russian translator of U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton's "Report on Manufactures."

The government resolution on establishment of the Lycée was promulgated in January 1811. It provided for six years of study, divided into two three-year courses. In

the first course were: *languages*—Russian, Latin, French and German; *moral sciences*—Divine law, moral philosophy, and logic; *mathematical and physical sciences*; *history*; *fine arts and gymnastics*—penmanship, drawing, dancing, fencing, horseback riding, swimming. The senior course provided a more elaborate curriculum for the "moral sciences," including public law, Russian law, the history of law, the philosophy of law, and the history of religion.

Malinovsky, the Lycée's first headmaster, was a diplomat and philosopher, specialist in history and law, and drafter of many projects for the development of Russia, the abolition of serfdom, and the establishment of "world peace." Malinovsky's translation of Hamilton's "Report on Manufactures" had come out in St. Petersburg in 1807, containing his introduction in praise of the nascent American system of promoting industrial development.²¹

Pushkin was close to headmaster Malinovsky and his son, a fellow member of the class. He was one of the five Lycée pupils, who helped to carry Malinovsky's coffin when the teacher died in 1814.

Alexander P. Kunitsyn, Professor of Law at the Lycée, had studied at Göttingen University in 1808-1811, as well as in Paris. While at Tsarskoye Selo, he wrote his own book on *Natural Law*, published in 1818. The last of Pushkin's five poems addressed to his former classmates, written on the anniversary of October 19 (in the years 1825, 1827, 1828, 1831, 1836), invokes the spirit of the Lycée with the image of Kunitsyn, welcoming the boys to the new school.

One year after the founding of the Lycée, Napoleon was in Moscow. The older brothers, uncles, and friends of the students went to war. In September 1812, there was some consideration of evacuating the boys from Tsarskoye Selo, in case the Grand Army turned north towards St. Petersburg. The classmate Pushkin called his "first friend," Ivan Pushchin, remembered that on Sundays, Professor of Russian Literature Koshansky would read aloud communications received from students' rela-

The development of Russian as a literate language was undertaken by men of letters beginning the mid-Eighteenth century. Shown (left to right) are the scientist Lomonosov, and the poets Derzhavin and Karamzin.



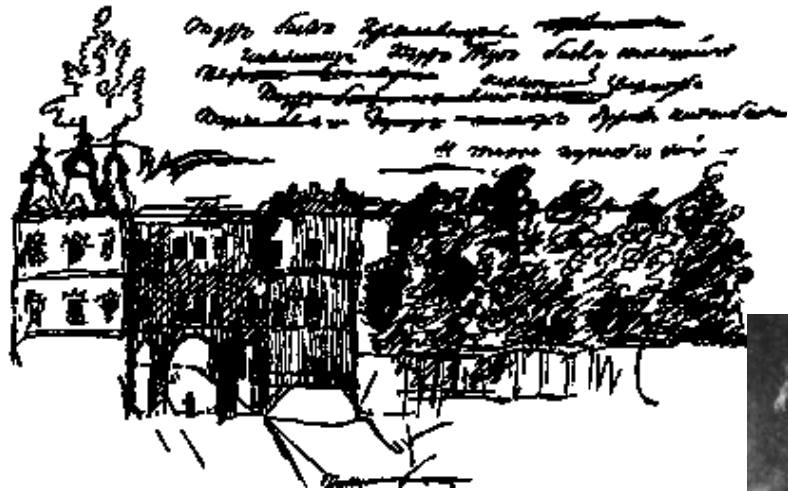
Mikhail Lomonosov
(1711-1765)



Gavriil Derzhavin
(1743-1816)



Nikolai Karamzin
(1766-1826)



Pushkin attended the elite Imperial Tsarskoye Selo Lycée, whose Classical curriculum was drafted under State Secretary Michael Speransky (above). Its first headmaster was Vasili F. Malinovsky (right), Russian translator of Alexander Hamilton’s “Report on Manufactures.” Above: Pushkin manuscript sketch of the Lycée.

tives at the front. “The newspaper room was never empty after class; Russian and foreign publications were read non-stop, with continuous discussion. . . . The professors would come and teach us how to follow the course of events, explaining the things we didn’t understand.”²²

The same Koshansky encouraged Pushkin in poetic composition. His literature course included *belles lettres*, the analysis of writings from Classical antiquity, stylistics, rhetoric, aesthetics, and philology. Substitute teacher Galich, who gave the literature courses during Koshansky’s illness, urged Pushkin to prepare a special poem on the feats of the Russian Army against Napoleon, for the Lycée examinations of 1815 to be held in the presence of the aged poet Gavriil Derzhavin (1743-1816). A military officer during the reign of Catherine II, and then Justice Minister, Derzhavin was the leading Russian poet after Lomonosov. Before Karamzin, he had begun to stretch the expressive capabilities of the Russian language, without straying far from the canons of Latin and French verse forms. The boy Pushkin’s recitation of his 19-stanza “*Vospominaniya v Tsarskom Sele*” (“Recollections at Tsarskoye Selo”) told Derzhavin that his life’s work had not been in vain—that Russia would have a national poet.

Writing in “Recollections . . .” about the burning of Moscow and the battles to drive Napoleon from Russia, Pushkin echoed the vocabulary of Derzhavin’s odes to Russian military commanders in the 1768-1774 Russo-Turkish War, before moving in the closing stanzas to invoke the next generation of Russian poets, Konstantin Batyushkov and Vasili Zhukovsky (1783-1852), the translator of Schiller. The verses ended with a favorite

Pushkin theme—mercy and forgiveness.²³ His recitation was informed by Koshansky’s training in the principles of declamation, such as the singing quality of speech, the musicality of speech in meter, the dynamic modulation of the voice, and vibrancy for expression. “Pushkin recited with unusual animation,” recalled Pushchin.

Pushkin himself reminisced about this seminal moment at the start of his career:

I saw Derzhavin just once in my life, but I shall never forget it. When we heard that Derzhavin was coming, we were all astir. [Pushkin’s friend and fellow poet Baron Anton] Delvig went out onto the staircase, to wait for him and kiss his hand, the hand that had written “The Waterfall.” . . . Derzhavin was very old. He was in uniform, with velvet boots. Our examinations tired him; his face was expressionless, his eyes dull. He dozed until it was time for the examination in Russian literature. Then he came alive: His eyes flashed, and he was completely transformed. . . . Finally, I was called forward. I recited my “Recollections at Tsarskoye Selo,” standing two paces away from Derzhavin. I cannot describe the state of my soul: When I reached the line where Derzhavin is mentioned, my adolescent voice squeaked, and my heart beat in ecstasy. . . . I don’t know how I finished reading; I don’t remember, where I fled. Derzhavin was ecstatic: He demanded that I be fetched, so that he could embrace me. . . . They searched, but they didn’t find me.

When word spread about Alexander Pushkin’s recitation, the editors at the *Vestnik Yevropy* (*Herald of Europe*) literary journal in Moscow realized who was the author of the poem “*K drugu stikhotvortsu*” (“To a Poet Friend”), which they had received anonymously and published in

1814 under the pseudonym “Alexander Enkashape” (the consonants in “Pushkin,” spelled backwards). It was Pushkin’s first published verse. “Recollections at Tsarskoye Selo” came next, now under his real name. For the remaining twenty-two years of his brief life, Pushkin was at the center of Russian culture—as he has been ever since.

A Poet’s Life For the Nation

Because only a few moments of Pushkin’s creative work will be explored here, an outline of his career is in order for English-speaking readers, to whom Pushkin is generally unknown.

Upon graduation from the Lycée in 1817, Pushkin received his civil service appointment, to the Foreign Ministry. He lived in St. Petersburg until 1820. In 1818, he was admitted to full membership in the Arzamas literary society, where he joined his uncle, Zhukovsky, Batyushkov, and Prince Pyotr Vyazemsky, who would be his friend for life, in polemics defending Karamzin’s “foreign” modifications of written Russian against the purists of Admiral Shishkov’s Conversation Society. Never one to be doctrinaire, however, Pushkin also visited the Shishkov circle, and he later lampooned his fellow Arzamasians for being as overblown in their excesses of poetic refinement, as was Shishkov in his militant Slavonicism. Pushkin’s nickname within Arzamas was *Sverchok*—“Cricket.”

In 1819, Pushkin was in the short-lived Green Lamp society, meeting at the home of Nikita Vsevolozhsky, which combined interest in the fast life of theater circles, with political ideas known as “liberal” in the post-Congress of Vienna period. Some future participants in the Decembrist uprising of 1825 were in the orbit of the Green Lamp, but most of Pushkin’s correspondence with and about Vsevolozhsky concerns the poet’s attempts to purchase back a manuscript of his poems, lost to Vsevolozhsky at a game of cards.

Pushkin’s barbed political epigrams, which circulated in St. Petersburg, and poems such as “*Volnost*” (“Liberty”) (1817) and “*Derevnya*” (“The Countryside”) (1819) drew official attention. In “*Derevnya*,” Pushkin wrote about serfdom as “a murderous disgrace,” and asked:

And shall I see, oh friends, the people crushed no
longer
And slavery by the Tsar’s command depart,
And will there finally in skies above our country
Arise enlightened freedom’s beauteous dawn?

He was interrogated by the Governor-General of St. Petersburg in April 1820, and transferred to Yekaterinoslav in southern Russia the next month. Karamzin and Zhukovsky exerted their influence, to prevent the young poet’s exile to Siberia.

Pushkin then lived in Kishinyov²⁴ (late 1820–summer 1823) and Odessa (1823–24), all the while in the employ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, until being exiled to his mother’s estate in the summer of 1824. In Odessa, his superior was Count Mikhail Semyonovich Vorontsov (1782–1856), the Governor-General of Novorossiysk and Bessarabia, son of the Count Semyon Vorontsov who had been Ambassador to Venice and then London under Catherine II, a gentleman, known as an “Anglomaniac,” who called himself “Simon.”²⁵ The younger Vorontsov, who made life difficult for his subordinate in Odessa and had a hand in his exile, was skewered by Pushkin in an 1824 epigram:

Half-Milord, half a merchant,
Half a wise man, half a lout,
Half a scoundrel, but there’s hope yet,
There will be all [or: enough] of him at last.

Before departing St. Petersburg for the south, Pushkin had completed his first long poem, *Ruslan i Lyudmila* (*Ruslan and Lyudmila*), which was published at the end of 1820. This work prompted Zhukovsky to inscribe to Pushkin a portrait of himself, “From the vanquished teacher to his victorious pupil. . . .”; in *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, Pushkin parodied elements of Zhukovsky’s ballad “The Twelve Sleeping Maidens,” while Zhukovsky’s own plan for a long poem set in Kievan Rus, the epic *Vladimir*, did not materialize. Pushkin drew on Russian fairy tales and the heroic narrative poems called *byliny*, as well as the narrative style of the Italian Renaissance poet Ariosto, for his comic epic. He mocked sentimental and Romantic conventions, with such touches as having Lyudmila, held captive by the villain Chernomor, contemplate throwing herself from a bridge—only to take a break for lunch, instead. This first long poem was immensely popular. In the opening stanzas of *Yevgeni Onegin*, his unique novel in verse, Pushkin would address his anticipated readers as “Friends of Lyudmila and Ruslan!”

From the south, Pushkin wrote and published another long poem, *Kavkazsky plennik* (*The Prisoner of the Caucasus*), and wrote *Bratya razboyniki* (*The Robber Brothers*), *Bakhchisaraysky fontan* (*The Fountain of Bakhchisaray*), most of *Tsygany* (*The Gypsies*), and parts of several others. He began work on *Yevgeni Onegin*, written in 1823–1830 and published in installments.



After graduating from the Lycée, Pushkin joined poets Vasilii Zhukovskiy (top left), Konstantin Batyushkov (bottom left), and Pyotr Vyazemskiy (top right), in the St. Petersburg Arzanas literary society.



Below: Pushkin manuscript sketch shows Prince Vyazemskiy in profile.



The adventure plots of the “southern” long poems and their exotic locales have often served as a pretext for critics to characterize them as a “Romantic” or “Byronesque” phase of the poet’s development—even though they never lack that irony in the narration, which is quite alien to Romanticism, but is always there in Pushkin. In a survey of criticism of his published works, which Pushkin jotted in a notebook in 1830, he looked back on *The Gypsies* with a smile and some satisfaction about how it had *not* conformed to Romantic canons:

One lady observed that there was only one honest person in the whole poem, and that was the bear [kept by the gypsies—RBD]. The late Ryleyev objected to Aleko’s being made the bear-keeper, and even more to his collecting money from people to see the bear. Vyazemskiy said the same thing. (Ryleyev asked me to make Aleko at least a blacksmith, which would not have been a bit more noble.) Best of all would have been to make him an official of the eighth rank or a landowner, and not a gypsy at all. Then, of course, there would have been no poem, *ma tanto meglio* [but so much the better].

The deterioration of his relations with Vorontsov and the interception by the post office of a letter in which Pushkin discussed atheism, led to his second exile. He was dismissed from the state service and sent to his mother’s estate of Mikhailovskoye, near Pskov. Pushkin was alone there from August 1824 to August 1826, with the company only of the neighboring Osipov-Vulf family, his childhood nursemaid Arina Rodionovna, and other ser-

vants, and with just an occasional visit from friends (Delvig and Pushkin each came to see him once) and the ability to correspond, subject to interception and surveillance. He finished *The Gypsies*, continued *Yevgeni Onegin*, and broke new ground with his dramatic tragedy, *Boris Godunov*.

Pushkin was at Mikhailovskoye, when Tsar Alexander I died on Nov. 19 (Old Style), 1825 in Taganrog. Alexander’s next oldest brother, Governor-General of Warsaw Constantine, had renounced the throne and Nicholas was the heir, but this was not generally known. Military units swore allegiance to Constantine, who, however, refused to come to St. Petersburg. On December 14, the Northern Society²⁶ of young noblemen and officers, veterans of the Great Patriotic War against Napoleon, took advantage of the interregnum to stage a revolt, known as the Decembrist uprising, against the incoming Tsar Nicholas I. On the Senate Square in St. Petersburg, a day-long standoff, punctuated by the assassination of two government officials, ended in an hour of cannonfire. Scores of the soldiers summoned by the insurgents died, and the Decembrist leaders were arrested. Among them were two of Pushkin’s closest Lycée friends, Ivan Pushchin and Wilhelm Kyukhelbeker (Küchelbecker).²⁷ Five ring-leaders were hanged in 1826, including Pushkin’s friend the poet Kondrati Ryleyev. Others were exiled to Siberia for life.

Pushkin wrote to Zhukovskiy in January 1826:

Probably the government has ascertained that I do not belong to the conspiracy, and had no political ties with the rebels of December 14—but in the journals it has announced disgrace for those, as well, who had any information of the conspiracy and did not announce it to the police. But just who, except for the police and the government, did not know about it? There was shouting about the conspiracy in every alley, and that is one of the reasons I am guiltless. All the same . . . the gendarmes . . . can perhaps easily convict me of political conversations with somebody or other of the accused. And among them there are enough of my friends.

He named some of his associates among the Decembrists—Major Rayevsky, General Pushchin, Orlov. Pushkin burned his notes for an autobiography, after learning that manuscripts of his early poems had been found in the possession of most of the Decembrists.

In the same letter, Pushkin asked Zhukovsky to consult with Karamzin, on whether this were not the time to ask the new Tsar finally to allow him to return from the countryside. His sense of the timing had to do not only with his own sustained efforts to get away from Mikhailovskoye, but with hopes for Russia. He had spent the previous year wrestling in his mind with the question of national leadership, while writing *Boris Godunov*, so he thought not in terms of a simple scheme like “bad Tsar succeeded by good Tsar,” but about the tragedy of the outgoing regime. In the same letter to Zhukovsky, Pushkin wrote, “They say you have written verses on the

death of Alexander—a rich subject! But your lyre was silent during the last ten years of his reign [after the Congress of Vienna—RBD]. That is the best reproach against him. Nobody has more right than you to say that the voice of the lyre is the voice of the people. Consequently I was not completely wrong in hissing him to the very grave.” Pushkin’s biting verse, “Reared to the beat of a drum,” on Alexander fleeing at Austerlitz in 1805 and trembling in 1812, dates from 1825, but so does this passage in his “October 19” poem:

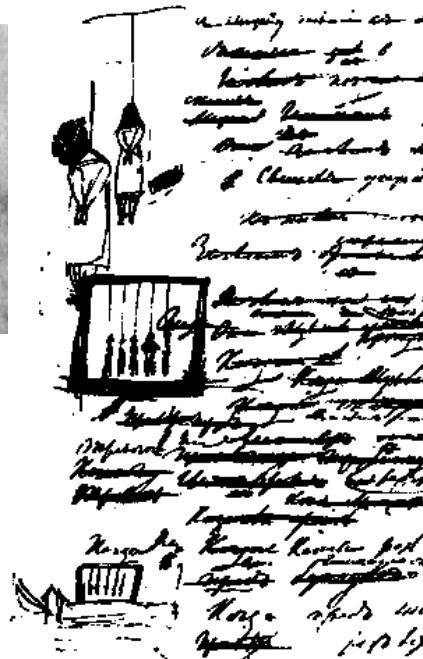
Hurrah, our Tsar! Raise glasses for his health.
He is a man! The moment is his master,
He is a slave of gossip, doubts, and passions;
Let us forgive him unjust persecution:
He took Paris, and founded the Lycée.

When Pushkin did petition the new Tsar to end his exile and the request was approved, he was brought in September 1826 directly to an audience with Nicholas I in Moscow. Nicholas remarked afterwards that on September 8, on the eve of his coronation, he had talked with “the most intelligent man in Russia.” Pushkin recalled that he answered a question about the December 14 uprising, “I would have been in the ranks of the rebels,” had he been in St. Petersburg on that day, and thanked God that he hadn’t been there. Nicholas granted Pushkin a pardon, and initiated a complex relationship in which he was Pushkin’s personal censor, although without, as the poet thought at first, releasing him from the regular

Pushkin’s closest Lycée friends were Baron Anton Delvig (far right), Wilhelm Kyukhelbeker (right), and Ivan Pushchin (below).



Pushchin and Kyukhelbeker were arrested after the Decembrist uprising. In Siberian exile, Kyukhelbeker translated Shakespeare’s tragedies.



Left: Pushkin manuscript sketch depicts the five hanged Decembrist ring-leaders, including his friend, the poet Kandrati Ryleyev.



censors. Their correspondence was conducted through Count Alexander Benkendorf (Benckendorff), chief of the Third Section of His Majesty's Chancellery, the political police.

In 1828, Pushkin wrote the long poem *Poltava*, set around Peter the Great's decisive battle in the Northern War with Sweden (1700-1721). Then, in 1830, came the famous Boldino Autumn. Engaged to marry Natalya Goncharova, Pushkin travelled to Nizhny Novgorod on the Volga, to arrange finances in connection with his father's gift to him of half the estate of Boldino, south of Nizhny. Arriving at Boldino at the beginning of September, he was caught in a cholera epidemic and could not cross the quarantine zones to return to Moscow. In three months at Boldino, Pushkin wrote Chapter 8 (the last published chapter) of *Onegin*, the five prose *Tales of Belkin*, the Little Tragedies (four short dramas on moral themes), the verse tale *Domik v Kolomne* (*The Little House in Kolomna*), the fairy tale in verse *Skazka o pope i o rabotnike ego Balde* (*The Tale of the Priest and of His Workman Balda*), and several of his most brilliant short poems.

Married in February 1831, Pushkin lived for the rest of his life in Tsarskoye Selo and St. Petersburg. He and his wife had four children.

Permission was granted for the publication of *Boris Godunov*, at the time of Pushkin's marriage. In 1831, the poet obtained a special appointment from the Tsar as historiographer, giving him access to the state archives. In 1833, he was elected to the Imperial Russian Academy. An 1833 field trip to Orenburg and Kazan, to research the insurgencies led by Yemelyan Pugachov in the 1770's, concluded with the second Boldino Autumn, as Pushkin stopped at Boldino for October and November, and there completed *The History of the Pugachov Revolt*, as well as writing *Medny Vsadnik* (*The Bronze Horseman*), two more fairy tales, and *Angelo*, based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*.

At the end of 1833, Pushkin was given the court rank of *Kammerjunker*, normally bestowed upon younger aristocrats. Because of the years of civil service advancement missed by Pushkin during his official disgrace, the court rank matching his government-service rank was inappropriate for his age. Resentment over the mandatory court appearances and protocol associated with his *Kammerjunker* status dogged Pushkin for the rest of his life. He did not attribute ill will to Nicholas, who simultaneously consented to finance the publication of *Pugachov*, but he wrote to his friend Pavel Nashchokin in March 1834:

I've been a *Kammerjunker* since the month of January. *The Bronze Horseman* was not passed [by the censors-RBD].

Losses and unpleasantnesses! On the other hand, *Pugachov* has been passed, and I am publishing it at the Sovereign's expense. This has quite solaced me; all the more that, of course, in making me a *Kammerjunker* the Sovereign was thinking of my rank rather than of my years—and he surely didn't intend to humiliate me.

The next month, though, Pushkin wrote with more bitterness in a letter to his wife Natalya, on the occasion of a ceremony for the future Alexander II:

I have no intention of going to see the Heir, with congratulations and greetings; his reign is yet to come, and I probably shall not live to see it. I have seen three Tsars: the first [Paul I] ordered my little cap to be taken off me, and gave my nurse a scolding on my account; the second was not gracious to me; although the third has saddled me with being a Kammerpage close upon my old age, I have no desire for him to be replaced by a fourth. . . . We shall see just how our [son] Sashka will get along with his namesake [Alexander] born to the purple: I didn't get along with mine. God grant that he not follow in my footsteps and write verses and quarrel with Tsars!

This letter was screened by the postmaster, forwarded to the police, and delivered directly to the Tsar. The aftermath of the incident for Pushkin's relations with the court was grim, as he wrote in his diary on May 10, 1834:

I have received from Zhukovsky a note from Tsarskoye Selo. He informed me that a certain letter of mine was circulating around the city, and that the Sovereign had spoken to him about it. . . . The Moscow post unsealed a letter written by me to Natalya Nikolayevna and, finding in it an account of the Grand Duke's swearing in, written, apparently, not in the official style, made a report about it to the police. The police, without making out the meaning, presented the letter to the Sovereign, who flared up and did not understand it, either. Fortunately, the letter was shown to Zhukovsky, who then explained it. Everything quieted down. It did not please the Sovereign that I referred to my becoming a *Kammerjunker*, without tender emotion and without gratitude. But I may be a subject, or even a slave, but I shall not be a flunky and a clown even before the Tsar of Heaven. But what profound immorality there is in the customs of our government. The police unseal a husband's letters to his wife, and take them to the Tsar (a well-bred and honorable man) to be read, and the Tsar is not ashamed to admit it. . . .

On June 25, 1834, Pushkin attempted to resign from the state service, while retaining permission to use archival materials in his historical research and writing. The reply from Count Benkendorf said, "His Imperial Majesty does not wish to keep anyone against his will," but that retirement would mean the loss of access to the archives. With his great project of writing the history of

Peter the Great still ahead, Pushkin could not accept these terms. The last two years of his life involved an ever-tightening circle of financial troubles, attempts to leave the service and the capital without forfeiting the archives, and intrigues against him. Professor Vadim Kozhinov, in the article included in this issue of *Fidelio*, analyzes the final offensive against Pushkin by his political enemies, ending in his death in January 1837 [see “The Mystery of Pushkin’s Death,” page 74, this issue.].

Pushkin wrote the story *Pikovaya dama* (*The Queen of Spades*) in 1834, as well as his last fairy tale in verse, *Skazka o zolotom petushke* (*The Tale of the Golden Cockerel*). *Kapitanskaya dochka* (*The Captain’s Daughter*), a novel set in the time and region of the Pugachov revolt, was finished in 1836. During that last year, 1836, Pushkin published his own literary quarterly, *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*).

The Greek Project

“We are all accursed and scattered over the face of the earth,” Pushkin wrote to Vyazemsky from Odessa in 1824. The matter at hand was their mutual desire to found a literary journal, a forum for the development of Russian literature that would be “nobly independent” of oligarchical patronage, for which task Pushkin said “we must unite.” He was hungry for collaborators, but isolated from them.

Pushkin found partners in dialogue from other times and places. The education he had received, prepared Pushkin’s mind to embody the principle of Raphael’s “School of Athens” in scientific work and Classical art, the method of education Lyndon LaRouche discussed with Russian scientists during his first visit to Moscow, in 1994, as on many other occasions:

The best method to educate a child is the method which resulted in the Renaissance in Italy and elsewhere. . . . The same method was used by [Gaspard] Monge in the Ecole Polytechnique. The child *must re-live the experience of each discovery*. Any good scientist, as we can all attest, has a mind full of the memory of the experience of discovery of many great scientists from history. When colleagues are referring to a certain scientist’s work by name, they are trying to recall among themselves the mental experience they had as a student, in living through that experiment. . . .

So, what we should call scientific culture, is a child’s mind, a student’s mind, filled with the living, re-created memory of a thought of a person who was dead one hundred years, two thousand years ago. You can imagine the painting of Raphael, of the famous “School of Athens.” People who are separated from each other by hundreds of years are sitting in the same large hall. How is this possible? Because in the mind of the person who knows the creative work of each, *they are living contemporaneously*.

These ideas, represented by the creative contributions of original thinkers, transmitted by teachers who have re-lived that experience, to students and others who re-live the experience—that is where this power comes from.²⁸

The dialogue between cultures occurs as a creative individual takes the workings of the minds of other thinkers, inside the sovereign precincts of his own mind.

In Pushkin’s early writing, there is already evident a relationship with past composers that goes beyond mere imitation of forms or themes, to seize the living kernel of works from Classical antiquity. Like plenty of young poets, he was fond of Ovid (43 B.C.-c. A.D. 17), the Roman poet of love and and love’s transformations, exiled by Augustus Caesar to the north shore of the Black Sea. In Kishinyov in 1821 he wrote “*K Ovidiyu*” (“To Ovid”), in which he compared his own exile to Ovid’s:

. . . now I have visited
The land, where once upon a time you spent an age.
Imagination’s dreams being brought to life by you,
Here, your refrains I sang again, again, oh Ovid,
And well could I believe the truth of their sad
pictures; . . .

If future generations learn of me and come
To seek my lonely trace in this far country,
Beside your famous ashes . . .
In lot, not glory, shall I be your equal.

Three years later, in *The Gypsies*, Pushkin had progressed in his simplification of Russian poetic expression to where he could convey his *idea* of Ovid—the exiled good poet, who is immortal in the minds of people because of a quality of kindness that becomes shared—without ever saying his name, now putting much sparer language in the mouth of the old Gypsy. The Old Man tells of a legend among the Gypsies, about a man exiled to Bessarabia by a Tsar:

In years he was already old,
But young, alive in his kind soul:
He had a wondrous gift of song,
A voice like to the sound of water,
Beloved was he by everyone,
And on the Danube banks he lived,
Offense to no one did he give,
But all enchanted with his stories. . . .

And strangers hunted game for him
And caught fish for him in their nets;
And when the rapid river froze
And winter whirlwinds raged around,
They stitched together furs and skins
To keep the blessed old man warm; . . .

Pushkin was certain that the most important creative contributions of original thinkers to be brought into Russian were those of ancient Greece, beginning with the language of Homer. He gave lifelong attention to the project of translating Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into Russian; the translation of the former had been undertaken by Nikolai Gnedich (1784-1833). Gnedich was Pushkin's friend from youth, helping to shepherd *Ruslan and Lyudmila* through its first printing. Pushkin wrote to him from Kishinyov in 1821 about the *Iliad* translation, and again in May 1823, asking, "You, whose genius and labors are too lofty for this puerile public, how are you doing, how is your Homer doing?"

From Mikhailovskoye in 1825, deep into study of Russian history and of tragedy for his *Boris Godunov*, Pushkin suggested in a letter to Gnedich that the translation of Homer was necessary preparation for the writing, perhaps by Gnedich himself, of heroic epics in Russian:

My brother has told me of the early completion of your Homer. That will be the first classical, European feat in our fatherland (may the devil take this fatherland). But when you have rested after your *Iliad*, what will you take up in the full flower of your genius, after you have matured in the temple of Homer, like Achilles in the Centaur's den? I am expecting an epic poem from you. "The shade of Svyatoslav is wandering, unsung," you once wrote me. And Vladimir? and Mstislav? and Donskoy? and Yermak? and Pozharsky? The history of a people belongs to the poet.²⁹

And, in 1826: "Gnedich will not die before he com-

pletes his *Iliad*!" After twenty-two years of work by Gnedich, and after his illness and long convalescence, the translation reached publication in 1829. Pushkin hastened to place a notice in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, observing that the completion of this task far outweighed all the most popular verses that literary critics spent their energies to debate:

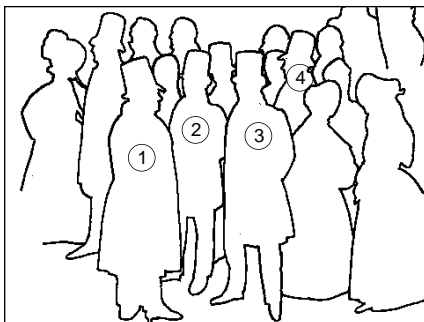
At last, the translation of the *Iliad*, so long and so impatiently awaited, has come out! In a time when writers, spoiled by successes of the moment, mostly aspire to produce brilliant little nothings, when talent is divorced from labor, while fashion ignores the models of grand antiquity, . . . it is with a feeling of deep respect and gratitude that we look upon a poet, who proudly dedicated the best years of his life to the exclusive labor and selfless inspiration, of this absolutely unique, lofty feat. The Russian *Iliad* is before us. Let us now study it, so as to be able, with time, to give our readers some account of this book, which ought to have such an important influence on our country's literature.

The notice was unsigned, but Gnedich recognized Pushkin's hand and thanked him, to which Pushkin replied in a letter of Jan. 6, 1830:

I am glad, I am happy, that the several lines which I timidly jotted down in the *Gazette* could touch you to such a degree. Ignorance of the Greek language prevents me from proceeding to a full-scale critique of your *Iliad*. This analysis is not necessary for your fame, but it may be necessary for Russia.

In verse, as well, Pushkin celebrated the translation of

The painter Grigori Chernetsov incorporated the literary circle around Pushkin, which he had painted in his 1832 "In the Summer Garden," as a detail of his large canvas, "Parade in the field of Mars" (detail, right). Writers include (1) Ivan Krylov, author of the famous Russian "Fables." (2) Pushkin, (3) Vasili Zhukovsky, and (4) Nikolai Gnedich, the translator of Homer.



the *Iliad*, with an unpublished poem to Gnedich and with his distich “*Na perevod Iliady*” (“On the Translation of the *Iliad*”). This poem happens to provide a particularly transparent illustration of his method of composition:

Слышу умолкнувшей звук божественной эллинской речи;
Старца великого тень чую смущенной душой.

I hear the died-away sound of divine Hellenic speech;
The great old man’s shade I sense with perturbed soul.

The meter of the distich is dactylic hexameter, the meter of Homer’s epics (slightly modified):

/ ~ ~ / ~ ~ / ~ ~ / ~ ~ / ~ ~
Sly-shu u- | mol-knu-vshy | zvuk bo- | zhe-stven-noy | el-lin-skoy |
/ ~
re-chi;

/ ~ ~ / ~ ~ / ~ ~ / ~ ~ /
Star-tsa ve- | li-ko-vo | ten | chu-yu smu- | shchon-noy du- | shoy.

Pushkin imitates the *sound* of ancient Greek, with the double vowel *uu* at the end of the first word and beginning of the second word.

Beyond this mimicry of Greek with meter and sound, the two lines give a beautiful example of Pushkin’s mastery of the principle of inversion. There are two simultaneous inversions: in the ordering of vowel sounds and in the grammatical arrangement. The vowels move from the relatively “dark” ones produced in the middle or the back of the mouth, to three stressed *e* vowels in a row, which are produced in the front of the mouth and sound “bright”; the hinge in the center, the first syllable of the second line, is the only stressed *a* in the poem—*stártsa* (“of the old man”); then back through the forward *i* and *e*, to conclude with the “dark” *o* and *u* vowels again. Here is the sequence of stressed vowels, with unstressed *u* and *i*³⁰ also shown, in parentheses, because they are fully sounded even when not stressed:

[i (u) (u) o (u) (i) u] [e e e]
[a] [i e] [u (u) (u) o (u) o]

The second inversion is the grammatical ordering: verb / object / genitive (adjectives-noun) // genitive (noun-adjective) / object / verb:

[I hear] [the died-away sound] [of divine Hellenic speech];
[Of the old man the great] [the shade] [I sense]

After the grammatical inversion, the last, summary phrase—*smushchonnoy dushoy* (“by means of my perturbed soul”)—is in the instrumental case, a noun form that implies verbal action. It is a powerful grammatical

feature, inherited by Russian from ancient Indo-European; Sanskrit also has the instrumental case, as do the Baltic Languages (Lithuanian, Latvian), which likewise preserve many ancient word-roots and much grammatical differentiation lost even to Classical Greek, not to mention most modern Indo-European languages.³¹ In Russian, the instrumental is called *tvoritelnny padezh*, literally “the creative case.”

One of Pushkin’s notebooks from 1833, the year Gnedich died, contains his own sketch for the opening of the *Odysey* in Russian.

Pushkin’s Friend Shakespeare

Pushkin seized on the idea of writing a dramatic tragedy in Russian, from Russian history, in 1824. He was reading Shakespeare (in French) in Odessa. Then, at Mikhailovskoye, he received Volumes 10 and 11 of Karamzin’s *History of the Russian State*. “What a marvel these last two volumes of Karamzin are,” wrote Pushkin, “What life! It’s all as topical as the latest newspaper.” He wrote out notes on the chapters dealing with the murder of Dmitri, the young son of Ivan IV (Ivan Grozny, “the Terrible” or “the Awesome,” r. 1533-1584), and the short reign of Ivan’s other son, Fyodor. He sketched the outline of a play, which became *Boris Godunov*. The project absorbed Pushkin until completion of the first draft in November 1825.

Godunov is set just before and during the *smutnoye vremya*, the Time of Troubles, 1605-1613. Ivan and Fyodor, being the last tsars of the Rurikid Dynasty of Kiev and Moscow, were succeeded in 1598 by the boyar Boris Godunov, rumored to have murdered Dmitri seven years before that. In 1603-1605, Godunov was challenged by a pretender, the renegade monk Grishka Otrepyev, who claimed to be the escaped Dmitri. The False Dmitri secured military backing from Poland, invaded Russia from the West, and overthrew Godunov. He, in turn, was overthrown the following year. Chaos and a flood of new pretenders ensued, ending only in 1613 with the election of Mikhail Romanov as Tsar Michael I. In the larger framework of European history, the Russian Time of Troubles was the eastern front of turmoil and collapse that intensified throughout Europe, leading into the 1618-1648 Thirty Years War.

Schiller’s last play, the unfinished *Demetrius*, treated the same episode of Russian history as did Pushkin’s *Godunov*. Schiller left notes for the unfinished parts of the play, on the concept of legitimacy of leadership, which he wanted to present through the double tragedy

of Dmitri and Godunov—either of whom could rightly have ruled, irrespective of bloodline, had he *given* leadership. The crucial psychological moment, of the False Dmitri's own belief or disbelief in his identity—which Schiller discusses in his notes for a scene called “Demetrius discovers his birth”—also has a central place in Pushkin's work, in the scene titled “Night. A Garden. A Fountain,” between the Pretender and the Polish lady, Marina Mnishek.

As Pushkin worked, he addressed simultaneously the problems of the nature of tragedy, leadership in the history of Russia, and the kind of language needed to write a work of this nature. He asked his brother to send him Schiller's published plays (in French). He thanked Karamzin, through Vyazemsky, for sharing an “observation on Boris' character. . . . I had been looking at Boris from the political point of view, without observing his poetic side”³²; now, Pushkin would “set [Boris] down to the Gospels, make him read the story of Herod,” the killer of the innocents.

Above all, he enlisted the aid of Shakespeare to break out of the existing canon about how tragedy might be written. Following the sterile formalisms of the French Academy, Russia's partisans of French “court Classicism” had turned Aristotle's “three unities”—of time, place, and action—into strict requirements for “verisimilitude.” Like Gotthold Lessing in Germany in the previous century, Pushkin consciously followed Shakespeare as he argued that these rules should yield for the sake of truth of a higher order.³³ “The true geniuses of tragedy have never troubled themselves about verisimilitude,” he wrote in the draft of a letter to Nikolai N. Rayevsky (the younger) in July 1825.

[At Mikhailovskoye] I have literally no company except my old nursemaid and my tragedy; While writing it, I have reflected on tragedy in general. It is perhaps the most misunderstood genre. The classicists and the romanticists have all based their laws on *verisimilitude*, and that is precisely what the nature of drama excludes. Not to speak of time, etc., what the devil verisimilitude is there in a hall cut in two halves, of which one is occupied by two thousand people, who are supposed to be unseen by those who are on the boards? . . . Verisimilitude of situations and truth of dialogue—here is the real rule of tragedy.

In the same letter, Pushkin revealed where he had turned in his efforts to achieve “truth of dialogue”:

. . . what a man this Shakespeare is! I can't get over it. How paltry is Byron as a tragedian in comparison with him! This Byron who never conceived but one sole character . . . ; this Byron, then, has parceled out among his characters such-and-such a trait of his own character; his pride to one,

his hate to another, his melancholy to a third, etc., and thus out of one complete, gloomy, and energetic character he has made several insignificant characters—there is no tragedy in that.

By contrast, Pushkin advised,

Read Shakespeare; he is never afraid of compromising a character of his, he makes him speak with all the unconstraint of life, because he is sure to find the language of his character for him at the right time and place.

Pushkin read *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard III* while he was writing *Godunov*, and likely others of the histories, all in French.³⁴ He alludes in letters from this time to *Henry V* and the two parts of *Henry IV*. In later notes for an introduction to *Godunov*, he remarks that “Dmitri has much in common with Henry IV.” Pushkin wrote, “. . . I composed my tragedy according to the system of our father, Shakespeare, and sacrificed upon his altar two of the classical unities, barely preserving the third.” And, “I imitated Shakespeare in his free and broad depiction of the characters, and carefree and simple composition of types.”

Pushkin followed Shakespeare in the composition of crowd scenes, while the snatches of the conversation of officers on the battlefield, one speaking French and another German, in the scene “A Plain near Novgorod of the North” are reminiscent of Fluellen and Gower in *Henry V*. The character Marina Mnishek, of which Pushkin was especially proud (“My Marina is a fine female: a real Katerina Orlova!” he told Vyazemsky, referring to the sister of Rayevsky), reminds us of Shakespeare's bold heroines, especially the quick-witted Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*.³⁵

Boris Godunov is in Russian blank verse in the manner of Shakespeare, unrhymed iambic pentameter, but Pushkin, like Shakespeare, shifted into prose for what he called “coarse jokes and common [*prostonarodnyye*] scenes.”

In the scene “Square in Front of the Cathedral in Moscow,” the character called the *Yurodivy*, or Russian Holy Fool, makes a single appearance. His name is Nikolka Iron Cap:

YURODIVY

Boris! Boris! The children are insulting Nikolka!

TSAR

Give him alms. Why is he crying?

YURODIVY

Little children are insulting Nikolka. . . . Order them murdered, as you murdered the little Tsarevich.

BOYARS

Away, fool! Seize the fool!



Pushkin's Shakespearean drama "Boris Godunov" was based on the history of the Time of Troubles following the rule of Tsar Ivan the Terrible (above). Right: Scene from Mussorgsky's opera "Boris Godunov," based on the play by Pushkin, Bolshoi Opera, Moscow.



TSAR

Leave him. Pray for me, poor Nikolka.

Exit.

YURODIVY

No, no! Tsar Herod can't be prayed for—the Mother of God says not to.

The scene is completely Russian, and at the same time so directly after Shakespeare's fools, that the voice of Edgar, playing the fool, in *King Lear* echoes: "Who gives anything to poor Tom. . . . Poor Tom's a-cold."³⁶ Pushkin put a great deal of thought into the truth-telling fool. He obtained from Karamzin a book on Iron Pointed Cap, a famous Moscow *yurodivy* discussed in the *History*. Pleased with the outcome of his project, he wrote to Vyazemsky in November 1825, on the pivotal place of the fool in *Boris Godunov*: "My tragedy is finished; I reread it aloud, alone, and I clapped my hands and shouted, 'at-a-boy, Pushkin, 'at-a-boy, you son of a bitch! My holy fool is a very funny young fellow.'" Speculating on the prospects for *Godunov* to be approved by the censors, Pushkin added, ". . . hardly, my dear one. Although it is written in a good spirit, there's no way I could hide my ears completely under the pointed cap of the holy fool. They stick out!"*

It is possible also to hear Pushkin's own voice from

* Cf. Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, another work that had to get past the censors.—Ed.

another character in *Boris Godunov*—the monk Pimen, the chronicle writer, who foreshadows the work of Pushkin as historian.

With one more tale, my chronicle is finished,
The duty is fulfilled, which God entrusted
To me, a sinner. . . .

Descendants of the Orthodox will know
The bygone fortunes of their native land.

Pushkin wrote that he had paid special attention to the footnotes in Karamzin's *History*, where the author provided voluminous excerpts from old manuscripts and chronicles. "I followed Karamzin for the clear development of events," wrote Pushkin, "while in the manuscripts I attempted to discern the way of thought and the language of that time."

With Shakespeare, Pushkin worked through the concept of *narodnost*, or "folk quality," in language, which was under debate by Vyazemsky, Kyukhelbeker, the critic Polevoy, and others in Russian journals in 1824-1825. In a notebook memorandum in 1825, Pushkin made fun of writers who "see *narodnost* in words, i.e., are glad that people, expressing themselves in Russian, use Russian expressions." "Climate, the nature of government, and faith give each people a special physiognomy, which is more or less reflected in the mirror of poetry," Pushkin wrote. "There is a way of thought and feeling, there is a mass of customs, beliefs, and habits, which

The Eloquence Of the Vernacular

belong exclusively to a given people.” At the same time, he insisted that a particular national idiom must be honed to express universal ideas and insights, shared with other branches of humankind. Shakespeare’s *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Measure for Measure* possess “qualities of great *narodnost*,” he noted, while they are situated far afield from England. In an 1830 article, Pushkin emphasized again that “the tragedies of Shakespeare that have the greatest folk element, happen to have been borrowed from Italian novellas.”

Pushkin continued to pursue every avenue, to explore how Shakespeare thought and wrote. In 1834 or 1835, a decade after *Godunov* was written, the philologist Ya.K. Grot encountered Pushkin at Dixon’s bookstore for English-language publications. “Seeing Pushkin,” he recalled, “I forgot my own mission and was all attention: He was asking for books on the biography of Shakespeare. . . . In my presence, he selected everything new on Shakespeare, and ordered them to be delivered to his house.”³⁷ Pushkin’s personal library contained K. Simrock’s 1831 *Die Quellen des Shakespeare in Novellen, Märchen, und Sagen*, a German book on Shakespeare’s sources.

Pushkin deepened his study of English in the late 1820’s. He obtained a Leipzig edition of *The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare* in the original. His long poem *Angelo* (1833) is a setting of *Measure for Measure*, with several scenes embedded in direct translation, including Isabella’s famous confrontation with the hypocrite, Angelo, in Act II, Scene 2. Pushkin told Nashchokin, “Our critics have ignored this piece and think that it is one of my weaker compositions, but really I have written nothing better.” Initially, Pushkin had contemplated making a full translation of *Measure for Measure*; the surviving manuscript of the first few scenes made the late Nineteenth-century literature professor and Shakespeare scholar N.I. Storozhenko exclaim that “in Pushkin, we lost a great translator of Shakespeare.”

Shakespeare was much discussed in Russian literary journals, especially *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, where Baron Delvig became editor-in-chief in 1830. Pushkin helped to prepare for press an article by the exiled Kyukhelbeker, “Thoughts on Macbeth,” which Delvig managed to publish without indication of the author’s identity.³⁸

Shortly after finishing *Godunov*, Pushkin had written to Delvig in February 1826 about a matter close to their hearts—their mutual anguish over the just-failed Decembrist uprising, the fate of their friends who took part in it, and Russia’s fate: “I firmly rely on the magnanimity of our young Tsar. Let us not be either superstitious or one-sided—like French tragedians. But let us look at the tragedy with the eyes of Shakespeare.”

Pushkin worked relentlessly to make his Russian vocabulary and poetic lines more direct and closer to spoken Russian. In doing so, he created more degrees of freedom in the language, including the possibility of reintroducing, for special effect, the type of Old Church Slavonic vocabulary to which he had objected in its overuse by Lomonosov or Shishkov.

The simplification of expression by Pushkin is evident in sequences of his rough drafts. A draft of “*Anchar*” (“The Upas-Tree”) (1828) reads:

К нему не ходит гладный тигр,
Над ним орел не пролетает

K nemu ne khodit gladny tigr
Nad nim oryol ne proletayet

To it goes not the hungry tiger
O’er it the eagle does not fly

Gladny is a lofty-sounding Old Church Slavonic (O.C.S.) form of Russian *golodny*, or “hungry.” In Pushkin’s final version, it has disappeared.³⁹

К нему и птица не летит,
И тигр нейдет:

K nemu i ptitsa ne letit
I tigr neidyot—

To it the bird never does fly,
And tiger goes not—

While expunging O.C.S. expressions, as well as ornate imitations of French, Pushkin listened carefully for the language to adopt in their place.

In the “Rejoinder to Criticism,” written in his notebook in the Boldino Autumn of 1830, Pushkin reviewed criticisms of the language in *Yevgeni Onegin*:

Certain poetic liberties, such as the accusative case instead of the genitive after the negative particle *ne*; or, the use of *vremyan* in place of *vremyon* [variations of the genitive plural of *vremya*, “time”—RBD] . . . sent my critics into a terrible state of confusion. They were most upset of all about the line:

Людскую мольвь и конский топ.

Lyudskuyu molv i konsky top.

The people’s speech and horses’ tread.

“Is that how we express ourselves, who have studied

from the old grammar books; can the Russian language really be distorted like that?," *Vestnik Yevropy* cruelly mocked that same line. *Molv* (*rech*) [speech] is a Russian word in its root. *Top* in place of *topot* [clatter] is just as much in use, as *ship* in place of *shipeniye* [hissing] (consequently, *khlop* in place of *khlopaniye* [clapping] is by no means contrary to the spirit of the Russian language). What's more, the line is not even mine, but was lifted in full from a Russian fairy tale:

«И вышел он за врата градские, и услышал конский топ и людскую мольву».

"*I vyshel on za vrata gradskiyе, i uslyshal konsky top i lyudskuyu molv.*"

"And he came out past the city gates, and heard the horses' hooves and the speech of the people."

The study of old songs, fairy tales, etc., is necessary for a perfect knowledge of the properties of the Russian language. In vain do our critics despise them. . . . The conversational language of the common people (who do not read foreign books and, thank God, do not express their thoughts in French, as we do) is worthy of the most profound study. Alfieri studied Italian at the bazaar in Florence: it wouldn't be bad for us sometimes to listen to the Moscow church-bread bakers. They speak an amazingly pure and correct language.

By the time Pushkin died, he had led the way in bringing a great array of words, that were defined as colloquialisms or slang in the *Slovar Akademii Rossiyskoy* (*Dictionary of the Russian Academy*), published 1789-1794, into legitimate use in literature.⁴⁰ Writers now had the flexibility to say many things in three ways: Russian, or with an admixture of O.C.S. roots, or with foreign borrowings. In *The Bronze Horseman*, Pushkin moved through the range of how the city, St. Petersburg, could be named: with the Russian *gorod* ("city"), with the O.C.S.-root alternative, *grad*, or as the Greek-derived "Petropolis."

In the poem "Prorok" ("The Prophet") [SEE page 61], Pushkin produced a special effect by reintroducing O.C.S. roots in concentrated expression:

«Восстань, пророк, и виждь, и внемли,
"Vosstan, prorok, i vizhd, i vnemli . . .

"Rise, prophet, hearken, understand . . .

With the O.C.S. *vizhd*; the prefix *vaz-* (*vos-*)(having the sense of initiating and/or uplifting), verbs with which were used constantly in stilted Eighteenth-century verses, but less and less often by Pushkin; and the word *prorok* ("prophet") itself, which has embedded the archaic *rok* ("fate"; replaced in general usage by the word *sudba*),

Pushkin had the freedom to make God's voice sound different from other voices. It is characteristic of the way he played with such modalities of vocabulary, that he did so in order to imitate not the religious language of OCS liturgy, but rather the Classical Arabic of the Holy Quran! Pushkin had practiced the lofty language for this poem on receiving from God his mission as poet-"prophet," in the set of verses called *Podrazhaniya Koranu* (*Imitations of the Quran*), done at Mikhailovskoye in 1824, in which are found the images of "thirsting in the desert" and the prophet (*prorok*), instructed to "read the book of heaven until morning," that later appear in "Prorok."⁴¹

Pushkin developed flexibility of meter, analogous to his transformation of Russian vocabulary. He was a master of all varieties of so-called syllabic meter, which had entered Russian poetic composition from France and Poland, and of the syllabic-accentual meters introduced by Lomonosov. The 1830 long poem *Domik v Kolomne* even begins:

Четырестопный ямб мне надоел:

Chetyrestopny yamb mne nadoyel:

Of iambic tetrameter I've had enough:

The poem proceeds in eight-line stanzas of iambic pentameter.

These meters have a fixed number of syllables *per* line, which in the syllabic-accentual form are arranged in two- and three-syllable feet with different accent patterns. The potential for musical tension in such meters, due to the rhythmic overlay of stressed syllables in the words as they are normally spoken, onto the syllables stressed according to what the meter demands, is especially great in Russian, because each Russian word, even if multisyllabic, has only one stressed syllable. Thus, the opening line of *The Bronze Horseman*, written in iambic tetrameter, must be read with three accents, not four:

На берегу пустынных волн

Na be - re - gu pu - styn - nykh voln

and not

Na be' - re - gu pu - styn - nykh voln.

Pushkin did not stop with the varieties of syllabic versification. During the Mikhailovskoye exile, he began to experiment with accentual meters, called in Russian *tonichesky*. These meters have a set number of stresses or accents *per* line, regardless of the number of syllables. They hearken

back to the oral epics of the Slavs, which were *sung*.⁴² In 1817, A.Kh. Vostokov published his *Opyt o russkom stikhoslozhenii* (*Essay on Russian Versification*), a treatise in praise of the accentual meters of Russian folk verse, a study that Pushkin upheld in *A Journey from Moscow to Petersburg* (1833-1835) as a work of high scholarship and insight. Pushkin employed accentual meters in his fairy tales and some other poems, especially after studying south Slavic accentual meters in his work on the *Pesni zapadnykh slavyan* (*Songs of the Western Slavs*) cycle (1833-1834).

The accentual meter of *Skazka o rybake i rybke* (*The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*) (1833) is audible, contrasted with the trochaic tetrameter of *The Tale of the Golden Cockerel* (1834).⁴³ The syllabic-accentual *Golden Cockerel* begins:

Негде, в тридевятом царстве,
В тридесятом государстве,
Жил-был славный царь Дадон.

Negde, v tridevyatom tsarstve,
V tridesyatom gosudarstve
Zhyl-byt slávny tsar Dadon.

Once upon a time and long ago,
In a kingdom far away,
Lived the famous Tsar Dadon.

The number of accents *per line* varies, owing to the multisyllabic words, but the number of syllables is fixed—seven in lines with masculine endings (last syllable stressed), eight if the ending is feminine (last syllable unstressed). *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish* is quite different:

Жил старик со своею старухой
У самого синего моря;
Они жили в ветхой землянке
Ровно тридцать лет и три года.

Zhyl starik / so svoeyu / starukhoy
U samovo / sinevo / mórya;
Oni zhyli / v vétkhoy / zemlyanke
Rovno tridsat / lét / i tri goda.

There lived an old man with his old woman
Right by the blue sea;
They lived in a ramshackle dugout
Exactly thirty years and three more.

There are three accents *per line*, each governing a phrase-group of words, but the number of syllables *per phrase-group* varies. In the first line, 10 syllables occur in phrase-groups of 3, 4, and 3 syllables; in the second line, 9 syllables are grouped 4-3-2; in the third line, 9 syllables as 4-2-3; in the fourth line, 9 syllables as 4-1-4. The poem has up to 12 syllables in a line.⁴⁴

The Tale of the Priest and of his Workman Balda begins:

Жил-был поп,
Толоконный лоб.
Пошел поп по базару
Посмотреть кой-какого товару.

Zhyl-byt / pop,
Tolokonny / lob.
Poshol pop / po bazaru
Posmotret / koy-kakovo tovaru.

Once there lived a priest,
A real porridge-head.
The priest went to the bazaar
To look over some wares.

Pushkin wrote this tale during the Boldino Autumn of 1830, but he had outlined it at Mikhailovskoye in 1824, as told to him by Arina Rodionovna. When Pushkin read *The Tale of the Priest and of His Workman Balda* to the writer Nikolai Gogol in 1831, the latter reported to a friend, “There is one fairy tale that has no meter, but only rhymes and unimaginable charm.”

Conversations with Russian History

“... [T]he Tsar ... has taken me into service—i.e., has given me a salary and permitted me to burrow in the archives, to compile a history of Peter I. God grant the Tsar health!” Pushkin was jubilant, as in this 1831 letter to Nashchokin, about the possibility of serious work on the history of Russia. Being the successor to Karamzin, whom he called “our first historian and last chronicler”⁴⁵, he considered a vital part of his identity and a matter of civic duty.

Never letting go of the ideals of freedom expressed in his early poems, Pushkin delved into the complex relationship between Russia’s people and its tsars. He wanted to look at what had happened, when the Romanov Tsars launched reforms, without being able to recruit the politically active layers of the population, never mind the

peasantry, to support a workable idea for the betterment of the nation. In surviving notes for his history of Peter I, covering the year 1721 (for that year, only the portions of the notebooks that were censored in 1840, the outtakes, are extant), Pushkin observed:

There is an amazing difference between Peter the Great's state institutions and his ukazes of the moment. The former are the fruits of a broad mind, full of benevolence and wisdom, while the latter are *not infrequently cruel, capricious, and seemingly written with a knout*. The former were for eternity, or at least for the future,—the latter were the outbursts of an *impatient, autocratic landowner*. [Pushkin's emphasis]

He added a note to himself: "N.B. (Think this through and put it in the *History of Peter*)."

Pushkin hoped that the Russian people could advance, without violent revolution. He believed that "the fate of the peasantry improves, with the spread of education. The welfare of the peasants is closely tied to that of the landowners; that is evident to all. Of course, there should be great changes; . . . The best and most durable changes are those that proceed from an improvement of moral practice, without the violent political upheavals that are so terrible for mankind."⁴⁶

In 1826, Pushkin was asked on behalf of the Tsar to write a memorandum on public education. Knowing he was expected to criticize the Lycée, as part of the price of being allowed to return from exile at Mikhailovskoye,

Pushkin nonetheless detailed his ideas for the teaching of history and other subjects. He remarked to Alexei Vulf, "It would have been easy to write what they wanted, but no chance to do some good should be passed up." In December 1834, Pushkin recorded in his diary his conversation with the Tsar's brother, the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich. Touching on such sensitive matters as the role of the hereditary nobility in Russia, the Decembrist uprising, and Pushkin's characterization of "all the Romanovs as revolutionaries and levellers," the conversation "turned to his Highness's favorite topic, education. I was able to say a lot to him. God grant, that my words produce even a drop of good."

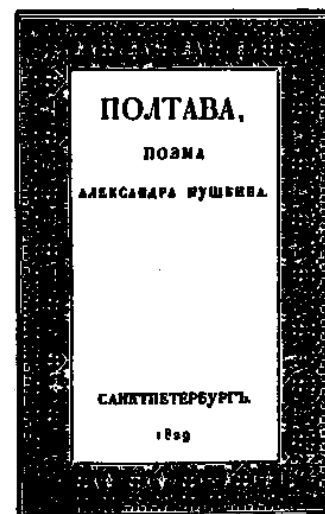
In the same spirit, Pushkin offered *The History of Pugachov*, which the Tsar required be retitled *The History of the Pugachov Revolt*, for publication in 1834. His exposition of the cultural history and economic circumstances of the Yaik Cossacks, which had predisposed them to follow Pugachov during the crisis of the 1700's, provided rich material for Russian state leaders, and was said to have been consulted by Nicholas I in preparation for agrarian reforms. "God forbid that we see Russian revolt [*Russky bunt*], senseless and merciless," was Pushkin's famous warning in *The Captain's Daughter*.

Had Pushkin lived, the defining "Slavophile vs. Westernizer" divide in Russian Nineteenth-century intellectual and political history might have been resolved, preventing many destructive effects achieved by British geopolitical manipulation of the belief-structures of both



Left: Peter I leads troops at the decisive Battle of Poltava (1709), in the Northern War with Sweden. Pushkin recounted the events in his 1828 narrative oem, "Poltava" (below).

In 1831, Tsar Nicholas I appointed Pushkin to research and write an official history of Peter the Great (above, left). While studying Peter's reforms, Pushkin noted that, "The best and most durable changes are those that proceed from an improvement of moral practice, without the violent political upheavals that are so terrible for mankind."



the radical Pan-Slav movements and the “Western” revolutionary insurgencies in the late 1800’s. The “Westernizers” came more and more under the domination of British liberalism, influenced by the international organizing of John Stuart Mill, Giuseppe Mazzini, and other apostles of Lord Palmerston in the mid-Nineteenth century.⁴⁷ The “Slavophile” reaction to attempts to import political mores from Western Europe, was to argue that Orthodoxy was superior, and that Peter I’s reforms had been a mainly destructive force. In this school of thought, the Renaissance idea of the sanctity of the creative individual, *imago viva Dei*, was held to be no different than the so-called Enlightenment’s “Hobbesian” man, and they were glossed together as spiritually bankrupt “Western individualism.” Late in the Nineteenth century, the extreme ideology of “Pan-Slavism” served to entangle Russia in Balkan Wars that benefitted the British Empire.

In 1836, Pushkin wrote a reply to one of the opening salvos of the Slavophile-Westernizer debate, Pyotr Chaadayev’s *Philosophical Letters* (1836), in which the author argued that Russia’s divorce from Western Christianity had deprived the country of any meaningful history or culture. It was in response to Chaadayev’s assertion, that the Slavophile movement arose. The terrain of the argument was not new to Pushkin. In an 1834 rough draft titled “On the Paltriness of Russian Literature”⁴⁸, Pushkin himself reflected on the detrimental impact of Russia’s long separation from Western Europe:

Having adopted the light of Christianity from Byzantium, [Russia] took part in neither the political revolutions, nor the intellectual activity of the Roman Catholic world. The great epoch of the Renaissance had no influence here. . . . Russia had a lofty calling Its boundless plains swallowed the force of the Mongols and stopped their onslaught at the edge of Europe. . . . During the epoch of storms and great changes, tsars and boyars agreed about one thing: the necessity of bringing Russia closer to Europe. Hence the relations of Ivan Vasilyevich [IV] with England, Godunov’s correspondence with Denmark, . . . the embassies of Alexei Mikhailovich [r. 1645-1676]. . . . Finally, Peter appeared.

Pushkin drafted a letter to Chaadayev, whom he had known for two decades, on Oct. 19, 1836 (although the political circumstance of Chaadayev’s being declared insane deterred him from sending it):

. . . you know that I am far from being entirely of your opinion. There is no doubt that the Schism separated us from the rest of Europe and that we have not participated in any of the great occurrences which have agitated it. But we have had our own special mission. Russia, in its immense expanse, was what absorbed the Mongol con-

quest. . . . They withdrew to their deserts, and Christian civilization was saved. . . .

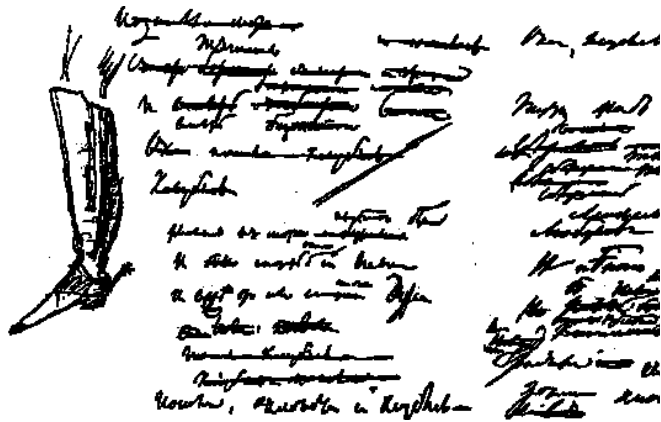
You say that the well to which we went to draw Christianity was contaminated, that Byzantium was contemptible and contemned, etc. Well, now, my friend! Was not Jesus Christ himself born a Jew, and was not Jerusalem the laughing-stock of nations? Are the Gospels the less wonderful for that? We have taken the Gospels and traditions from the Greeks, but not the spirit of puerility and controversy. The customs of Byzantium were never those of Kiev. . . .

As for our history being nil, I absolutely cannot be of your opinion. The Wars of Oleg and of Svyatoslav, and even the wars of appanage—are these not that life of adventurous effervescence and of ruthless, pointless activity which characterizes the youth of all peoples? The invasion by the Tatars is a sad and a grand picture. What? Are the awakening of Russia, the development of its power, its march toward unity, . . . the two Ivans, the sublime drama begun at Uglich and concluded at the Ipatyev Monastery—is all this to be not history, but a pallid and half-forgotten dream? And Peter the Great, who in himself alone is a universal history! And Catherine II, who placed Russia on the threshold of Europe? And Alexander, who led us to Paris? And (cross your heart) do you find nothing impressive in the present-day situation of Russia, nothing which will strike the future historian? Do you believe that he will place us outside Europe? Although I personally am sincerely attached to the Emperor, I am far from admiring all that I see around me; as a man of letters, I am embittered; as a man of prejudices, I am offended. But I swear to you on my honor that not for anything in the world would I be willing to change my fatherland, nor to have any other history than that of our ancestors, such as God gave it to us.⁴⁹

What a crime, that the battle over Russia’s identity had to continue without Pushkin!

Pushkin’s viewpoint became focussed in his study of Peter I as an expression of Russia’s historical circumstance. His notes for his *History of Peter* are the assembled raw materials for a great chronicle, spiced with the sort of pungent insight, noted above, with respect to the contrast between Peter’s institutional designs and his pragmatic cruelty. Pushkin recorded Peter’s development of the economy, from the mapping of Siberia, to silver prospecting, to the establishment of iron foundries and shipbuilding. He detailed the purchases of scientific instruments, made during Peter’s travels to Germany, Holland, and England, and the founding of the Academy of Sciences, as well as the Russian Senate, according to designs from Leibniz.

The *History of Peter* being unfinished, Pushkin’s strongest statements on the central figure of Peter the Great are in his poetry. Pushkin could look at Russian history through the prism of his own family, as he did in



Pushkin manuscript sketches for “The Bronze Horseman”—the equestrian statue of Peter I in St. Petersburg’s Senate Square—include the “firm foot by the sea” (above) and a playful “bronze horseman without the horseman (right). Far right: The statue pursues Yevgeni through the streets of St. Petersburg, in a famous illustration to the narrative poem.

the poem “*Moya rodoslovnaya*” (“My Genealogy”) (1830). Its refrain is “I am simply a Russian bourgeois,” a status that Pushkin traced, in verse, from the noble roots of the Pushkins, through the conflicts around the accession of Catherine II:

Then the Orlovs fell into favor,
And into jail my grandpa fell, . . .

In a postscript to this poem, Pushkin replied to sniping by his literary adversaries, by bringing the matter back to Peter the Great:

Figlyarin from his armchair judges,
That my black grandpa Hannibal
Was purchased for a bottle of rum—
Into the skipper’s hands he fell.

That skipper was the famous skipper,
By whom our native land was moved,
Onto a course of power and greatness,
With might, the helm of state he hove.

Pushkin’s great-grandfather Ibrahim Hannibal, here also called “the Tsar’s confidant, not his slave,” was the subject of his unfinished novella *Arap Petra Velikogo* (*The Moor of Peter the Great*).

In *The Bronze Horseman*, Pushkin captured the tragedy of Peter by setting a “sad story” of little people, in St. Petersburg, the gloriously conceived northern capital

he founded. First, Peter the Great brings the city into being by the power of his thought:

By nature we are destined here
To cut a window through to Europe.
To stand with firm foot by the sea.
Hither, across waves new to them
All flags will visit as our guests,
And we shall feast on the expanse. . . .

The poet rejoices at the new city:

I love thee well, Peter’s creation,
I love thy strict and well-built look,
The river Neva’s stately current,
The guardian granite of her banks.

The clerk Yevgeni, who loses his fiancée in the great St. Petersburg flood of 1824, goes mad and imagines that Falconet’s bronze statue of Peter the Great (it stands in the Senate Square, the place of the Decembrist revolt) pursues him through the streets of the city. As Yevgeni looks in horror at the statue, the poet-narrator asks:

Where art thou leaping, oh proud horse,
Where will thy hooves come down again?
Oh mighty master of destiny!
Just so, didst thou not o’er th’ abyss,
On high, with iron bit in hand,
Rear Russia up on its hind legs?

A Poet's Immortality

A few months before he was killed, Pushkin wrote his version of the Horatian ode on the immortality of the poet, “*Exegi monumentum aere perennius . . .*” (“I have built a monument more lasting than bronze . . .”). Derzhavin had begun his own ode on this theme:

Я памятник воздвиг чудесный, вечный. . .

Ya pamyatnik vozdvig chudesny, vechny . . .

A monument I've built, wondrous, eternal . . .

Keeping Derzhavin's language exactly, through *vozdvig*, Pushkin then said something entirely new:

Я памятник воздвиг нерукотворный. . . .

Ya pamyatnik vozdvig nerukotvornyy . . .

A monument I've built, unmanufactured . . .

Literally: “not by hands made.” Pushkin used the word *nerukotvornyy* only this once. It is rooted in the Old Church Slavonic of the Gospels, where Jesus is reported to say he will build a new temple “without hands” (Mark, 14:58). In Russian, the term also describes miraculous icons, religious images believed to have been painted not with a brush in a human hand, but by divine intervention.⁵⁰ The entire poem reads*:

A monument I've raised that never hands could
build,
The people's path to it will not be overgrown,
Its head, unbowed, untamed, stands higher from the
ground
Than Alexander's column stands.

Not all of me will die: by sacred lyre my soul
Will outlive mortal dust and will escape decay—
And I shall be renowned so long as on this earth
One single poet is alive.

Word about me will spread throughout great Russia's
land,
And each and every speaker there will say my name,

The proud Slav's sons, the Finn, the still untamed
Tungus,
The Kalmyk, dweller of the steppe.

Long after now my name will warm the people's
heart,
Because my lyre awoke feelings both good and kind
And in my cruel age I sang of freedom's glory
And for the fallen mercy begged.

Be thou obedient, Muse, to the command of God!
Not fearing wrongful hurt, seeking no laurel crown,
Remain indifferent to calumny and praise,
And do not argue with a fool.⁵¹

Pushkin was self-conscious of the source of the power of ideas—*l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle* (“the love that moves the sun and th'other stars”)—the divine love of which the poet Dante sang. His poems on beauty and inspiration radiate the essence of the creative moment, which is recognizably and naturally coherent with the personal kindness Pushkin exuded in his life. It is striking to find in Pushkin's letters, amid the literary debates, such correspondence as his 1830 thank-you note to two citizens from Kaluga, who walked eleven miles to see him at his grandfather-in-law's estate and thank him for his poetry, or his 1834 appeal to the Procurator of the Holy Synod on behalf of a priest in Tsarskoye Selo, fired for drunkenness, who “has addressed himself to me, supposing that my weak voice might be honored with your attention.”

Pushkin was visited by “a genius of pure beauty,” he said in the famous poem, “*Ya pomnyu chudnoye mgnoveniye . . .*” (“I remember the wondrous moment . . .”), which is directed to an unnamed beautiful woman in the way that Dante addressed his Beatrice. Pushkin wrote by the rule of love, the principle his Mozart speaks of to the plodding, envious Salieri in the short drama *Mozart i Salieri* (*Mozart and Salieri*):

. . . a genius,
Like you and me. Genius and evil-doing
Are incompatible. Is that not so?

The character Salieri, brooding because the seeming magic of creativity eludes him, has complained about Mozart:

What use is he? Like some sweet cherubim,
He brought down to us several songs from heaven,
Awakened wingless yearning in us mortals,
Creatures of dust—only to fly away!

But, in truth, neither Mozart nor Pushkin flew away. They are present, so long as their music resounds in the mind of any person living anywhere.

* Readers should compare this poem to Shakespeare's Sonnet 55, which begins,
“Not marble nor the gilded monuments
“Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rime . . .”

Autumn—A Fragment (1833)

*What comes not then into my drowsing mind?
—Derzhavin*

October is upon us—now the trees
Shake off the last leaves from their naked limbs;
An autumn cold has blown—the road will freeze.
The gurgling millstream still rotates the wheel,
But on the pond is ice; my neighbor flees
With hounds to hunt, into the open fields,
The winter wheat's run under by such fun,
And howling dogs awake the sleepy sun.

Now is my time: Spring I can hardly bear;
The thaw is wearisome; the stench and grime—
I sicken, mind and feelings crushed by care.
Stern winter offers what I treasure more,
I love the snow; and in the moonlit air
The light sleigh's run, when 'neath the sable throw,
A willful girl, beside you fresh and warm,
Presses your hand, inclines her trembling form!

How merry, then, with hooves in iron turned out,
To skate the standing, even river's mirror!
And what more cheer than winter's sparkling rout? . . .
But then enough; six months of snow on snow
Not e'en a bear will finally last out,
Deep in his lair. We cannot for all time
Cavort in sleighs with one or 'nother lass
Or stew at home behind our double glass.

You, summer fair, I'd love with certainty,
Were't not for heat, and dust, and gnats, and flies.
Undoing every mental faculty,
You torture us; we join the droughted fields,
And have no other thought than icy tea
To quench our thirst, and old dame Winter's mourned,

Whom, having bid farewell with cakes and punch,
We now commemorate with ice-chilled lunch.

The latest autumn days have often been
Accursed, but, reader dear, for me they're best,
They sparkle peacefully, with quiet sheen.
Like a poor child its parents fail to love,
Fall draws me to her. Yes, I truly mean,
She is the only season gives me joy,
There's good in her; a modest lover, I find
In her some element of my own mind.

How am I to explain? To me she's dear,
As once, perhaps, a sickly girl to you
Was dear. Condemned to death, she lets it near
Without a murmur, not expressing ire.
A smile is on her fading lips, no tear;
She doesn't hear the yawning grave's abyss;
There's on her face more crimson light than sorrow.
Today she lives as yet, but not tomorrow.

Oh mournful time! Enchantment of the eyes!
Your farewell festive costume pleases me—
I love that richest bloom, as nature dies,
The woods dressed up in crimson and in gold,
Through all their leaves, the rustling wind that sighs,
The skies enveloped in the wavy mist,
The sun's rare shimmer and the frost's first bite,
The far-off hint of threatening winter's might.

And every autumn back to bloom I surge;
The Russian cold snap benefits my health;
And to the ways of life I bring new verve:
I sleep in turn, I hunger when I ought;
My blood fair frolics, racing to each nerve,
Desires well up—I'm happy, young again,
I'm full of life—such is my organism,
(If you'll forgive needless prosaicism).

Pushkin manuscript sketches, "Osen" (Autumn), October 1833. Above, right: "It sails—where should we sail?"



Pushkin manuscript sketches, "Osen" (Autumn), October 1833. Above, right: "It sails—where should we sail?"

A horse is brought me; 'cross the wide estate,
 With tossing mane, he carries off his lord,
 And 'neath his flashing hooves reverberate
 The frozen valley and the crackling ice.
 The short day dims—and in the lonesome grate
 The fire burns again—it pours bright light,
 I read before it, to the last dying coal,
 Or nurture longtime thoughts within my soul.

And I forget the world, in silence sweet
 I'm sweetly conquered by imagination,
 And poetry awakes anew in me:
 My soul's compressed by lyric agitation,
 It flutters, sounds, and seeks, as if in sleep,
 To pour out full in free manifestation—
 An unseen host of guests arrives and teems,
 Acquaintances of old, fruits of my dreams.

And in my head the thoughts take shape and rage,
 And easy rhymes come meet them on the run,
 My fingers ask a pen, the pen a page,
 A moment—and the verses freely flow.

So on the still sea oft a still ship lays,
 But ho!—quick, up the ropes the sailors climb
 And down—the sails puff out with wind in motion;
 The great hulk shifts, it moves, and plows the ocean.

It sails. Where should we sail?



He says very much — *Stykhaniye* in 'Pushkin',
 (He knows *rotok* — x x x — x x x)
 He has just xx *Pushkin* of the *Stykhaniye*
 He has just *Pushkin* — — —

All quotations from Pushkin's letters are taken from "The Letters of Alexander Pushkin," trans. by J. Thomas Shaw (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967).

The works of Pushkin that are most accessible in English translation are the stories, including "The Tales of Belkin" and "The Queen of Spades," which are available in several anthologies. The Penguin and Everyman paperback editions of "Yevgeni Onegin" give readable renditions of Pushkin's novel in verse.

NOTES

1. On the Classical idea, see Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., "The Classical Principle in Art and Science," *Fidelio*, Winter 1997 (Vol. VI, No. 4). In the chronology of the development of Russian literary language, Pushkin defined a new era, superseding what is known as the "Classical" period of the Eighteenth century, when Lomonosov and Derzhavin wrote odes in imitation of the forms used by ancient Greek and Latin authors, or their modern French imitators. In distinction from "Classical" as an academic classification of that sort, we denote by the terms "Classical principle" or "Classical idea," not the mere imitation of ancient forms (the "Romantics," customarily counterposed to the "Classical," were the more fanatical devotees of Rome, in all its corruption), but rather the celebration and metaphorical expression of creative reason. "Classical," LaRouche writes in a footnote to the cited article, "is employed . . . in the sense of rejection of . . . forms of degeneration into eroticism expressed by Romantics . . ."
2. The emigration from Russia during the Revolutions of 1917 and the Civil War (1918-1921), is known as the first wave; the second wave occurred in connection with World War II.
3. Anna Akhmatova, "Slovo o Pushkine," May 1961, printed in *Anna Akhmatova o Pushkine* (Leningrad: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1977).
4. Alexander S. Pushkin, *Zimniaia Doroga*, ed. by Irina Tokmakova (Moscow: Detskaiia Literatura, 1972).

5. Akhmatova, "Pushkin i deti," radio broadcast script prepared in 1963, published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, May 1, 1974.
 A youngster with a lively mind quickly absorbs Pushkin's verses, as did a future Prime Minister of Russia, Yevgeni Primakov, as a child. David Hoffman recounted in *The Washington Post* of March 19, 1999: "Robert Demargaryan, a childhood friend and classmate, recalled for the Russian magazine *Ogonyok* last year how Primakov missed the first week of classes in the first grade. Fatherless, born in Ukraine, Primakov had moved to Tbilisi [Georgia] and lived in a 17-square-yard communal apartment with his mother, a gynecologist. A stern teacher informed the new boy that the other students had learned how to draw a slanting line, how to repeat in unison, and how to count to ten. What could Primakov do? 'The small, very stocky boy, not the least intimidated, stood up and began to recite Pushkin,' Demargaryan said. 'We were all stunned. We listened open-mouthed, and he kept reciting by heart. All of our achievements writing lines and little curlicues gradually dimmed, became insignificant.'"
6. Muriel Mirak Weissbach, "The Power of Great Poetry To Shape Character and Build the Nation: Dante, Humboldt, and Helen Keller," *Fidelio*, Summer 1996 (Vol. V, No. 2). Dante's work *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, on the eloquence of the vernacular, is presented on pp. 6-11.
7. See Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., *op. cit.*; also, especially, "That Which Underlies Motivic Thorough-Composition," *Executive Intelligence Review* (*EIR*), Sept. 1, 1995 (Vol. 22, No. 35), pp. 50-63.
8. Trans. by Caroline Stephan and Robert Trout, in *Friedrich Schiller. Poet of Freedom*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Schiller Institute, 1988), pp. 253-272.
9. Robert K. Massie, *Peter the Great* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), pps. 175-7, 569, 754. Sophie said of Peter, "He is a prince at once very good and very bad; his character is exactly that of his country. If he had received a better education, he would be an exceptional man, for he has great qualities and unlimited

natural intelligence.”

H. Graham Lowry, *How the Nation Was Won: America's Untold Story, 1630-1754* (Washington, D.C.: EIR, 1988), pp. 87-91, recounts the project to put the Electress of Hanover Sophie on the English throne, as the “Leibniz card” against the Venetian party in Britain. The *EIR* series by Philip Valenti, “The Anti-Newtonian Roots of the American Revolution,” Dec. 1, 1995 (Vol. 22, No. 48), and Anton Chaitkin, “Leibniz, Gauss Shaped America's Science Successes,” Feb. 9, 1996 (Vol. 23, No. 7), deals with the American republic as Leibniz's greatest project. Michael O. Billington writes on Leibniz's ideas about China in “Toward the Ecumenical Unity of East and West: The Renaissances of Confucian China and Christian Europe,” *Fidelio*, Summer 1993 (Vol. II, No. 3), and “Kepler and Renaissance Science in China,” *21st Century Science and Technology*, Summer 1996 (Vol. 9, No. 2).

10. Allen and Rachel Douglas, “The Roots of the Trust,” unpublished *EIR* research report, 1987, Chapter III. The Venice-centered financial oligarchy that dominated the world grain trade had great interest in securing political control over the southwards expansion of the Russian Empire. It was a sign of the Venetians' success, that in the Black Sea port city of Odessa, founded in 1794 as part of the build-up of the “New Russian” lands acquired by Catherine II, the first street-signs were in Italian. The main cargo shipped through Odessa was so-called “Polish grain,” from the newly incorporated Polish provinces of the Russian Empire (Bessarabia, Podolsk, Volyn). The structure of the city was soon determined by this trade, from the great Greek and Italian exporting firms, the insurance and shipping operations they ran, down to the mass of agents, commissioners, brokers, weighers, drivers, balers, bag-stitchers, port labor, construction workers, and so forth.
11. Helga Zepp LaRouche, “Friedrich Schiller and the Liberation Wars,” *Executive Intelligence Review*, Dec. 4, 1998 (Vol. 25, No. 48), examines the brilliant strategic thinking by Ludwig von Wolzogen and his collaborators, by means of which Napoleon was defeated in Russia. Wilhelm von Wolzogen tutored the family of Tsar Alexander I, whose wife had been Princess Louise of Baden, reading Schiller's plays with them, among other texts. Schiller cautioned his brother-in-law to avoid certain plays such as *Wilhelm Tell*, as being more than the Russian political situation was ripe for. Half a generation later, the main Russian translator of Schiller, Vasili Zhukovsky, would tutor in Russian the bride of Alexander I's younger brother Nicholas, the future Tsar Nicholas I. She was born Princess Charlotte of Prussia, daughter of the Queen Louise who reigned during the liberation war against Napoleon.
12. Pushkin, “*O prichinakh, zamedlivshikh khod nashei slovesnosti*” (1823).
13. Pushkin, “*Puteshestvie iz Moskvy v Peterburg*” (1833-1835).
14. *Ibid.* The “Slavonic” elements were borrowings from Old Church Slavonic, a language from the southern branch of the Slavic language group (akin to Macedonian and Bulgarian), which came into use with the missions of Cyril and Methodius to the Slavs in the Ninth century.
15. The Russian historian and philologist Ya.K. Grot characterized the state of literary Russian before the appearance of Pushkin, in his 1869 review of the famous dictionary of spoken Russian, compiled by V.I. Dal: “The followers of Lomonosov, who had assimilated his respect for Church Slavonic books, but lacked his linguistic restraint, befouled written speech with their abuse of Slavonicisms. This provoked another extreme: Those who disliked such writing turned to modern foreign languages and started looking for models there, especially in French. Thus, in the 1780's there developed a ‘French style,’ alongside and in opposition to the language of the Slavonomaniacs, and these two mutually hostile schools could not coexist. One of them had to prevail, the one on whose side there would be more common sense, taste, and talent. Karamzin embodied these qualities: avoiding the

extremes of either tendency, but inclined more towards the second, which was more contemporary, he took from it what was in accord with the spirit of our native language, and began to write in a somewhat purified conversational language, mastering the natural cast of speech and, at the same time, a beauty of expression, which he had learned from the best European writers.

“Understandably, the adherents of Slavonicism did not want to yield the battlefield to their foes without stubborn resistance. . . . Shishkov refused to see that Karamzin and the best of his followers, while they did not ban foreign words altogether and even introduced ones that seemed to them necessary, were nonetheless attempting to avoid barbarisms and to replace foreign words with Russian, wherever corresponding expressions could be found in their native tongue. Although all the innovations of the Karamzin school were equally detested by Shishkov, he especially attacked them on what seemed to him the most vulnerable flank, namely borrowings from other modern languages.”

Quoted from Ia.K. Grot, “*Narodnyi i literaturnyi iazyk*,” Grot's review of V.I. Dal's *Tolkovy slovar zhivago velikoruskago iazyka* (Moscow: 1863-1866), in *Trudy Ia.K. Grot*, Vol. II (St. Petersburg: 1899), pp. 1-45. Both of these Russian language specialists knew Pushkin. Academician Grot, whose recollections about Pushkin's study of Shakespeare are cited in the present article, wrote a book on Pushkin and his Lycée classmates. Dal, who was a medical doctor as well as a philologist, was attending physician to Pushkin on his deathbed.

16. Irina Bagration-Mukhraneli, *Pushkin (Tvorcheskaia biografiia)*. “. . . *bud' zaodno s geniem*” (unpublished, 1998). The Greek poet Pindar (c.522-433 B.C.) is famous for his odes.
17. *Ibid.*, citing V. Sipovskii, *Detstvo Pushkina. Biblioteka velikikh pisatelei pod red. S.A. Vengerova* (St. Petersburg: Brockhaus-Efron, 1907).
18. Five decades later (1855), Bagration-Mukhraneli reports, Olga Sergeevna Pavlishcheva (née Pushkina) could still recite her little brother's protest about her “review” of his play “*L'Escamoteur*” (“The Clever Thief”):
*Dis moi pourquoi L'Escamoteur
Est-il sifflé par le parterre,
Hélas—c'est que le pauvre auteur
L'escamota de Molière.*
Oh, say why at “The Clever Thief”
The audience boomed, hissed, and sniped,
Alas! 'Tis that th' entire sheaf
From Molière the author swiped.
19. *Ibid.*, citing S.L. Pushkin, “*Biograficheskaya zametka*,” in *Ogonek*, No. 7, 1927.
20. D.F. Kobeko, *Imperatorskii tsarskoselskii litsei. Nastavniki i pitomtsy* (St. Petersburg: 1911), pp. 12-15.

The idea of a special school for aristocratic youth and members of the so-called service nobility had emerged among the reform recommendations, solicited by Alexander I from the circles of Mikhail Speransky during the early years of his rule. Speransky, the orphaned son of a Russian Orthodox priest, rose to the rank of Assistant Minister of Justice in 1808 and State Secretary in 1810, all the while translating the writings of Thomas à Kempis in his spare time. In 1807, Alexander named him, Prince Alexei Golitsyn, the poet and retired Justice Minister Gavriil Derzhavin, and several Russian Orthodox Church officials, to a commission on the reform of ecclesiastical education. They proposed a system of academies, seminaries, and district schools, to be financed by returning to the Church its monopoly on the sale of wax candles. At the same time, political storms raged around the project for an institution to educate national leaders.

The Duc de Richelieu, a French veteran of the Russian Army who in 1805 became Governor General of Novorossiysk in south-

ern Russia, proposed a Lycée for Russian noble youth on the model of Jesuit schools in Europe, to be staffed with Jesuits. (The Jesuit Order had a strong presence in Russia, where Catherine II gave its members refuge after Pope Clement XIV banned the Order in 1773.) The influence of Joseph De Maistre, a Savoyard refugee from the French invasion of Italy and Sardinian Ambassador to Russia, was on the rise in St. Petersburg just at this time. De Maistre lobbied members of the Russian nobility to whom he was close (he was working to convert as many of them as possible to Catholicism, even as he promoted a version of Freemasonry, mixed with an occultism that he called the “true divine magic” of Christianity), to win their support for Richelieu’s version of a Jesuit Lycée and opposition to the curriculum that was actually proposed. De Maistre corresponded constantly with Minister of Education Count Razumovsky during 1810.

The factional strife bearing on education policy is touched on in: Alan Palmer, *Alexander I, Tsar of War and Peace* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 164-176; Marc Raeff, *Michael Speransky, Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772-1839* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), pp. 56-63; James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970 edition), pp. 269-276.

21. V.F. Malinovskii, *Izbrannye obshchestvenno-politicheskie sochineniia* (Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., 1958), pp. 23-24. In his introduction to the Russian edition of Hamilton’s report, one of the founding documents of the American System of Political Economy, which defines the development of manufactures as the source of a nation’s wealth and the necessary condition for its security, Malinovsky wrote, “The similarity of the American United Provinces with Russia appears both in the expanse of land, climate, and natural conditions, and in size of population disproportionate to the space and the general youthfulness of various socially useful institutions; therefore all the rules, remarks and means proposed here are suitable for our country.” Malinovsky’s “world peace” studies antedate Immanuel Kant’s 1795 treatise on that topic.
22. Quoted in Bagration-Mukhraneli, *op. cit.*
23. The stanza of the poem on forgiveness is quoted in Helga Zepp LaRouche’s article in this issue, pp. 29.
24. Chisinau, today the capital of Moldova.
25. Douglas, *op.cit.* details the London and Venetian alliances of “Simon” Vorontsov.
26. The two wings of the Decembrist movement were the Northern Society and the Southern Society, originally so called after the division of the Union of Welfare secret society, founded in 1817. Anatole G. Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1937, 1964), gives the history of the Decembrist movement, including details of the various factions and their views, with documentary material from their writings and testimony at trial. Political ideas among the Decembrists ranged from radical republicanism, pledged to regicide and imitation of the Jacobin Committees of Public Safety, to designs for a constitutional monarchy, with economic reforms incorporating elements from America.
27. Just one week before the Decembrist revolt, Pushkin had written to Kyukhelbeker, the subject being the latter’s play *Shakespeare’s Spirits*, in which Kyukhelbeker used characters from *The Tempest* in a parody of Zhukovsky’s works. Kyukhelbeker was a serious translator of Shakespeare, working on the tragedies during his long years of Siberian exile.
28. “LaRouche in Dialogue with Russian Science,” *Executive Intelligence Review*, June 10, 1994 (Vol. 26, No. 24), pp. 30-43. The publication is the transcript of lectures and discussion before an audience of Russian scientists, gathered under the auspices of Dr. Pobisk Kuznetsov’s “*Prezident*” program. The “School of Athens” principle is developed in depth by LaRouche in “The Truth About Temporal Eternity,” *Fidelio*, Summer 1994 (Vol. III, No. 1), and in many other locations.
29. Svyatoslav ruled in Kievan Rus from c.945 to 972; Vladimir, who

converted to Christianity, from 980 to 1015. Mstislav founded the principality of Tmutarakan in the Eleventh century. Dmitri Donskoy, ruling prince of Moscow, ended the Tatar-Mongol occupation with the defeat of the Tatars at Kulikovo Field in 1380. Yermak Timofeyevich took western Siberia for Russia in the Sixteenth century. Prince Dmitri Pozharsky commanded Russian forces against Poland during the last years (1610-1613) of the Time of Troubles.

30. The Russian vowel Ъ, written ÿ in phonetic transcription, is sounded mid-mouth, between u and i. It is heard in the German pronunciation of the first vowel in *Physik*.
31. Groundbreaking work on the “died-away sounds” of ancient Indo-European was being done in St. Petersburg in Pushkin’s lifetime. The German philologist Friedrich Adelung was based there. His comparative studies of Sanskrit and European languages helped lay the basis for the breakthroughs of Franz Bopp, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the Grimm brothers in the 1820’s and later, on the relationship of these tongues as members of one language family. Adelung sent his study *Rapports entre la langue Sanscrit et la langue Russe (Connections between the Sanskrit and Russian Languages)* (St. Petersburg: 1811) around the world, including via Levett Harris to the American Philosophical Society.

In the Twentieth century, the Indian philologist S.K. Chatterji [1958 conference speech, reprinted in *Select Papers*, Vol. 2 (New Delhi: People’s Publishing House, 1979), pp. 131-154] made a short study of the rare surviving Russian oral epic poem, *Slovo o Polku Igoreve (The Lay of Igor’s Campaign)* or, as Chatterji translated it for emphasis on the shared word-roots: *The Word about Igor’s Folk*. A manuscript of the 770-line poem, with Twelfth-century subject-matter and Fifteenth-century script, was discovered in the Eighteenth century in the library of the Musin-Pushkin family. Its authenticity was debated. Pointing out that “Old Slav preserves some Primitive Indo-European linguistic features more than any other branch of Indo-European,” Chatterji suggested that “It will not be too much to suggest that the famous invocations to the Wind, the Water, and the Sun, which the loving and sorrowing wife of Igor, Yaroslavna, is making on the ramparts of the town of Putivl, have a Vedic ring about them.”

*svetloye i tresvetloye Solntse!
vsemu teplo i krasno yesi!*

Bright and thrice-bright Sun!
To all men warm and beauteous art thou!

Chatterji commented, “This invocation can easily be rendered into Sanskrit, using a good many words of the original Old Russian text in their Sanskrit equivalents or cognate forms—so closely do the words . . . of this unique fragment of . . . ancient Slav poetry run with the words and sentiments of Aryan and Indo-European language and poetry as preserved in the *Vedas*.” Chatterji carried out the experiment:

*svētalāḥ āt tri-svētalāḥ Sūryaka!
viśvēbhyaḥ tāpalaḥ āt ślakṣṇah (?) asi!*

There is no indication of Pushkin’s direct involvement with the German philologists, but he intervened in the debate about the Russian epic. One of his last essays, dated 1836, is called “*Pesn o polku Igoreve*” (“The Song of Igor’s Campaign”). Regarding authenticity, Pushkin went by what he could hear: “There is no evidence, except the word of the song-writer himself. The authenticity of the song is proven by its spirit of antiquity, which is impossible to feign. Who among our writers in the Eighteenth century had the talent to do this? Karamzin? But Karamzin was not a poet. Derzhavin? But Derzhavin didn’t know Russian, never mind the language of ‘The Song of Igor’s Campaign.’ The rest of them had not as much poetry, all put together, as is to be found in Yaroslavna’s lament alone.”

32. J. Thomas Shaw, translator of Pushkin's letters into English, provides Karamzin's observations as conveyed to Pushkin by Vyazemsky: "You must have in mind in depicting the character of Boris a savage mixture: piety and criminal passions. He constantly reread the Bible and sought in it justifications for himself. That is a dramatic contradiction."
33. Muriel Mirak Weissbach, "Lessing's Shakespeare Revolution in Germany" (unpublished, 1999).
34. M.P. Alekseev, "Pushkin i Shekspir," in *Pushkin. Sravnitel'no-istoricheskie issledovaniia* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972), p. 249ff.
35. Having written two chapters of *Yevgeni Onegin*, by the time of his work on *Boris Godunov*, Pushkin was also incubating the character of Tatyana, the figure whose uncompromising virtue and integrity makes her the heroine of that novel. Marina Mnishek, though, is not a sketch for a cookie-cutter of the "strong female" type. Pushkin wrote in a letter to Rayevsky the younger in 1829, of which a draft survives, that Marina herself should be seen as a tragic figure: ". . . most certainly she was a strange, beautiful woman. She had only one passion and that was ambition, but to such a degree of energy, of frenzy that one can scarcely imagine it. After having tasted of royalty, watch her, drunk of a chimera, prostitute herself with one adventurer after another. . . . Watch her boldly face war, destitution, shame, and at the same time negotiate with the king of Poland as one crowned head with another—and end miserably a most extraordinary life. I have only one scene for her, but I shall return to her, if God grants me life." He also wanted to write again about Prince Shuysky, the leading boyar figure in *Godunov*.
36. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act III, Scene 4. Academician Alekseev's research on Pushkin's study of Shakespeare does not highlight *King Lear*; although it was one of the first works translated into Russian (from a French version) by Nikolai Gnedich.
37. Alekseev, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
38. Kyukhelbeker translated *Macbeth* in 1828-1829. He was so immersed in Shakespeare, that an 1836 letter of his to Pushkin from Siberia came in this mixture of English (italics show English in the original) and Russian: "I am going to get married; now I shall be *Benedick the married man*, and my *Beatrice* is almost as much of a little *Shrew* as in old man *Willy's Much Ado*." Quoted in Alekseev, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
39. V.A. Plotnikova, "*Rabota Pushkina nad slovom v protsesse sozdaniia poeticheskogo teksta*" ("Pushkin's Work on Word Use in the Process of Creating a Poetic Text"), in *Problemy Sovremennoi Filologii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965). The anthology is a Festschrift, prepared by the Literature and Language Division of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., for the seventieth birthday of Academician V.V. Vinogradov, author of *Iazyk Pushkina (Pushkin's Language)*. Plotnikova gives the example from *Anchar* and several others.
40. Iu.S. Sorokin, "Razgovornaia i narodnaia rech' v 'Slovar Akademii Rossiiskoi'" ("Conversational and Popular Speech in the 'Dictionary of the Russian Academy'"), in *Materialy i issledovaniia po istorii russkogo literaturnogo iazyka* (Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., 1949), Vol. 1, pp. 95-160. Sorokin gives dozens of examples, from *rukhnut* ("to collapse") to *krysha* ("roof"), citing their use in literature by Pushkin and others, and some instances of loud protests by Pushkin's critics against such usage. He notes Pushkin's high regard for the *Slovar*, about which the poet wrote that "It can only be regretted that our writers too infrequently consult the Dictionary of the Russian Academy." In *Onegin*, Chapter I, Stanza 26, Pushkin jokes about the impossibility of finding, even in the *Slovar*, Russian words to describe the dandy Yevgeni's attire: *gilet, pantalon, frac*.
41. See Mirak Weissbach, *The Power . . .*, pp. 11-15, on the universal character of the Classical strophic poem. Pushkin's "Imitations of the Quran," done from translations into other European lan-
- guages, proceed from God's instruction to the prophet, "Read! Recite!"
42. These traditions are still alive in Slavic-language poetry. In 1993, members of the Schiller Institute had an opportunity to ask the Ukrainian poet Pavlo Movchan, a Member of Parliament and a guest speaker at a Schiller Institute conference in the United States, to recite some of his verses. Movchan began to chant and sing; the verse incorporated elements of pitch-accent in the manner of the Indo-European epics of antiquity.
43. *The Tale of the Golden Cockerel* brings to light yet another of Pushkin's partners in story-telling and language-creation—the American writer Washington Irving. Pushkin retold Irving's "Legend of the Arabian Astrologer" from the *Tales of the Alhambra*, which Pushkin acquired in French as soon as it was published, in the same year as its English editions, 1832. Thus, we have a rendition in Russian narrative verse form, of an American's retelling of this story from Moorish Spain!
- Irving's story begins: "In old times many hundred years ago there was a Moorish King named Aben Habuz who reigned over the kingdom of Granada. He was a retired conqueror, that is to say, one who, having in his more youthful days led a life of constant foray and depredation, now that he was grown feeble and superannuated, 'languished for repose' and desired nothing more than to live at peace with all the world."
- Compare Pushkin's *Golden Cockerel*:
- Once upon a time and long ago,
In a kingdom far away,
Lived the famous Tsar Dadon.
Fearsome was he from his youth
And he inflicted bold offense
On his neighbors time and again,
But in old age he desired from
Fighting wars to take a rest
And make for himself, repose; . . .
- The late Allen Salisbury's enthusiastic research into the spread of American story-telling (by diplomats and intelligence agents, as most of these writers were) in Europe, led me to recognize the Irving story in Pushkin. Anna Akhmatova made the same comparison, in her 1931-1933 article, "*Posledniaia skazka Pushkina*" ("Pushkin's Last Fairy Tale"), printed in *Anna Akhmatova o Pushkine* (see footnote 3).
44. V.M. Zhirmunskii, "*Russkii narodnyi stikh v 'Skazke o rybake i rybke'*" ("Russian Folk Verse in 'The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish'"), in *Problemy Sovremennoi Filologii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965). Zhirmunsky gives detailed analysis of the phrase-groups, or syntagmas, in this tale, as following from the accentual verse developed by Pushkin in *Pesni zapadnykh slavyan*.
45. Pushkin, review in *Literaturnaiia Gazeta* (1830) of N. Polevoi's *Istoriia Russkogo Naroda*.
46. Pushkin, *Puteshestvie iz Moskvy v Peterburg* (1833-1835).
47. "Lord Palmerston's Human Zoo," *Executive Intelligence Review*, April 16, 1994 (Vol. 26, No. 16), pp. 4-45.
48. Pushkin, "*O nichtozhestve literatury russkoi*" (1834).
49. The "two Ivans" are Ivan IV (Tsar, r. 1533-1584) and his grandfather Ivan III ("the Great", r. 1462-1505). Ivan IV's son Dmitri died at Uglich in 1591; the Time of Troubles ended in 1613 with the election of Michael Romanov at Ipatyev Monastery. By his "prejudices," Pushkin refers to those of a member of the old nobility against the corruption of the "service nobility" introduced by Peter I.
50. David G. Huntley, "On the source of Pushkin's *nerukotvornyi*," *Die Welt der Slaven* (Wiesbaden, 1970), Jg. 15, Heft 4, p. 362.
51. After the translation in Walter N. Vickery, *Alexander Pushkin* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970).