

Hamletism in Russia : Perspective in History. :
From the First Hamlet (Sumarokov, 1748) to its
First Stage (Mochalov, 1838)

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Hamletism in Russia: Perspective in History.

-From the First *Hamlet* (Sumarokov,1748) to its First Stage (Mochalov,1838)-

OKABE Shoichi

1. Hamlet and Hamletism in Russia

Russian Shakespeariana has already amassed a great quantity of literature on the theme of the Russian reception of and interpretation of Shakespeare's work in general, and specifically on "the theme of Russian life and culture through the perspective provided by Russia's approach to *Hamlet*." The latter theme is "Hamletism in Russia."(1)

1. A. Bardovskii, "Russkii Gamlet," *Russkoe Proshloe*, Kn.4. Pg.-M., 1923:135-145.& Kn. 5:112-120. * V.P. Kin, "Gamletism i Nigilism v Tvorchestve Turgeneva," *Literatura i Marksizm* M.,1929, Kn.VI:71-116. * B. Alpers, ① *Akterskoe Iskusstvo v Rossii* T.1. M.-L., 1945:136-146. ② "Russkii Gamlet," *Teatr*, 1955, Nr.8.65-70. * F. S. Grim, *Russkaya i Ukrainskaya Gumanisticheskaya Kontseptsiya Tragedii Shekspira <Gamlet>*. Kiev, 1958. * G. Kozintsev, *Nash Sovremennik Vil'yam Shekspir*. M., 1962:167-210. (Gr.<Gamlet> i <Gamletizm>) * I. Bertsman, <Gamlet> *Shekspira*. M., 1964: (Gr.<"Gamlet i Galmletianstvo">) * M.E. Elizarova, "Obraz Gamlet i Problema <Gamletizma> v Russkoi Literature Kontsa XIX v. ('80-90-e Gody)" *Nauch. Dokl. Vysshei Shkoly. Filol. Nauki*, 1964, Nr.1(25):46-56.; * Yu.D. Levin, "Stat'ya I.S.Turgeneva <Gamlet i Don-Kixot>." * H.A. Dobrolyubov, *Stat'i i Materialy*. Gor'kii, 1965:122-163. * L. khodorkovskaya "Mir Deistvite'nosti Zhizni : (Belinskii o <Gamlete>)," *Vop. Lit.*, 1966, Nr. 6:155-171. * B.M. Eikhenbaum, "Istorii <Gamleta> v Rosii," *Shekspirovskii Sbornik*, 1967, M., 1968, pp. 60-71. * M. Smolkin, "Shekspir v Zhizni i Tvorchestve Chekhova," *ibid.*, 72-84. * N.F. Budanova, "Roman <Nov> v Svete Turgenevskoi Kontseptsii Gamleta i Don-Kixota," *Rus. Lit.*, 1969, Nr.:180-190. * Zh.S.Norets, "Ivanov i Gamlet (Opyt Sravnitel'noi Kharakteristiki)," *Stranitsy Russkoi Literatury Selediny XIX Veka: Sb. Nauchnykh Trudov*, L., 1974:160-172. * E. H. Oprishko, "Prelomlenie Vzglyadov I.S. Turgeneva na Tip <Lishnego Cheloveka> v Stat'e <Gamlet i Don-Kixot>," *Russkaya Literatura XIX-XX Vekov i Voprosy Ee Tipologii*. Dnepropetrovsk, 1975:7-18.

The theme of "Gamletism in Russia" to a various extent is treated in a various chapters of the book, (ed.) M.P.Alekseev, *Shekspir i Russkaya Kul'tura*. (M.-L., 1965), and in an unpublished Master Thesis of Yu. Semënov, "Gamlet v Rossii (Istoriya Perevoda i Kritiki)," (M., 1946); Also T.K. Shakh-Azizova, <Russkii Gamlet (<Ibanov> i Ego Vremya) (in the book: *Chekhov i Ego Vremya*. M., 1977: 232-246.

* I embrace this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Yu.D. Levin for his frequent replies to my enquiries, advice and assistance in our correspondence since the *viva voce* discussions I had had with him on the theme of Russian Hamletism during my stay in Moscow (1990-91) as a scholar of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences (日本学術振興会).

Dr. Levin is Senior Fellow of the Institute of Russian Literature at the Academy of Sciences (at St. Petersburg) of the former Soviet Union.

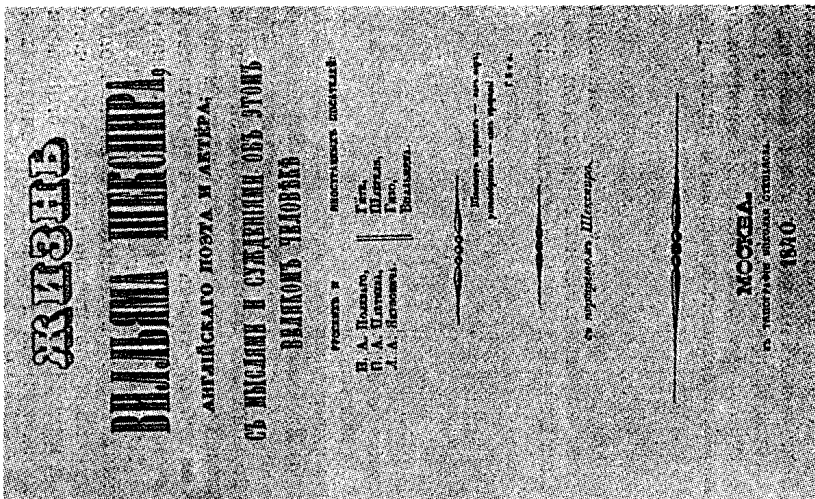
Dr. Levin was awarded Honorary Doctorate by Oxford University in 1988 and was elected President of Humanities Research Association (1992-94), and he was also made Corresponding Member of the British Academy (1993) for his outstanding contribution to the discipline of the Anglo-Russian cultural and literary relations.

Dr. Levin became the successor of late academician M.P. Alekseev (1896-1979) for the study of Shakespeare in Russia when he had joined in the making of the voluminous *Shakespeare i Russkaya Kur'tura*, (Shakespeare and Russian Culture. AK.NK. 1965. 824 pp.).

Dr. Levin's main contributions to Russian Shakespeariana, among others, are the following.

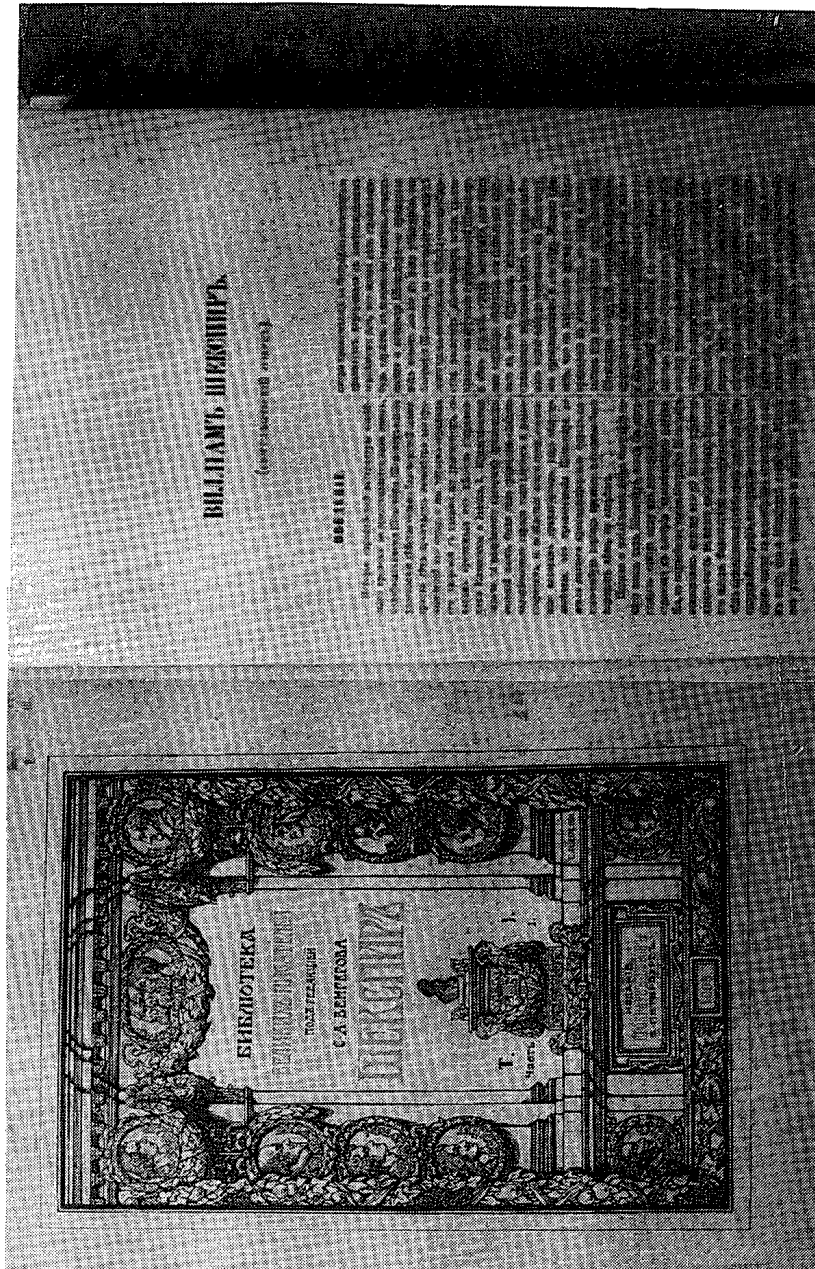
1. *Shakespeare i Russkaya Literatura v XIX Veka* (M.-L., AK.NK.1988. 327 pp.)
2. "Shakespeare and Russian Literature: Nineteenth-Century Attitudes," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 1989 (New Series, vol. XXII) 113-132.
3. Yu.D. Levin, *Vospriyatie Angliiskoi Literatury v Rossii: Issledovaniya i Materialy*. Leningrad: «Nauka», 1990. 288 pp.
4. "European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age," in Dirk Delabastita & Lieven D'hulst (ed.), *European Shakespeares*. John Benjamins Publishing Co. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: 1993:75-90.

The origin of Russian Hamletism is in the transition period from romanticism to realism, and Russian Hamletism is one of the driving forces for this transition. As it is, I put a special emphasis on the period from the '30 through '40's of the nineteenth century. However I will step



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Title page of Vengerov's edition of Shakespeare's Selected Russian Translation vol. 1 Nr. 1 1900

Vengerov's article; "William Shakespeare: Biographical Essay. 1st page

**ЖИЗНЬ
И
СМЕРТЬ
РИЧАРДА III
КОРОЛЯ АГЛИНСКАГО,
ТРАГЕДІЯ
ГОСПОДИНА
ШАКЕСПЕРА.**

Жившата въ XVI вѣсѣ, а умръшата 1470 году.
Переведена съ Французскаго языка въ Насъ
жизнѣ Новбъ-городѣ 1783 году.



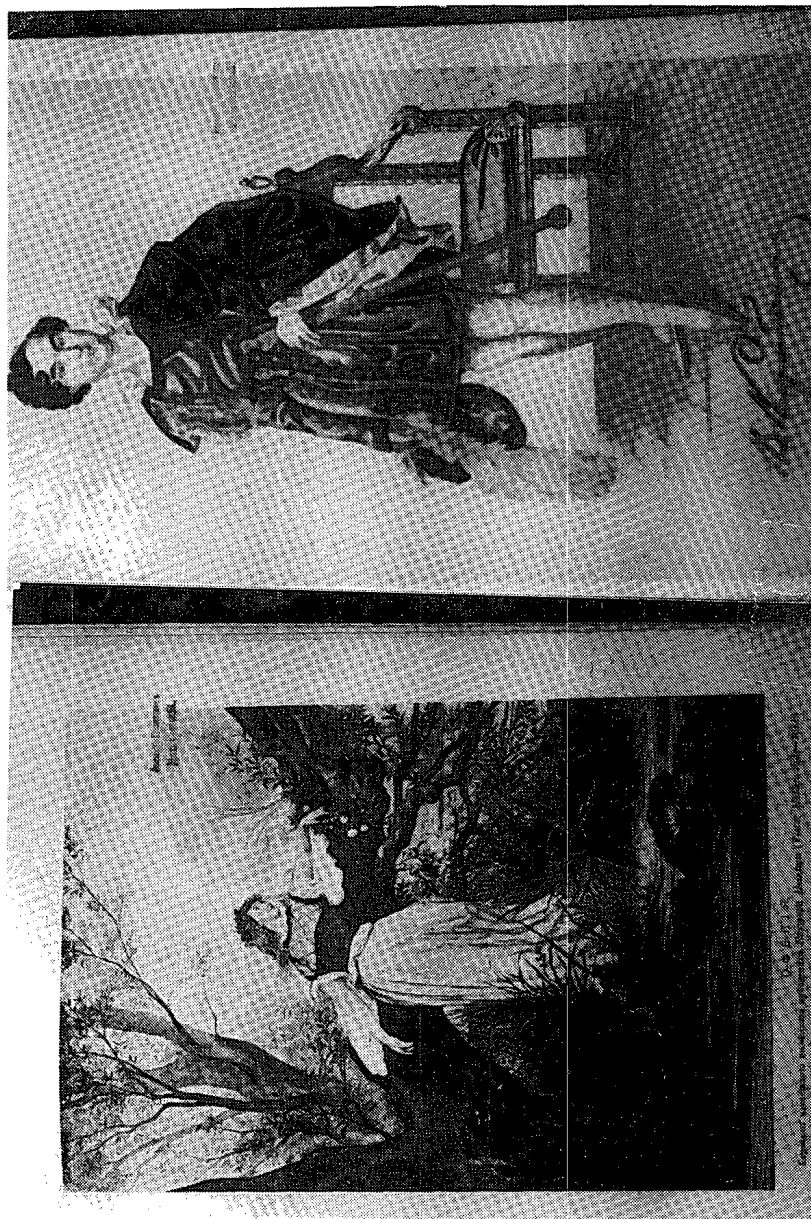
печатано съ дозволенія управы Благоченія.

ВЪ САНКТПЕТЕРБУРГѢ
1787 году.

**ТИТУЛЬНЫЙ ЛИСТЪ РУССКОГО
ИЗДАНИЯ ТРАГЕДИИ
ШЕКСПИРА «ЖИЗНЬ И СМЕРТЬ
РИЧАРДА III»**

Экземпляр из библиотечки
Белинского

Музей И. С. Тургенева, Орел



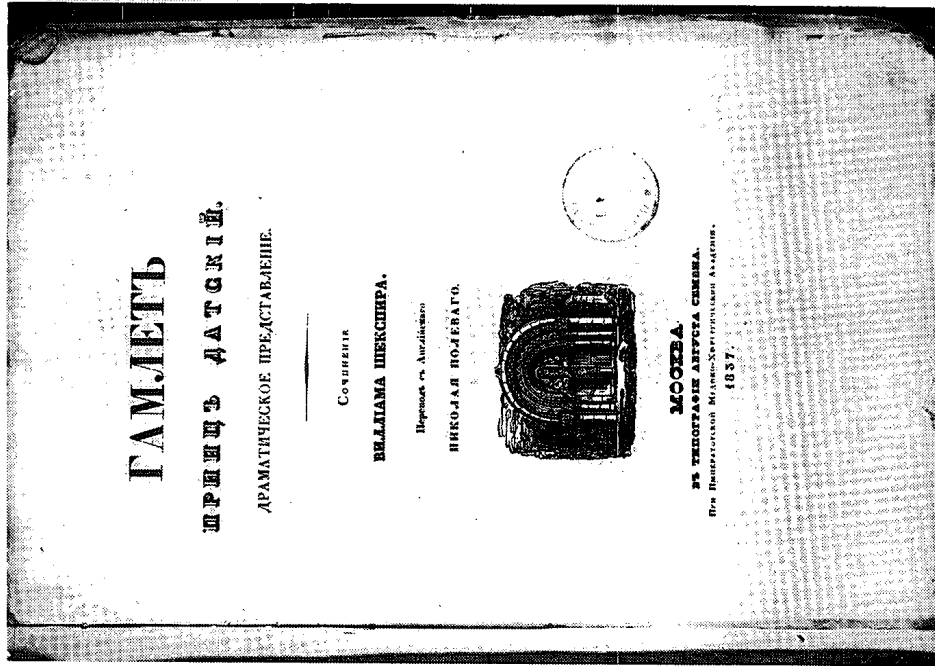
Peter Andrevich Karatygin
(1802-1853) as Hamlet in
St. Petersburg, December
1839

Ophelia, painted by a famous
German painter Victor Müller
(1829-1871)



N. Polevoi

Nikolai Aleksevich Polevoi (1796-1846) :
Translator of the *Hamlet*, 1838.



Title page of Polevoi's Russian Translation of
the *Hamlet*, 1838

over the framework of this period, and inquire into the earlier and later times of this transition period, so that I might present Russian Hamletism in its entirety.

The theme of Hamletism has often been confused with concrete interpretations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the works which had made a special study of the theme of Hamletism. Although the two themes have much in common, two themes do not completely coincide with one another. The confusion of two conceptions has rightly been enhanced by a stereotype interpretation of Hamletism and Hamlet.

Scholars, starting from contemporary interpretations of the *Hamlet*, which has been accumulated in Russia, applies the conception of the *Hamlet* of the former times to the present-day *Hamlet*, and palmed it over as "true" or "false" interpretations of *Hamlet*. However instead of relying on the stereotype interpretation of the *Hamlet*, we have to interpret and explain the *Hamlet* in the perspective in history.

It is a commonplace knowledge that in the Shakespearean tragedy *Hamlet* its intellectual hero, Hamlet, is eternally tormented with ambivalent conflict of love and duty. This image of tormented Hamlet is characteristic of the crisis of Renaissance humanism. In consequence the image of suffering Hamlet has widely been accepted in all over the world and all through 400 years after Shakespeare's demise, and this image has been embodied in a great number of interpretations in literary works and in stage performances. Apart from a concrete story of the *Hamlet*, the plot of the tragedy lies in the fact that Hamlet, the hero, who is conscious of surrounding inhuman and evil realities, realizes that it is his duty to fight against such insuperable realities, but at the same time he feels that he is not equal to this strife.

Therefore a doubt occurs to him for human existence and a wish for suicide, which has culminated in the too, too famous monologue of Prince Hamlet. ("To be or not to be, that is the question": *Hamlet*, III,1,55)

This ambivalent conflict is an immanent motif of the tragedy. But whatever is the cause of a tragical conflict the conflict lies in the inside of the hero, or does it exist apart from the hero? What is a concrete representation of this inward or outward situation? These questions

could be answered in many ways, and this possibility for multifarious interpretations entails a large number of interpretations of the *Hamlet* through centuries.

Some of these interpretations gives birth to the so-called Hamletism. Suffering of the prince of Denmark, in accordance with interpretations of the *Hamlet*, is projected onto a spiritual life of certain generations, of some social groups, and even of a whole nation which had experienced a crisis that had jeopardized her life in history.

Even though the starting point of realizing the spiritual crisis is Shakesperean *Hamlet*, Hamletism obtains a widely accepted autonomy, and reflects interests and spiritual needs of its interpreters, and ideologists of a new age. G.M. Kozintsëv (1905-1973) vividly delineates, "A tiny statuette in a funeral costume rises to become a colossal figure, which is able to participate in a grandiose ideological struggle. But the more firece the struggle becomes, the more often comes forward the concept of Hamletism, and the very image of the Prince of Denmark recedes "in the thin air." "Finally the bone of contention becomes a bare concept of Hamletism. The progenitor of Hamletism was not necessarily Shakespeare, but also he could be a great many other people."(2)

It is well known that Hamlet, the most well known figure of all the Shakesperean heroes, like the other equally famous heröes of the world literature, breakes away from the concrete work of his birth, Shakespear-ean *Hamlet*, and acquires a meaning of a certain "supertype", a socio-psychological generalization of such a wide scope and extent that Hamlet has been accorded a privilage for eternal existence which is not rounded off with any period.(3)

Inspiring the minds of succeeding generations, Shakesperean heroes moves from one work to the other, thereby obtaining a new characteristic, and at the same time keeping hold of a definite immanent core, which inherently makes up a core content of the supertypes of the heroes.

I.A. Goncharov (1812-91) remarked in this connection: "Don-Quixote, Lear, Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, Falstaff, Don Juan, Tartuffe and others,

2. G. Kozintsëv, *Hash Sovremennik Vil'yam Shekspir*, pp.170-171.

3. L.M. Lotman, *Realizm Russkoi Literatury 60-x Godov XIX Veka*. L., 1974, p.96.

breaks into pieces in the works of later authors, giving birth to a whole series of kinship generations.” (4).

We could even assert that these supertypes were not the creations of the authors, but were discovered in a world of realities. I.S. Turgenev (1818-1883) wrote on the *Hamlet*. “Shakspeare discovered ‘Hamlet’ and made him our common property.”(5)

And later as an author of the *Rudin* (1856) Turgenev has often put emphasis on the immanence of Shakespearean types, which had been torn off from the life itself. Turgenev also elaborated on the fact that “Shakespearean heroes were taken deeply and truthfully from the very core of the essence of man. Of “their right to live, their banality,” speak the interlocuters in the introductory to Turgenev’s novel entitled *Stepniy Korol’ Lir* (*King Lear of the Steppe*. 1857). Moreover each of the interlocuters speaks of Hamlet, Othello, Falstaff, and even of Richard the Third and Macbeth, whom he happened to have met, although none of us in reality could hope to meet the last two characters.(6)

And on the testimony of I.Ya. Pavlovskii, memoir writer of Turgenev, Turgenev seems to have said, “Shakespeare created Hamlet, but we natually lose something from that which the contemporaries of Shakespeare had found and represented in Hamlet.”

Spkeaking of the essence of the Prince of Denmark, we have to emphasize one characteristic, which distinguishes Hamlet from other Shakespearean heroes, who had also attained the status of the supertypes, the status of man’s “true companions.”

“Those (Shakesperean) heroes were created in their circumstances, and our heroes were created in our circumstances. We are bound to find these circumstances and consequent eombodiments,” (7) said Turgenev, one of the leading creators of Russian Hamletism.

4. I.A. Goncharov, *Luchshe Pozdno, Chem Nekogda* (1897). *Sobr. Soch.*, T.VIII, M., 1955, p.104.

5. I.S. Turgenev, *Poln. Sobr. Soch.i Pisem. Pis'ma*, T. II. M.-L.,1961. p. 301 (Pis'mo N. A. Nekrasovu i V.P.Botkinu ot 25 Iyunya 1855 g.)

6. *ibid.*, *Soch.*, T. X, p. 186.

7. P. [I.Ya.Pavlovskii], “*Vospominaniya ob I.S.Turgeneve*,” *Russkii Kur'er*, 1884, 20 Maya, Nr. 137, p. 2.

The name of Macbeth is usually applied to the usurper of the power, and that of Lady Macbeth to a killer's collaborator; Othello's name was associated with the jealous husband, who kills his beloved wife or who makes an attempt on her life. Lear reminds us of a man who is unfortunate in his heirs, whom he himself had benefited (cf. Turgenev's *King Lear on the Steppe* (1859), Zlatovratskii's (1845-1911) *Derevenskii Korol' Lir* (*King Lear of the Village*) (1858) and others.

However Hamlet of a new era, as usual, need not revenge himself on a murderer of his father; he need not struggle for the crown. Hamlet does not fight against neither to Claudius nor to Gertrude, and new Ophelia does not always accompany Hamlet. An uneventful story of these textures does not associate Hamlet with Shakespearean prototype Hamlet. And ideological and psychological figure of Hamlet is represented in the way in which new interpreters of Hamletism have understood Hamlet.

L.E.Pinskii (1906-195?), writer of *Shakespeare* (1971), observing a fate of 'True types' in world literature, has distinguished two types; one is a "subject-story" type, where a main motif of story moves from one work over to another. (Prometheus, Don Juan, Faust and others), and the other is "subject-situation" type, in which Pinskii puts Don Quixote and Hamlet. Pinskii wrote "for Hamlet's situation there is no need for court situation; no need for revenge for father nor for any other motifs of Shakespearean tragedies"(8)

2. History of *the Hamlet* in Russia.

As has been shown above, the formative period of Russian Hamletism was at about the 30-40's in the nineteenth century, when in Russian literature was completed a transition from romanticism to realism, and in a social-political life, a transition from the phase of the aristocrats' movement for freedom to the phase of a common intellectual's movement for freedom.

However Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet* had already been widely known in Russia. It is interesting to note that the very first Shakespearean reminiscence appeared in print as early as in 1713. "Superb Hamlet's

and Othello's comedies."(9). Apparently neither a translator who had written the word *Hamlet* nor its readers had not understood what this word had been about

In 1748 the First *Hamlet* in Russia by A.P. Sumarokov (1717-1777), the first professional writer in Russia, was published, but this was a complete reworking of the original. Even the name of Shakespeare was not mentioned, and Hamlet and Ophelia were wedded happily at the end of Sumarokov's version *Hamlet*, and in 1811 Viskovatov's (P.A.1842-1905) *Hamlet* was brought out, but both *Hamlets* were reworked not from the original English *Hamlet*, but from A.de Laplace (1707-1798) and J.F.Ducis' s (1733-1816) French translations respectively. These *Hamlets* had often been studied in the discipline of Russian literature. (10)

However these *Hamlets* have had no essential relevance to the theme of this paper. Both *Hamlets* were a reworking or an adaptation on a canon of French neo-classicism ; "A tragedy was conceived as a drama from a life of a crowned personage."(11)

These Hamlets might invoke allusion to the topical political scene for the temper of the time of Ekaterina Second's reign, when Ekaterina had taken the crown of her husband. and the image of the prince of Denmark was associated with her son Pavel, That is why the staging of the *Hamlet* had been prohibited for about thirty years during her reign.

However Sumarokov intended his *Hamlet* to justify a court coup d' état to elevate Elizaveta Petrovna to the throne.(12) And Viskovatov

9. Pervod LXI Razgovora iz 1 chati Spektatora.- *Istoricheskie, Genealogicheskie i Geograficheskie Primechaniya v Vedomostyakh*, 1731, ch. LXXVII, p.318 cf. Yu.D. Levin, "O Pervom Upominanii P'es Shekspira v Russkoi Pechati." *Rus. Lit.*, 1965, Nr.1:196-198.

10. In addition to the above cited works of A.A. Bardovskii, cf. B.M. Eikhenbaum and relevant chapters of a co-authored work of Alekseev and Levin, *Shekspir i Russkaya Kul'tura* (1965), cf. B.A. Lebedev, "Znakomstvo s Shekspirom v Rossii do 1812 Goda," *Russkii Vestnik*, 1875, Nr.12:756-775.& A.S.Bulgakov, "Ranee Znakomstvo s Shekspirom v Rossii," v kn.: *Teatral'noe Nasledie, lb. Statei*, 1. L.-M., 1934, pp.48-52, pp.75-78; Also B.N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross "Politicheskie Idei Russkoi Klassitsisticheskoi tragedii," *O Teatre. Sb. Statei*, 1, L.-M., 1940, pp.110-112.

11. *Russkoe Proshloe*, Kn.4, p.135.

12. *ibid.*, pp.141-143.

might have intended to rehabilitate Aleksander I. Rumour had it that Aleksander had participated in the murder of his father, Pavel I. (13)

Nothing similar to Hamletism was found in the life of heroes of both *Hamlets*, which in the end triumph over the enemies.

A reviewer of the *Moscow Telegraph* aptly wrote afterward on the reissue of Viskovatov's *Hamlet* "All secret progresses of fate, all struggles of *Hamlet's* with himself, all deep thought, philosophical scenes with actors, with Horatio, with grave-diggers and others, in short, all of Shakespeare's were lost in intolerable distortion of the *Hamlet*, by Ducis and Sumarokov."(14)

Early Russian adaptation of the *Hamlet* dates from the pre-history of Russian Shakespeariana, when Russia had been little informed of Shakespeare. Knowledge of Shakespeare entered Russia mostly from French or German translations or adaptations, and there were very few Russian intellectuals who had been interested in Shakespeare.

Genuine interest in the *Hamlet* occurred with development of Romantic idea in literature. Pushkin and the writers of the Decembrist group were ardent advocates of this literary idea, but they were mainly interested in Shakespeare's historical plays such as *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Merchant of Venice* and fantastical comedies, such as *Windsor's Merry Wives* (with Falstaff).(15)

Of course they had been informed themselves of the *Hamlet*. However they did not specifically take up the *Hamlet* among from other Shakespearean works. Character of the Prince of Denmark, and especially its German interpretation did not so much evoke due interests, as ironical associations in their minds.

3. Pushkin and *the Hamlet*

Pushkin, for instance, was remotely referring to a few passages of the *Hamlet*. He quotes in his poem *Iz Pindemonti* (1836) a famous speech of the *Hamlet*

13. A. A. Vardovskii put forward such a view (cf. *op. cit.*, Kn.5, pp.118-119.)

14. *Moskovskii Telegraf*, 1830, ch. XXXII, Nr 8, p.498.

15. Yu.D. Levin, *Shakespeare i Russkaya Literatura XIX Veka*, 1988, p.32.

"words, words, words," and to be exact, this scene refers to the *Hamlet*. (When Hamlet comes forward with his eyes on the book, Polonius asks; "What do you read, my lord ?, Hamlet's answer was "Words, words, words.") (Act 2, Scene 2, line 194). (16)

Pushkin quotes the *Hamlet* with *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, and other works of Shakespeare mentioned above, which he thought were worthy of a great nation. (17)

In his masterpiece of prose poem *Eugenie Onegin* (1823-30) Pushkin quote a word "poor Yorick" from the *Hamlet*, in the stanza XXXVIII, which recalls Lenskii's visit to the graveyard.

Соседа памятник смиренный,
И вздох он пеплу посвятил;
И долго сердцу грустно было.
«Poor Yorick! — молвил он уныло, —
Он на руках меня держал».

(VI, 48)

(18)

a neighbor's tombstone humble,
and with a sigh he dedicated ashes,
and for long sad was with heart.
"Poor Yorick !" said he dolefully.

(*Hamlet*. Let me see, [*Takes the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick !" *Hamlet*, 5.1, 178-180) (19)

And it is the same with his *Epistle to Delvig* (1827), in which characteristics of 'Hamlet-Baratynskii' was alluded to in a poem of "Skull" (1824).

16. Pushkin, *Poln.Sobr.Soch.*, T., III. M.-L., 1948, p.420.

17. *ibid.*, T. XI, p.40.

18. "Pushkin i Shekespir," in M.P.Alekseev (Red.), *Pushkin: Sravnitel'no-Istoricheskie Issredovaniya*, 1972, p.243. (pp. 240-280). Pushkin put this 'poor Yorick' in the mouth of Lenskii with his immaculate Göttingen mind.

19. E. Rowe, "Pushkin, Lermontov and Hamlet," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 1975, vol. xvii.

It is remarkable that two of Pushkin's references to the *Hamlet* were to the graveyard, where Hamlet muses on the skull of Yorick, a jester.

In "a graveyard, with a newly opened graves; yew-trees, and a gate" (*Hamlet*, Act 5, Scene 1) a clown digs up a skull and showed it to "Hamlet (clad in sailor's garb.)" (*loc.cit.*), The clown says: "...this same skull, was, sir, Yorick's skull, the king's jester." Hamlet "Let me see. [*Takes the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times" (5,1,180-186)

We have a feeling that most of all Pushkin took to this scene of graveyard with two gravediggers, with its mixture of high and low, of tragical and comical feel. Pushkin recreated Shakespeare's gravediggers in his *Grobovshchik* (the Undertaker) (1821). (20)

Taking this into account, we might be able to explicate a well-known enigmatical phrase "A time comes for a mature literature ." (1828), where Pushkin wrote: "In a scene of ghost in the *Hamlet* all were written in a jestful style, even merging with a base style, but the hair comes to stand on end from Hamlet's joke." (21).

The ghost of a murdered King Hamlet appears on the battlement of the Elsinor castle, and speaks to the prince Hamlet, who was waiting him there.

The ghost accosted to Hamlet "I am thy father's spirit/Doomed for a certain term to walk the night/And for the day confined to fast in fires/Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature /Are burnt and purged away." And the king ghost orders Hamlet, "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" by prince Hamlet's uncle Claudius, who "Now wears his (father's) crown." (Act 1, Scene 5, 10-25.)

However as is seen from the original passage quoted above, the style of the ghost scene is by no means "jestful." Hamlet's encounter with the ghost of his father is not a stock for laughter.

Here Pushkin blunders for his slip of pen, but in fact he had had in his mind the scene of the graveyard where two clowns were digging the

20. Pushkin, *Porn. Sobr. Soch.*, t. VIII, p. 89.

21. *ibid.*, t.xi, p.73.

grave, and bantering with Hamlet.(Act 5, scene 1) (22)

Contemporary literary men of Pushkin age were similar to Pushkin in their approach to the *Hamlet*. Of course they had known the *Hamlet*, but they did not specifically take up this tragedy among from Shakespeare's works.

A.A. Bestuzhëv (1761-1810), from his exile camp at Yakutsk, quotes Hamlet's words for a praise of man in his letter to his sister (dated 25 May, 1828) who happened be staying in Denmark. He wrote: "In his apprehensions how like God!" Thus wrote all-embracing Shakespeare," (23), but he did not write to her that Prince Hamlet had uttered the words. The passage in the original *Hamlet* is "in apprehension how like a god!"

To be exact in the original *Hamlet*, Prince Hamlet made a longish laudatory declamation for man's excellence.

"What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals;" (*Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2:303-311)

However he asked his sister to send over to him the *Tempest* and the *Henry VI*. (24).

Wilhelm Küchelbecker (1797-1846), authority and admirer of Shakespeare, translated *Macbeth*, *Merchant of Venice*, and made a frequent use of Shakespearean motifs in his works. However he quoted the *Hamlet* only in passing in an epistolary poem "Pamyanniku D.G. the Grinka," (For Nephew D.G. Glinka) (1839).

В земле, которой чудотворный дух
Великого очаровал поэта,
И он склонил к ее предапьям слух
И завещал бессмертию Гамлета.²⁸

22. Pushkin's first version of the passage was "in a scene of the *Hamlet*, all was written in a jestful style, and the hair stood on end from Shakespeare's joke" (*ibid.*, p. 345.)

23. *Pamyati Dekabristov: Sb. Materialov*, II. L., 1926, p.201.

24. *Pamyati Dekabristov :Sbornik. Materialov*. II. L., 1926, p. 201.

In the land, a spirit of miracle worker
 Charmed the great poet.
 And he listened to the earth's legend
 And bequeathed immortal Hamlet.

(translation mine) (25)

In this respect Decembrist, M.S. Lunin (1787-1845), must be recalled; who was in a voyage in 1816 along the Elsinore castle, proposed to his friend to go ashore, and said in a joke, "We might probably meet Hamlet in a hall of the fortress in the same place where rancorous ghost of Father King appeared to divulge the secret of his death to Hamlet." (26)

A.A. Delvig (1798-1831) in his idyll *Konez Zolotogo Veka* (The End of the Golden Century) (1828) "felt reverence to a poetical genius of a tragedian of Great Britain," (27) and he made use of a motif from the *Hamlet*, but his selected motif was not concerned with Hamlet, but with the fate of Ophelia.

Pushkin wrote to the decembrists' exiles in a Siberia: "Your sorrowful work and high-flown spirit will not disappear," and the exiled decembrists echoed and reciprocated Pushkin; "Our sorrowful work will not disappear and from a spark a fire will flare up."

Не пропадет ваш скорбный труд
 И дум высокое стремление, —
 Наш скорбный труд не пропадет,
 Из искры возгорится пламя.

This mood is not only foreign to Hamletism but diametrically opposes to it. It is not in vain that Gertsen (1812-70) saw in Chatskii, a disillusioned intellectual in Griboedov's (1795-1829) masterpiece, *Gore ot Uma* (Woe from Wit) (1822-24; performed in 1831) a literary reflection of Decembrists' type. Gertsen wrote; "Chatskii went straight to the exiled hard labor, and if he had escaped the Decembrists' Upheaval of December 1825, he would have become neither a suffering depressed man nor a

25. V.K. Kùkhelbecker, *Izbrannye Proisvedeniya v 2-x T.*, T.1. M.-L., 1967, p. 250.

26. "Iz Zapisok Ippolita Ozhe," *Russkii Arkhiv*, 1877, kn. 1, Nr.4, p. 540.

27. A.A. Delvig, *Poln. Sobr. Stikhotvorenii*, L. 1959, p.204.

proud valiant man.”(28)

It is true that Mikhail Betuzhëv, a decembrist, in spite of himself breathed a sigh of a Hamlet-like doubt, “This fateful night solves a nebulous problem. ‘To be or not to be.’”(29).

However this doubt was fumed in 1869 in a thoroughly new century, when the problem of Hamlet had already been a commonplace formula, and was not inextricably bound with the concept of Hamletism.

4. Two of Russian Translations of *the Hamlet*

In the time that follows the Decembrists’ Upheaval interest in the *Hamlet* had gradually grown, and in 1828 the first Russian translation of the *Hamlet* was published.(30)

The author of the Russian version of the *Hamlet* was an army geodesist, Mikhail Pavlovich Vronchenko (1802-1855), who managed to present to his fellow countrymen a copy of the *Hamlet* as true as possible to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. (31) P.A. Pletnëv (1886-1942) afterward affirmed that after the appearance of this translation the people who had never read the original had for the first time understood what the *Hamlet* was about and what his fate was.(32)

It is true that the veracity of the translation has its reverse side. Vronchenko’s translation steered a steady course for a word-for-word translation, and made a heavy and difficult reading. In his “From a Translator” in the “Introduction,” Vronchenko informed a reader of a basic knowledge of Shakespeare, and expounded his principle of translation.

Vronchenko drew on Goethe and described a character of Hamlet, and stated that for the present it was out of question whether the image of the Prince of Denmark had had some meaning to the life of the Russians.

Review articles of Vronchenko’s first Russian translation had not

28. A. I.Gertsen, *Sobr. Soch.* v 30-ti T., T.XX, kn.1, M., 1960, p.342.

29. *Vospominaniya Bestuzhëvykh.* M.-L., 1951, p.65.

30. *Gamlet, Tragediya v Pyati Geistviyakh. Sochnenie V. Shekspira.* Perevël s Angliiskogo M.V. Spb., 1828.

31. *Gamlet*, p. XV.

32. P.A. Pletnëv, *Soch. i Perepiska*, T.II, Spb., 1885, p.443.

been concerned with this problem of relevance of the *Hamlet* to the mental life of the Russians, but the reviewers unanimously remarked the worth of Vronchenko's translation for its strict adherence to the original *Hamlet*. (33)

However Shakesperean spirit of Russian literature of Pushkin period was built mainly on an attempt to historically assimilate "System of Our Father Shakespeare" to Russian dramaturgy.

The exemplar was *Boris Godunov* (1825) of Pushkin, and Pushkin's use of Shakespeare's dramatic art served as an exemplary type for such writers connected with the Society of Philosophers (*Obschchestvo Lyubomudriya*; A Study Group of Schelling in the 19th Century Russia) as M. P. Pogodin (1800-75) for his *Mafa, Posadnitsa Novgorodskaya* 1830 (*Mafa, Governess of Novgorod*) and as A.S. Khomyakov's (1804-60) for *Dmitrii Samozvanets* 1833. (*Drimtri the Imposter*).

B.K. Küchelbecker (1797-1846) elaborated on this line of Shakespear-ean dramaturgy and wrote *Prokofii Lyapunov* (1834). However the time had not yet been ripe for the interpretation of his contemporary realities with the aid of Shakesperean conception of dramatic art. Nevertheless only in Pushkin's *Angelo* (1833; published 1834) could be recognized some connection of Shakespeare with the contemporary temper of the time, although it was very indirect and deeply covert. (34)

Seemingly it was M.Yu Lermontov (1814-41) who had been the first to realize an actual meaning of the image of the Danish Prince. Although he died a violent death in a duel with Martinov only four years after Pushkin's death in a duel with Dantes, Lermontov completely belonged to the post-Pushkin generation.

Lermontov was younger than Gertsen, Belinskii and Goncharov, but he was only four years older than Turgenev (I.S.1818-83); seven years older than Dostoevskii (F.M.1821-81). Lermontov was, as it were, a man of 40's who had not lived out his times. Gertsen (A.E.1812-72) wrote; "During summer Lermontov was a friend of Belinskii, he mingled with us

33. Survey of reference to Vronchenko's translation of the *Hamlet*, cf. *Shekspir i Russkaya Kul'tura*, p. 256.

34. Cf. Yu.D.Levin's article, "Nekotorye Voprosy Shekspirizma Pushkina," (in the book, Pushkin. *Issredovaniya i Materialy*, t. VII. L., 1974, pp.79-85.

in the university.”(35)

In a letter to his aunt M.A. Shan-Girei, which was dated most probably from the beginning of 1829, Lermontov answered to her attacks on the *Hamlet*, a tragedy, and he wrote; “I will go in for Shakespeare; if he is great it is because of the *Hamlet*. If the *Hamlet* is truly Shakespeare’s, then Shakespeare is a genius unfathomable, penetrating to the heart of man, to the law of fate, and he is original. This is inimitable Shakespeare, whom we find in *Hamlet*.”(36) Apparently Lermontov read the *Hamlet* in the original.

Later Lermontov, somehow put the image of Hamlet onto his hero, Ferdinand, protagonist of his first drama *Ispantsy* (the Spaniard) (1830). Ferdinand accosts to Emilia with Hamlet’s cry.

Ступай ты лучше в монастырь,
Ступай в обитель — скрой себя от света.

“You had better go to the monastery;
go to the cloister - hurry up out of the world.”(37)

Furthermore, Lermontov recalls the Prince of Denmark in quite a different context in a poem *Sashika* (1839), which takes important place in the development of his last year’s creative work.

Гамлет сказал: «Есть тайны под лупой
И для премудрых», — как же мне, поэту,
Не верить можно тайнам и Гамлету?..⁵¹

Hamlet said: “there are secrets under the moon
And for the wise” - why as a poet I could not
ever believe the secrets and Hamlet?... (38) (translation mine)

However N.A. Polevoi’s (1796-1846) new translation of the *Hamlet*

35. *Sobr. Soch.* v 30-ti t., t. XX, kn.1, p.347.

36. M.Yu.Lermontov, *Soch.* v 6-ti T., T. VI, M.-L., 1957, p. 407.

37. M.Yu.Lermontov, *Soch.* v 6-ti T., T. V, p.35.

38. M.Yu.Lermontov, *Soch.* v 6-ti T., T. IV, p.66 (Stanza LXVI)

had made an epoch-making impact on the development of Russian Hamletism, that is, philosophical observations on socio-psychological stances of leading intelligentsia of '30-'40's against the backdrop of the *Hamlet*.

N.A. Polevoi (1796-1846) published a Russian translation of the *Hamlet* in 1836. Polevoi's *Hamlet* was put on stages both in Moscow and in St.Petersburg, and it was published in a separate bookform in 1837. (39)

(Hereafter reference to this edition is given by the page number.) In due time Belinskii (V. G. 1811-48) recalled this stage performance and publication of Polevoi's Russian version of the *Hamlet*, and remarked: "Up to the present the majority of our reading public had not had a slightest idea of the existence of "Hamlet"."(40)

Polevoi's translation of the *Hamlet* was far cry from Vronchenko's *Hamlet* with respect to the word-for-word exactness. Polevoi quite definitely adapted Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to the temperament of the reading intellectuals of the 30's in the nineteenth century. The translator himself had remarked this kinship tie of Russian (translation of) *Hamlet* with his contemporaries.

S.P. Solov'ëv (1817-1879), director of the Moscow theater, left a reminiscent memoir on the introductory words, which Polevoi had voiced before the reading of his *Hamlet* by the actors. Polevoi affirmed that Shakespeare had created the Prince of Denmark; "he was not only a poet, but a prophet who had been prophesizing for the past 300 years. Hamlet in his view of the world and in his moral temper...was a man of our times, an idol of the nineteenth century."

And further, he narrated: "We love Hamlet, as a brother of our kin. He is ever dear to us for his weaknesses, because his weaknesses were in essence our weaknesses, and he feels the throbs of our hearts, and he thinks with our heads."(41)

39. *Gamlet, Prints Datskii. Dramaticheskoe Predstavrenie. Sochnenie Viliama Shekspira. Perevod s Angliiskogo, Nikolaya Polevogo.* M. 1837.

40. V.G. Belinski, *Poln. Sobr. Soch.*, T. VIII. M. 1955, p. 190.

41. S.P. Solov'ëv, "Dvadtsat' Let iz Zhizni Moskovskogo Teatra," *Teatral'naya Gazeta*, 1877, Nr.84, 8 Sentyabrya, p.266.

Shakespearean *Hamlet* in Polevoi's translation was put on a stage both in Moscow and in St.Petersburg, and in due course of time in the countryside. The first actor for the role of Hamlet was S.P. Mochalov (1800-1848) in Moscow, and V.A.Karatygin (1802-1853) in St. Petersburg.

The premiere of this romantic and gloomy *Hamlet* in Moscow on January 22, 1837 was a spectacular success, and during that same year Karatygin, another famous Russian actor, played Polevoi's *Hamlet* with a success equal to Mochalov's in Moscow. (42)

Mochalov's *Hamlet* was performed in a demoniac force of Lermontov's heroes. Belinskii, who had thought Hamlet 'a weekling', wrote however, that Mochalov, independent from Shakespeare, gave Hamlet a far greater force and energy, than a man was capable of, who was in struggle with himself, and with overwhelming burdon for him to carry. Mochalov gave Hamlet a far less sadness and melancholy than those that Shakespeare's Hamlet had suffered. (43)

Mochalov's performance put forward a forcible sarcasm, heartrending melancholy and deep despair, as much as a call for a struggle, because in Russia towards the end of 1830 there was almost no man who had not voiced such a call for a social reform. At any rate Mochalov's performance sent a very invogorating call to the heart of the leading intellectuals of those days. N.V.Stankevich (1813-40) wrote to M.A. Bakunin (1814-76) on 30 January 1837.

"For the present the *Hamlet* was being staged here. The *Hamlet* is my favorite drama, I have to say that we have much in common with Hamlet. Mochalov was superb ...We sat alongside with Belinskii, This doubly enhanced my pleasure. We understand very much each other. ... The scene of Hamlet with his mother, his love for the murdered father, his indignation at human meanness and weaknesses. all this was vividly presented before our eyes." (44)

Gertsen, another admirer and sympathizer of romanticized performance of Hamlet wrote to his wife on 18 December 1839.

42. Ellenor Rowe, *Hamlet: A window on Russia*, 1976, p.43. (186 pp.)

43. B.G. Belinskii, *Poln.Sobr. Soch.*, T.II, p. 328.

44. N.V.Stankevich, *Perepiska, 1830-1840*, M.,1914, p. 509.

“I have now returned from <Hamlet> . You might not believe, but tears poured out of my eyes, and ran, and I sobbed. No, don't read, You must see this, “voir, c'est avoir”, to realize for yourself. A scene for Ophelia and then when Hamlet laughed loudly after the King had run away from the play, Karatygin had performed superbly. And Hamlet himself was old and of great stature, ..I brought back home all the excitements...Now I see a pitchblack night, and pale Hamlet show a skull on the top of a sword, and he cried “here was lips.” and now “ha,ha,ha.”(45)

Belinskii was the first who had written of Hamlet's affinity with his contemporary generation. In 1838 he published an article entitled “Hamlet, Drama Shekspira, Mochalov v Roli Gamleta” where he affirmed “Hamlet !,...This is a life of man, this man, *it is you, it is I. It is everyone of us.* more or less, noble or absurd, but always in a pitiable and sad sense.”(46)

45. A.I.Gertsen, *Sobr. Soch.* v 30-ti T., T. XXII, p. 65.

46. B.G. Belinskii, *Porn. sobr. Soch.*, T. II, p. 254.