Bakhtin, Pushkin, and the Co-Creativity of Those Who Understand / *Bakhtin, Pushkin e a cocriatividade daqueles que compreendem*

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ABSTRACT

From the beginning (1919) to the end (1972) of his publishing career, Mikhail Bakhtin very often wrote about the force of creativity. This is a secondary theme, but also a freedom-valuing variant of his grand themes of dialogism, chronotope, carnival, great time. Bakhtin's definition, which works to disentangle the existing given from the newly-created, helps us in 2015 to rescue creativity from debased usages in the public sphere. One purpose of this essay is to rectify a valuable term: to show what Bakhtin means by "the co-creativity of those who understand." Another purpose is to specify, with Bakhtin's help, the type of creativity Alexandr Pushkin achieves in his historical moment, in lyric, narrative, and meditative poems. To the extent we are successful, we continue an ongoing project in Bakhtin studies: to show how his thinking aids in the interpretation of poetry as verbal art.

KEYWORDS: Creativity; Performative; Poetry; Praxis

RESUMO

Do início (1919) até o final de suas publicações (1972), Mikhail Bakhtin escreveu frequentemente a respeito da força da criatividade. Isso foi um tema secundário, mas também uma variante livre e valorativa de seus grandes temas como dialogismo, cronotopo, carnaval, grande tempo. A definição de Bakhtin que colabora para distinguir os dados existentes daqueles recentemente criados ajuda-nos, em 2015, a resgatar a criatividade de seus usos desgastados na esfera pública. Uma finalidade deste ensaio é retificar uma expressão valiosa: mostrar o que Bakhtin quer dizer com a cocriatividade daqueles que compreendem. Outra finalidade é especificar, com o auxílio de Bakhtin, o tipo de criatividade que Alexandr Pushkin realiza nos poemas líricos, narrativos e meditativos em seu momento histórico. Na medida em que formos bem-sucedidos, continuamos um projeto de estudos bakhtinianos, cujo objetivo é mostrar como seu pensamento contribui para a interpretação da poesia como uma arte verbal.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Criatividade; Performativo; Poesia; Práxis

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What is praxis? Or, What links active thought to action in the world? My answer is: Creativity. As Mikhail Bakhtin defines creativity over fifty years of his writing career, this is one variant meaning of praxis, a term he never used. For Bakhtin, creativity is a politics of art as well as an art of politics. For him, the action of art, while shrewd about historical conjunctures, is an agency both formative and generous. In his response to verbal art, he deliberately condemns and avoids the Formalist need to bracket-off history, to detach the word from dialogue, to draw back from action. For him art-speech simply does not allow the loose and hopeful thinking that the term creativity usually drags along with it.

The grand themes of Bakhtin's career are dialogism, chronotope, carnival, great time. I want to make a case for another theme and term, creativity, and especially what he called (in a late set of notes) "the co-creativity of those who understand" (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.142). Creativity is clearly a secondary theme, which comes before us only in instances as long as a sentence, a paragraph, at most a page, but I have found over a hundred convergent usages between 1919 and 1971 and this is always a freedom-valuing variant of, synonym for, those primary four grand themes. Also *creativity* (which is never for Bakhtin *genius*, rarely *creator*, almost always this abstract noun for the power or faculty) helps define, and is defined by, his other linking terms *unfinishedness, outsideness, speaking subject, boundary, meaning, reading, great time, culture,* and the *new* as the contrary of *theoreticism, codes,* the *ready-made.*

My attention was drawn to *creativity* as a sub-theme and continual concern by the Morson-Emerson *Prosaics* book of 1990 *(Mikhail Bakhtin:* Creation of a Prosaics*)*, where this is in their title and appears on every tenth page, heavily in the index. My own interest is in historical poetics, though not to push prosaics to the side. For my purposes the most fruitful document is the loosely-strung set of notes from 1970-71 collected in *Speech Genres* (1986), and the most exciting paragraph comes after a little riff on outsideness (*vnenakhodimost'*), or non-merging, the need for standpoints and boundaries, where Bakhtin strongly denies that the fullest understanding can come from emotional empathy or a translation "from the other's language into one's own" (1986a, p.141). Then comes the following passage, in the form of notes to himself, productive because enigmatic, a gesture of thought we need to complete:

> To understand a given text as the author himself understood it. But our understanding can and should be better. Powerful and profound creativity is largely unconscious and polysemic. Through understanding it is supplemented

by consciousness, and the multiplicity of meanings is revealed. Thus understanding supplements the text: it is active and creative by nature. Creative understanding continues creativity, and multiplies the wealth of humanity. The co-creativity of those who understand [*sotvorchestvo ponimaiushchikh*] (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.142).

Especially in these notes, bundled by the editor, contextual meaning is everything for Bakhtin, and here the context is the dialogic relationship embedded in terms like *understand, as, supplements, continues, multiplies,* and his frequent and favorite prefix of mutuality, "co-." To explain with terms from elsewhere in the late fragments, "co-" is meaning struggled-for on the boundary of consciousnesses; "creativity" is our freedom to break away from, while including, the given: "ultimately creation [is] cognition" (BAKHTIN, 1993, p.35), a "thought-deed" (BAKHTIN. 1993, p.26); the understanders are the ones who actively perform the "demarcation of two consciousnesses, their counterposition and their interrelations" (BAKHTIN,1986a, p.142).

Here is my expansion of Bakhtin's meaning: this kind of creativity is not that of dialogic speech-acts in the past that might have contributed to the author's decisions in making the work of verbal art, or of speech-acts in the present that might occasion laughter or political action or love out of sheer random talk. Rather, this is the creativity of the reader or critic or historian, who comes after the work once it is fixed. This is the creativity of the after-word as it catches the intent, speech-genre, emotional-volitional tone and momentum of the whole work.

This co-creativity of reading/responding, whether as scholarship or art-making, partakes of all the ordinariness of dialogism: democratic, open to everyone always. "That which is creative must create itself," John Keats said in a famous letter (KEATS, 1958, p.374). Consciously within the contradictions of our own space-time, we might learn to be creative from the words and works of others, even ancient others, and we can supplement and continue their chronotope, their creative work. Empathy and agreement are not necessary; indeed these are signs that more work is needed. It is in the spirit of Bakhtin to say our creativity recruits itself through confrontation. Not through Lippsian *Einfülung,* not through mind-meld or identity with the original, can we transform ourselves, but through defining the relation of our space-time-culture to that of the work: through knowing more and more history, which informs imaginative struggle on the territory of the utterance. This is the parallax effect, changing the present by reference to the past, but, equally valuable, changing the past by reference to two points of view in the present; this is also what Bakhtin meant by "great time," in the last line of Toward a

Methodology for the Human Sciences, in the *Speech Genres* collection (1986b, p.170) described by him as a "problem," yet-to-be-solved.

In another of these late collections of scraps, titled by the English-edition editors The Problem of the Text, Bakhtin (1986c) puts more meaning into play, by using a different word entirely to signify "creative." Staying clear of *tvorchestvo,* here he wants to enforce a crucial distinction between the *given* and the *created* in a speech utterance, by adding a prefix to the same root: "*Dannoe i sozdannnoe.*" The adversarial meanings share the same semantic root! The English for this wonderful paragraph is:

> The *given* and the *created* in a speech utterance. An utterance is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing outside it that is given and final. It always creates [*sozdaet*] something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable, and, moreover, it always has some relation to value (the true, the good, the beautiful, and so forth). But something created is always created out of something given (language, an observed phenomenon of reality, the speaking subject himself, something finalized in his world view, and so forth). What is given is completely transformed in what is created (1986c, pp.119-120).[1]

This adds to Bakhtin's idea of creativity three elements we have not so far seen, namely given vs. created, something that never existed before, and creation as value. In the rest of this paragraph Bakhtin mocks the given as the "ready-made" ten times. He is trying to do equal justice to both meanings, the given and the created, but he clearly understands "what is created" as the more strenuous project and the only urgent opportunity for discovery. He says exactly this in a sentence that comes below, on the same page as the previously quoted passage:

> It is much easier to study the *given* in what is *created* (for example, language, ready-made and general elements of world-view, reflected phenomena of reality, and so forth) than to study what is *created* [*legche, chem samo sozdannoe*] (1986c, p.120; italics in original).

Here as elsewhere in uses of the term *creativity* and its cognates across his career, Bakhtin almost always elects to promote and defend, if not study at length, what is created.

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[1] Russian phrases from the same passage come from Mikhail Bakhtin, *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva* [The Aesthetics of Verbal Creation] (Moscow: Iskusstva, 1979), pp.298-299.

For this paper I have decided to follow him in taking the harder task, as I describe Bakhtin himself, Pushkin, and Pushkin's commentators. No one has ever found a way to draw the line between, or show the extent of entanglement of, the given and the created. But there are practical things to do if we wish to make creativity our focus and to identify the unpredictable, never-before-seen quotient of freedom in the work of verbal art.

To prepare for the second, more practical-critical half of this article, I would place here a meaning I find in Charles Sanders Peirce: *recognition* as a term that places a highlight on experience, not immediately on concepts; recognition as a map of thought capable of representing the creation of explanatory conjectures. Recognition, part of happening, should nonetheless have the same character as a traditional pursuit of concepts, namely evidence and generalization. To apply this to literary thinking: Can the reader, by historicizing the text, work to reproduce and affiliate with the elements that made a piece of writing creative, in the moment of its birth? Boris Pasternak once proposed that every poem describes the conditions of its own creation: Can the reader specify the ways in which that happens, by knowing enough about the state of play in poetry in a particular time and place? If this might be so, such readers would be recognizers, or, in a weakened sense, co-creators. Let's propose that putting the highlight on the creativity-quotient makes of a reader a recognizer.

Often though not always, Bakhtin was just such a reader. In my attempt to read not just as critic-judge-historian, but also as recognizer, I start with Bakhtin's own words, "What is given is completely transformed in what is created" (1986c, p.120). Bakhtin's adverb "completely" is outrageous in its unprovability, its totalism, unless we accept what Bakhtin never quite comes round to clarifying. Deborah Haynes says it best in her recent book: "Ultimately, the unrepeatability and open-endedness of creative acts make personal transformation possible" (2013, p.45). That gets to the core reason for his insistence on agency and value, in his scattered and many-focused sentences on creativity. What is human life for, if not transformation? This unuttered, but always nearby, question derives from Bakhtin's religious belief; for him an original Creation is the model for all our lesser actions. The question of transformation-- involving openness to self-conversion and willingness to convert others--also results in one relevant gap in his accounting for verbal art. Because Bakhtin thinks lyric is (or is usually) monologic and therefore overpersonal and unsocial, he has reservations about lyric as ethical stance and as the literary mode where device-heavy, rhythmic language is enforced. That the *cri*

de coeur lyric is repeatable and closed is his reason why poetry is a less transformative practice than the novel, given the novel's imaginary persons and their clash of discourses. Isn't it acting in his spirit, to give an explanation of poetry that will return to it the values of unrepeatability and open-endedness?

How can a lyric poem that is frozen forever in one form of words, eloigned from speech by material constraints, memorizable because unchangeable, go from moral event to moment-by-moment eventfulness in the mind of the reader? Bakhtin is nearby with his emotional-volitional tone, but the links need to be made more explicit. He knew that for Formalism the material device, meter and so on, resided in the text itself, obviously a profound error; he knew that the relationship of speaking-acting consciousnesses was the center of a more complete theory of communication, including verbal art; eventfulness/performativity in the specific, sequential relationship between text and reader was the next, untaken-as-yet step.

I will be suggesting an approach to thinking with Pushkin by way of performativity and eventfulness, two categories Bakhtin approached but did not develop. There is an early paragraph in Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity (1990b) that helpfully defines *event* as shared and active: where the other consciousness is God, the event is religious (prayer); where there is no hero at all, the event is cognitive (treatise); where author and hero are antagonists, "the aesthetic event ends and an ethical event begins" (political tract, etc.); but an aesthetic event, our focus here, "can take place only when there are two participants present; it presupposes two noncoinciding consciousnesses" (1990b, p.22). A related definition of *event* occurs in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* when Bakhtin argues that emotional-volitional tone "*circumfuses the whole content/sense of a thought in the actually performed act and relates it to once-occurrent being-as-event*" (1993, p.34; italics in original). *So* the event is unique, never repeatable; and when aesthetic it is only to be experienced by interlocutor-humans in the same space and time. The event is more marker of value than a mere moment; it is prior to thought; it is prior to the "actually performed act."

In the same early text Bakhtin praises the "*participative* thinking [that] predominates in all great systems of philosophy," writing of "a participative, incarnated consciousness" wherein emotional-volitional values come from the participants acting in space and time (1993, p.8; italics in original). Event and participation are related concepts because the latter performs the former. Event is nearby (but not yet) eventfulness, or a replay of the cognitive-emotional

energies of the text in the mind of the reader, and participative thinking is not yet performativity, or illocutionary speech that does things in the world, like "I sentence you, Pussy Riot, to two years in prison." Nonetheless, Bakhtin is using *postupochnaia,* Russian for "performative." J. L. Austin's antagonist, the constative or the fixed in language, has much in common with the codes that Bakhtin deplores in Ferdinand de Saussure and in Yuri Lotman. There is a case to be made for a fundamental kinship of dialogism and the speech-act theory of Austin and Paul Grice, which emerged in the West about the same time Bakhtin was being re-discovered in Russia. In particular, the idea of a legible, emotional-volitional social tone, which changes in and between speakers, is a possible analogue for Austin's *performativity* and Grice's *implicature.*

With eventfulness and performativity as our framing categories, we turn to the massive example of Pushkin. Why Pushkin? First, because he has a way of calling forth co-creation in Bakhtin and admirers of Bakhtin. Bakhtin has more than a few pages of practical criticism on Pushkin's lyric and longer works, using close study to illustrate dialogic theory. Pushkin himself remains a foundational writer, Russia's Shakespeare, because in his career creativity has all the attributes of intelligence: abundance, awareness of Russian poetic tradition, range of genres, dazzling display of technical competence, purity of diction and unpredictability of sentencing, ability to be personal and impersonal at need, dense perceptual content, a forensic skill at argument, topicality; and, not least, conscious concern for what produces greatness in writing. Pushkin gave the first sustained example of a flexible, resourceful Russian literary language, and thus made possible modern Russian poetry. In *Eugene Onegin* he also invented, in verse no less, the sophisticated structures of character-development and of speech-act tones of all that followed in the Russian novel. Also, as we shall see with the mid-length poem, Autumn (*Osen'*), Pushkin expressed an intense interest in the conditions, seasonal and cognitive-emotional, that call forth creativity.

Bakhtin refers to Pushkin in his first published work, Art and Answerability (1919/1990a), and seven times in the pages of *Speech Genres*. In the half-century between his first and last writings, there are many in-passing mentions and three sustained readings: there are two 1920s analyses of Pushkin's short lyric Parting (*Razluka—*"Dlia beregov otchizny dal'noi"), each about eight pages long, whose vexed relationship and publication history I omit here; and one outstanding (yet, I think, obstinately partial) reading of *Eugene Onegin* from 1940. The best feature of both analyses of Parting is his demonstration that lyric may perform and exemplify

thinking. Both readings are linked by lines of logic and networks of recurring terms (such as *love, moment, rhythm,* and very often, *event*) that derive from the essays they exemplify, and both emphasize the relation of persons in the text: turning Pushkin's speech-acts into thought-deeds. For instance, one reading well shows the human relevance of Bakhtin's ethics of speaking, his *Philosophy of the Act*, as he touches on every important metaphor, every turning point in the poem. The other reading of Parting, in Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity, shows how a text may abolish space, time and mortality, as it exposes the raw helplessness of love. In neither of these does he account for the other intentions, the other structures that make the poem a poem, but he has already warned us that was not his purpose.

The Pushkin pages in Author and Hero contain a paragraph on Lensky the poet in *Eugene Onegin*, showing Pushkin's criticism of the young writer and his sentimental verses, where, Bakhtin concludes, "the author's relationship to the hero is not immediately lyrical" (1990b, p.225). Since these few sentences make a point about parodic style, they lead me to Bakhtin's similar but much fuller account of *Onegin* as a novel, years later in 1940, in From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse (1981, pp.41-83). In the eight pages on Pushkin in the later essay, his point is that with *Onegin* the Russian novel leaps into full self-identity, by which we can at last determine "the stylistic *specificum* of the novel as a genre" (1981, p.42). (Indeed most historians agree that this is correct for the origin of realistic narrative in Russia.) Now Bakhtin might have argued that here, in a Novel in Verse very considerable on both sides of the line, a claim about *pre-history* would have been strong because this one work is the perfect marker of transition, one genre growing out of the other, but that is not what he says. With focused intensity he writes as if the work in its speech acts is not partly or mainly, but only, indeed specifically, a novel. He signals that he well knows but must brush aside such features as Pushkin's own double-genre-term in the work's subtitle, and metaphor-meter-rhyme-line-stanza-chapter, and the labor-intensive allocation of syntax within these constraints of formal meticulousness. I propose that we re-admit these features. If we accept all Bakhtin's powerful categories, so provoking to doing history and so useful for actual reading, but also accept the intention of verse, can we find a more capacious reading of *Onegin* as a successful novel which is a poem?

This is Bakhtin's finest moment as polemical analyst of a single text. Especially in his pinpointing of the voice-zones of three *Onegin* characters, we admire the force of his claim for specific novelistic discourse. Also he understands how sophisticated Pushkin must be, to manage

an author-character who is now audible as Onegin's friend, now forgotten in the run of the story, yet present in every word, as creator-connector where all the levels intersect.

In a book that collects Russian essays on *Eugene Onegin*, Sona Stephan Hoisington (1988) puts Bakhtin's interpretation within the context of translated pieces by Yuri Tynjanov, Bakhtin's disciple Sergey Bocharov, and Yury Lotman Bocharov discusses the vocabularies of high and low, and Lotman finds antitheses at all levels, but only Tynjanov's essay On the Composition of *Evgenii Onegin* (1921-1922) (1988, pp.71-91) is a fully adequate answer to Bakhtin's speech-act reading of the novel. This answer is surprising because it is delivered twenty years before Bakhtin writes, and because it is not so much a refutation as a co-creation *avant la lettre.* Had Bakhtin responded to Tynjanov, probably he would have modified his novel-only claim by saying the work oscillates, achieves disturbance both ways, presenting to the reader a double success; for theses of the voice-zones and the elocutionary disappearance of the author can survive, without *Onegin* being specifically, uniquely a novel.

It falls to us to account for this essay by a formalist-antagonist. Tynjanov notes that *Onegin* was published in yearly parts, which in its moment and also later on emphasizes not the development of the action but "the dynamics of the word" (1988, p.80). Whereas in the prose novel the most important semantic unit is the hero, in the verse novel character-driven plotting and dialogue are deformed. We get a novel of digressions-as-compositional-design, where the narrator often says, "Now we turn away..." The empty numbers of self-censored or unwritten stanzas, the presence of an ending after the ending (the fragment Onegin's Journey), the abrupt shift in Tatiana from provincial miss to *grand dame* in the final Canto, the parodistic underscoring of clichés associated with the novel, the comic choice of lexicon and placement of rhyme-sounds: these were compositional devices. As a new form was born, the novel and the long poem experienced "mutual struggle and interpenetration" (1988, p.90). Tynjanov, summarizing: "The deformation of the novel by verse [meter; phonic character; stanza] manifested itself in the deformation of small units and in the deformation of large groups, and finally as a result the entire novel was deformed" (1988, p.90). Of course, Tynjanov loves deformation and the two united into one, and in other situations so does Bakhtin.

Pushkin, a Classical satirist and libertine recreating himself after 1826 towards being a Romantic proponent of imagination, can well be imagined writing a stanzaic work in 5000 lines and eight Chapters, that has the novel's open-ended clash of voice-zones. In his marshalling of

contrary or deforming intentions at every level and in every project, Pushkin is like Bakhtin who can speak of the word as already enmeshed in social discourse.

Creativity and co-creativity have to do, apparently, with how wide a spread of the era's contradictions can be reconciled in the writing, and in the capaciousness of what is brought to bear in the act of reading. What is the breakaway, creativity-quotient of Pushkin's extended lyric Autumn (*Osen', written 1833), a mid-length personal poem of the sort that began in the 1790s with Wordsworth, but was new in Russia? Such poems, called by M. H. Abrams the Greater Romantic Lyric, move out-in-out from speaker to world to speaker: Pushkin in Autumn shifts from description of season, to meditation on poem-making, and back. If I try to read Autumn for cues to eventfulness in the consciousness of the reader, who is after all me, I will look for the first and last sentences of the utterance, which stand at the boundaries of the changes of speech-subjects. Do changes between speaking subjects and respondents occur within the line, from line to line, from stanza to stanza? I will look for speech-acts like apostrophe, which address a dialogic partner outside the poem's frame of reference. I will look for semantic concord and discord in the meanings of paired rhyme-sounds; for effects of listing, of breaking-off with suspension dots, of incomplete forms and formats, oxymorons, catachreses. All these, we now know, are relationships, not just registrations in the psyche of the reader.

Here in art-speech as elsewhere, everywhere, we have learnt from Bakhtin that the word in language becomes one's own only by populating it with our own intention. Bakhtin's point is that, sharing a language, in our utterances we struggle and collaborate to turn the common speech to our own meanings. For Bakhtin, there is co-creativity in our every-day, casual speech-acts. My derivative point is that a consummate opportunist like Pushkin knows how to exploit this attribute of ordinary speech within verse-forms that reveal, and hide, their own elaborate artifice.

Just below his title, Pushkin calls Autumn a Fragment (*otri'vok*) because the twelfth, and last, eight-line stanza consists of only half of one line; and this ends stanza and poem on an actual question-mark followed by 2 1/2 lines of suspension-dots.[2] (See footnote 03 for

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[2] Here is a summary of Pushkin's Osen' [Autumn, 1833], stanza by stanza. I: The first-person pronoun for the speaker of the whole utterance: "*Oktyabr uzh nastypil--*" "October has come again--" ; II. Mud of spring denounced, snows of winter preferred, especially the "fresh-faced girl...giving your hand a timid, passionate squeeze" in the sleigh; III. Joy of racing on "frozen ponds with sharp steel on your feet," but winter begins to pall; IV. "Ah! gorgeous summer," apostrophe to a season! Yet we miss winter in the middle of summer, blurring these categories; V. "Dear reader," I love the autumn others denounce: first gesture to the reader, affectionate; VI. Autumn's like a

transliterated Russian lines at the opening and ending of this poem.) Like Pushkin, I foreground the notion of a completed fragment because it opens a tract of absence, of Romantic-era suggestivity, that can only be filled by the active labor of the responsive reader. Pushkin had already developed this ultimate kind of eventfulness/performativity in the numbered but self-suppressed stanzas of *Onegin.* All the energetic details in the earlier stanzas of Autumn aim at this ending. (Yet, as I shall suggest, the partial pattern at the end rouses search-behavior, and may pass the reader round to the start.)

Following through the stanzas, in emotional-volitional tone we have moved a great distance: from the delicious homely details in the mode of affectionate listing, seasonal comparisons, blendings of seasons, a classical reference, apostrophes to seasons and to the reader, a witty rhyme, declarations of health and desire -- finally to the open edge, the vast ocean, the massive hulk urging forward.

The ship *is* writing, the creative mind, but not obviously, not only. It is an enigmatic image saved for the ending of the utterance, an indeterminacy of concept to work with and on the question-mark, the suspension-dots, the blank where a final stanza would be.

With half the comparison missing or obscure, this is a catachresis, an imperfect metaphor. In her essay on Emily Dickinson, Enikő Bollobás has argued that the aporia of catachresis "has proved most helpful [to poets] when constructing some intellectual or philosophical concept--much like Dickinson's *circumference*--formerly unrepresented or incomprehensible" (2012, p.274). For her, catachresis is the "trope of performativity par excellence: ....in the sense that by remaining within discourse all along, [it] brings about new ideas or concepts by extending the meaning of existing ideas" (2012, p.274). What is here not named by Bollobás, but known, is creativity. Creativity is Pushkin's catachresis. Just when the text over-rides the boundary between descriptive and meditative, between given and created, the mystery ship arrives -- and leaves. The ship/hulk brings completion and consummation, but also the refusal of strong closure that is the fragment.

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consumptive girl, in whom "life fades from the lips that are smiling": the image contains opposed categories (oxymoron); VII. "How can I put it?" asking himself and the reader; then to Autumn itself: your fading beauty; VIII. Cold brings energy, happiness, youth: "I'm full of life again--my organism/Is like that (pardon my posaicism)"; IX. Vigorous physical exercise riding his horse outdoors, then equally vigorous mental work in front of the fire, reading, or giving "my drifting thoughts their hour of freedom"; X. "And I forget the world" in lyric agitation; XI. Epic simile of ship; "wind swells the sails," vessel moves; XII. "It sails. Where then shall we sail to...?" *"Kuda zh nam plyt'."*

When we read as recognizers, aware of existing historical constraints on plots and verse-forms in Russian writing, we accept a catachresis as an innovation so strong it becomes a constitutive metaphor, not a willful obscurity. We also accept a fragment as a text entirely complete, with an over-determined complexity of design impossible in the writers who were Pushkin's models.
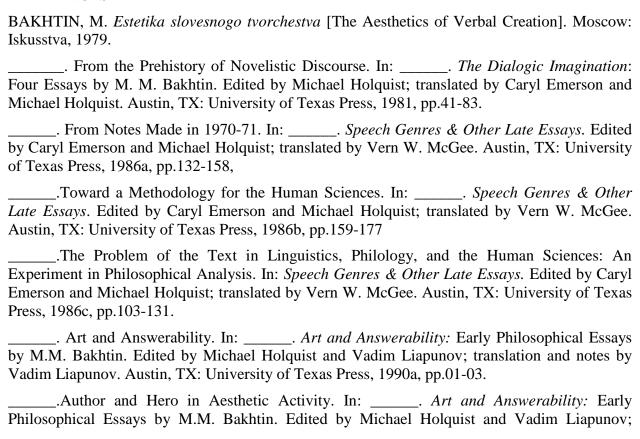
Have Pushkin's unspeaking interlocutors dropped away, been left back on land, back in time? Perhaps. But in his last sentence Pushkin uses the pronoun "we," so both season and reader may be along for the speaker's journey. Where shall we sail to? No answer, but what is suspended with the question-mark and the lines of dots will lead us back to the opening. What is created is the very poem we have been carried by! Now go back to the beginning: "*Oktyabr yzh nastypil--*," starting again.

Creativity is Pushkin's metaphor, perfect in its partial character, but also Bakhtin's in his reluctance to write anything like a treatise on creativity. However, he wrote extensively on it as adjunct to other issues. His thinking here includes the range from ordinary everyday speech acts to the making of complex, written works of verbal art; includes cultural-historical agency; includes all the possible persons in communicative acts--specifically, the dialogic partners and their own positionings and inner speech, the author's relationship to the hero, and also the work's relationship to the co-creativity of the late-coming reader. This represents a genuine theory of act, value, and art, reasonably coherent and capacious, connected by strong lines to the dialogism already so well described by Bakhtin, and also by the rest of us since the 1970s.

Here, ending by suggesting a wider context, I may note the irony that there exists a large scholarly archive on *creativity*, a term that (apparently) resists or exceeds the *given*. So far, emphasizing eventfulness, performativity, and how taking Bakhtin's terms one step further makes him more of a friend to poetry, I have tried to show how co-creativity may open energies in the archive, especially by tracking Pushkin's changing emotional tones. But the co-creativity of the understanders may also perform a critique of the suddenly ubiquitous archive of creativity itself, or what the trend-setters are *calling* creativity under late Capitalism. I am thinking of how definitions in Bakhtin, in Raymond Williams in *Keywords,* in books by George Steiner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and most recently Pierre-Michel Menger by implication strongly resist corporate leaders and university administrators who want to turn creativity into a new buzz-

word.[3] Like us, finance capital has come to know that we all need this term, but the trend-setters want to mystify the sector of experience that we want to interpret. Think of phrases like creative kindergartners, creative writing, creative advertising, creative Chief Executive Officer. Just here, Bakhtin's so serious inquiry, scattered but capable of constellation, will labor, as praxis, against the wretched popular understanding of this issue.

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[3] The word *creativity* was not defined in the massive *Oxford English Dictionary,* first published in 1928. The word may have its origin-in-usage as the over-arching concept of Alfred North Whitehead's philosophical system in *Process and Reality,* published a year later in 1929. Creativity is a foundational (his term is "ultimate") premise for Whitehead, but for Bakhtin this was only one of several mutually-defining key-words; for neither Whitehead nor Bakhtin was it a single topic for sustained exposition. None of the books I list below refers to Bakhtin, and none of them comes up with anything like his magnificent idea of *the co-creativity of those who understand* (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.142; italics added). In order of publication, here are several books worth considering in relation to issues raised in this paper's final paragraph: WILLIAMS, R. *Keywords:* A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, M. *Creativity:* Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention. New York: Harper/Collins, 1996; STEINER, G. *Grammars of Creation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001; SINGER, I. *Modes of Creativity:* Philosophical Perspectives. Cambridge, MA*:* MIT Press, 2011; BERARDI, F. *The Uprising:* On Poetry and Finance. Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2012; RAUNIG, G. *Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity.* Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2013; MENGER, P-M. *The Economics of Creativity:* Art and Achievement Under Uncertainty. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.

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