Shakespeare’s Sonnets in Russian:
The Challenge of Translation

Elena Rassokhina
To study Shakespeare in translation is just another way to find him.

Ton Hoenselaars

The translation of verse is impossible. Every time is an exception.

Samuil Marshak
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Abstract

Shakespeare’s 154 sonnets have become the interest of several generations of Russian translators. Overall, after their first appearance in the middle of the nineteenth century, at least thirty-five Russian translations of the complete sonnet collection have been produced so far, though mostly during the last three decades. The overall objective of the present thesis is to examine the evolution of Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets over the years. The thesis is novel in that it offers an analysis of specific linguistic, literary and cultural challenges the numerous Russian translators have dealt with while translating the sonnets, as well as the strategies adopted in an effort to resolve them.

In order to achieve the study objectives, several individual sonnets and a number of their Russian translations have been selected as a sample representing challenging areas that have been more closely investigated in four articles. The method of cross comparison has been applied throughout the study. Both the introductory part and the articles address certain problematic translation issues, such as the sonnets’ formal structure, the pronouns of address, grammatical gender, bawdy language, sexual puns, culture-specific items, and metaphors.

The results provide evidence for seeing translation as a multi-layered and ever-changing process, which, apart from the pure linguistic tasks, combines historical, political and ideological aspects. The findings of the study suggest that translation competence, namely deep understanding of the context and its fundamental cultural and social features, motivates the translator’s interpretation of the contradictions and uncertainties of Shakespeare’s poems. Those include the sonnets genre, relation to Shakespeare’s biography, the order of the poems in the first 1609 Quarto. The analysis also identifies the ways in which the target language’s social and historical context have had an impact on the choices made by the translators.

On the whole, the study’s results do not contradict Mikhail Gasparov’s model describing the pendulum-like movement from “free” to “literal” approaches through the history of Russian literary translation.
List of Articles


IV. Rassokhina, Elena. (in manuscript). “The Language of Alchemy: Translating Alchemical Metaphors of Shakespeare’s Sonnets into Russian.”

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Acknowledgements

Studying Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets is an intriguing task. Throughout the long journey of writing the thesis, I could not help but feeling the everlasting presence of Mr. Shakespeare with me when writing, walking my dog or just relaxing, and now when I am about to finish my work he helps me to find the right words.

Writing the thesis, with all its challenges, was certainly worth the effort, because the work, and the challenges it presented, has delivered much joy and satisfaction.

*Shakespeare (Sonnet 91.6):* Wherein it finds a joy above the rest...

Yes, especially during the final stages, that’s when I came to understand the pleasure of creativity. But there were also times of frustration and even desperation.

*Shakespeare (Sonnet 66.1):* Tired with all these, for restful death I cry...

No, not that far! Still, it would not have been possible to finish this thesis without help and support. Many people I would like to thank. I am most grateful to Per Ambrosiani, my main supervisor, and Berit Åström, my assistant supervisor. One could hardly have better advisors than I did. Thank you, Per, for believing in this study and supporting me in so many ways. I have learned from you so much, you helped me to develop my skills and to understand what it means to be a researcher. Thank you for reading my thesis in so many versions and commenting on them tirelessly. Berit, thank you for invaluable comments, help and support. Writing in English has been a true challenge and I feel grateful to you for editing my texts in such a consistent and professional way.

I am particularly grateful to Stella Sevander, who has been my teacher, colleague and dearest friend. I am so blessed to have met you many years ago here, at the Department. Thank you for your believing in me, for your warmth and support during all the years I have known you. I cannot thank you enough.

Thank you to my colleagues and friends at the Department of Language Studies for making this most intense time of my life equally pleasant. I wish I could have spent more time with you at the coffee breaks. Special thanks to Sergej Ivanov for your generous help at the final stage of my writing.

My heartfelt thanks also to Malin Isaksson for giving me an opportunity to do something I love most – to teach Russian, which stimulated me during my research effort.

I also thank all those who participated in the two seminars held on the parts of this thesis, for their valuable suggestions and constructive
comments, especially Julie Hansen (Uppsala University) and Hannu Kemppanen (University of Eastern Finland).

I have been privileged to meet some special people outside the Umeå University, when my papers were presented and discussed at conferences, I am grateful to all of you. I would particularly like to thank Susanna Witt and Julie for their great editing work on one of my manuscripts.

My gratitude extends also to the closest circle of my friends both in Sweden and Russia, for their sense of humour and many wonderful moments we have shared. I am so lucky to have you in my life, guys.

To you, my dearly loved mum and dad, and to you, Denis and Natasha, I honestly don’t know what to say other than – thank you for your never-ending concern about me and my family’s wellbeing and for always keeping your door open for us in Russia, whenever we come.

Thank you, Anjuta and Lyonja, for your patience, seven-year long waiting for your mum to complete the work which you were not able to understand. Last but not least, my loving Aleksej. I so much appreciated your attention and support when I needed it most. You have been always by my side, gently and patiently waiting, helping and encouraging me. I love you.

Shakespeare (Sonnet 16.5): Now stand you on the top of happy hours...

Yes, I do! It feels great to be able to say I have concluded the thesis. Thank you, Mr. Shakespeare – it has been a pleasure to have you in my life and having the opportunity to work with you.
A note on transliteration and translation

When transliterating Russian names, book titles, quotations and bibliographical references in the footnotes, I have followed the Library of Congress transliteration system. The Russian “soft sign” is omitted in the proper names (Gerbel instead of Gerbel´, Vilgelm instead of Vil´gel´m).

All Russian quoted texts are given in the transliterated form, in italics. The English translation of these quotes is my own unless otherwise indicated, and is provided in square brackets, for example:

Fёdor Dostoevskii depicts Shakespeare as “prorok, poslannyi Bogom, chtoby vozvestit´ nam tainu o cheloveke, dushi chelovecheskoi” [a prophet sent by God to proclaim to us the mystery of man and the human soul] (1974, 239).

In cases where Russian quotations are available in English translation, those editions are used.

Of course, the study of translation presumes that the researcher possesses knowledge of more than one language. Even though the thesis is primarily concerned with translation from English into Russian, I have aimed this work for a wider audience, which may not be proficient in the Russian language. For this purpose, in illustrative examples from Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets, English back-translations will be given in brackets. Here is an example of translations of the first two lines of Sonnet 26:

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit (1-2)

Russian translation | English back-translation
---|---
Vladychitsa liubvi, moë ocharovann´e, Skovavshaia menia, chego ia ne taiu. | [Mistress of love, my charming, who has chained me, and I do not hide that fact.]
Preface

When I was fifteen, I came across a poem that attracted me with its unusual, or so I thought, description of love as emotional enslavement. In his declaration of love, the poet humbly agrees to wait patiently for his subject while giving full right to a personal life and pursuit of pleasure to his beloved woman. The poet expressed his feelings of love as a slave of his mistress but laments the indifference received in response. While reading, I could not help feeling empathy towards the anguished-suffering of the man in love. The man appears to be trying to convince himself that he has a right to know where and with whom his beloved shares her time; at the same time, he is afraid to offend her by asking questions that may give an impression of suspicion.

The speaker turns his hopes and emotions to prayer, to God, begging for the patience to wait and is hoping for mutual feelings, even though, to him, the waiting equals suffering, described as a yearning for love. What was most striking that the speaker did not condemn the beloved, he was content and willing to wait. The poem was about sublime and pure feelings, demanding nothing in return. Just hoping... Beautiful poetry, and I could easily sympathise and share the perception of the man. The last two lines I always remembered by heart:

\[ V\text{ c}h\text{s}y\ t\text{voik}h\ z\text{bo}t\ i\text{l}´\ n\text{as}lazh\text{d}e\ n´i\text{a} \]
\[ I\text{a} \text{z}h\text{d}u\ t\text{e}b\text{i}a\ v\text{t}\text{os}k\text{e}, \text{be}z\text{ osu}z\text{h}d\text{e} n´i\text{a} \]

[At the times of your worries or pleasure
I'm waiting for you in anguish, without judgment]

Some years later, I saw a beautiful edition of Shakespeare's Sonnets, translated into Russian, in a store. I opened the book at random, and read a poem in which the hero querulously expressed his discontent to some young person. At first, it looked like an angry father reprimanding his son, who, instead of living with dignity, wastes his youth in pleasure and ruins his opportunities. The last two lines were slightly recognizable:

\[ K\text{hot}´\ ozh\text{i}d\text{a}n´e\ ad, – i\text{a} d\text{o}l\text{zh}e\ n´i\text{a} \]
\[ z\text{h}d\text{at}´, \]
\[ I\text{ c}\text{h}t\text{o} \text{b}y \text{t}y \text{n}i \text{s}d\text{e}l\text{a}l – n\text{e} \text{r}o\text{p}t\text{at}´. \]

[Though awaiting is hell, I should wait,
And no matter what you did – not to complain.]

It turned out that this was the same poem that had made such an impact on me - Shakespeare's Sonnet 58. Yet, the first time I came across a translation by Samuil Marshak, and the second was by Modest Chaikovskii. That was the first time I asked myself the question - who is the author of the poem I read?
Shakespeare, Marshak or Chaikovskii? And if I am unable to read and understand the original, to what extent can I trust the interpretation by a translator? This question lead me to reflect on some more fundamental issues connected to translation and its challenges, such as the endless discussion about the relationship between the original and translation. Should the translation stay as close as possible to the original text, or should some deviations be allowed in order to make the foreign author speak like a domestic author would speak to his audience? Who is right then? Georgii Shengeli, who said that the ideal scenario should be full equivalence between the translation and the original ([1951] 1997, 357), or Kornei Chukovskii (1964), who believed that the art of translation is an art in its own right, because it is in the translation, as in any other work of art, that the translator’s personality is reflected, whether it was intended or not?

Today, the Russian reader has access to dozens of versions of Shakespeare’s Sonnet number 58. It turns out that Shakespeare’s texts have an incredible creative ability for permanent revival in new, often very different, versions. The present dissertation attempts to analyse how and why translations of one and the same poem may end up to be so different. Shakespeare’s sonnets have attracted lots of attention and have been popular with Russian translators since the eighteenth century. The readers’ understanding and appreciation of the poems are mediated through translation, and such significant differences in translation of the sonnets are first of all puzzling, and, secondly, demand an explanation. Here is my effort to deliver such an analysis.
1. Introduction

1.1. Shakespeare’s sonnets as a Russian literary phenomenon
Shakespeare’s sonnets have attracted much scholarly attention and have been the subject of numerous studies over a period of more than two hundred years. Still, it has been acknowledged that little evidence exists to support any hypothesis about the historical and biographical background of the sonnets. Contradictions, uncertainties, and multiple interpretations have given rise to the mystery and speculation surrounding the sonnets continuing to this day. Over the four centuries since their first publication, these poems have experienced vicissitudes and changes of fortune: they have been forgotten, neglected, altered and rearranged, resented and then admired, deciphered and interpreted. They have been also translated into many languages.¹

Translators should be given much credit for the worldwide recognition of Shakespeare’s sonnets transferred into other languages from the poet’s own Early Modern English. The readily available renderings leave little doubt about the fact that world’s global audience enjoys Shakespeare’s words in translation. Even present-day English differs from the language known by Shakespeare to such an extent that it makes comprehension of some parts of the sonnets a challenge, which, in turn, motivates such a phenomenon as the Shakespeare Made Easy-series and other simplified editions that helpfully provide contemporary readers with modern spelling versions of the sonnets.²

Thus, somewhat ironically, even the modern English-speaking world accesses Shakespeare’s works through translated versions. The modern English that is a native tongue of Shakespeare’s compatriots is far more closely related to the original text compared to foreign languages, but it still represents a “translated” version of the original text.

It is widely recognised that translation in certain periods plays a significant role in the origins and development of national literatures. Itamar Even-Zohar (1990, 59), the pioneer of the polysystem theory, emphasises the importance of intercultural reciprocity between national literatures: “[t]here is not one single literature which did not emerge through interference with a more established literature; and no literature could manage without interference at one time or another during its history”. Alexander Huang

¹ The anthology Shakespeare's Sonnets for the First Time Globally Reprinted contains hundreds of translations and versions of the sonnets in seventy-three languages and dialects (Pfister and Gutsch 2009).
² On the other hand, David Crystal states that claims about the incomprehensibility of Shakespeare’s language are greatly exaggerated. The vast majority of grammatical rules and words are the same in the Elizabethan period as now: “At worst we are talking about somewhere between 5 and 10 per cent of Shakespeare's grammar and vocabulary posing a problem” (2008, 15).
notes, that, being the most widely translated secular author in the past centuries and thus “forcefully” brought into the cultural contexts of different epochs and places, Shakespeare “acquired the capacity to appear as the contemporary (and ideal companion) of the German Romantics, a spokesperson for the proletarian heroes, required reading for the communists, and even a trans-historical icon of modernity in East Asia” (2011, 69). Within the Russian context, the stature of the Danish prince Hamlet and his constant reflecting upon “the Hamlet question” has been fascinating Russian theatre audience and readers since the late eighteenth century, when the play was first translated into Russian. According to Eleanor Rowe (1976, 56), one of the reasons for this phenomenon is a similarity between the Russian political environment before the Revolution and during the Soviet times, on the one hand, and the context in which Hamlet was created, on the other hand. In a similar way, the major milestones in the history of Russian translations of the sonnets are related to the history of Russian poetry and developments within the Russian society.

While Shakespeare as a dramatist was first introduced to the Russian reader almost 270 years ago, the sonnets were translated into Russian at a much later date, and each step of the process has entailed updated aspects of the sonnets’ perception within the Russian culture. The first translations of some of the sonnets, both in prose and in verse, were made in the middle of the nineteenth century. From then on, translations of Shakespeare’s poems have been produced and published by numerous magazines, anthologies in print and online. Translations have also been collected and published in print as separate volumes. The first translation of the complete sonnet cycle into Russian was made by Nikolai Gerbel in 1880, followed by Modest Chaikovskii in 1914. These early verse translations using the sonnet form set an example for later translators, which has been followed closely by all subsequent translators. A highly praised work made by Samuil Marshak appeared in 1948. In 1977, a new translation by Aleksandr Finkel was published, posthumously. Another Russian translation of the whole cycle appeared in 1977 in London, done by Iakov Berger, an Israeli poet of Russian origin. A translation of the entire cycle made in 1990 by Igor Fradkin was the last of those published during the Soviet era.

A process of liberalisation of Russian culture, art, and literature began in the second half of the 1980s and culminated in the abolishment of censorship of the print and other mass media in 1991. To this day, a large number of new full translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets have appeared. The arrival and expansion of the Internet has provided opportunities for many amateur translators to introduce their retranslations of the sonnets to the

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3 This question is bound up with the issue of Russian Hamletism, as well as Hamlet translation and canon formation in Russia. For more details, see Levin (1978) and Semenenko (2007).
general public. Given the immense amount of various sources containing new or never previously published translations, the task of presenting an exact figure is very difficult, if not impossible. Thus, we can only be sure with a degree of confidence that today there are at least thirty-four translations of the whole cycle of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

There may be several reasons why so many translators are willing to undertake the challenge of translating the sonnets. Robert Nizhegorodtsev (2004) suggests that the renewed surge of interest in Shakespeare’s poetry in recent years might be explained, in part, by a considerable and ever increasing distance between the romanticised famous translations of the sonnets by Marshak, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the contemporary Russian reader’s perception of the world. According to Nizhegorodtsev, “ordinary” native speakers, rather than professional linguists, poets, and translators, are, at times, more sensitive to the current ongoing changes in modern Russian. Personally, I would agree with his opinion that investigating what kind of Shakespeare the modern translators discover for themselves, and whether they exert an influence on the Russian tradition of reading Shakespeare, remains a subject of considerable interest.

1.2. Objectives of the research and methodology
This study presents a diachronic comparative investigation of a number of retranslations of Shakespeare’s sonnets into Russian. It is therefore located within the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, concerned with studying various translated texts, compared against their source material and at the same time against other translations of the same source text. Gideon Toury states that the main objective of such an analysis is to find shifts between source language and target language, subsequently using the results obtained to reveal “the processes which gave rise to them: the options at the translators’ disposal, the choices made by them and the constraints under which those choices were affected, on the way to extracting such shared factors as are reflected by larger bodies of texts [...] In order for such results to gain in significance, a lot of contextualising would have to be done, which is really what target-orientedness is all about” (1995, 174; emphasis in original). The overall objective of this thesis is to examine the evolution of Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets as a phenomenon over the years. More specifically, I intend to describe some specific linguistic, literary and cultural challenges, as well as the strategies adopted by several generations of translators in an effort to resolve them. It is not my intention

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4 Some translators consider themselves to be amateurs. See, for example, a statement expressed by the poet Naum Sagalovskii in an interview: “Sonety Shekspira ia Perevel dlia sobstvennogo udovol’stviia. Oni izdany otdel’noi knizhkoi, no ne dumaiu, chto est’ mnogo okhotnikov eë pokupat’, sledovatel’no – malo kto znaet i budet znaet o moei rabote” [I translated Shakespeare’s sonnets for my own pleasure. They are published as a separate book, but I do not think it would be readily purchased, so – there are few people who know and will know about my work] (Ruzhanskii 2011).
to evaluate the quality or merits of the Russian translations as such, but rather to analyse and understand the shifts that have taken place during the transfer of specific poems from the literary system of Elizabethan England into that of Russia over the past 140 years.

The study compares a selection of Russian translations with their source texts in order to highlight and investigate some of the most important challenges faced when translating the sonnets. In order to find answers to the objectives, the method of cross comparison will be applied to identify the ways in which the target language’s social and historical context have had an impact on the choices made by the translators.

1.3. Disposition of the thesis
The present thesis comprises four research articles and the introductory chapters. Of the articles, two have been published internationally, one can be found in conference proceedings, and one is ready to submit for publication in an international academic journal. All the three published papers have been peer reviewed. The fourth paper will undergo a peer-review-process.

The first chapter of the thesis introduces its general idea. It presents the main objectives of the thesis, the research method, aims, sources and limitation of the study. The chapter comprises a literature review where I present a wide spectrum of critical views generated by the sonnets and their translations into Russian. I then describe the theoretical background to this research, by discussing the theories of Descriptive Translation Studies with a focus on the theories of norms and retranslation in connection with the phenomenon of the extraordinarily great attention given to Shakespeare’s sonnets by Russian translators. The last section of this chapter presents various views on the subject of the translatability of poetry. It provides a review of some major approaches to poetry translation theory, from the important earlier contributions up to some of the more recent ones.

The second chapter deals with the main characteristics of the Shakespearean sonnet. It starts with a presentation of the whole cycle consisting of 154 poems, with a focus on their composition and themes. Thereafter the age-old controversies surrounding the sonnets are discussed, such as their dating, relation to Shakespeare’s life, the addressees, and the order.

The third chapter focuses on the reception of Shakespeare’s work in the Russian context in general, and the sonnets in particular, over time. A brief overview of the sonnets’ reception in Russia is central for this chapter, as well as questions concerning the evolution of the sonnets in Russian translations. It also reviews the major translation models and theories used within what has become known as the Russian school of translation.

The fourth chapter addresses several vital practical issues and difficulties arising in the process of translating the sonnets, such as metre, rhyme,
rhythm, grammatical gender, and the ways of address. The chapter also deals with the challenges posed by the translation of Shakespeare’s language, focusing on such aspects as bawdy language, metaphors, puns, and culture-specific items. Some of the issues mentioned here are discussed in more detail within the articles included in the present thesis.

The concluding chapter summarises the thesis by discussing findings of the study, as well as the results from the articles in relation to the aim and research objectives.

1.4. **Sources and limitations**

Unless stated otherwise, the sonnets are quoted according to the widely recognised critical edition of the *Sonnets* in the Arden Shakespeare series, edited by Katherine Duncan-Jones ([1997] 2010). Including critical glosses, explanations, and interpretations, this edition addresses textual as well as interpretive matters related to the sonnets.

Another edition that has been consulted is *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, edited by Colin Burrow (2002). This is considered to be one of the most important scholarly work on the interpretation and dating of Shakespeare’s sonnets. Although Eric Rasmussen (2003, 349) has identified several textual errors and omissions in Burrow’s edition, those passages are not used in my research and thus do not affect the results.

Like most literary texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the editions of the sonnets are usually presented with modern spelling and punctuation. That means that any modernised source text is, in fact, a translation reflecting the editors’ own interpretations of the original. For this reason, I have chosen to consult Paul Hammond’s edition of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets: An Original-Spelling Text* (2012), which prints the poems as they appeared in the 1609 Quarto, preserving the spelling, punctuation, italics, and capitalisation of the original.

For additional insight into the meanings of certain words, I have also used *Shakespeare’s Words: A Glossary and Language Companion* by David & Ben Crystal (2002). This book contains glosses and quotes for nearly 14,000 words that could be misunderstood by, or are incomprehensible to, a modern audience because they are no longer used or have developed a different sense since Shakespeare’s time.

Shakespeare’s sonnet cycle consists of 154 poems. As mentioned earlier, over the last 400 years, the whole cycle has been translated into Russian by at least thirty-four different translators. In addition, there are numerous translations of particular sonnets by dozens of other translators. If we calculate the translations of 154 poem sonnet cycle translations alone, the corpus will have reached more than five thousands of Russian target texts.
In view of the above, this investigation is not aiming to analyse all the existing translations of all Shakespeare’s sonnets. It limits itself to a detailed analysis of translations of Sonnets 33, 46, 109, 119, 135 and 136, which have been selected as a sample representing strategies used in the practical application of various translation tasks. In other words, being a qualitative study, it limits itself to the aspects which are perceived as problematic in translation.

Sonnet 109 has been selected for the discussion of difficulties arising while translating grammatical gender (Article I).

The so-called ‘Will’ sonnets, 135 and 136, have been chosen in order to examine strategies implemented by Russian translators when dealing with sexual puns (Article II).

In the analysis of Sonnet 46, I discuss the translators’ strategies dealing with Shakespeare’s vocabulary and culture-specific items, within the legal domain (Article III).

Article IV focuses on Sonnets 33 and 119 with regards to the special terminology and metaphors that seem to be of special importance in terms of translation of these poems.

The criteria applied in all the four articles for a selection of particular target texts are, firstly, based on concern that the considered Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets represent a wide range of translation strategies. Secondly, although my intention was to analyse the translations of only a small number of sonnets, in order to ensure objectivity in the comparative analysis, only the translators who have made an effort to render the entire body of 154 sonnets were chosen. This criterion was applied with the view that the translators probably shared a similar attitude regarding each sonnet as part of a larger poetic unity. Moreover, one may assume that those translators have invested more effort into their work, having paid much attention to the sonnets’ context. Thirdly, since the target texts cover a span of almost 140 years, it is possible to analyse the target texts from a diachronic perspective. The contemporary translations chosen for the analysis are only a small cross-sample of the numerous Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets that have been published in print or appeared on the Internet over the past three decades. Finally, the chosen target texts belong to those that have been discussed most, which provides insight into changing normative values surrounding literary translations.

1.5. Critical studies of the sonnets and their translations into Russian

Over the years, the sonnets have generated extensive scholarly criticism all over the world. Most of the editions of the sonnets in English, which have been published within the past few decades, demonstrate critical opinions on various subjects related to the poems. Apart from useful introductions, these
editions often contain copious notes and annotations, as well as multi-page bibliographies and critical commentary (Booth 1977; Blakemore Evans 1996; Vendler 1997; Duncan-Jones [1997] 2010; Burrow 2002).

The sonnets have been studied from a variety of perspectives: textual, cultural, psychoanalytic, semantic, sociopsychological, autobiographical, and many others. Generally, criticism on the sonnets may be divided into a number of clusters. The first cluster includes the works concerning Shakespeare’s poems in the broad cultural and historical context of their time, often compared with the poetic works of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, predecessors, and successors (Bates 1992; Bray 1995; Fowler 1970; Lever 1966; Orgel 1996). There are also many Russian literary scholars whose publications address a whole range of issues related to the contextual aspects of the sonnets (Anikst 1963, 1964; Morozov 1948, 1967; Samarin 1964; Smirnov 1934, Lukov & Frolova 2009).

The second cluster includes studies seeking to deal with the sonnet cycle as a whole, but limited to critical discussions of specific angles of study, such as controversies surrounding the sonnets. These investigations most often include such issues as the sonnets’ authenticity, date of composition, authorisation and order, relation to Shakespeare’s life, the controversial second edition published in 1640 by John Benson, as well as identities of the addressees. Some new themes have emerged during the last few decades, for example, gender politics (Sedgwick 1985; Smith 2011), class (de Grazia 1994), colour and race (Hall 1995), to name but a few. In parallel with their colleagues in other countries, Russian scholars debate when the poems were written, who were the sonnets’ protagonists, and in what ways they are related to the poet (Storozhenko [1902] 2012; Morozov 1948; Mezenin 1996; Gililov 1997; Balashov 1998).

Another group of research focuses on the poetic devices of the sonnets, such as, for example, specialised vocabulary, grammar, structure, metre, tropes, puns, imagery (Abbott [1870] 1966; Schmidt [1874] 1968; Partridge 1955; Trousdale 1982; Williams 1997; Wright 1991; Crystal & Crystal 2002; Hassel 2005). Russian scholars have also paid attention to rhetorical devices of Shakespeare’s poems, such as metaphors (Anikst 1963; 1984, Prikhodko 2010), epithets (Guseva 1976), lexical repetitions of various kinds (Golysheva 1974; Murzaeva 1983), stylistic features (Skliar 1970), phonetic properties (Mezenin 1971), rhythm (Antipova 1974), syntactic features (Pashkovska-Hoppe 1974), structural organisation (Babkina 2006).

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5 For a comprehensive survey of 400 years of criticism of the sonnets, see James Shiffer’s introduction to his Shakespeare’s Sonnets: Critical Essays (1999). A more recent overview of criticism is offered by Critical Survey of Shakespeare’s Sonnets (2014), which includes a fully annotated and up-to-date guide to literary criticism and free online resources, as well as a general bibliography. It should be noted, however, that both editions include only English-language criticism published in English-speaking countries.
The criticism, mentioned so far, has approached the subject of the sonnets as a phenomenon directly related to the culture where they originated. Once translated into a different language, however, any translation becomes a part of the target-language culture and literature. The perennial interest in Shakespeare’s sonnets in Russia has resulted in translation of those being perceived as a separate activity within Russian literary translation, which has generated a wide scope of numerous comparative studies. The investigations have been carried out with a focus on many different issues related to the sonnets. However, to the best of my knowledge, no comprehensive study of the sonnets in Russian translation was conducted in Russia and the Soviet Union before the appearance of Marshak’s translation in 1948. After the publication of Marshak’s translations, “v istorii vosprinatiia sonetov Shekspira russkimi chitateliami nachalas’ novaia èpokha” [a new era began in the history of the perception of Shakespeare’s sonnets by the Russian readers] (Zorin 1984, 281). Marshak’s translations received very enthusiastic reviews and scholarly analysis (see, for example, Morozov 1948; Elistratova 1949; Karp and Tomashevskii 1954; Razova 1964; Etkind 1968). As a result, only a few other translations were published, but not studied and mentioned with one and only purpose – to stress the superiority of Marshak (Zorin 1984, 283). But since the 1960s the situation has changed. A decisive role in the critical reassessment was played by the article written by Nina Avtonomova and Mikhail Gasparov (1969 [2001]; see also Levik 1968). At the same time, the new complete translation of the sonnets by Aleksandr Finkel was published in 1977.

In 1984, an edition by Andrei Gorbunov presented a new publishing strategy, which not only printed the poems in English, but also offered alternative translations of each sonnet (Gorbunov 1984). Moreover, the edition was accompanied by substantial articles by Aleksandr Anikst and Andrei Zorin. Since then, works devoted to a comparative analysis of the sonnets’ translations made by different translators have appeared regularly. The works by Vladimir Kozarovetskii (2009) and Iurii Lifshits (2009) are particularly interesting and important because they consider different types of problems faced by translators while translating the sonnets. In 2000, Irina Chogovadze devoted her doctoral thesis to Shakespeare’s sonnets as a material for discussing the issue of criteria to be established for the evaluation of poetic translation. In 2010, Elena Pervushina published an important monograph, which provides a detailed overview of the literary history of Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets from the nineteenth century to the present day. The book further contains a detailed periodisation of Russian translations of the sonnets. Pervushina has also written articles dedicated to some translators of the sonnets cycle, including
Andrei Kuznetsov, Aleksandr Finkel, Boris Pasternak, and Osip Rumer (Pervushina 2001; 2004a; 2005; 2009).  

Along with works devoted to the sonnets’ translations made by individual translators, scholars have also carried out important studies on various translations of the most famous and popular of Shakespeare’s sonnets, for example, Sonnet 90 (Berestov 1966), Sonnet 66 (Kushner 2004, Finkel 1968, Iakobson 1968), Sonnet 73 (Kushner 2004), Sonnet 74 (Pervushina 2004b), Sonnet 130 (Kushnerovich 1977, Kozarovetskii 2009).

Finally, yet another group of criticism is that of translators who, often in the preface to their own translation, focus on their personal perception of the sonnets criticising previous translations for being insufficient, thus justifying the need for an improved version. Highlighting the creative aspect of translation, these translators seek distinction by claiming that their translations are aimed at serving a function in the target culture, something that was to a large degree ignored in earlier translations (Stepanov 2003, Kushner 2004, Liberman 2015, Kullé 2016).

1.6. Theoretical background
Having outlined the subject matter of this thesis, I now examine the most significant theories in the field of Descriptive Translation Studies.

1.6.1. Translation and norms
Translation, as a social activity, is norm-governed. In translation studies, this idea was explored in 1995 by Gideon Toury in his seminal work Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond. One of Toury’s central ideas was that, since translation naturally involves two languages (at least), there should also be two cultural traditions involved, with their sets of constraints. Toury regards these social constraints as norms and states that they stand in the middle of a scale of sociocultural constraints ranging from objective absolute laws to fully subjective idiosyncrasies (54). Norms can be described, on the one hand, as society’s way to regulate behaviour by stipulating acceptable or tolerated standards, and, on the other hand, making community aware about what is disapproved or forbidden in certain behavioural dimension (55).

The norms of source and target cultures may not be fully compatible with each other; as a result, there will be some losses and some gains in the translation. The translator, then, has to decide whether to be guided by the norms of the source language culture, or by those of the target language culture, and the choices the translator makes determine the position of the text in the target language culture. Toury argues that the position and function of a translation are normally determined by the target culture and target literature system (1995, 29). Translations are “facts of the culture

6 See also Kruzhkov (2009), Shaitanov (2014).
which hosts them” (24), which, therefore, imposes constraints on the translator’s strategic choices.

Toury divides translational norms into three basic categories. Preliminary norms are the norms that govern the translation policy (choice of text types to be translated), and the directness of translation (regarding the use of mediating languages). Translation involves both the source and target norms, which enables translators to make a choice between these two sources of constraints, what Toury calls the initial norm. The initial norm is expressed through operational norms, or decisions, which govern the actual act of translation (56–59).

When discussing norms, Toury notes that they change over time, because translation has never been an isolated activity. There is always a context in which translation takes place, the history and cultural environment from which a text emerges and those into which a text is transposed. Since the translation process has been completed, it is not possible to actually study the operational norms through the text, only the effects of these norms. When a translation work is analysed, it is the product that is studied, not the process. Toury suggests that through descriptive translation studies it is possible to reconstruct the norms that have been involved in the translation process.

1.6.2. Translation as rewriting
As mentioned earlier, the translation deals more with the target than the source culture. As a result, there always are certain target forces that set the goals of the translation activity. In other words, translation, undertaken in certain circumstances and for certain purposes, takes the form of the rewriting of an original text. The rewriting theory is applicable to the case of Shakespeare’s sonnets, and I will give special attention to this issue in this section.

The idea that translation can be regarded as a form of rewriting was developed by the theorist André Lefevere and fully expressed in his 1992 monograph Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame. He sees translators as rewriters of literature, “who do not write literature, but rewrite it” (1992, 1). According to Lefevere, translation is an act carried out under the influence of authority, legitimacy, and power, positioned in the target literary system. Translation should be studied, then, in combination with the most important of those factors, namely, ideology, poetics, patronage and literary professionals (13).

In terms of importance, Lefevere states, the translator’s ideology (whether willingly embraced or imposed on the translator) and the poetics dominate in the receiving literature at the time when translation is made (41). The ideology of the receiving culture governs the process of translating largely from the outside and includes the dominant powers of a social system, for
example, publishers, the media or other individuals in power, such as influential literary families, the court, and even religious communities. Poetics are represented by professionals, for example, critics, experts, translators, who are responsible for the aesthetics of the society. The literary experts, whom Lefevere calls “professionals”, exercise control within the literary system, which may repress certain works of literature or rewrite them under the poetical or ideological constraints to make sure that the literary system “does not fall too far out of step with the other subsystems society consists of” (14). Patronage is another contributing human factor that functions outside the literary system. Lefevere defines it as “powers (persons, institutions) that also can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature” (15).

Unlike many previous theories on translation that considered the source text as authoritative and translations as derivative, Lefevere’s rewriting theory supports a dynamic approach to translation. He claims that the constraints imposed on the rewriters of a society are not absolute restrictions. Instead, they are open to change.

While emphasizing the constraints which condition translation on different levels, Lefevere does not regard translators as slaves to the original. Lefevere argues that translators can choose to be adaptive to the system and “stay within the parameters delimited by its constraints”, or to go against the system and try to “operate outside its constraints; for instance, [...] by rewriting works of literature in such a manner that they do not fit in with the dominant poetics or ideology of a given time and place” (13).

1.6.3. Translations and retranslations
The repeated translation of Shakespeare’s sonnets into Russian constitutes an interesting subject for study in the context of literary retranslation – a term that has been defined as “a reiterative and a multiplicative event which gives rise to a second, third, and infinitum target language instantiation of a source text” (Deane-Cox 2014, 1).

In 1990, Antoine Berman presented theoretical assumptions on retranslation which are often referred to as the retranslation hypothesis. Berman distinguishes two stages of translation: that of the first translation and that of retranslation. Discussing the reasons for rendering a new translation of the already translated texts, he claims that translation is an “incomplete” act and its inherent “failure” can only be improved through later translations. Berman suggests that, while original texts remain “eternally young”, translations age and lose their acceptability to the target culture. However, it is known that not all translations are equally affected by the passage of time. Some may acquire a significant status while others will not necessarily survive the test of time. The translation of the sonnets by Samuil Marshak (1948), the most recognised translator of the cycle, has been
considered classic by many and remained the most widely available Russian translation for the next seven decades. In spite of the fact that dozens of new translations have appeared in Russia since Marshak’s work, his translation still continues to be the most published.7

The need for “updating”, bringing the text in line with the modern reader, may also largely depend on the pace of the language evolution. As languages evolve, translations become dated, and there is a need to update the wording and terminology. Furthermore, all later translations, the hypothesis runs, seem to benefit from the increased knowledge of the source language and culture, getting closer to the source text and culminating in a more faithful target text.

Although there are many cases that conform to the statements of the retranslation hypothesis, some scholars disagree with the assumed chronological development of translations. (Paloposki and Koskinen 2004; Brownlie 2006). Even if the passage of time entails that the translator, theoretically, has more means and knowledge to interpret the text, the first translation of a literary work need not necessarily be deficient. Yves Gambier (1994, 414) suggests that the first translation always tends to be more domesticated if a source text appears to be foreign or alien to the receiving culture. Yet, many cases demonstrate any number of possible variants in first and retranslations, which reflect a certain alternation of trends in translation practice: source-oriented versus target-oriented translations.8 This might also hold to be true in the case of Russian multiple translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets. If we consider, for example, the first translation from 1880, and the four subsequent retranslations from 1914, 1946 and 1977, we will notice that the first one is more target-text oriented, while the second is more source-text oriented. The third one is, again, domesticated and the last one is more foreignised (Zorin 1984, Pervushina 2010). Currently, there are many different Russian versions of the sonnets, with varying degrees of assimilation to the Russian audience, which clearly demonstrates that foreignising and domesticating strategies may coexist and even be supplementary. I believe that every time a translator makes a choice he/she does it according to many kinds of factors that do not necessary contradict each other. I agree with Koskinen and Paloposki, who state that the

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7 For example, Russia’s largest online bookstore Ozon.ru is currently selling thirty editions of Shakespeare’s sonnets in Russian translations published from 2000 to 2017. Out of those, five editions are anthologies of the sonnets rendered by a number of translators; ten editions by nine translators from different periods represent translations of the whole cycle (Gerbel, Chaikovskii (2 editions), Finkel, Fradkin, Kruzhkov, Stepanov, Liberman, Paudi and Sharakhshane). However, as many as fifteen different editions (50%) published during this period contain sonnets translated only by Samuil Marshak.

8 For example, the first translation of Oliver Goldsmith’s The Vicar of Wakefield into Finnish (1859) is much closer to the original than the second one from 1905 (Koskinen and Paloposki 2003, 22). Conversely, the Russian poet Nikolai Gnedich translated Homer’s Iliad first using alexandrines, a popular verse in Russian, but in 1829 he started his translation over using hexameter, trying to find equivalence in phrasing and metre (Semenenko 2007, 100).
established foreignisation-domestication binaries give a too simplified picture of the retranslation process: “Instead, texts and their interpretations function simultaneously on several layers, denying easy classification into assimilative first and source-text oriented new translations” (2003, 23).

Another assumption that has been criticised is the paradigm of perfection implied in the retranslation hypothesis. It suggests that the more the source text is retranslated, the better the translation will be, which assumes the existence of an “ideal” translation, which can be defined. The supposed “ideal translation” would suggest that its author has made no mistakes in interpretation and achieved perfection in a form which makes it unnecessary to translate the original again. Setting standards in relation to an “ideal” translation is in any case doubtful, since culture, language and readers’ needs are never stable and permanent.

Berman places emphasis on the aging of translations as a primary reason for rendering a new version of an already translated text. However, according to Siobhan Brownlie, changing ideologies and the evolution of translation norms in the target culture are the major factors influencing the decision to retranslate a source text (2006, 150). Brownlie discusses two case studies from different cultures as examples of a close correlation between the evolution of linguistic and ideological norms and the publication of new retranslations. One of the studies was conducted by Miryam Du-Nour (1995), who investigated the translation of children’s literature into Hebrew over a span of seventy years. She found that a tendency of reducing the sublimity of the elevated style in recent retranslations complies with modern linguistic norms and concurs with a tendency of putting "readability" as a central issue. Similarly, Pekka Kujamäki (2001) has discussed the historical dynamics of retranslations of a Finnish literary work into German undertaken between 1901 and 1997. He claims that the examined retranslations are largely conditioned by the time-bound ideological contexts of reception. As I demonstrate in Article 2, ideological and political factors have largely affected new retranslations of Shakespeare’s sonnets 135 and 136.

One of the reasons for retranslation is the cultural aspect. This issue was discussed by Toury (1999, 167), who states that retranslation may bring about new ideas and expand perceptions within the target culture. Furthermore, Lawrence Venuti (2004, 26) claims that, since translation involves interpretation, a new translation is always a new interpretation, which may claim to be more faithful to the original text or some specific feature of it.

Some retranslations may even have been made by translators “without any awareness of a preexisting translation” (Venuti 2004, 25). Meanwhile, there may have been cases of translations published independently by different publishers at the same time, as there would not likely have been
any exchange of information on the issue. In some cases, publishing houses may be attracted by prestige, cost effectiveness, and guaranteed sales associated with the publication of literary classics (Milton 2001, 58; Koskinen & Paloposki 2003, 26) and be characterised by a strong drive for commercialism (Venuti 2004, 30).

The retranslation hypothesis put forward by Berman and supported by other scholars suggests the straight-line model of retranslations, with emphasis on the time factor. There are, however, many retranslations of the earlier translated works made within a short time frame (see, for example, the dates of the publications of Shakespeare’s sonnets translated into Russian, pp. 101–103). Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva moves away from the diachronic model and draws attention to “the spiral-like and vertiginous ‘evolution’ pattern of the indigenous literary critical discourse” (2003, 6). She states that the reasons for retranslations should be sought not within any inherent characteristics of the source text, but rather in the target system which may have certain needs and attitudes: “After all, to grant a multiple entry visa to a foreigner is totally at the discretion of the receiving authorities”, and “retranslations may also emerge as a result of a synchronous struggle in the receiving system to create the target discourse into which these translations will be incorporated” (2003, 5). According to Theo Hermans ([1985] 2014, 11), the target culture is always a heterogeneous system consisting of different groups of people, which makes a translation occupy a niche, which is appropriate only for a certain section of the receiving culture. What is more, alternative translations are likely to occupy different positions in the receiving culture even if they came into being at the same time (Toury 1995, 27). When discussing simultaneous retranslations, Venuti focuses on the role of the personal perception of a text by individual translators because they “are designed to make an appreciable difference” (2004, 29). The scholar sees retranslations as a continuous endeavor to “justify themselves by establishing their differences from one or more previous versions” (25). The differences come as a result of alternative retranslation strategies used to generate competing interpretations, believed to be necessary on the assumption that previous versions are no longer acceptable (26).

The idea of competition, or rivalry, being the cause of retranslation is also expressed by Anthony Pym, who draws a distinction between two types of retranslation. The so-called “passive retranslations” are set apart by geographical distance or by the passage of time and “have relatively little disturbing influence on each other” (1998, 82). In contrast, “active retranslations” share the same cultural and temporal location and are indicative of personal “disagreement over translation strategies” (83) among translators. The situation with translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets in Russia may be illustrative in this sense since it is characterised by very active
competition. The fact that the sonnets have been translated several times over the past years cannot be explained by a single factor such as the aging of the previous translations. Almost every year a new complete translation of all the 154 sonnets arrives (Kruzhkov 2014). In his 1968 article “Nuzhny li novye perevody Shekspira?” [Do We Need New Translations of Shakespeare?], Vilgelm Levik argues that the phenomenon might be explained by a need to learn from the experience of previous generations of translators in order to avoid repeating their mistakes.

Translations tend to be seen as inferior to the original text even when a translation may be considered a better poem. It may be said with regards to all types of translation that equivalence in every aspect is an unrealistic goal. As regards the translation of poetry, where the differences are more obvious, it is quite probable to assume that repeated translations of the same poem by different authors may result in an interesting effect, and may be able to achieve more than any single translation may do, making a good case for the defence of multiple translations of the same poetry (Welt Trahan 1988, 4–5; Holmes 1988, 51). Deane-Cox’s claim that “it is the impermanence of the original, and not the deficiency of translation, which gives impulse to the reiterative act of retranslation” (2014, 191), demonstrates my point of view.

1.6.4. Translatability and poetic translation
Retranslation may open new perspectives onto a number of central subjects of research within translation studies, including issues arising in the translation of poetic texts. Poetry translation has been the subject of heated debate for centuries. It is popularly believed that it is much harder to translate poetry than prose from the perspective of the process, techniques and evaluation criteria, which has to be recognised by the translator. The language of poetry has its own particular qualities and deviates from prose in a number of ways. This section gives an overview of scholarly opinion as regards translatability of literary works in general and on the particular difficulties translators encounter when translating poetry.

Poetry translation is a part of a bigger issue of different degrees of translatability of literary texts from one language into another. All the arguments for or against translatability may be applied to any literary text including the poetic one. Before discussing translation of poetry, it would be useful to address the problem of the translatability/ untranslatability of a literary text in general. This question has divided scholars into two radically opposed groups: a universalist one and a monadist one (Steiner [1975] 1998). Supporters of the former approach proceed from the assumption that there is a deep structure that is universal and common to all languages, which ensures translatability: “To translate is to descend beneath the exterior disparities of two languages in order to bring into vital play their analogous and, at the final depths, common principles of being” (Steiner
The Russian linguists Leonid Barkhudarov and Aleksandr Shveitser suggest that the category of translatability has to be established on the level of a text as a whole. At the same time, translation will always deal with concrete language instances that might be hard or even impossible to translate. In that case, they should be dealt with on the level of textual element and not be applied to the category of translatability of a whole text (Barkhudarov 1975; Shveitser 1988).

The followers of the second, monadist, approach believe in a practical impossibility of translating from one language into another. This approach tends to identify language with thinking. They declare that speakers of different languages have different perceptions and mental organisations of reality. Linguistic communities map the world in their own particular manner according to their own linguistic codes. Even concepts common to several linguistic communities have different connotations in each of them, which results in a practical impossibility of translating adequately from one language into another.

John Catford (1965) distinguishes two kinds of untranslatability: linguistic and cultural untranslatability. He argues that these two types reveal the possible linguistic gaps between the source and the target languages, on the one hand, and the gaps between source culture and target culture, on the other hand. Linguistic untranslatability occurs when a translator fails to find a target language category corresponding to a formal one in the source language. Linguistic untranslatability includes such difficulties as language-specific grammatical forms, puns, ambiguity, and polysemy. Cultural untranslatability occurs when a situational feature which has a particular function in the source text is absent from the culture of the target language, for example, the terms of some food, clothes, tools, etc.

Burton Raffel examines the specific constraints of language and highlights a few aspects of the original literary work that cannot be reproduced in the target language: phonology, syntactic structures, vocabulary, literary history, and prosody (1988, 12). He states that it is not possible to fully translate

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9 Many scholars agree that every language has units that have no adequate counterparts in other languages. Indeed, the word “begetter” that we find in the dedication to the sonnets proves difficult to translate adequately into Russian. The correspondences given by Russian translators include porodivshii [who gave birth], vdokhnovitel’ [inspirer], tot, komu obizan poiavleniem [to whom they owe their origin], avtor [author], proizvoditel’ [procreator], tvorets [creator], zaehinatel’ [initiator].

10 This view is mainly supported by language theoreticians such as E. Sapir and B. Whorf, who state that each language conditions the way in which its speakers perceive and interpret the world. In Russia, Aleksandr Potebnia, a distinguished philosopher and linguist of the nineteenth century, shared the same view of the organic unity of language and thought.

11 Catford illustrates linguistic untranslatability by referring to such a grammatical category as gender, which is present, for example, in Russian but is absent in English (1965, 96).

12 See, for example, Article IV, where I investigate strategies applied by several Russian translators for rendering the meaning and cultural value of the metaphors related to alchemy.
anything written in one language into another. He adds: “This is not a judgment about translatability of poetry: it is a judgment about translatability in general” (11).

In poetry translation, where meaning can never be separated from expressive form, the issue of untranslatability becomes crucial, as Eugene Nida and Charles R. Taber state: “Anything that can be said in one language can be said in another, unless the form is an essential element of the message” (1982, 4). Roman Jakobson believes that the essence of poetic form is the sounds. For this reason, he declares that poetry is completely untranslatable: “Only creative transposition is possible: either intralingual transposition - from one poetic shape into another, or interlingual transposition - from one language into another, or finally intersemiotic transposition - from one system of signs into another” ([1959] 2000, 115). In André Lefevere’s view, most poetry translations are unable to capture the source text’s totality, and, therefore, they remain “unsatisfactory renderings” (1975, 99).

Unavoidable difficulties involved in translating poetry have led some critics to the conclusion that poetry can only be rendered literally. According to Peter Newmark, “literal translation” should always be preferred since it is “the only correct procedure” that gives a close target language equivalent, and therefore is “the basic translation procedure” (1988, 70). Russian-American author and translator Vladimir Nabokov takes this position to its extreme. For him, the precise rendering of the meaning of the original becomes so important that the structural features, such as rhyme and metre, are denounced as obstacles. Nabokov uncompromisingly claims: “The person who desires to turn a literary masterpiece into another language, has only one duty to perform, and this is to reproduce with absolute exactitude the whole text, and nothing but the text” (1955, 504). He argues that a translator should make “a choice between rhyme and reason”, striving to reproduce the exact contextual meaning of the original. According to Nabokov, any attempt to translate a poetic work results in an imitation, an adaptation or a parody.

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13 Raffel, however, states that even if full rendering is impossible, he strongly believes in satisfactory translation, “that is, to translate most things, and translate them well” (1988, 11).

14 Andrew Chesterman notes that the term “literal” is rather vague, because it may mean either word-for-word (ungrammatical translation), or the closest grammatical translation. Anyway, “in both cases, the stress is on closeness to the original form” (1997, 12). Eugene Nida defines the notion of literal translation as “formal equivalence” (1964, 159), while Vinay & Darbelnet describe it as a type of “direct translation” ([1958] 2000, 86). As I demonstrate later in this section, Nabokov understands the term as rendering of “the exact contextual meaning of the original” (1964, viii), while Lefevere explains it as a word-for-word translation. Catford argues that literal translation starts with a word-for-word rendering, but in order to conform to target language grammar, the final target text “may also display group-group or clause-clause equivalence” (1965, 25).

15 Other well-known advocates of ‘literal translation’ are A.T. Murray (1924), who rendered Homer’s Iliad in prose, and Charles S. Singleton (1970), who transferred Dante’s Divine Comedy into prose text.
An opposite view is expressed by the Mexican poet and translator Octavio Paz. He defends the idea of the translatability of poetry because poetry is universal. It contains universal emotional experiences which may be rendered by any language within any culture. Paz identifies translation and creation as related phenomena: “Translation and creation are twin processes” (1971, 160). Both poet and translator perform creative activities. The translator’s activity may be divided into two phases. First, the translator acts as a reader or critic within the process of interpretation of the original. During the second phase, the translator acts as a poet, with the essential difference that the translator reproduces the original poem in another poem that is “less a copy than a transmutation” (160). Being a poet himself, Paz holds that the best translator of poetry is ideally also a poet, who almost always uses the source poem as a starting point for his or her own poem.

Although believing in the general possibility of translating poetry, many translators and theoreticians express the opinion that the figurative language of poetry seriously resists translation, for example, ambiguity, polysemy, and wordplay. Also, it has been noted that the translation of poetry cannot preserve all its initial qualities since the nature of poetry is characterised not by the words and metre but a “musical mode” (Raffel 1984, 1). In David Connolly's view, “musical mode” means “inner rhythm, regardless of whether there is any formal metre or rhyming pattern” (1998, 171). He admits, however, that this notion is one of the most elusive yet essential characteristics of a poetic work that poses a serious challenge to translators. In the same vein, John Woodsworth expresses the opinion that, while it is generally thought that the main goal of prose translation is to convey the meaning from one particular language into another, in poetry “the balance is often shifted from meaning to musicality” (2002, 2). He identifies four stages of the shifting: first “in ‘prose poems’, a little more in ‘free verse’, still more in Shakespearean ‘blank verse’ where metre (but not always rhyme) comes into play, and considerably more in what we usually think of as ‘classical poetry’ with more or less constant metre and more or less of a rhyme scheme” (2, emphasis in original). Since the sonnet is one of the strictest poetic forms, with a tight rhyme scheme and metrical regularity, it

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16 Theodore Savory expresses a similar idea: “[In poetry] there is rhythm, metrical rhythm; there is emotion, sensuous emotion; there is an increased use of figures of speech and a degree of disregard for conventional word-order [...]. All this is true, but [...] none of it is the prerogative of any one language” (1968, 75).

16 It has been pointed out by many scholars (Frawley 1984; Bassnett 1991) that translation is first of all an act of reading, which can give rise to different interpretations since the message of a poem is often implicit. Consequently, what the target reader receives is, in fact, the translator’s own understanding of the original text.

17 Reading, which can give rise to different interpretations since the message of a poem is often implicit. Consequently, what the target reader receives is, in fact, the translator’s own understanding of the original text.

18 For instance, in Article II, I consider Russian translations of Sonnets 135 and 136 in relation to rendering puns on the word “will” in various senses.
represents classical poetry in its compact and condensed form, in which the formal features and content are highly interconnected and inseparable. According to Woodsworth’s classification, the sonnet as a poetic genre is imbued with ‘musicality’.\textsuperscript{19}

Another poetic feature that goes beyond the meaning of the source text is its unique style, which may be defined, according to Peter Verdonk, as “a distinctive way of using language for some purpose and to some effect” (2002, 5). Nida and Taber state that a poetic translation cannot be considered successful if poetic style has not been conveyed alongside with content: “translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language massage, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (1982, 12).\textsuperscript{20} Style is one of the features that characterises a text as belonging to a particular poet, and, as Verdonk suggests, it can be seen as the result of the poet’s motivated choices “of certain forms and structures over others that could have been chosen but which were not” (2002, 6).\textsuperscript{21}

Related to the issue of style is the question that has been widely discussed in the context of poetry translation, namely whether verse should be translated into verse or prose:

There is, surely, no other problem of translation that has generated so much heat, and so little light, among the normative critics. Poetry, says one, should be translated into prose. No, says a second, it should be translated into verse, for in prose its very essence is lost. By all means into verse, and into the form of the original, argues a third. Verse into verse, fair enough, says a fourth, but God save us from Homer in English hexameters (Holmes 1988, 25).

Believers in the impossibility of translating poetry without loss tend to assert that prose is the only medium for transferring a poem from one language into another. However, the prevailing opinion nowadays is quite the opposite: it is necessary to preserve a poem’s formal rhymes and metre because they carry out vital functions in ‘the body’ of a poem: “[…] the form of expression (rhythm, meter, assonance, etc.) is essential to communicating the spirit of the message to the audience” (Nida [1964] 2000, 133). As Joseph Brodsky has formulated, verse metres “are kinds of spiritual magnitudes for which nothing can be substituted. They cannot be replaced even by each other, let alone by free verse” (1986, 139). Brodsky widely

\textsuperscript{19} Leonid Grossman draws attention to the difficult question of relationship between music and poetry in his essay Oneginskaia strofa [The Onegin Stanza] (1924, 140–150).

\textsuperscript{20} On importance of style and how it might affect the literary translation, see Boase-Beier (2006).

\textsuperscript{21} Some of the distinctive features of poetic style that have been put forward by different scholars include the text’s physical shape, the use of inventive language, its openness to different interpretations, and demand to be read non-pragmatically (Boase-Beier 2006, 195).
criticised some translations from Russian made by American authors, specifying that “differences in meters are differences in breath and in heartbeat. Differences in rhyming pattern are those of brain functions” (139).22

In practice, translators may choose different possible solutions regarding the verse form though “it is important to remember that these solutions can never be seen as innocent choices, since each type of form, by its very nature, opens up certain possibilities, while at the same time closing others” (Fochi 2011). In the foreword to his translation of Pushkin’s verse novel Evgenii Onegin from Russian into English, Nabokov identifies three methods of verse translation. The first one is paraphrastic, a free version of the original, with its meter and rhyme system retained. Yet, according to Nabokov, this method “fools” the reader, since it cannot be faithful to the work’s exact meaning. Nabokov calls his second method lexical (or constructional), which means “rendering the basic meaning of words (and their order). This a machine can do under the direction of an intelligent bilinguist” (1964a, viii). An example of lexical translation would be an interlinear version that follows the syntax of the original. The third method is literal, rendering the contextually correct meaning of the words with a word order rearranged as far as English syntactical rules allow. “Only this is true translation” (viii), Nabokov claims, and then he returns to the question he had asked in the beginning – “can a rhymed poem like Eugene Onegin be truly translated with the retention of its rhymes?” (ix). His answer is a definite and clear “no”, because it is impossible to reproduce the rhymes and yet translate the entire poem literally. Nabokov assures that “in losing its rhyme the poem loses its bloom” (ix), but he still does not accept any “imitations” which distort the meaning: “To my ideal of literalism I sacrificed everything (elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage, and even grammar) that the dainty mimic prizes higher than truth” (x). In order to compensate for these losses, the poem is supplemented with three volumes of scholarly and linguistic commentary of an encyclopaedic character. In James E. Falen’s, another translator of Pushkin’s work, opinion, “Pushkin [...] loses where Nabokov gains” (Falen 1995, xxvi).23

André Lefevere adopts a descriptive approach and introduces a number of methods for translating poetry, even if he remains sceptical of the very possibility of it. Phonemic translation aims at the reproduction of the source text sounds in the target text while rendering an acceptable paraphrase of the meaning. He himself considers this method as “somewhat utopian” (1975, 21) and “incapable of survival in the literature of the target language”

22 Brodsky criticised translations of the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam made by American writers W.S. Merwin and C. Brown in 1974 for their decision to convert Mandelstam’s “classical” prosody into free verse.

23 Falen translated Evgenii Onegin preserving the rhyme schemes and metrical structure of Pushkin’s text.
Literal, or word-for-word, translation is in danger of distorting the original sense and the target language syntax, as it “pays an enormous price for its illusory pursuit of elusive ‘accuracy’” (96). Four other forms of translation are added by Lefevere to complete those above, but they focus on only one aspect of the source poem. Metrical translation emphasises the re-creation of the original metre, subduing other poetic features of the original. Translation into prose “distorts the sense, communicative value, and syntax of the source text” (49), though not to the same degree as the literal and metrical methods. Rhymed translation restricts the translator with the “bondage” of both the rhyme and metre. In this case, Lefevere believes, the resulting product is “doomed to failure from the start” (49). Translation into blank verse attempts to produce a translation with the stylistic qualities of the target language culture, which may result in achieving greater ‘accuracy’ with regard to the original poem. However, some structural restrictions are unavoidable due to limitations imposed by the metrical scheme. The last form is interpretation, when the translator uses a new form for the translated original poem, yet retaining its original sense. Despite such a generous number of translation methods, Lefevere finds that none is suited for the translation of poetry, their main fault being the emphasis they place exclusively on certain aspects of the source text, rather than on a text as a whole.

James Holmes is one of the scholars who believe in the possibility of the translation of poetry and in the translator’s ability to recreate a poetic text, by seeking “counterparts” and “analogues” rather than exact “equivalents” for all the source poem’s features (1988, 53). Holmes identifies four main approaches on the formal level that can be chosen by translators. The first two are “form-derivative” approaches, aimed at reproducing the equivalent form in the target language, while the second two are intended to deliver the opposite effect.

The first approach is the mimetic form, or replicating the original form, which implies emphasising a source culture’s foreignness, distance, and the strangeness of the original message. The second approach is analogical, in which the translator uses a target form with a similar cultural function to the source form, with the effect of naturalising the foreign poem.

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24 On the definitions of the notion of “literal translation”, see footnote 14 earlier in this section (p.19).
25 Generally, the term “blank verse” refers to unrhymed iambic pentameter, probably the most common and influential form of English poetry, which was preferred by, for example, Elizabethan playwrights for verse drama (Baldick 2008, 37). Unlike the use of “blank verse” in poetry, Lefevere presents it as one of the strategies for translating poetry, in his analysis of translations of one of Catullus’ poems into English. He accepts the possibility of some occasional rhythmic variation using such devices as expansion or compression of the line (1975, 61–65).
26 Holmes’ concepts of “analogical” (i.e. seeking to import the original poem into the native tradition) and “mimetic” (i.e. breaking target conventions) forms can be paralleled to Venuti’s “domestication” and “foreignisation” translation strategies (Venuti 1995).
The third, “content-derivative”, or *organic* approach gives prominence to the content of the poem and allows it to assume its own unique poetic shape, as dictated by the inner value of the text. Finally, there is the *extraneous* form, in which a translator adopts a form possibly unrelated to the form or content of the original. The original poetic text functions just as mere starting point for another poetic text (1988, 25–28).

A further difficulty will arise if a translator has to deal with a source language poem from earlier times, as in the case of Shakespeare’s sonnets. “The greatest problem when translating a text from a period remote in time is not only that the poet and his contemporaries are dead, but the *significance of the poem in its context* is dead too” (Bassnett 1991, 83, emphasis in original). Remoteness in time adds even more complications to the challenges already present in the source text.

Creating a poetic text in the target language, while aiming to preserve the crucial characteristics of the original as accurately as possible, is the ever-present dilemma for the poetry translator. It is not the purpose of my thesis to argue about pro and cons of translating poetry or about the right method of producing verse translation. But the fact remains that translating poetry as poetry is a special activity that goes above and beyond the translator’s linguistic knowledge and calls for the ability to offer a different form of fidelity.
2. The context of Shakespeare’s sonnets

2.1. The sonnets and translation competence
Shakespeare’s sonnets’ great cross-cultural importance and influence, in combination with the paucity of surviving biographical information and the complexity of their meaning, have given rise to a “thick aura of mystery” that “has served as an open invitation both to conspiracy theorists and to reasoned scholarly speculation” (Schoenfeldt 2007, 2). Myths and speculations about the sonnets relate particularly to their dates of composition, to the supposed historical identities of the protagonists, to the poems’ coherence as a sequence, as well as to Shakespeare’s personal life and interests. I agree with Hilton Landry (1976, 3), who says that contradictory conceptions and conclusions, based upon “a confused set of views” about the nature of the sonnets, often affect the reader’s perception and interpretation of the poems. Do the poems also affect a reader from a different culture who has no choice but to perceive them in translation? And if so, then a translator should be aware of these problematic circumstances surrounding the sonnets, which influence the translation.

A translator needs knowledge and skills that are usually referred to as translation competence. Many scholars argue that, in addition to the essential knowledge of both source and target languages, understanding of the cultural differences between the two languages, and the ability to carry out the textual analysis required to produce the target text, a translator also needs to have relevant knowledge of the theme in question or the ability to research it (for overviews see Pym 2002; PACTE 2003; Schäffner and Adab 2000). According to research carried out by the PACTE group, translation competence is made up of several underlying sub-competences, one of which is defined as extra-linguistic sub-competence. It includes encyclopaedic, thematic and bicultural knowledge, both implicit and explicit (2003, 59). Christina Schäffner asserts that translation requires “an awareness of and conscious reflection on the relevant factors for the production of a target text [...] that appropriately fulfills its specified function for its target addressees” (2000, 146).

In our case, the “relevant factors” would include the historical and critical context of the sonnets. Informed by the context, a Russian translator has to make a decision in relation to his/her interpretation of the contradictions and uncertainties of Shakespeare’s poems, and that decision is bound to be reflected in the translation.

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27 There are other definitions of the same concept as well: “translation abilities”, “translation skills”, “translational performance”, “transfer competence” (Cui & Zhao 2014, 181).

28 The PACTE group (Process of Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation) has been carrying out experimental research into translation competence and the process of acquiring it in written translation since 1997.
2.2. Date of composition and the author’s intentions

The sonnets’ uncertain date of composition has generated a great deal of controversy. Although the poems were not formally published as a unit until 1609, they were referred to eleven years earlier in Francis Meres’ *Palladis Tamia* (1598). According to Meres, Shakespeare’s “sugred sonnets” circulated privately in manuscript form among the poet’s “private friends”. In 1599 two sonnets – 138 and 144 – were published in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, a collection of poems by several authors. Though Meres’ reference seems to be one of the most important contemporary accounts of Shakespeare’s literary production, there is no certainty that the mentioned sonnets were among those included in the 1609 Quarto edition or that they have survived to this day. Nor do we know how many “sugred sonnets” there were, or whether they were circulated as individual sonnets or as connected groups or sub-sequences.

The version of the sonnets in the 1609 Quarto edition functions as the basis for all modern editions. The Quarto was produced by the publisher Thomas Thorpe, whose initials are placed on the front page. Thorpe’s edition, entitled *Shakespeare’s Sonnets: Never Before Imprinted*, has been a source of endless speculations. Popular opinion has been that Thorpe published the Quarto without Shakespeare’s knowledge and approval because the text is riddled with spelling and punctuation errors. Katherine Duncan-Jones, however, has challenged this claim in her important 1983 article “Was the 1609 ‘Shake-Speare’s Sonnets’ Really Unauthorized?”, where she attempts to restore Thomas Thorpe’s reputation. Duncan-Jones argues that Thorpe was an experienced and respected publisher who had issued highly authoritative texts of such leading writers as Marlowe, Jonson, Marston and Chapman (155–157). The collection of the sonnets, therefore, was unlikely to be pirated. Duncan-Jones suggests instead that it was bought by Thorpe from Shakespeare when the theatres were closed because of the plague in 1609. However, some critics, such as Arthur Marotti (1990) and Heather Dubrow (1996), remain unconvinced by Duncan-Jones’ hypothesis, thus the issue remains unresolved.

Apart from the question of dating, scholars have also discussed Shakespeare’s sonnets as unconventional poems in the light of the sonnet tradition. Firstly, love as it is represented in the sonnets is extraordinarily complex and paradoxical. Many of Shakespeare’s poems celebrate love’s mutuality, but the object of the speaker’s passion is not a woman but a young man, whose beauty and virtue is explicitly praised. Moreover, when Shakespeare eventually embarks on describing female qualities, he not only portrays the woman as physically unattractive, but also refrains from

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29 For the publication history of the sonnets, see Duncan-Jones (2010, 1–5) and Burrow (2002, 91–103).
attributing any such qualities as virginity and angelic demeanor to her.\textsuperscript{30} This has caused scholars to debate the motivations Shakespeare would have for writing such poems. Duncan-Jones suggests that Shakespeare was attempting to introduce a new interpretation of the form:

One answer, then, to the question of why Shakespeare composed a sonnet sequence might be literary. He sought to appropriate and redefine the genre, rejecting the stale conceits of mistress-worship, and to create a sonnet sequence so different from all its predecessors that the form could never be the same again ([1997] 2010, 49).

Another interpretation of the sonnets is that they can be seen as parody on the three-hundred years long tradition of Petrarchan love sonnets, as well as on the systematic and conventional sonnets of some of Shakespeare’s contemporaries. Commenting on the sonnets’ historical and literary context, Katherine M. Wilson asserts that Shakespeare might have sought to produce a comical effect by using “the same or similar tunes and the same imagery and conceits as the other sonneteers, to pay the same flattering and devoted attention, but to a man, not a woman” (1974, 82). Indeed, it seems that Shakespeare mocks many conventional themes and rules that were strictly adhered to during the Renaissance time. In contrast to tradition, the poet not only inverts gender roles but also parodies beauty (Sonnet 130), plays with twofold nature of the addressee (Sonnet 20), speaks openly about sexual relationships (Sonnets 129, 134, 135), criticises human vices (Sonnet 66), as well as uses unique similes and metaphors (for example, Sonnets 23, 47, 52, 74, 143).

2.3. Relation to Shakespeare’s life
For centuries, critics have pondered whether the sonnets are linked to Shakespeare’s private life. As early as 1780, one of the most influential Shakespeare’s commentators, Edmond Malone, suggested the presence of autobiographical elements in at least some of the poems (Schiffer 1999, 23). The sonnets contain some dramatic elements and an overall sense of an intrigue, which has allowed both scholarly and lay readers to suggest the possibility that the poems contain autobiographical material. There are several reasons suggesting that the poems may be confessional statements, revealing Shakespeare’s private state of mind. First, they are written mainly in the first person, as if the poet is speaking of his own feelings and actions. Second, in Sonnets 135 and 136 Shakespeare puns on his own name “Will”.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{30} Caitlin Larracey states, however, that the Dark Lady is more traditional “as she is a woman and the relationship between her and the speaker is clearly romantic and not ambiguous like that of the speaker and the young man” (2012, 276).

\textsuperscript{31} See Article 2 for the discussion of punning on the name “Will”.
Third, the intense and emotionally vivid lyricism of the sonnets has encouraged a search for the “real” young man and the “real” woman behind the characters usually referred to as the “Fair Youth” and the “Dark Lady”. Biographical readings raise the question of homosexual relationship between Shakespeare and the young man, especially in view of the romantic and erotic language (see, for example, Joseph Pequigney 1985).

Furthermore, it has been suggested by many that Shakespeare alludes to his career as an actor in the public theatre in, for example, Sonnets 110, 111, 112, as well as in 25, 29, 72, and 87. In Sonnet 110 he writes: “I have gone here and there, / And made myself a motley to the view” (1–2), where ‘a motley’ means “a fool, a clown (i.e. a wearer of motley, parti-colored cloth of the sort traditionally worn by professional jesters” (Booth 1977, 354).

However, all these arguments put forward by proponents of the autobiographical theory, have their counter-arguments. As for the identity of the Dark Lady and the Fair Youth, as well as Shakespeare’s relationship with them, even if assumed that these individuals were real, the lack of information prevents any conclusions from being drawn, “so speculation is likely to be fruitless” (Hammond 2012, 5). According to Schiffer, the failure of scholars to agree on even a single historical identification of the sonnets’ principal characters may serve as an indication that these people and situations are fictional (1999, 15).

As for the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’, it was common for a poet to write in first person during the Elizabethan era. Since the sonnets are not factual or historical productions but belong to a literary genre, it is very likely that the ‘I’ of the sonnets may represent the poet’s both real and imagined identity (Callaghan 2007, 24). The themes were also fashionable at the time and repeated from one cycle to another. Schiffer quotes James Boswell as noting the great popularity of the sonnet form: “The Sonnet was at that time a popular species of poetry, and was a favourite mode of expressing either the writer’s own sentiments, or of embellishing a work of fiction” (1999, 28). Furthermore, the passionate language of the sonnets addressed to the male friend may reflect the Renaissance courtly love convention of friendship between men, which was seen as an advanced form of human relations (Hecht 1997, 142). Thus, the sonnets may be read as expressions of

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32 Many critics refer to the young man as the ‘Friend’, which also suggests an ambiguous relationship, since in Renaissance England this term could mean both casual acquaintance and the sexual partner (Hammond 2012, 18). The term ‘the Dark Lady’ has been widely accepted by critics, though the word ‘lady’ is never used in the sonnets, and the word ‘dark’ when applied to a person occurs only once in Sonnet 147, but not necessarily about the woman. For a discussion of possible historical prototypes for the Dark Lady and the Fair Youth, see Duncan-Jones ([1997] 2010, 50–69).
33 In Booth’s view, this particular line “is colored by (and colors the following lines with) its pertinence to the particular circumstances of its author’s life” (1977, 354).
34 Terri Power notes that, in today’s view, even Elizabethan men’s clothing may be considered ‘effeminate’, as they wore lace, satin, ruffs, stockings and earrings (2016, 124).
platonic love, or even as the love of a father for his son. As Burrow argues, “[s]ame-sex relations in early modern England could be read within a number of different and incompatible traditions, from the political (according to which they were monstrous) to the Hellenic (which could present them as the highest form of love)” (2002, 139).

The name Will, apart from to the poet, may also refer to the Fair Youth or the Dark Lady’s husband. As for the allusions in Sonnet 110, the phrase “And made myself a motley to the view” may be understood simply as “I made a fool of myself” and thus contain no theatrical allusion (Booth 1977, 354; Burrow 2002, 600).

Few critics today advocate the sonnets as a source for Shakespeare’s private life. We know very little about the poet other than certain external facts about his life, so it is very difficult to confirm or refute any suggestions and attempts to identify the sonnets with the author’s biography, made on the basis of any implications in the poems. It seems pertinent to quote here Booth’s pronouncement on what is termed the biographical fallacy: “William Shakespeare was almost certainly homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. The sonnets provide no evidence on the matter” (1977, 548).

It goes without saying that Shakespeare could portray many different aspects of life and human relationships. There is a tendency in recent criticism to de-emphasise the biographical aspect of Shakespeare’s sonnets (Schiffer 1999, 35). Still, to paraphrase the end of Sonnet 18, so long as men can breathe or eyes can see, so long will the speculation about Shakespeare’s sexuality go on and give life to new waves of debate on the issue.

2.4. The order of the sonnets
The question of the order of the sonnets is another subject that has been debated by researchers over many decades. We do not know whether the sonnets were intended to be read as a sequence or as a few separate, random mini-sequences. If we believe that the edition was issued without Shakespeare’s authorisation, we have to admit that the internal order of the poems might be not the one intended by the author. If we assume that Shakespeare did actually oversee the edition of his poems himself, we shall have but little choice to admit that the sonnets are likely to be in the order intended by Shakespeare.  

35 Still, many critics notice the difference between the spiritual love for the Fair Youth and the overtly sexual love for the Dark Lady. Jonathan Bate claims that whereas the sonnets addressed to the young man “idealize rather than sexualize the love object”, the relationship with a woman is described as being “intensely sexual” (2009, 173).

36 Burrow notes also that the “allusion to Shakespeare’s activities as a player” in Sonnet 110 “is at best a distant reference, since the role of fool was a specialized one which Shakespeare did not play” (2002, 600).

37 Though, even in this case, as Michael Schoenfeldt notes, uncertainty remains: “Even if we assume that Shakespeare was writing a deliberate sequence, we cannot be certain that the 1609 text sets the poems in the precise order Shakespeare intended” (2007, 3).
According to Kenneth Muir, “sonnets sequences from the time of Petrarch to the age of Auden have never been narrative poems in fourteen-line stanzas” (1997, 7). However, beginning with Charles Knight in 1841, many editors and scholars have attempted to offer their own order of the poems in an effort to create a more coherent and structured “plot” than the one found in Thorpe’s volume.\(^{38}\) As Robert Matz notes,

So many of the sonnets are thematically linked one way or another, and the threads of the narrative are so slight, that many new combinations can and have been proposed without being sufficiently persuasive to convince most readers that the new order is the correct one. (2008, 14)

One of those who are convinced that the sonnet order of the Quarto should be accepted, Hilton Landry maintains that “[s]uch criteria as sense, grammar, imagery, rimes, catchwords, and rare words” can serve as “indications of connection or relation between Sonnets” (1976, 130). Kenneth Bennett (2007) treats the sonnets as parts of a coherent sequence held together by threads of themes and motifs. Booth (1977) argues that the sonnets are ordered by a variety of formal patterns.

Critics who have accepted the order of the sonnets presented in the Thorpe edition usually address the sonnets as a sequence of events.\(^ {39}\) Helen Vendler’s close readings of each sonnet reveal strong connections between certain poems, thus supporting the suggestion that they shall be seen as a sequence rather than isolated pieces. Scolars commonly recognise several themes and narrative strands that emerge through the collection grouped formally or thematically.

The contemporary view that the sequence is divided into two parts – the first 126 sonnets addressed to the Fair Youth and the rest addressed to the Dark Lady – has prevailed. The unity of the first seventeen sonnets is often referred to as the “procreation sonnets”, the poems of advice, where the poet-speaker adopts the tone of an advisor, who puts himself in a socially inferior position to his addressee. He urges the young man to marry and beget children for the sake of continuation of the family name and of reproducing his extraordinary beauty. Starting in Sonnet 18, when the young man seems to reject this argument for procreation, the poet claims that the

\(^{38}\) Brents Stirling (1968), for example, rearranges the sonnets claiming that most of them fall into groups of two or more linked together that focus on either a theme, or a recurring metaphor, or an image. Peter J. Smith presents a new order based on a cipher that Smith believes was used by the sonnets’ “true” author in order to hide his identity and to conceal “certain tenets and messages” (2011, xvi).

\(^{39}\) Conversely, Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells compare the collection to a “mixed bag of poems” and “a patchwork composed of separately woven pieces of cloth”. They argue that although there is a sense of dramatic narrative in the collection, it would not be right to talk about one single story: “To insist on one story alone is to misread the Sonnets and to ignore their will to plurality, to promiscuity” (2004, 46).
young man’s beauty will be immortalised through poetic praise: “Art is far more successful in combating time than simple procreation, which is the possible reason why the idea of procreation disappears from the sequence” (Larracey 2012, 274). Gradually the speaker and the young man become closer, and the emotional intensity increases. The speaker becomes more attached to the young man than he originally intended. Sonnet 22 celebrates love when the two men give their hearts to each other.

The situation grows complicated by a triangle involving a woman, who becomes the mistress of each man in turn (Sonnets 39–42). In Sonnets 79–87 a “rival poet” comes on the scene, who gains the young man’s favor. This leads to the young man’s betrayal, which greatly upsets the speaker. Sonnets 91–96 suggest a quarrel and then reconciliation between the speaker and the Youth in Sonnet 97, which is a poem of strongly expressed love. The final sonnet of the Fair Youth sub-sequence signifies the end of the relationship that has stretched throughout the 126 poems.

The second, shorter group of Sonnets 127–152 involves the poet's sexual relationship with the Dark Lady, who is presented as treacherous and dark, with “raven black” eyes and brows (Sonnet 127). Similar to his friendship with the young man, this relationship fluctuates between feelings of love, hate, jealousy, and contempt. The woman becomes unfaithful and betrays him with the young man (Sonnets 133–134), while Sonnets 135, 136, and 143 deal with puns on the poet’s name and his desire, or ‘will’.

2.5. Formal features of the Shakespearean sonnet

The sonnet is a poem written not only on a conventional theme, but also in a conventional form. According to Booth and Vendler, formal patterns of a sonnet are of great importance. Booth draws attention to the unity of the poem, because the first thing that readers see is “a tight little block of print on a page” (Booth 1977, 29). Moreover, he says, this unity must be based on some particular rhyme pattern in order to distinguish a sonnet from any other fourteen-line poem.

This poetic genre became popular first during the Italian Renaissance, long before the birth of Shakespeare. In the fourteenth century, Francesco Petrarca, anglicised as Petrarch, wrote a sequence of sonnets of divine love addressed to Laura, a distant, chaste, fair lady. The speaker celebrates her beauty and virtue, and he cries to her for mercy being obsessed by what he perceives to be her cruelty. In the early sixteenth century the sonnet was imported into England, where the form underwent a number of revivals and periods of renewed interest.

The Petrarchan sonnet consists of two parts; an octave (the first eight lines) and a sestet (the last six lines). The octave can be broken down into

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40 For more information about the origin and development of the sonnet, see Spiller (1992).
two quatrains. Likewise, the sestet is made up of two tercets. The octave presents the idea to be contrasted by the ending sestet, which is supposed to resolve the theme introduced in the octave. The quatrains and tercets are divided by change in rhyme. Petrarch typically used an \textit{abab abab} pattern for the octave, followed by either \textit{cde cde} or \textit{cdc dcd} rhymes in the sestet. At the beginning of line 9 there is often a \textit{volta} – a shift, or a turn in the argument. With such a rhyme scheme the change between the two parts, the \textit{volta}, becomes physically visible, which “centers the energy of the poem inside it” (Booth 1977, 30).

Shakespeare used another structural form of the sonnet, comprising fourteen lines organised as three quatrains and a concluding couplet.\textsuperscript{41} The lines follow the rhyme pattern \textit{ababcdcdefgfgg}, the form, which became known as the “English” sonnet, or the “Shakespearean” sonnet. Booth states that such a rhyming scheme cuts the quatrains phonetically from each other and directs the energy of the poem onward to “an abrupt stop in a final spastic epigram” (1969, 30). However, as Vendler points out, the critical feature of a Shakespearean sonnet is not its formal poetic concerns but a logical progression of thought and emotional development (1997, 5). The core idea is introduced in the first quatrain, then it evolves and gains sophistication in the next two quatrains, and reaches its conclusion in the final couplet. Duncan-Jones argues that the octave and sestet can also be seen as units of thoughts, which shows that Shakespeare was “fully aware of the Italian form” (2010, 97). Hammond writes:

\begin{quote}
The sonnet form as used by Shakespeare is particularly well suited to argument, with the succession of quatrains encouraging the step-by-step development of a line of thought, or its successive complication; and sometimes the sestet will question the argument of the octave. The couplet may sum up the ideas of the poem, or it may turn the thought in a new direction, sometimes, indeed, undermining or dismissing what the sonnet has just said. (2012, 21)
\end{quote}

Similarly to the Petrarchan sonnets, Shakespeare’s lines contain ten syllables and are written in iambic pentameter, in which each foot is made up of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, and is repeated five times.\textsuperscript{42} The structure is illustrated by the following examples, with the stressed syllables highlighted in bold type and the divisions between the feet inserted:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Only two of the 154 sonnets do not conform to this structure - 99 and 126, which have fifteen and twelve lines respectively.
\item Sonnet 145 is the only one written in iambic tetrameter, i.e. in eight-syllable lines.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
When I/do count/the clock/that tells/the time  
(12.1)

When in/disgrace/with for/tune and/men’s eyes
I all/alone/be weep/my out/cast state  
(29.1-2)

Shall I/compare/thee to/a sum/mer’s day?
Thou art/more love/ly and/more tem/perate  
(18. 1-2)

Hammond states that the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables determined by the metre helps to emphasise the key words on which the stress falls. He notes, however, that although iambic pentameter provides the basic pattern for each line, the distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables is not always clear in English, for “when a line of verse is spoken aloud there will be various degrees of emphasis according to the metre, the grammar, the semantic importance of the word, and the emotional weight which a word may carry; and each reader’s sense of these elements […] will differ” (2012, 21). Of all poetic meters, iambic pentameter comes closest to conversational English:

Pentameter […] is the most speechlike of English line-lengths […]. Long enough to accommodate a good mouthful of English words, long enough too to require most of its lines to break their phrasing somewhere, it also resists the tendency to divide in half. […] For iambic pentameter, however highly patterned its syntax, is by nature asymmetrical – like human speech. (Wright 1988, 5)

In addition, pentameter is by far the most widespread form in English classical verse (Kemball 1997, 308). Even speeches in verse in Shakespeare’s plays are composed mostly in iambic pentameter.

Since a standard verse in the Shakespearean sonnet consists of ten syllables, where the last one is always stressed, the line, consequently, usually has a masculine rhyme. The eleventh syllable, if there is one, is always unstressed. Each quatrain of the sonnet contains its own alternate masculine rhymes, and a terminal couplet with a plain masculine rhyme. Only two Sonnets, 20 and 87, are constructed almost entirely with feminine rhyming endings, i.e. a rhyme of two or more syllables, which ends with an unaccented syllable.

Frances Mayes, in her book The Discovery of Poetry, notes that the poem’s form and content are “interactive systems”, and, therefore, “[t]he form of a good poem occurs simultaneously with the meaning, not as a separate phenomenon” (2001, 302). Following this statement, one can be quite certain that both rhyme and rhythm are rhetorical ways in which Shakespeare creates patterns not only of sound but also of thoughts. Thus, understanding the importance of structure and form in the process of
translating the sonnets into another language would allow a translator not only to recreate the poems’ formal features, but also to preserve their emotional and informative substance to a higher degree.
3. Shakespeare and the sonnets in Russia

Although Shakespeare’s sonnets were translated into Russian at a much later date than his plays, they have acquired the same level of popularity. In order to contextualise my examination of the evolution of Russian translations of the sonnets, the first section of this chapter is an overview of the historical and ideological factors that determined the reception of Shakespeare as a playwright. In the next section, I focus on the reception history of the sonnets. Their unfolding popularity during various periods will be presented, beginning in the Russian Empire, through the USSR, and, finally, to present day Russia.

3.1. Shakespeare in Russian culture

The Russian interest in Shakespeare developed in stages from its inception in the eighteenth century. The cultural processes of the post-Petrine period were characterised by the active acquisition of European cultural heritage and a liberation from the Church Slavonic traditions. Russian national literature, along with the literary language, was still in a nascent state. Thus, translated literature played an essential role in the creation of Russian original literature. As outlined by Itamar Even-Zohar,

 [...] in such a state when new literary models are emerging, translation is likely to become one of the means of elaborating the new repertoire. Through the foreign works, features (both principles and elements) are introduced into the home literature which did not exist there before. (1990, 47)

The early stages of literary development, Even-Zohar continues, were often based on the “import” of a whole new aesthetic system together with the many elements that are part of it. When the European Neoclassicist aesthetic took shape in Russia by the middle of the eighteenth century, a translator was often seen as an equal participant in the literary process (Levin 1995, 11). Such an approach favoured a free and creative translations transmitting the neoclassical ideal embedded in the chosen source text rather than preserving the particulars of its imagery and style. Aleksandr Sumarokov, one of the poets of the eighteenth century, who excelled in translation, remarked in his Épistola o stikhotvorstve [Epistle on Verse Composing]: “Ne mni, perevodia, chto sklad v tvortse gotov./ Tvorets daruet mysıl’, no ne daruet slov” [Think not, when translating, that the author’s language is sufficient/ The author provides an idea but does not provide the words] ([1747] 2013, 141). Indeed, Russian poet-translators of the eighteenth century often altered source texts in order to accommodate them to the contemporary cultural contexts. One of
the first Western authors, who underwent such transformations, was Shakespeare. In 1748, Sumarokov, often referred to as the father of Russian drama, published his *Gamlet* [Hamlet], a Classicist tragedy based on the French prose adaptation of Shakespeare’s play published by Pierre-Antoine de La Place (Semenenko 2007, 70). The tragedy strictly follows the rules of the French Neoclassical canon but acts upon the issues and motifs deeply rooted in Russian culture and traditional Orthodox views (Simmons 1932, 791). Sumarokov’s goal was not to reproduce Shakespeare’s play for a Russian audience but rather to transpose specific elements of the existing poetic system into the context of a new tradition. It allowed him to publish *Gamlet* without acknowledging the source: Shakespeare’s name is neither mentioned anywhere in the original edition of the play, nor is it visible in the paratext.

The first play in Russia attributed to Shakespeare was an adaptation of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* published in 1786 by Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia. The comedy was given the curious title, *Vol´noe no slaboie perelozhenie iz Shakespira, Vot kakovo imet´ korzinu i bel´ë* [A free but poor adaptation of Shakespeare: What it means to have a basket and linen]. Like her contemporary translators, Catherine used the stock imagery of the original but adapted it to norms familiar to the Russian reader in terms of both stylistics and content. The same year, the Empress published two more plays based on Russian history. In the titles, she admits her debt to the English playwright saying that her plays are “podrazhanie Shekspiru” [imitations of Shakespeare], (Ekaterina II, 1893). However, as Simmons comments, “beyond the initial inspiration, which is important enough, and the general matter of form, there is little other Shakespearian influence” in these plays (1932, 803).

In the early nineteenth century four of Shakespeare’s tragedies were translated into Russian: *Othello* (1808), *King Lear* (1808), *Hamlet* (1811), and *Macbeth* (1815). Similar to Sumarokov’s and the Empress Catherine’s versions, these translations were not based on the English originals but on the French adaptations (Zabrorov 1965). The famous historian and cultural leader of his time, Nikolai Karamzin was the first to translate Shakespeare from the original. In 1787, he published a translation of *Julius Caesar* into Russian, albeit anonymously. The edition was accompanied by a preface written by the translator, where he explains some particular qualities of Shakespeare’s drama and praises Shakespeare as one of those writers whose fame, in his view, will last for centuries:

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43 Ekaterina Sukhanova notes that there appears to be no evidence of any eighteen’s-century poet ever reading Shakespeare in the original (2004, 28).
Vremia, sei mogushchestvennyi istrebitel’ vsego togo, chto pod solntsem nakhoditsia, ne moglo esheche’ dosele zatmit’ iziaschnosti i velichiia Shekspirovykh tvorenii [Time, the mighty destroyer of everything existing under the sun, was unable to demolish the elegance and greatness of Shakespeare’s creations]. ([1787] 1964, 82)

Karamzin also describes the translation method he used:

_Chto kasaetsia do perevoda moego, to ia naibolee staralsia perevesti verno, staraiasˇ pri tom izbezhatˇ i protivnykh nashemu iazyku vyrazhenii […]_Myslei autora moego nigde ne peremenial ia, pochitaia sie dlia perevodchika nepozvolennym [Concerning my translation, I have tried as much as possible to translate faithfully, at the time trying to avoid expressions unpleasant to our language […] Nowhere have I altered the ideas of my author, considering this inexcusable in a translator]. ([1786] 2013, 8)

Karamzin’s translation of Julius Ceasar was indeed a novelty but the play was, however, never staged. Moreover, in 1794 it was confiscated by the authorities and banned for political reasons.

The period of Romanticism, which developed in the 1820s to 1840s, became a turning point in the reception of Shakespeare in Russian culture. Iurii Levin notes that “[b]y the mid-1820s Russian men of letters keenly felt a lack of reliable Shakespeare versions” (1993, 76). During this time, rigid neoclassical prescriptions and rationalist principles were challenged by a somewhat different approach to Shakespeare. Inspired by the Romantic cult of Shakespeare in Europe and the growth of native Russian theatre, dozens of translations were published from the 1840s onwards. One of the most important was Nikolai Ketcher’s ambitious project to recreate the complete plays in prose, which sparked a continuing debate about prose/verse translations (Levin 1965, 372).

The first Russian poet to be deeply influenced by Shakespeare’s style was Aleksandr Pushkin. He did not translate as much as some of his contemporaries (Zhukovskii, Batiuishkov, and Viazemskii), but his own works contain many examples of reworking the elements of foreign poetic culture. Pushkin’s tragedy of kingship and conscience, Boris Godunov (1825), undoubtedly echoed Hamlet, as well as the history plays (Alekseev 1972, 250ff). In the draft letter to the publisher of Moskovskii vestnik (1828), Pushkin claims to have written Boris Godunov “po sisteme Ottsa nashego - Shekspira” [according to the system of our Father Shakespeare] (Pushkin [1828] 1996, 66). David M. Bethea has characterized the play as “a goldmine of reinvented and thoroughly ‘russified’ Shakespearean characters, episodes, varying levels of diction, genre telescoping (tragedy and history), and spirited dialogue with sources” (2001, 84). Contrary to Bethea, Zakharov states that
Pushkin did not russify Shakespeare but tried to apply the playwright’s artistic method to depict the time and characters of his dramatic works (2014, 239). Prompted by a growing interest in the originals, other translations of Shakespeare’s plays appeared at Pushkin’s time: Mikhail Vronchenko translated *Hamlet* (1828), *Macbeth* (1837), and parts of *King Lear* (1832), while Vasilii Iakimov published his versions of *King Lear* and *The Merchant of Venice*, in 1833.

After Pushkin’s death in 1837, Shakespeare and translations of his works into Russian, French and German continued to have a significant influence on Russian culture. Sukhanova notes that during this time, the status of Shakespeare’s works had undergone significant changes:

Before Pushkin’s time, Shakespeare’s texts in Russian literature lacked the canonical status necessary to stimulate such an inner dialogue of the reader with himself or herself. This particular function of Shakespeare’s work started to become actualized in Russian cultural life in the 1820s to 1830s and reached its high point by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the canonization of Shakespeare’s heritage in Russia could be considered apparent. (2004, 30)

The period after Pushkin saw many editions of Shakespeare’s works oriented toward a mass readership which had been formed by that time. Literature turned to mirroring the social realities of the time and harsh discordances of life. The leading literary critic of his day, Vissarion Belinskii was among the first to claim Shakespeare to be one of the founders of “realistic poetry” that the critic considered to be the true and genuine poetry of his time: “On byl iarkoiu zarêiu i torzhestvennyym rassvetom éry novogo, istinnogo iskusstva” [He was a bright and solemn dawn of the era of the new and true art] (1835 1953, 266). Overall, Belinskii acknowledged the essential contribution of translations to the development not only of modern Russian literature but also of “our still maturing language” (1835 2013, 33).

Such great novelists of the nineteenth century, as Ivan Turgenev and Fëdor Dostoevskii, often referred to Shakespearean characters and themes. Apart from numerous stories on Shakespearean themes, Ivan Turgenev wrote the essay *Gamlet i Don-Kikhot* [Hamlet and Don Quixote] (1860), where he called Shakespeare “a giant” and “a demigod”. In the essay, Turgenev showed that the Hamlets of the 1840s hate evil but fail to fight against it, because their will is paralysed by their self-criticism, scepticism, and doubts (Turgenev 1982). Most of Dostoevskii’s novels and stories contain allusions to Shakespeare, including *Bednye liudi* [Poor Folk] (1846), *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* [Crime and Punishment] (1866), *Idiot* [The Idiot] (1868), *Besy* [Demons] (1871), and *Brat’ia Karamazovy* [The Brothers
Karamazov] (1879). In the drafts to his anti-nihilistic novel Besy [Demons] (1871), Dostoevskii projects his own interpretation of Shakespeare’s images onto the characters and describes Shakespeare as “пророк, посланный Богом, чтобы возвести нам тайну о человеке, душе человеческой” [a prophet sent by God to proclaim to us the mystery of man and the human soul] (1974, 237). Dostoevskii was greatly attracted by such Shakespearean characters as Othello, Hamlet and Falstaff, who, in his view, had embodied certain life principles: non-acceptance of evil, scepticism bordering on despair, and the parasitical exploitation of social vices.

During the 1840s–60s, many new translations of Shakespeare’s plays reflected a characteristic feature of this period – the coexistence of different translation strategies used by a number of translators. The theory of translation was an issue widely discussed in magazines and newspapers. The leading role in this matter belonged once again to Belinskii. Addressing the issue of how Shakespeare ought to be translated, he wrote that there is a need to create a theory of translation, because the practice had provided the necessary prerequisites for such a theory (Levin 1965, 367). In the 1830s and 1840s, Shakespeare’s works were translated mainly by writers, for whom translation was a secondary occupation, or sometimes by individuals who simply had a passion for Shakespeare and devoted their spare time to translation of his works. In contrast, during the 1860s, an important group of professional poets-translators, such as Пётр Венигр, Александр Соколовский and Фёдор Миллер, emerged. The general interest in Shakespeare’s works, as well as the emergence of professional translators created the necessary preconditions for the publication of a complete collection of Shakespeare’s plays translated into Russian (Levin 1988, 289). In 1865–1868, the first complete edition of Shakespeare’s drama works was published, which had a significant impact on the development of the art of translation in Russia. A complete edition of all Shakespeare’s works, including the sonnets, did not become available until 1880.

In the political climate and harsh censorship of the second half of the nineteenth century, the interest in Shakespeare declined, not least under the pressure of more urgent literary debates. Some Russian writers even attempted to dethrone Shakespeare. In his book on Shakespeare, Levin cites revolutionary democrat Nikolai Chernyshevskii, who found the playwright’s works lacking psychological realism and being insufficiently engaged politically (1988, 92–93). In his critical essay from 1903, Lev Tolstoi denounced Shakespeare as a bad artist and criticised him, among other

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44 For details of Shakespeare’s influence on Dostoevskii’s writing, see Levin (1974). A persistent Hamletian subtext in Dostoevskii’s novels has been investigated in a recent article by Karen Stepanian (2014).
45 Lev Vygotskii, the Soviet psychologist and the founder of historicocultural psychology, maintained that Dostoevskii and Shakespeare are strongly related phenomena (1968, 541).
things, for his inability to create characters and for his anti-democratic attitudes (1983).

At the end of the nineteenth century, Russian academic scholarship on Shakespeare began to develop. The scholar Nikolai Storozhenko is regarded as its founder and a prominent expert on Shakespeare heritage. His historical and cultural works about Shakespeare and his predecessors and successors, gained respect both in Russia and abroad. Storozhenko’s studies were related to the staging of Shakespeare’s plays in Moscow theatres, where they formed an important part of the repertory. In 1902–1905, the well-known historian of literature and bibliographer Semën Vengerov, together with a team of literary scholars, critics and translators produced the second collected works of Shakespeare, including the sonnets. It was a finely designed edition, with commentary, in five volumes, which many critics consider to be the best Shakespeare collection issued before 1917.

The late nineteenth century and early twentieth were marked by a new literary and artistic movement, usually referred to as the “Silver Age” of Russian literature. This period saw an increase in poetic translation, which prompted the emergence of a new approach to Shakespeare and especially his plays, whose “emblematic nature and poetic power” were primarily valued by the Russian symbolists (Prikhodko 2012, 73). One of the leading poets of the symbolist movement, Alexander Blok, referred repeatedly to Shakespeare, finding inspiration in his images for his own poetry. The theme of Hamlet accompanied all of Blok’s poetry, from the intimate lyrics of Hamlet to Ophelia to the problems of making life choices, fulfilling his duties and taking revenge. Blok, a keen supporter of the classic repertoire, played an important role in the early Soviet promotion of Shakespeare’s classic plays. Being involved with the Moscow Art Theatre productions, Blok stated that Shakespeare’s plays should become central in the repertoire of the future theatre (Zinner 1965, 761). Inspired by Blok, a theatre-related study of Shakespeare started in 1925 with Vladimir Miuller’s work Drama i teatr ēpokhi Shekspira [The Drama and Theatre of Shakespeare’s Epoch] (Miuller [1925] 2015).

In 1922, the institution of censorship and strict centralisation was established in Soviet Russia, which influenced not only domestic literature but also the whole process of literary translation. The Russian governmental censorship played a crucial role in the creative manipulation and appropriation of original texts. Everything that did not fit the official ideological canon was banned or severely limited. Literary texts, including those by Shakespeare, were subjected to restrictions on political, religious, and moral grounds.46 One of the most important figures in the literary

46 On the role of censorship in Russia, see Baer (2013), Ermolaev (1997), and Friedberg (1997). On literary translation as a specific cultural phenomenon in the context of Soviet totalitarianism, see Witt (2011).
criticism of the first Soviet years was a literary critic, Vladimir Friche, who depicted Shakespeare as an aristocratic author despising the common people and holding reactionary views. Anatolii Lunacharskii, Commissar of Education, was another supporter of this view. George Gibian states that the Friche-Lunacharskii critical method was very influential during the 1920s: “Attempts at exegesis in terms of a schematic, amateurish, over-simplified sociological background abounded” (1952, 28).

In 1934, the first All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers proclaimed Socialist Realism as the official artistic method to be applied in Soviet literature and literary criticism, which provided guidelines for any work in all fields of art. Through idealised depictions of communist values and the glorification of common workers and peasants, Socialist Realism was supposed to give a generally optimistic picture of the Soviet State and to praise socialism. All cultural spheres were charged with this task, including translations of foreign literature, where Shakespeare held a primary position.47 At the aforementioned Congress of Soviet Writers, Shakespeare was mentioned in almost every speech concerned with drama; and, as described by Arkady Ostrovsky, his large portrait decorated the congress hall – “physical proof that on the 370th anniversary of his birthday Shakespeare had been assimilated into the ranks of Soviet writers” (2006, 56). In addition to this pictorial tribute, in the same year the Theatre Union of Russia organised the Shakespearean Department, whose goal was to provide consultation for directors. The English writer’s birthday was celebrated on the scale similar to that of such national figures as Pushkin, with annual conferences marking the occasion. Ostrovsky notes, that by 1939, “mass Shakespearization was in full swing” (2006, 58).

Although the vast majority of critics had fallen under the influence of the official methodology during the 1920s-30s, some alternative studies had also come to the public attention, which, to a varying degree, ignored the assumptions about the class origin of Shakespeare’s works. For example, in 1929, Aleksandr Bulgakov published a book on the theatre companies in Shakespeare’s time, neutral to Marxist political views, while Aleksandr Smirnov described the development of Shakespeare’s work from the point of view of an individualistic bourgeoisie, opposing the position expressed by Friche and Lunacharskii. In 1934, Smirnov published research that investigated the playwright’s connection with Renaissance humanism in depth (Smirnov 1934). Another Shakespeare scholar and literary theoretician, Ivan Aksênov, was interested in the structural aspects of Shakespeare’s plays (Aksênov 1937). In 1941, Mikhail Morozov published a study on the language and style of Shakespeare, as well as other works.

47 The establishment of the Union of Soviet Writers in 1934, which included a Translators’ Section, marked the final step of the politicisation of literature. Translators were thus ascribed the same status as writers. On the history of the Soviet Writers’ Union, see Garrard (1990).
After the Second World War, a certain revival of intellectual and spiritual life became apparent in the country. A number of Shakespeare’s plays were staged, and many new Russian translations were also published during this period, including Samuil Marshak’s famous complete translation of the sonnets (1948).

Two principal approaches relating to Shakespeare’s works emerged in the translation history of the Soviet period. The first was marked by an intention to reproduce the complexity of Shakespeare’s images and metaphors, preserving the variety of styles in his drama. This characterises the translations by Anna Radlova, Mikhail Lozinskii, and Mikhail Kuzmin, made during the 1930s. Another translation method was later introduced by Boris Pasternak, who rejected literalness and modernised the language (Pasternak 1989). His principles were embraced by Samuil Marshak, Vilgelm Levik, Iurii Korneev, Mikhail Donskoi, Tatiana Gnedich, and Polina Melkova, whose translations strive to unite accuracy with poetic naturalness and fluency in the target language.

The second half of the 1950s marked a new era in Soviet Shakespeare studies. Many publications of these years took decisive steps away from the old dogmatic predominance of the Marxist sociological approach, thus establishing more analytical ways of research into social, philosophic, and artistic motifs in the works of Shakespeare. For example, the collection of critical essays Shekspirovskii sbornik 1958, was significantly different from the publications of the previous period (Anikst and Shtein 1958). In 1957-60, Smirnov and Anikst issued an eight-volume collection of Shakespeare’s works, one of the most authoritative of the complete editions released during the Soviet time. This publication included the translations of the previous decades, including those by Anna Radlova, Mikhail Lozinskii, and Boris Pasternak.

In the 1960s many books and articles on Shakespeare’s heritage appeared in the USSR, in connection with the upcoming 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth. Anikst’s works on Shakespeare included a whole range of themes, subjects and genres. He wrote books about both separate plays and the theatre of Shakespeare’s time. He was also the author of some works on Shakespeare’s biography, and carried out a number of textual studies (Anikst 1963; 1965a; 1965b; 1974). Leonid Pinskii’s book Realizm épokhi Vozrozhdeniia [Realism of the Renaissance] contained a social, philosophic and stylistic analysis of the nature of Renaissance realism as a stage in the history of this movement (Pinskii 1961). Various aspects of Shakespeare’s oeuvre were discussed by Naum Berkovskii, Izrail Verstman, Roman Samarin, Mikhail and Dmitrii Urnov, Iurii Shvedov, and others. The cinema made notable contribution by filming some of Shakespeare’s tragedies: Othello (1946), Hamlet (1964), and King Lear (1972), directed by theater and film director Grigorii Kozintsev. His books Nash souremennik Vil’iam

In the 1970-80s, Soviet scholars’ interest in Shakespeare’s works remained strong. Many new original performances on stage appeared at that time. The film director Sergei Iutkevich wrote a comprehensive study of adaptations of Shakespeare’s works for the screen in \textit{Shekspir i kino} (1973). Analysing the significance of the 1960-80s for the history of Russian and Soviet Shakespeare scholarship, Mark Sokolyansky notes that this period can be regarded as most productive, because it

\[\ldots\] appeared to be a determinant in the process of the full and certain inclusion of Russian Shakespearology to the world literary and theatrical scholarship, expanded its scope of critical and scholarly approaches to Shakespeare, stimulated appearance of a number of new works on Shakespeare, which would be free from the remnants of dogmatism and based upon the best national and world traditions. (2005, 82)

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the further development of Shakespeare studies took place within a new and unstable political and economic reality. On the one hand, the strict censorship and restrictions were mostly lifted. On the other hand, the sharp reduction of financial support for publishing houses, theatres and cinema resulted in a considerable reduction of book circulations and theatre productions. However, some notable books on the most controversial questions of Shakespeare’s life and works were published, for example Ilia Gililov’s work on the problem of authorship (1997).\footnote{Several scholars criticised Gililov’s book accusing it of non-professionalism. See, for example, Balashov (1998), Sokolianskii (2000).}

In the twenty-first century, Russian literature continues to employ Shakespearean motifs and characters. The range of works presented for the Ivan Bunin Literary Award in 2007, which included a new translation of the sonnet cycle, is just one example of that. Shakespeare retains his popularity on the theatrical stage in Russia. His plays are regularly staged in theatres all over the country, though it appears that the time has not yet come for an extensive discussion about the modern developments in the Russian scholarship on Shakespeare.

\subsection*{3.2. The reception of the sonnets in Russia}

The sonnets were translated into Russian at a much later date than Shakespeare’s plays. As noted in the previous section, Aleksandr Pushkin was one of the first Russian writers to pay tribute to Shakespeare’s sonnets.
In his poem *Sonet* [Sonnet], he mentions Shakespeare among the, in his opinion, great sonnet writers, such as Dante, Petrarch, Camões, Mickiewicz and Wordsworth:

*Surovyi Dant ne preziral soneta;*[49]  
*V nём zhar liubvi Petrarka izlival;*  
*Igru ego liubil tvorets Makbeta;*  
*Im skorbnu mysł´ Kamoëns oblekal.* [...]

Zorin notes that the meaning of this definition is quite clear. Shakespeare for Pushkin is primarily the author of tragedies (1984, 267). It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that Russian readers became familiar with Shakespeare’s poetry. In this section, I pay particular attention to the sonnets’ reception in Russia from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.

### 3.2.1. *Pre 1917*

Shakespeare’s popularity as a dramatist had its peak in Russia in the 1830s–40s. During this time, some magazines turned to his lyrics in order to present this part of Shakespeare’s oeuvre to the readers (Levin 1965, 345–347). The first dated publication of any of Shakespeare’s sonnets in Russian was that of the poet and critic Vasilii Mezhevich, who in 1839 published his *Podrazhanie Shekspiru* [Imitation of Shakespeare], a poetic adaptation of Sonnet 71. Without keeping the sonnet form, Mezhevich tried to convey the general psychological content of the original (Zorin 1984, 268).

Three years later, the first critical essay about the sonnets, written by the well-known critic Vasilii Botkin, was published in the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski*. In the article entitled *Shekspir kak chelovek i lirik* [Shakespeare as a person and a lyrical poet], Botkin expresses his opinion that the sonnets contribute to an understanding of Shakespeare’s spirit that would not have become apparent exclusively from his plays. Similar to Mezhevich, Botkin includes a prose translation of Sonnet 71 in the essay, noting that he is not able to convey the sincere and melancholic beauty of the original (Zorin 1984, 269). Another attempt at translating Sonnet 71 without keeping the form was made by Mikhail Ostrovskii in 1852. It can be assumed that all three translators were fascinated by the feelings expressed in this particular sonnet to such extent that preservation of formal features of the poem appeared less relevant to them. Pervushina claims that the translators

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49 Pushkin, however, refers here to Shakespeare primarily as a playwright, calling him “tvorets Makbeta” [the creator of *Macbeth*].
preferred to focus on the emotional component of the poem, rather than on the
dramatic logics of the plot (2010, 66).

In 1859, Ivan Mamuna published a translation of Sonnet 29. In
subsequent years, his translations of another seven sonnets (30, 31, 55, 60, 130, 131, 139) were made available to a Russian audience. The last one, Sonnet 139, was published in 1902. This very fact indirectly suggests that Mamuna had been translating the sonnets over the course of more than forty years. It is worth to note that Mamuna was the first translator to use 14 sonnet lines in his versions, thus trying to keep some features of the original form. Mamuna’s translations were highly appreciated by Storozhenko, who said that the translator has the honour of being the first to introduce some of the best of Shakespeare’s sonnets to the Russian public ([1902] 2012, 323). Despite this praise, modern critics usually speak negatively about Mamuna’s translations (Kushnerovich 1977, 318).

The first to translate the whole collection of 154 sonnets was Nikolai
Gerbel.50 The 1880 edition contains a preface written by the translator where he draws attention to the high artistic quality of Shakespeare’s poetry and its special place among Shakespeare’s works. Nonetheless, Gerbel’s translations of the sonnets can serve as an illustration of the theory of rewriting outlined by Lefevere. Gerbel’s work is indicative of ideological and cultural processes within Russian society that forced the translator to subdue the specificity of the sonnets, making them culturally more appropriate for the target audience. One of such decisions made by the translator was readdressing the sonnets, originally addressed to the Fair Youth, to a woman. Feminising the masculine sonnets was Gerbel’s way of compromising between his aspiration to introduce a translation of the whole cycle of the sonnets and the demands of the receiving culture and public morals. Gerbel’s translations were sharply criticised by some contemporary critics, though not for the alteration of the strange source material but for semantic and poetic inexactitudes.51 Nevertheless, many critics of later periods expressed the view that Gerbel’s work formed an important beginning for the work of later generations’ translators.52 He emphasised the poetic unity of the cycle, and from that point both readers and translators started regarding the sonnets as a complete set of poems (Pervushina 2010, 90).

50 Gerbel also published the first complete collection of Shakespeare’s dramatic works in three volumes. There were five editions of this collection; the first one came out in 1866-1868 without the sonnets, but the third one (1880) contained the complete translation of the whole cycle made by the publisher himself.
51 For example, Storozhenko compared Gerbel’s translations of Shakespeare to a struggle between a dwarf and a giant, or a frog and an ox (Zorin, 1984, 270).
52 However, Efim Ėtkind, the Soviet philologist and translation theorist, criticised Gerbel’s translation for attempting to “polish” Shakespeare’s poetry, thus depriving it of its individuality. Moreover, Ėtkind criticised Gerbel for changing the metre of the sonnets having extended the lines by two syllables, or an entire foot, in order to gain more space for conveying the meaning of the original in a single line in Russian (1968b, 139).
Following Gerbel’s publication, a number of further attempts were made to produce new versions of the sonnets. In 1884, the translations by Fёdor Chervinskii went into print, while Platon Kuskov translated some of the poems into blank verse in 1886. Translations by Sergei Iljin, published in 1902, were a novelty in terms of the metrics. For the first time, a large part of Shakespeare’s poetry (nineteen sonnets) was translated in the meter of the original. On the whole, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Russian translators’ interest in Shakespeare’s sonnets was constantly increasing.

The culmination of the nineteenth century process of appropriating Shakespeare’s drama and poetry for Russia was a complete edition of Shakespeare’s works published in 1902–1905 by the Brokgaus-Eftron publishing house. It was a five volume collection edited by Vengerov. The sonnets were placed in the last volume. Seventeen different translators contributed to this work, which resulted in the combining of different voices without attempting to create a cohesive whole. Therefore, the distinguishing feature of this publication was that it was not a cycle of poems, but rather a poetic anthology. Gerbel’s and Vengerov’s anthologies represent different views on the art of translation. At the same time these anthologies introduced many, previously unknown, new translators to the Russian reader. Overall, this publication became a significant event in the cultural history of Russia.

In 1914, another translation of the whole cycle made by an individual author was produced by Modest Chaikovskii, the younger brother of the famous composer. He became the first author to translate all the sonnets with the application of the iambic pentameter. Only two sonnets were omitted, 135 and 136. The translator justified their absence referring to their untranslatable punning, without which the poems would be meaningless. Chaikovskii, following Goethe and Schleiermacher, believed that a translator should bring the reader toward the source text. The translator considered it necessary to not “Russianise” Shakespeare but rather to comprehend the essence of his works. That is why the edition of his translations is bilingual; it was printed with parallel English text, like the tragedy Richard II translated by Chaikovskii earlier. He tried to keep closer to the original than his predecessors, mainly due to his adherence to the foreignising translation strategy, using Venuti’s terminology. In contrast to, for example, Gerbel, Chaikovsky challenged Russian social norms and conventions by keeping the male addressee in the translations of the Fair Youth sonnets, thus consciously retaining the strangeness of the foreign text.

53 In Etkind’s opinion, Kuskov’s translation of Sonnet 27 is "ne tol’ko bezvkusnyi i banal’nyi, no dazhe anekdoticheskii" [not only tasteless and banal but also comical] (1968a, 140).
3.2.2. The Soviet period

Since literature is the product of its era, the translation activity is always under the influence of constraining cultural and social norms of the target culture, as discussed in Chapter 2. Toury claims that the translator is always subjected to the norms of either the source text or the target text, which will lead to either source-text oriented or target-oriented translation (1995, 56). In the same vein, José Lambert states that norms are “prevalent in a given society at a given moment in time. The study of literary translations therefore consists of the study of translation norms, models and traditions” (1998, 132).

In Russia, the process of translating and retranslating Shakespeare’s canon, including the sonnets, has always taken place against the background of the opposition between two translation approaches – the foreignising versus the domesticating translation, as shown, for example, in Gerbel’s and Chaikovskii’s translations. Instead of these terms, Russian translation theorists traditionally use the analogous binary oppositions – “literal” versus “free” translation.54 The former term refers to the method of seeking to retain as many stylistic features of the original as possible, while the latter focus on the so-called “faithfulness” to the spirit of the original.

In Russian translation history, one can observe alternating periods in which “literal” and “free” approaches dominated. According to Mikhail Gasparov ([1971] 1988), the leading verse theorist of his time, the nineteenth century was the era of “free” translation, when translators strived to bring the original closer to the norms familiar to the Russian readership, both in form and content.

This changed, Gasparov continues, during the first decades of the twentieth century, when the dominant translation strategy in Russia was “literal translation”, referred later to as bukvalism [literalism] (“bukva” in Russian means letter of the alphabet). The situation began to change over time, and bukvalism was gradually superseded by free translation. One of the most active opponents to bukvalism was Kornei Chukovskii, who treated it with contempt: “Unfortunately, in the thirties, there existed a whole school of such translators, the adherents of the mechanistic method. [...] This school left us a number of translations made on the basis of perverse theory and therefore irretrievably abominable”.55 In the early 1930s, the debate over bukvalism and free translation became politicised. As Andrei Azov notes, another term for bukvalism, formalism, had come to mean any technical

54 Hannu Kemppanen notes that within the Russian translation school, a number of other synonymous terms meaning ‘literal or word-for-word translation’, have been in use: bukvalizm, bukval’nyi perevod, bukval’nost’, doslovnost’, doslovnyi perevod. Kemppanen comments: “The great variety in naming the strategy of literal translation gives a hint of the evaluative definitions of this concept” (2012, 56).

difficulty, any stylistic innovations, any deviation from the prescriptions of Socialist Realism which demanded simplicity, clarity, and accessibility (2013, 41). Moreover, the very word “formalism” became a label, a curse word, a condemnation and was held in nearly universal disrepute (Witt 2016a).

The ideas of Chukovskii and other anti-formalist theoreticians were supported by many writers, such as Pasternak, Zabolotskii, Marshak, to name a few. Zabolotskii states: “If a translation from a foreign language does not sound like a good Russian literary work, then it is a mediocre, or poor translation” ([1954] 2013, 110). In the second half of the twentieth century, “free” translation became the dominant method in Russian translation, especially poetry. This method is usually seen in connection with “realist translation, the correlative of Socialist Realism” (Popa 2013, 28). As Ivan Kashkin, one of the leading theoreticians of “realist translation”, claimed, the translators’ task was to truthfully reconstruct the reality depicted in the original:

The best guarantee of faithful transference and historical concreteness of the original, with all its chiaroscuro and inherent qualities, lies in the realistic method, in its truthfulness. Our Soviet literary translation is far from a “photographer’s trade”, it is a creative mastering, a branch of the art of Socialist Realism.57

Kashkin explains in more detail that to “translate realistically” means “to translate truthfully without distortions, without disproportionate attention to particular details, […], and based on the correctly understood idea of the work”.58 Another important quality of translation advanced by Soviet scholars and translators was so-called accessibility: “Lёgkost´ i dostupnost´, za kotoroi chuvstvuetsia glubina podlinnika – ´eto velikoe dostoinstvo perevoda” [Simplicity and accessibility, which let the reader experience the depth of the original, is a great virtue of a translation] (Azov 2013, 141). Thus, translation was expected to be oriented toward the mass audience, and this was one of the prime goals of the Soviet translation school. As stated by the critic and translator Vladimir Rossels, the wider circle of the future readership as envisioned by translator, the better it corresponds to the goals of the entire Soviet literature (1955, 20).

56 See also Friedberg (1997, 16; 83–84). Moreover, Azov demonstrated how, using critical articles and armed with theoretical models, translators engaged in a serious and even dangerous struggle with each other for the direction of culture.
58 In the original: “Perevodit´ pravdivo, bez iskazhenii, bez neproportsional’no podchërkivanija otdel’nykh detalей, […], iskhodiat iz pravil’ no poniatogo tselogo […]” (1977, 434).
As one of the oft-quoted examples of the achievements of Soviet poetic translation, Samuil Marshak’s translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets, published in 1948, embodied these ideas of accessibility for a “general” readership.\(^59\) When Marshak’s translations appeared in journals, they enjoyed immediate success and popularity with Soviet readers precisely due to their clarity of both language, meaning and style. At the same time, the wave of praise was growing among the critics, which culminated in Marshak’s receiving the Stalin Prize in 1949.\(^60\) As Alla Latynina claims, the Stalin Prize “almost always rewarded a writer for fulfilling the current task while simultaneously outlining the conditions for the task that lies ahead” (1996, 116). According to Marshak himself, the total number of the copies printed within the period between 1946 and 1964 reached almost one million. The translator proudly claimed: “Knigu sonetov mozno uvidet’ v rukach u rabochego ili shofёra taksi. Takaia sud´ na doliu knigi stikhov” [One could happen by chance to see the book of sonnets in the hands of a worker or a taxi driver. Rarely has a book of poetry achieved such recognition] (1971, 431).

The very style of Marshak’s translations can serve as an example of Venuti’s theory of ‘domesticating’, aimed at bringing “back a cultural other as the same, the recognisable, even the familiar; […] where translation serves as appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, and political” (1995, 18). As in the case of Gerbel’s translations, Marshak consciously chose the strategy of feminising the masculine sonnets, owing to the political and moral censorship of the time. For a Soviet audience, any hints at probable male homoerotic relationships in an artistic work were simply unacceptable.\(^61\) Friedberg noted that “Soviet writers and editors occasionally conceded that […] excessively frank portrayals of sex were toned down in the translations of foreign literary texts” (1997, 140).\(^62\) However, despite enthusiastic reviews, it was noted by some critics that Marshak frequently changed the imagery and the stylistic overtones of the originals, tending to simplify the extended metaphors and complex syntactic structures. The stylistic adaptations made by Marshak in his renderings were characterised by Gasparov as translations from not only one language into

\(^{59}\) Before the publication of the complete cycle as a separate edition in 1948, Sonnet 32 was published in 1942 in the journal Znamia, while Sonnet 66 appeared in 1944. A large collection of the sonnets in Marshak’s translation appeared in the journal Novyi mir (1945), followed by several publications in Znamia (1947–1948).

\(^{60}\) As evident from the list of all recipients of Stalin Prize (1941–1952), provided by Latynina, out of totally 166 Stalin Prizes, two were awarded for translations: Marshak for Shakespeare’s Sonnets and Mikhail Lozinskii for a translation of Dante’s Divine Comedy (1996, 121–128).

\(^{61}\) In 1933, Article 121 was added to the Soviet Criminal Code, which made male homosexuality a crime punishable by up to five years in prison with hard labor. This article was eliminated in 1993 after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Moss 2013, 757).

\(^{62}\) For the analysis of reflection of social taboos and censorship with regard to sexuality in Russian translated literature, see Article II.
another but also from one style into another ([1969] 2001). This article, co-authored with Natalia Avtonomova, was a rare attempt at criticising Marshak’s translations by demonstrating certain limitations of a domesticating approach. The critics note that, when rendering Shakespeare’s sonnets, Marshak often left out certain elements (for example, the words that referred to sexuality or to religious and historical realia) and modified the abstract imagery when it appeared too complicated. The modifications resulted in the change of the entire manner of the original: “vmesto napriazhennosti - miagkost’” [gentleness instead of intensity], “vmesto konkretного – abstraktное” [the generalised instead of the concrete], “vmesto logiki – èmitsiia” [emotion instead of logic]. Gasparov finds Marshak’s language stylistically romanticised in the canonical manner of nineteenth-century Russian poets of Pushkin’s time. Gasparov explains that such poetic language is easily accessible to the Soviet readers because it is felt as quite emotional and expressive. At the same time, this style is traditional enough to be felt “klassicheski velichavym i vazhnym” [classically majestic and solemn] ([1969] 2001). Nevertheless, Gasparov praises Marshak for his adherence to a stylistic consistency to which, in his opinion, every translator should aspire.

Apart from Gasparov and Avtonomova’s article, another negative comment on Marshak’s translation of the sonnets was expressed (though in a private letter) by Boris Pasternak. In 1954, he translated Sonnet 74 at the request of Grigorii Kozintsev, who planned to include it as a final scene of his stage version of Hamlet in Pasternak’s translation. Pasternak wrote to Kozintsev: “[o]f course, I will have to translate it, and, beyond all doubt, it should be read in my translation, even if it will be worse than that of Marshak, because I cannot think of a combination of such different texts”.63

In the preface to the translation of Hamlet in 1939, Pasternak declared his own translation principles, his preference for “free translation”, that might be motivated both by adaptation to prevailing norms, and by gaining “a unique space of artistic liberty” (Witt 2011, 165). In the social and political conditions set by the Soviet regime, literary translation often served as means of survival and a cultural “niche” for poets and writers whose works could not be officially published (Friedberg 1997; Witt 2011). Pasternak was forbidden to publish his own works, which caused him to resort to translations as a safer livelihood. He turned to Western European classics and translated Shakespeare’s major tragedies and three sonnets (66, 73, and the abovementioned 74). The famous Sonnet 66 translated in 1938, with its Hamlet-like reflection, lists all the ills of society. Brian James Baer states that the line “And art made tongue-tied by Authority” must have had

63 In the original: “konechno, pridétsia perevesti ego mne i, konechno, pridétsia chitat’ ego v moém perevode, dazhe v tom sluchae esli on, vne vseago spora, budet neudachnui perevoda Marshaka, potomu chto takogo kooperirovaniia raznoiménnyh tekstov ia nikak ne mysliu” (Kozintsev 1988, 122).
particular resonance for Pasternak in the 1930s since the reader is encouraged to make connections between the events described in the distant past and “the moral and political corruption of contemporary society” (2006, 547). As pointed out by some commentators, Pasternak’s translations of those three sonnets, even if they retain the energy and emotional power of the original, bear traces of his own tendencies as an author (Finkel 1968, Kruzhkov 2009). Moreover, the proximity in intonation to Russian oral speech was considered by many critics as a weak point (Pervushina 2010, 168–169).

It was not until 1977 that a new complete translation of the sonnet cycle made by Alexander Finkel was published in a Russian academic edition Shekspirovskie chteniia. His work remained unknown during his lifetime (1899–1968), but was discovered and published posthumously. The fact that Finkel’s translation was included in the book containing scholarly articles may indicate, first, that this work was highly regarded and, second, that the era of Marshak was over. Finkel demonstrated a new approach to translating the sonnets. Anikst noticed in the preface to the publication that Finkel’s translation is more difficult to read than Marshak’s, but this “difficulty is not a consequence of inability, but the inevitable result of Finkel always striving to convey all the complexity of Shakespeare’s poetry as closely as possible”. In her thorough analysis of Finkel’s work, Pervushina defines the main objective of Finkel’s work as a re-creation of the consistent stylistic tone of the original (2010, 247). And this tone, Pervushina continues, was innovative and unexpected. It manifested itself in dynamic poetic language, in the use of intensely dramatic imagery, extended metaphors and complex syntactic constructions, which emphasises the general lyrical tension of the sonnets. Furthermore, Finkel avoids romanticising the woman of the sonnets, unlike Vasilii Zhukovskii and the early Pushkin. Although Finkel also readdressed several sonnets from the Fair Youth sequence to a woman, he did not apply this method as actively as his predecessors Gerbel and Marshak.

Towards the end of the Soviet period, several critics drew attention to the need for new translations of Shakespeare’s works, including his sonnets. In 1966, Levik expressed hope that a new Russian poet would appear and translate Shakespeare anew, using the fresh, unrestrained, violent and multicolored language that would correspond to that of the original (1968, 104). In 1984, Zorin noted that today “there is a growing need for translation, which [...] would not bring Shakespeare to us, but us to

64 Sonnet 66 is one of the most translated (may be the most translated) sonnets into Russian.
65 In the original: “Perevody Finkelia chitaiutsia trudnee, chem perevody Marshaka, no eta trudnost’ chteniia ne sledstvie neumeniiia, a neizbezhnyi resul’t stremleniiia Finkelia kak mozno polnee peredat’ vsiu mnogoslozhnost’ shekspirovskoi liriki” (1977, 218).
66 Gerbel readdressed 20 sonnets to the woman, Marshak – 14, while Finkel – only 9 (Pervushina 2010, 256).
Shakespeare”.\(^67\) This appeal was heard, and the 1980s, and even more so the 1990s, saw many new translations of Shakespeare including the complete cycle of the sonnets. A translation of the whole cycle made in 1990 by Igor Fradkin was the last of those published during the Soviet era.

### 3.2.3. The Post-Soviet period

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought about some radical changes to the nature of translation practices in Russia. The abolition of censorship, as well as the rapid transition to a decentralised, market-oriented economy provided new freedoms and possibilities to poets, writers, and translators, though they lost some of the stability and status of a writer in a closed society (Wachtel 2006). In the aftermath of significant social and cultural changes, translation ceased to play such an important and exclusive role in the society as it did in the past. It became obvious that the readership does not represent a homogeneous single group, but rather is divided into several different groups with different needs and expectations. As a result, the number of translations which can be seen as polemical in relation to the previously established standards, increased constantly. Overall, the period may be characterised by a simultaneous emergence of different approaches to translation: the domesticating, or mass target-oriented; the foreignising, or source-oriented; and approaches that in varying degrees paid attention to both the source and target cultures.

The new epoch in the translation history of Shakespeare’s sonnets in Russia, which continues to this day, is marked by unprecedented activity. The whole cycle has been translated by dozens of translators of the new generation – Pervushina defines this situation as a mass sociocultural phenomenon (2010, 275). However, many critics and poet-translators have complained about the mediocre, even poor, level of most of the new translations. Iurii Lifshits (2009) describes the contemporary situation as almost chaotic, saying that at the turn of the twenty-first century Russian translations of Shakespeare, particularly the sonnets, turned into a kind of versification party. Translators often openly criticise each other’s work, and, as Lifshits puts it, today each Russian translator of Shakespeare’s sonnets is convinced that his and only his translation will be (or has already become) the necessary and sufficient, and that he and only he would overnight become (or has already become) the new Marshak and thereby his name would be immortalised. Analysing the current state of translation, Lifshits compares translators of the Soviet period with those of the present:

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\(^67\) In the original: “Segodnia […] vse ostree chuwstvuet sia potrebnost’ v perevode, kotoryi, […] pereselial by ne Shekspira k nam, a nas k Shekspiru” (1984, 286).
Esli ran’ she russkie perevodchiki byli oseneny oreolom slavy, predstavliai soboi tvorcheskuu elitu i schitailis’ kem-to vrode nebozhitelei, to teper’ oni v svoeim opredeliaschem bol’shistve prevratilis’ v nekoe parodiinoe podobie iskatelei zhemchuga v pustykh rakovinakh [Earlier, the Russian translators were seen as a creative elite and a kind of celestial human beings adorned with a nimbus of glory. But nowadays they have mostly turned themselves into a grotesque kind of pearl hunters searching through empty shells]. (2009)68

This situation may serve as an illustration of the idea of a competition, or rivalry being one of the causes of retranslation, as discussed by Pym (1998).

Considering the similar phenomenon of “the feverish sonneteering” in the Czech Republic in the 1990s, Martin Hilský states:

> It is obvious that in our time the process of re-presenting, re-producing, reinventing, reimagining, rereading, reinterpreting, re-editing, and retranslating Shakespeare has dramatically accelerated and continues on an unprecedented scale and with unprecedented intensity. And it is no less obvious that the plurality of translations has affected our perception of the status, value, identity, and meaning of literary texts, both original and translated. (2003, 135)

This observation is fully applicable to the new conditions and effects of no less “feverish” Russian sonneteering during the post-Soviet period. Today a great number of people produce translations of the sonnets, hoping to supersede Marshak, but their works are generally considered inferior (Gasparov 2001, Shaitanov 2005, Pervushina 2010).

Yet, these considerations should not be perceived as a condemnation. It is noteworthy that Shaitanov expressed his opinion in 2005 in the preface to Arkadii Shtypel’s translations of a number of Shakespeare’s sonnets. The appearance is welcomed by the critic, who gave a positive evaluation to it.

Pervushina has presented a list of Russian translators and sonnets translations that have been published in different printed formats between 1839 and 2009 (2010, 342–353).69 While Pervushina’s list contains twenty five names of translators of the whole sonnet sequence, Aleksandr Sharakshanë (2011, 264) mentions “ne odin desiatok” [a few dozens] existing translations of the whole cycle, presumably taking into account both printed and web versions. The figures continue to grow, as at the time of the completing of this thesis, a web search resulted in yet another ten complete translations of the sonnets that are not present on Pervushina’s list.

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68 See also Pervushina (2010, 275–277).
69 Pervushina admits that her list is not exhaustive but gives the general picture of Russian history of the sonnets’ translation.
4. Some particular issues
Poets and translators often use metaphorical language when reflecting on the process of translating. Mikhail Lozinskii, for example, compared the process of poetry translation to a delicate process of transplanting a poem from “the soil” of one language into that of another. According to him, this process cannot be performed mechanically because “every language has its own prosody, or poetic devices, represented by a specific system and specific features” (2013, 89). The fourth chapter addresses several vital practical issues and difficulties arising in the process of translating the sonnets, such as metre, rhyme, rhythm, problems of gender, and the ways of address. The chapter also deals with the challenges posed by the translation of Shakespeare’s language, focusing on such aspects as bawdy language, metaphors, puns, and culture-specific items. Some of the issues mentioned here are discussed in more detail within the articles included in the present thesis.

4.1. Cycle or collection?
Although we do not know if Shakespeare wished his reader to assume that all 154 sonnets were primarily planned to form one connected and indivisible whole, criticism on the poems has addressed an interpretation of the sonnets mainly as a story, not as an artificially assembled collection. The opinion that the sonnets is a single work is favoured by the majority of contemporary Russian scholars and translators, who often call the poems “tsikl” [cycle, sequence]. This word implies a certain continuity, unified motion.

The question of order of the sonnets that has been debated by researchers must be crucial for translators as well, since their own interpretation of the sonnets, either as a story or as separate poems, will inevitably influence the final target text.

In his 1880 translation, Nikolai Gerbel chose to present the poems as a poetic ensemble. The interpretation of the sonnets as an artistic unity was largely dependent on specific processes that took place in late nineteenth-century Russian literature. According to Mikhail Darvin, the decades around the turn of the century were the time of the blossoming of the cycle as a genre (1999, 495). Darvin states that, unlike rigorous categorisation of literary works according to their genre which was a characteristic feature of Russian literature of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century saw new principles of lyric cyclisation. Shorter lyric poems within a collection interact to create a coherent meaning, often unified by a single poetic personality and a theme. Darvin points out that in the late nineteenth-century Russia, the acquired independence of the poetic cycle as a genre also affected the perception and interpretation of translated poetic collections,
the unity of which began to be equated with the unity of a long poem (1999, 493).

Gerbel’s translation of Shakespeare’s collection can be considered as this very kind of lyrical novel. He considered the consecutive order of the sonnets as the basis of a coherent plot unfolding according to the principle of the narrative. Such reading was supported by Gerbel’s solution to the problem of the sonnets’s male addressee: more than twenty poems from the first, sequence, the Fair Youth, were readdressed by the translator to the Dark Lady. As a result, the cycle acquired the characteristic outline of a traditional love story. One of the central themes present in the source text - of male friendship – was lost in Gerbel’s work. Consequently, the theme of love for a woman was significantly expanded in the translation, though it lost the dramatic tension inherent in the original. This approach set an example for many later translators of the Soviet era.

Shakespeare’s sonnets also appeared as a romantic love story in Marshak’s translations as well. Similar to Gerbel’s translation, Marshak’s Dark Lady became the main addressee throughout the cycle, which strengthened its unity. The sonnets have remained in this bowdlerised form up to the end of the Soviet era. The opinion that at least some of the first 126 sonnets, if not all of them, are addressed to a male person has become more widespread among the Russian translators of the post-Soviet era. Nevertheless, many contemporary translators choose to adhere to the tradition of readdressing the sonnets, for example, Adolf Shvedchikov (1996), Vadim Rozov (1998), Andrei Kuznetsov (2004).

However, the way of seeing the sonnets as a cycle is not confined to redirecting the “male” sonnets to the woman. Contemporary translators, such as Vladimir Mikushevich, also find other principles of its compositional unity based on the sonnet’s formal features. Mikushevich states that the syntax and structure of Shakespeare’s sonnet, as well as its way of rhyming, contributes to the establishment of a special type of connection between lines. They naturally “flow” into subsequent lines, which, in turn, create a basis for an equally natural transition into subsequent sonnets. That is why Shakespeare’s work is “ne prosto sobranie stikhotvorenii ‘na sluchai’ [...] Tak sonety Shekspira sochetaiutsia v edinom proizvedenii, i êto proizvedenie ne chto inoe, kak roman v stikhakh” [not just a collection of poems made ‘for an occasion’ [...] Shakespeare’s sonnets interact within a single work and this work is nothing but a novel in verse” (Mikushevich 2004, 19).

Sergei Stepanov offered another way of plotting the sonnets, presenting them as a part of his book Shekpriovy sonety, ili Igra v igre [Shakespeare’s Sonnets, or a Play in Gaming] (2003). He comes to conclusion that the sonnet cycle is a poetic correspondence between Roger Manners, Earl of Rutland and his wife Elizabeth, published under the pen name Shakespeare.
According to Stepanov, the spouses, forced to live separately, exchanged letters with each other, addressing, however, some of them to a third addressee, whom Stepanov identifies as the Earl of Pembroke. The translator offered his own version of ordering the sonnets that would reflect the drama of the love triangle Rutland - Elizabeth - Pembroke. Thus, according to Stepanov’s interpretation, the sonnet collection is a kind of epistolary novel.

A fundamentally different view was first presented in 1902–1905 in a collection of Shakespeare’s works, published under the editorship of Semën Vengerov. Seventeen different translators contributed to this work, including Valerii Briusov, one of the most prominent symbolist poets also known for his translation works. The poet expressed concerns about stylistic uniformity of the translation methods applied in this edition, and for a good reason. Indeed, the translators offered a variety of solutions, from iambic pentameter and iambic hexameter to a combination of both. In the preface to the fifth volume, the literary critic Ivan Ivanov suggested that the sonnets cycle cannot be considered to be a complete work in its own right, but rather a compilation of various poems presented in the sonnet form (1904, 400).

One century later, editions presenting the sonnets in translation by a number of different authors began to appear more and more often. Under the influence of the actively developing phenomenon of co-existing parallel translations, some of these collections include several different renderings of the same sonnets. As mentioned in the first chapter, in 1984, an edition by Andrei Gorbunov not only presented the poems in English, but also offered alternative translations of each sonnet (Gorbunov 1984). The editors of an anthology of modern translations, dedicated to the centenary of the Vengerov’s edition, also organised the translations in this way (Nikolaev and Sharakshanë, 2004). In the preface, the editors claimed that their goal was not to provide a stylistically unified translation of the entire set of the sonnets: “naoborot, raznoobrazie i dazhe pestrota tekstov schitalis´ za blago” [on the contrary, variety and even diversity of the texts were considered appropriate] (2004, 49). Most recently, the 2016 special edition of the sonnets marked the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death (Gorbunov 2016). Apart from the poems in original, the volume contains five different complete translations of the whole cycle, as well as a collection of selected translations of individual sonnets made by 47 other translators.

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70 From the beginning, Briusov decided to preserve the original metre of the sonnets. At the same time, he was very concerned about reproduction of the poems’ style, as well as about correctness and clarity of the target language. After finishing translating Sonnets 59, 60 and 61, Briusov, with his characteristic self-criticism, informed Vengerov that he was not satisfied with his own work. After a while, he changed the translations (Sokolov 1959, 168).
4.2. Metre and rhythm

As stated previously, Shakespeare favoured iambic pentameter, a poetic line of five metrical units. Kirk Melnikoff states that Shakespeare’s extensive use of this kind of metre may be explained by his adherence to traditional forms of English poetry (2015, 75). By the end of the sixteenth century, pentameter became the most significant and widespread metrical form in English classical verse, employed by many of Shakespeare’s predecessors and contemporaries, for example, by Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and Christopher Marlowe. I pointed out also that, of all the poetic metres, iambic pentameter comes closest to conversational English, “both in its unstressed/stressed rhythm (reminiscent of the beat of a human heart – de dum, de dum, de dum) and in its length (similar to the span of a normal breath)” (Melnikoff 2015, 75; emphasis in original).

It is noteworthy that there is a lot of confusion over the difference between the concepts of rhythm and metre, which leads to their interchangeable use by scholars. In this section, I will adhere to the definitions proposed by Rosemary Winslow in The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (2012). Unlike prose, poetry is rhythmically organised by a consistent regularity of the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. With the term “metre” Winslow refers to the idealised regular pattern of precisely alternating unstressed and stressed syllables, which may be thought of as a subset of the larger concept of rhythm: “Meter is the measure of sound patterning in verse, occurring when a rhythm is repeated throughout a passage of language with such regularity that a base unit (such as a foot) becomes a norm and governs poetic composition” (Winslow 2012, 872).

Shakespeare consistently avoids perfect regularity of the iambic pattern, creating rhythmic variety within the structure of the pentameter line. George T. Wright notes that Shakespeare’s rhythm is “extremely various; that is, we hardly ever find the same phrasing-patterns in successive lines (except for deliberate echoes), and the movement from line to line and quatrains permits us to savor a great many line-forms” (1991, 78). What follows from Wright’s research into Shakespeare’s metrical art is that the sonnets’ style and meaning bear largely on metre: “[…] whatever subtle views the Sonnets develop, the equally subtle meter plays a crucial role in reinforcing, undermining, or modifying them” (88). Shifts of accent, elision and the interplay between long and short vowels are characteristic features of Shakespeare’s poems that affect the meaning and may indirectly convey important information about the moods, feelings, and ever changing state of mind in the poet or speaker, Wright argues. Considering the importance of rhythmic patterns in the sonnets, many translators believe that it is necessary to reproduce iambic pentameter when translating the poems. According to Holmes, those decisions are usually made at a very early stage in the entire process of the translation of verse because they “can be largely
determinative for the nature and sequence of the decisions still to come” (1988, 25).

It has been acknowledged that systems of versification employed in English and Russian poetry share several qualities common to the two traditions (Scherr 1980). The rhythmical systems of Russian and English are fundamentally similar: both are accentual-syllabic in orientation, with their regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. In both the English and Russian versification systems a preference for iambic lines over other kinds of metre has been noted (Winslow 2012, 874; Gasparov 1974, 50-51). Still, as Jiří Levý notes, different languages need a different number of syllables to convey the meaning of a particular idea. Levý calls this phenomenon “semantic density of languages” and says that it can strongly influence the translator’s choice of how to translate a piece of poetry: “A discrepancy in semantic density between source and target language forces the translator either to compact the semantic meaning into a concise expression or, in contrast, to resort to padding, with implications for the overall interpretation of the poem” (2011, 196). Levý goes on to say that the semantic density of the English language is greater than that of Russian. Thus, he concludes, this feature constitutes a considerable difficulty in the process of translating English verse into Russian, since a translator has to accommodate the content of an original poem within the bounds of its original metre.

The situation of disagreement between the metre of a poem and the distribution of actual stresses in a specific line is exacerbated in Russian because Russian words are on average longer than English, in terms of number of syllables. In Vysokoe iskusstvo ([1941] 2014), Kornei Chukovskii addresses the issue of the length of English words and observes that the brevity of English words produces a special kind of compactness and energy in the English speech. However, translation into Russian “invariably replaces a seven-line English paragraph with a flabby one of eleven or twelve lines. [...] This proportion is unavoidable” (quoted in Friedberg 1997, 132). The problem of the natural shortness of English words as opposed to the natural length of Russian words has been recognised by many translators. They often have to compress the meaning of a line into fewer words, thus reducing “lexical volume” of a poetic text (Barkhudarov 1984, 39-40). The following examples have been taken from a number of Russian translations of the couplet of Sonnet 147. The original two-line text contains twenty

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71 “Syllabo-tonic” in Russian terminology.
72 Nick Ellis cites figures that show that the average number of syllables in English as small as 1.41 (1992, 151). According to Levý, this value is 3.0 for Russian (2011, 196).
73 In the same vein, Boris Pasternak argues that the compactness of the English phrase is the key to its meaningfulness, and meaningfulness underlies its musicality, because music in a word is the result not of its sonority, but of the correlation between sound and meaning. In this sense, the English versification is extremely musical ([1943] 2001, 546–547).
words. Because of the iambic pentameter, a sonnet line consists of ten syllables, which means that in the entire couplet of Sonnet 147 Shakespeare uses only monosyllables:

For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night. (13–14)

I have analysed more than a dozen Russian translations. In all of them, except one, the number of words employed in these two lines range from ten to sixteen, but only one example contains nineteen words:

_Schital ia, chto prekrasnyi angel ty,_{10} words
_Kogda uzhasnei adskoi temnoty_{Sharakshané (2009)}

_Kak mog ia mnit’, chto ty svetla, iasna?_{16} words
_Kak ad cherna ty, i kak noch´ mrachna._{Finkel (1977)}

_Il´ ia ne klial sia v tom, chto ty, kak den’, iasna,_{19} words
_Kogda ty, slovno noch´, kak tèmnyi ad, cherna?_{Gerbel (1880)}

There is an opinion that “good English does consist in the main of short words” (Fowler 2009, 334). According to Chukovskii, good Russian consists of combination of short and long words, and a Russian poetic line that consists of only one-syllable words would sound anti-melodious to the Russian ear ([1941] 2014, 93). Gerbel’s translation contains almost the same number of words as the original. However, each line of his translation consists of six feet instead of five. Thus, Gerbel has changed the metre of this sonnet (as well as of all the other sonnets he translated) lengthening the lines by two syllables each, or by an entire foot, in order to gain more space for accommodating the meaning of the original.

Not only Gerbel, but a number of other translators of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, resorted to extending the original metre of the sonnets with one foot: Ivan Mamuna, Vladimir Benediktov, Fëdor Chervinskii, Vladimir Likhachëv, Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik, Izabella Grinevskaiia, Konstantin Fofanov, and others. However, the different semantic density of English and Russian is not the only linguistic reason behind this fact. Aleksandr Finkel argues that the extension of a poem’s lines was often used by translators as a way to adjust the alien poetry to more familiar aesthetic norms widespread in Russian poetry at that time. Finkel criticises this phenomenon in his analysis of two translations of the famous Sonnet 66 by Fëdor Chervinskii (1890) and Nikolai Gerbel (1880). He argues that both translators “poeticise” and embellish Shakespeare’s verses, giving the sonnet a different tone, which he describes
as alien and false (1968, 162). According to Finkel, in order to create his “elevated” style, Chervinskii, for example, often selects archaic words that are not present in the source text, such as “gibel´nye strasti” [fatal passions] and “nadmennoe chelo” [haughty brow]. At the same time, Gerbel’s translation is replete with “pustye sochetaniia izbitykh slov” [banal combinations of hackneyed words], as Finkel put it (1968, 163). He concludes that the translators used the additional space provided by the extra foot in a line (which makes a total of at least 28 additional syllables for a complete sonnet) as an opportunity to demonstrate their own poetic creativity rather than to create more faithful renderings. He adds that these translations are not just of poor quality, but that they are representatives of a certain aesthetic system, which distorts Shakespeare beyond recognition. I would like to illustrate this point by a further example. In 1884, Vladimir Benediktov also translated the same Sonnet 66. The original poem (lines 9–12) reads:

And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill (66. 9–12)

Benediktov

Iskusstvo smeteno so stseny pomelom,
Bezum´e kafedroi vlaedeet. Prazdnik adskii!
Dobro ogrableno razboinicheshki zlom,
Na istinu davno nadet kolpak duratskii.

English back-translation

[Art is swept away from the scene with a broom, Insanity rules science. Hellish feast!
Good is robbed by evil in a predatory way, Truth has long been wearing a fool’s hat.]

As we can see, Benediktov’s version contains many words whose equivalents are not found in the original text. Thus, the additional foot in each line gives the translator space for many creative amendments and additions of his own.

The first translator who rendered the sonnets exactly in the original metre was Modest Chaikovskii. He believed that Shakespeare should not be subjected to the rules of Russian poetry. Following the publication of Chaikovskii’s translations of the sonnets in 1914, iambic pentameter became the mandatory metre for Shakespeare’s poems in Russian. In his 1919 article Perevody stikhovtoranye, Nikolai Gumilëv stated that poetry should be
translated with careful attention to its metre. In his opinion, “each metre has its own soul, characteristics, and functions” (2013, 97). Poetry is enveloped in a particular metre not by accident but because different poetic metres are related to the emotional content of poetry and can express different moods. For example, “the iamb, as though descending a staircase (the tone of the stressed syllable is lower than that of the unstressed), is free, clear, firm, and wonderfully relates human speech and the strength of human will” ([1919] 2013, 97). Thus, poems written in iambics should keep the iambics when being translated, Gumilëv argues.

It seems that over the course of one hundred years, Russian translators have almost without exception followed the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare’s sonnets, though many of them have expressed regret over the abandoned tradition of rendering the original iambic pentameter by using six-foot lines. For example, Vilgelm Levik, a renowned translator of French and German poetry into Russian, notes that in the case of translation of the English sonnet, in which the form is strictly defined, one has to sacrifice a somewhat larger number of details and shades of meaning than when one translates from other languages (1979, 59). In the same vein, the poet and translator Boris Kushner (2004) writes that, since the content of Shakespeare's line does not fit in the line of Russian iambic pentameter, translators will inevitably have to make difficult compromises, and that, perhaps, one translator differs from another in what he/she has sacrificed in his work, rather than what features of the original he/she has preserved.74

4.3. Rhymes

Rhyme as one of the fundamental features of poetry is such an intrinsic aspect of versification that Shakespeare often used the word “rhyme” as a synonym of poetry. In Sonnet 106, for example, he mentions “beautiful old rhyme” (106.3) referring to the earliest chronicles written in verse.75 Indeed, rhymes are one of the most important aspects of the English sonnet. “Take the rimes off a good sonnet, and there is a vacuum”, Ezra Pound remarks ([1918] 2000, 28). However, attitudes among scholars to the problem of translating rhymes range from abandonment to recreation. It is generally accepted that preserving rhymes in translation is a difficult and challenging task, especially when the grammar systems and prosodies of the two languages involved in translation show significant differences.

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74 In the introduction to his translation of the sonnets, the poet and journalist Vadim Rozov complains about the shortness of the original line he experienced during his work on translating the sonnets. He calculated that each sonnet contains approximately 100–110 words, while the number of words in, for example, Marshak’s translations does not exceed 70–80, on average. The loss of 30 words in Rozov’s opinion results in loss of epithets, comparisons, metaphors, and many other means of artistic expression (1998).

75 In this sense, the word “rhyme” appears also in Sonnets 16, 17, 32, 55, and 107.
One of the characteristic features of Russian verse is its strict division into masculine (ending in a stressed syllable) and feminine (ending in an unstressed syllable) rhymes. In English verse, rhyme is most often masculine (Scherr 1980, 367). Feminine rhymes are relatively rare in English poetry due to the fact that English “everyday” vocabulary is “markedly monosyllabic” (Scherr 1980, 367; Honneyman 1997, 37). Moreover, feminine rhymes have been traditionally associated with light and humorous verse (Wilson-Okamura 2007, 162; Tucker 1999, 36). According to Nabokov, feminine rhymes are “insipid and burlesque”, while in Russian they are “as frequent as masculine ones and add extrametrical music to the verse” (1964b, 51).

The types of rhymes in the sonnets have been studied statistically by Thomas Randolph Price, who found that in all the sonnets taken together, the feminine rhymes make up only eight per cent (quoted in Rollins 1944, 67). Thus, Shakespeare most often employs the masculine type of rhyming. Here is an example:

That time of year thou mayst in me be-hold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang (73. 1–4)

The so-called “master-mistress” Sonnet 20 is extraordinary as Shakespeare employs exclusively, and perhaps purposely feminine rhymes. In Sonnet 87, feminine endings occur in all but two lines, which are masculine (estimate – determinate) (Vendler 1997, 381). In Sonnet 126, conversely, the feminine rhymes appear only in lines 9 and 10 (treasure – pleasure). There is critical debate over the effect the feminine rhyming produces in these particular sonnets. Vendler suggests that, while in Sonnet 20 the feminine rhymes “enact the originally intended feminine sex in Nature’s creation of the young man”, in Sonnets 87 and 126 they “enact the poet’s unwillingness to let the young man go, a lingering farewell to this pliant self” (1997, 381). Duncan-Jones agrees that these two lines of Sonnet 87 reinforce a sense of separation (2010, 284). In the same vein, Schoenfeldt adopts the view that “the extra syllable produces the lugubrious effect of a dying fall, which suits the poem’s valedictory message” (2010, 10).76

76 The terms “feminine” and “masculine” rhymes were adopted from old French poetry, where the final “feminine” e would have been sounded, thus fully differentiating masculine and feminine rhymes (Zhirmunskii 1975, 257). In 1591, the terms were discussed by Sir John Harington in the preface to his translation of Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso into English, where he compares the feminine rhymes with sugar poured into wine and calls them “pleasing and sweet” (Wilson-Okamura 2007, 350). It is hard to say what associations Shakespeare had with feminine rhymes, but it is most likely that he was familiar with Harington’s work (Cairncross 1976).
The issue of using either masculine or alternating pattern of rhymes in translation of the sonnets has been the subject of much controversy among Russian translators and critics. According to Zhirmunskii, the task of a translator is to produce a formally similar translation, which at the same time would be more natural for the target language (1975, 240). In Russian poetry feminine and masculine rhymes are equally frequent (Scherr 1980, 367), and they traditionally alternate – the feature that is considered to be the norm in classical Russian poetry (Zhirmunskii 1975, 237). Zhirmunskii states that this might be the reason why masculine rhymes, characteristic of English poetry, are traditionally substituted in Russian translation by the alternation of feminine and masculine rhymes. However, in English verse, Zhirmunskii claims, the regular alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes occurs rarely and is perceived as monotonous and dull to the English ear (237). If a Russian translator preserves English masculine rhymes in the target text, it would confer a special mood to the target poem which is not present in the original. In addition, it would distort the whole artistic effect of the target text (241). Nevertheless, there is an opinion that continuous masculine rhymes should be preserved in translations since they are essential for preserving the energetic rhythmic flow of the sonnets (Lifshits 2009). In Gasparov’s view, the reason why masculine rhyme has never become popular in Russian prosody is that it has been traditionally perceived as a pause or stop of the poetic flow (1993, 33). Vladimir Kozarovetskii takes the argument even further by stating that there are very few really good poems in Russian using uniformly masculine rhymes (2009, 99).

Although some translators have sometimes preserved the original masculine rhyming, the amount of target texts where only masculine rhymes have been used is rather small. Pasternak kept masculine rhymes throughout in his translations but he translated only three sonnets. As a result, Russian translations demonstrate a maximum diversity of rhyme combinations. The following example displays different variants of rhyming in the Russian translations of Sonnet 73 (lines 5–8):

\[
\begin{align*}
Vo mne ty vidish sumerechnost’ & goda: \quad F \\
List pozheletel, dal’ kholoda polna, \quad & M \quad \text{Fradkin, 1990} \\
Razrushen khram, umchalis’ zvony svoda, \quad & F \\
Napevy ptits smenila tishina. \quad & M
\end{align*}
\]

\[77\] For example, Mikhail Lermontov’s famous poem Mtsyri (1840) is written in iamb tetrameter and exclusively in masculine rhymes. Vissarion Belinskii compares this type of metre and rhymes with abrupt strokes of a sword: “Uprugost’, energiya i zvuchnoe, odnoobraznoe padenie ego udvitel’no garmoirit s sosredotochennym chuwstvom, nesokrushimo cilou moguchei natury i tragicheskim polozheniem geroia poemy” [Its resilience and energy, as well as its sonorous, monotonous fall harmonises amazingly with concentrated feelings and enduring power of the poem’s hero and with his tragic situation] ([1841] 1954, 543).
Among the vast number of Russian translations of the sonnets, one can find other possible variants of the masculine-feminine rhyme combinations, for example: MFFM (106.4–8, Marshak), FMMF (147.1–4, Trukhtanov), MMFF (90.1–4, Gerbel), and FFMM (72.8–12, Gerbel).

The rhyme combinations employed by Russian translators in these examples imply yet another departure from the model rhyme scheme suggested by the Shakespearean sonnet. The original sonnet’s rhyme scheme divides the poem into three quatrains, each with its own alternate rhymes, and a conclusive couplet, rhyming abab/cdcd/efef/gg. At the same time, this structure serves to organise and develop the movement in the poet’s thought and emotions, where the final rhyming couplet “seals the preceding twelve lines with an emphatic sense of conclusion and hives each sonnet off from others in the collection” (Edmondson and Wells 2004, 56).

Shakespeare uses the alternating rhyme scheme throughout the sonnets. Russian translators, however, sometimes used variations of this model. For example, only the first of the three quatrains of Marshak’s translation (1948) of Sonnet 106 is composed in alternate rhymes. The structure of this sonnet’s translation follows the abab cdcd effe gg pattern, that is, two quatrains have an embracing rhyme. Two other translators, Gerbel (1880) and Trukhtanov (2006), used the same type of rhyme in the first quatrain of their versions of the same sonnet: abba cded efef gg. On the whole, Marshak and Gerbel, compared to other translators, most often modified the original form.
of the sonnet in regard to the rhyme scheme. The following examples demonstrate the various rhyme patterns used in different translations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sonnet 32</th>
<th>Marshak</th>
<th>abab cdcd eeff gg</th>
<th>alternate-alternate-adjacent-couplet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sonnet 33</td>
<td>Marshak</td>
<td>abba cddc effe gg</td>
<td>embracing-embracing-embracing-couplet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gerbel</td>
<td>abab cdcd eeef gf</td>
<td>alternate-alternate-eeef-gf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnet 72</td>
<td>Marshak</td>
<td>abab cddc efe efe</td>
<td>alternate-embracing-tercet-tercet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gerbel</td>
<td>aabb cddd eeff gg</td>
<td>adjacent-adjacent-adjacent-couplet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnet 90</td>
<td>Gerbel</td>
<td>aabb cddd effe gg</td>
<td>adjacent-adjacent-embracing-couplet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnet 147</td>
<td>Trukhtanov</td>
<td>abba cddc efef gg</td>
<td>embracing-embracing-alternate-couplet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translators’ choice to depart sometimes from the original invariable structure of the Shakespearean sonnet might be explained by some characteristic features of Russian versification. From the eighteenth century to the present day, rhyme has been the crucial element in the Russian poetic tradition (Wachtel 2004, 28). Russian, like the most Slavic languages, is highly inflected, which obviously allows for a great variety of endings. This feature leads to a wide range of possibilities for creating rhymes and their patterns within a stanza. Gasparov notes that the four-line stanza, the quatrain, is the most common type of stanza in Russian poetry, with various rhyme schemes, where the abab pattern is traditionally the most common alternating rhyme scheme. In Gasparov’s opinion, the aabb rhyme scheme is simple compared to the stanza written in abab, while the quatrain abba, seems more complicated (1993, 153). The adjacent aabb quatrain functions as a simple sum of two couplets, while the abba embracing structure creates associations of something more strained and tense, Gasparov argues.80 All three types of rhyming within a four-line stanza have always been fairly common in Russian poetry. In addition, each of the three rhyme schemes can be combined with different masculine and feminine endings, which further increases the variety of rhyming.

80 Gasparov describes the effect of the embracing structure as follows: the ear, being accustomed to the alternating rhymes, after an initial ab expects a repetition of rhyme, but this expectation is not fulfilled, and the rhyme a comes back only later, after one line – ba (1993, 153).
As mentioned earlier, Shakespeare’s poems are not divided into quatrains graphically on the written page, though the couplet is always indented to the right so that it stands apart from the quatrains not only in content but also in layout. It probably helps the reader to treat each sonnet as if it were a single unit, where the first three quatrains with the same alternate rhymes “usually amount to an ongoing argument of increasing intensity” (Briggs 2016, 15). However, a number of Russian translators, including Gerbel, Marshak, Trukhtanov and Stepanov, as well as some others, divide their translations graphically into three separate quatrains and a couplet. This approach may have been guided by two influential factors: the quatrain being the most traditional stanza within Russian poetry, and a wish to emphasise the inherent structure of a Shakespeare’s sonnet.

There is another factor that, I believe, have had a great impact on the translators’ decision-making as regards rhyming patterns within the sonnet. As discussed earlier, Marshak created his translations under a strong influence from Pushkin’s poetry and other poets of the Russian Romanticism. In his verse novel Eugene Onegin (1825–1832), Pushkin invented a sonnet-like stanza consisting of three four-line groups following the rhyme scheme abab/ccdd/effe/gg, where all three quatrain structures are different – alternating, adjacent, and embracing – with a strong final couplet, gg. This form has become known as the “Onegin stanza” or the “Pushkin sonnet”, with no graphic breaks into separate units. The first quatrain of the Onegin stanza presents the main idea, the next two develop it, and the witty couplet rounds it out (Tomashevskii 1958, 118). Grossman particularly highlights the Onegin stanza’s vitality and plasticity, mobility and its remarkable ability to express the diverse poetic styles easily and naturally. The stanza seems to be amazingly simple as if it has been created without any difficulty and effort (1924, 118). Employing various rhyme patterns in his translations, Marshak, as well as Gerbel, perhaps, tried to make use of the possibilities which the Onegin stanza’s complex and flexible form opens up for: much digression, variety of tone, representation of colloquial description and dialogue, and reflections on contemporary life. Neither of them, however, used the complete pattern of the Onegin stanza as such in their translations of the sonnets.

As for rhymes, apart from classical Pushkin’s poetry, translators could also have been influenced by other literary traditions, exemplified by Sonnet 72 in Marshak’s translation and Sonnet 33 in Gerbel’s:
Sonnet 72 (Marshak)

Chtoby ne mog tebia zastavit’ svet
Rasskazyvat’, chto ty vo mne liubila, –
Zabud’menia, kogda na sklone let
Il’ do togo voz’ mët menia mogila.

Tak malo ty khoroshego naidësh’,
Perebiraiia vse moi zaslugi,
Chto ponevole, govoria o druge,
Pridumaesh’ spasitel’nuju lozh’.

Chtob istinnoi liubvi ne zapiatnat’
Kakim-nibud’ vospominan’em lozhnym,
Menia skorei iz pamiati izglad’
Il’ dvazhdy mne otvet pridëtsia dat’:
Za to, chto byl pri zhizni stol’nichtozhnym
I chto potom tebia zastavil lgat’!

Sonnet 33 (Gerbel)

Kak chasto videl ia prekrasniu Avroru,
Kogda zlatilis’ vkrug luga, kholmy i les,
Pokornye eë laskaiushchemu vzoru,
I rdeli rucheiki alkimie nebes.

No tucham vsled, ona pokorno pozvoliala
Toptat’ v puti svoë nebesnoe litso –
I, niskhodia s nebes, pozorno ukryvala
Na zapade vo t’me luchei svoikh kol’tso.

Uvy, tak i moë svetilo dnia snachala
Pobedno nado mnoi gorelo i blistalo,
Iavivshis’ lish’ na mig vostorzhennym ocham!
Teper’ zhe blesk ego unov’ tucha zatmevaet.

No starst’ moia za to ego ne preziraet:
Pust’ merknet solntse zdes’, kol’ net ego i tam!

68
Marshak’s translation is divided into two quatrains with different rhyming patterns and two tercets abab cdcd efe efe. This structure resembles the Petrarchan (or Italian) sonnet, which is divided, though not graphically, into two unequal halves, with the commonest rhyme scheme abba/abba/cde/cde. The last six lines of the sonnet make up a sestet, which can be arranged in a variety of ways: cdcdcd, cdcdcd, cdecde, cdeced, cdeced. Sonnet 33 in Gerbel’s translation follows the same pattern. At first sight, the layout of his translation assumes a strong 4+4+4+2 appearance and consists of three quatrains and a couplet: abab cdcd eefg gf, with two alternating quatrains first. The third quatrain and the couplet, however, give the impression of being unusual and inventive in regard to the rhyme scheme. But on closer inspection the last six lines (sestet) of Sonnet 33 splits easily into two equal units that might be reorganised into tercets: eef ggf, by all the rules of the Italian sonnet. I suppose that the existence of the Petrarchan rhyme scheme among the Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets may also be caused by the influence of the Onegin stanza. According to Grossman, with regard to the rhyme pattern, the Onegin stanza often breaks down into two quatrains and two tercets, depending on the layout of the sentences within any particular stanza (1924, 127). “One stanza reads like a pure Italian sonnet, the next like a Shakespearean one. More frequently the stanzas hover between the two with only a ghostly tendency one way or the other”, as Briggs notes (1983, 194).

4.4. YOU and THOU

Since the sonnet form is limited structurally, the language becomes dense and complex. Each word is loaded with manifold meanings amplified by the power of rhythm. Some commentators have noted that Shakespeare’s language often shifts from the “most justly celebrated accounts of love and friendship” to “the most haunting portraits of the mad compulsions and intemperate behaviors of love” (Schoenfeldt 2007, 4). This ambiguity can be interpreted as a reflection of the poet’s ever changing attitude toward the two addressees of the sonnets, the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady. This change of attitude can be identified even at the lexical level, namely in Shakespeare’s use of the second person pronouns you and thou, which were still employed to make distinctions during Shakespeare’s time, though the development of the second person pronoun in English has been a complex process (Walker 2007, 59ff).

Old English distinguished between the forms of the second person pronouns not only by number (singular/plural) but also by case: originally thou was the nominative form and thee the objective form in the singular,

81 Unlike the Shakespearean sonnet, the Petrarchan sonnet very rarely ends in a couplet.
82 Out of 367 stanzas in Pushkin’s verse novel, 122 have the structure 4+4+3+3 (Grossman 1924, 127).
with the same functions performed by *ye*/*you* in the plural (Barber 1997, 149). During the sixteenth century, this nominative/objective distinction in the plural became levelled in favour of *you*. With the increasing courtly French influence, where *vous* was used as a polite form of the singular, the pronoun *you* came to designate not merely the plural form but also social difference in English (Barber 1997, 153). Indeed, in the Middle English period, the distinct singular and plural forms were increasingly used to signify social rather than grammatical relationships. In their influential study, Roger Brown and Albert Gilman attempt to account for the process of adoption of *you* as a polite form, while *thou* was used as a familiar and intimate one. They argue that this development was governed by the communicative relationships built upon so-called “power semantic” (1960, 255). For example, during Shakespeare’s time, the pronoun *you* was often used by a social inferior to a superior – such as people of lower rank or status to those above them, or children to parents, or servants to masters, while *thou* would be used in return. In a later study conducted on the data collected from four Shakespeare’s tragedies, Brown and Gilman note that the status of power cannot, however, be applied for all uses of *thou* and *you* singular: “[i]n cases where *you* is expected, the occurrence of *thou* indicates that the speaker is emotionally aroused”, which means that, unlike *you*, the pronoun *thou* could be used for the expression of various positive and negative emotions (1989, 177). Yet, people also had relationships based upon equality, which came to be reflected in the usage of pronouns of address: the reciprocal use of *thou* among equals of lower social status and the reciprocal *you* among the nobility (Barber 1997, 208–209). In Shakespeare’s tragedies, the lower class includes servants, anonymous messengers, and the two gravediggers in *Hamlet*, who used reciprocal *thou* between themselves but nonreciprocal *you* upward. The upper classes are represented by, for example, the noble spouses Othello and Desdemona, adult brothers and sisters in *King Lear*, members of the king’s court, and Hamlet and Horatio (Brown and Gilman 1989, 177). Ulrich Busse has investigated the socio-historical implications of second person pronouns of address in Shakespeare’s plays and notes that the pronoun *you* usually accompany titles of courtesy (*Your Grace*) and terms of address indicating occupation (*doctor, nurse*). At the same time, *thou* tends accompany more emotional and more personal terms of endearment (*chuck, heart*) and terms of abuse.

83 The development of the English language is usually divided into four phases: Old English (from the 400s through 1150), Middle English (from 1150 to about the 1500s), Early Modern English (from the late 1400s to about 1700) and Modern English (from about 1700 onward) (Gelderen 2006, 11–12).

84 See also Crystal & Crystal 2002, 450.
(knave, rascal), thus serving two functions – to indicate both insult and intimacy.\textsuperscript{85}

With regard to this issue, the status of the sonnets’ two addressees, the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady, remains undisclosed, as well as the speaker’s relation to them. Judging by Shakespeare’s use of pronouns you and thou in the poems, the relationship between the sonnets’ personalities, as well as their status, are constantly changing. The number of occurrences of you and thou (as well as their forms) reveals the perplexing instability of address:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The number of you-occurrences</th>
<th>The number of thou-occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the Fair Youth (1–126)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Dark Lady (127–154)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady to the Speaker (145) \textsuperscript{86}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Fair Youth sequence, Shakespeare fluctuates between you and thou, while in the Dark Lady sequence, he invariably employs the pronoun thou. In terms of frequency, the thou-sonnets are much more numerous than the you-sonnets. In the whole cycle, there are 86 thou-sonnets as opposed to only 34 you-sonnets.\textsuperscript{87}

Shakespeare’s switching has been widely debated. Opinions range from acknowledging the importance of this phenomenon (Gurr 1982) to claiming that no consistent difference can be traced between thou and you in the sonnets in terms of passion, intimacy, or insult (Tucker [1924] 2009). Many critics have tried to answer the question Francis Berry asks: “What is the difference in poetic result between a ‘thou’ sonnet and a ‘you’ sonnet? […] We can, in other words, expect some significance in the fact that one sonnet may be built around an ‘I–thou’ relationship, while another sonnet centers around an ‘I–you’ relationship” (1958, 138). The search for a persuasive motivation for the distribution of the intimate versus the formal form of address has given rise to various and sometimes entirely contradictory answers. David Crystal and Ben Crystal believe that Shakespeare’s you is the

\textsuperscript{85} Busse comes to the conclusion that, since you was the safer option in all situations of everyday interactions, it resulted in the increased use of this form of address, while thou was felt to be increasingly more inappropriate (2002, 286).

\textsuperscript{86} Sonnet 145 is the sole exception when the pronoun you appears in the Dark Lady sequence, though it refers to the speaker, not to the Lady or the Friend: “I hate, from hate away she threw,/ And sav’d my life saying not you” (13–14). De Grazia argues that Shakespeare uses the pronoun here in the interest of preserving rhyme (1994, 43).

\textsuperscript{87} Sonnet 24 is not included in the data since it uses both thou and you forms. It has been suggested that you forms in this sonnet should be understood in a generic sense, similar to “one” and “one’s” (Blakemore Evans 1996, 157).
pronoun of respect and politeness, while *thou* serves for expressing intimacy and powerful emotions (2002, 450). Berry, on the other hand, argues that *you* is used for more intimate relationships between the speaker of the sonnets and the addressee, whereas *thou* is more formal and distanced (1958, 143). Edward Dowden expresses a similar view: “[... ] sometimes intimate affection seems to indicate the use of *you*, and respectful homage that of *thou*; but this is by no mean invariable” (1881, xlvii). In reply to this, Denys Bray remarks: “As respectful homage is hardly the keynote of the sonnets to the Dark Lady, these conclusions are disappointing enough” ([1925] 1977, 35). G. P. Jones criticises Berry’s opinion saying that “if anything, the reverse is closer to the truth”. But he adds: “In Shakespeare’s sonnets there does not appear to be any direct and consistent correlation, such as Berry suggests, between degree of intimacy and the use of either *thou* or *you*” (1981, 80). Edward Dowden suggests that the choice of the pronoun might be sometimes determined by considerations of euphony or rhyme (1881, xlvii). Brian Vickers agrees with this opinion stating that euphony might have played the crucial role in the phenomenon (1989, 47–48). Ulrich Busse and Beatrice Busse express the view that the pronoun switches in the first sequence (sonnets 1–126) reflect changes both in the relationship between the speaker and the Fair Youth and in real and/or imagined social contexts (2010, 256). Overall, it seems that all explanations offered by scholars on the issue of Shakespeare’s usage of *you* and *thou*, have led to the result that this “highly complex code remains unbroken” (De Grazia 1994, 43), and no consensus has been reached.

Many European languages, such as French, German, Italian, and Russian, still retain the distinction between the second person pronouns. In addressing one person, modern Russian distinguishes between the two second person pronouns: singular informal *ty*, and the respectful plural *vy*. The use of *vy* appeared in Russia in the fifteenth century and began to occur with increasing frequency among the educated upper classes in the eighteenth century during Peter I’s process of Europeanisation (Popov 1985). In his description of the usage of the second person pronouns in modern Russian, Gerald L. Mayer notes that, generally, *ty* represents closeness to the addressee and is used among friends and immediate family and other relatives one feels close to. The usage further depends not only on the closeness of the relationship but also on strong social conventions. Children always use *ty* to address each other and are addressed in this way by adults.

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88 Burrow, who also maintains that a shift from *thou* to *you* may mark the increase of intimacy, explains his opinion: “*you* is the normal norm of address between educated Elizabethans, and by the mid-1590s *thou* might seem poetic” (2002, 406). See also Edwin Abbott’s note about *thou*, which in Shakespeare’s time “had already fallen somewhat in use, and being regarded as archaic, was naturally adopted in the higher poetic style and in the language of solemn prayer” ([1870] 2015, 153–154).

89 In order to indicate social distance, the respectful *Vy* may be capitalised in written correspondence, while plural *vy* is not (Rosental 1967, 30).
but are taught to address adults with vy. This singular pronoun represents distance, and younger adults typically also address adult strangers as vy as a mark of respect, and may be addressed as ty in return. When talking to each other young people often start with the formal vy but may transition to ty very quickly in an informal situation. Among older people, ty is often reserved for closer acquaintances. While people may switch quickly from reciprocal vy to reciprocal ty, such transition presumes mutual agreement. Use of ty without consent of the other person is likely to be viewed as socially unacceptable boorishness (or, in the case of opposite-sexed people, overly flirtatious), particularly if the other party maintains using vy (Mayer 1975; see also Ambrosiani 2000).

Mayer concludes that the functions of the singular second person pronoun in modern Russian are characterised very much by the same set of rules and social interplay as one finds preserved during the Middle English and Early Modern periods of English. Mayer points out that the Russian pronoun ty is used “to and between children, in the immediate family, to animals, to God, regardless of feelings of closeness or distance on the part of the speaker. Vy, on the other hand, always implies distance and formality” (1975, 439). Thus, the practical use of Russian pronouns ty and vy is closely associated with the above mentioned “power semantic”.

Any translator of the sonnets, whatever language he/she translates into, has to consider the value of you and thou in the Sonnets in order to decide what strategy to choose when translating the poems. One of the options would be to accept the argument put forward by Abbott, who argues that Shakespeare was aware of the shift between the two pronouns and intended to show that something meaningful was happening ([1870] 1966, 154; see also Blakemore Evans 1996, 118). Similarly, Crystal & Crystal state that Shakespeare’s changing from one pronoun to another “always conveys a contrast in meaning – a change of attitude or an altered relationship” (2002, 450).

If a Russian translator of the sonnets interprets the usage of you and thou as meaningful second person pronouns of distance/formality versus closeness/intimacy, then he/she can find the Russian system of second person pronouns as perfectly corresponding to the Early Modern English one in regards to the possibility of reproducing all the nuances of feelings and relations, as well as a complex interplay of psychological and sociological factors. On the other hand, a translator may agree with those who seriously doubts the significance of the shift between thou and you as signaling changes in attitude or tone. In this case, he/she chooses to not to take into consideration the existence of these two pronouns in the original text of the sonnets.

To the best of my knowledge, no Russian translator of the whole cycle of 154 sonnets has chosen to follow the original pattern strictly in regard to the
distribution of the two second person pronouns. A thorough search through the available complete translations that have been published so far in print and on the Internet, revealed that the translators, without exception, ignore the pronoun vy in favour of ty. One single instance of using vy, in Marshak’s translation of Sonnet 77, can be considered as a special case of employing you, along with another pronoun my [we], in a generic sense.

Sonnet 77 Occurrences of vy [you] and my [we] and their forms in translation by Marshak

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear, vashi [yours]
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste, vashu [yours]
The vacant leaves thy mind’s imprint will bear, my [we]
And of this book, this learning mayst thou taste: my [we]
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial’s shady stealth mayst know
Time’s thievish progress to eternity;
Look what thy memory cannot contain,
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nursed, delivered from thy brain, vami [by you]
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind. vy [you]
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee and much enrich thy book. nas [us]

Booth suggests that Sonnet 77 is in the memento mori tradition (1977, 266). The poet may be pictured as sending the Fair Youth, along with this sonnet, a notebook, which, when the Youth has filled its pages with his reflections, will serve as “offices” to his profit and to the book’s enrichment. The Sonnet is characterised by the extensive use (16 times) of thou and its forms thy and thee, on the one hand, and the absence of the pronoun I, on the other hand. David Weiser asserts that this phenomenon means that the speaker does not occupy the dramatic center of the poem: “[…] the speaker’s absence precludes any chance of an inherently dramatic situation” (1977, 508). Quite unexpectedly, Marshak translates this single sonnet using the pronoun vy (and its forms), which, as it was discussed above, corresponds to the English pronoun you rather than thou. Moreover, the reader of the Russian version encounters yet another pronoun in the target text, namely the first-person plural pronoun my [we] along with one of its forms. These pronouns, the overall meaning and mood of the translated poem, as well as the speaker’s
reflections on the inevitability of “Time’s thievish progress”, suggest that both vy and my are used impersonally here, and may be applied to anyone or everyone. Marshak’s decision to translate the only this particular sonnet with vy is likely motivated by the translator’s interpretation of this particular poem as a philosophical piece of poetry. Thus, in Marshak’s interpretation of Sonnet 77, the usage of vy does not serve as a way of addressing the friend personally. Marshak goes beyond the concrete relationships between the Speaker and the Fair Youth bringing the focus into the sphere of general human existence. Notably, Gasparov quotes Marshak’s translation of Sonnet 77 as an example of his adherence to the strategy of stylistic modification marked, for instance, by the substitution of concrete imagery found in the original for the more abstract in the translation (2001).

We can only speculate regarding the reasons and motivation behind the translators’ unanimous choice to follow one pattern consistently, always translating both thou and you as ty. For the translations conducted after 1948, this may have been done under the influence of Marshak’s famous work, which has always been praised for its stylistic integrity.

Another explanation was put forward by Aleksandr Sharakshanë, who did not only translate the complete sonnet cycle into Russian but also included an accompanying commentary on each sonnet in his 2009 edition. In a personal communication, I asked him about his own motivation to ignore you in favour of the pronoun ty throughout the cycle. The reply reads: “Shifting between you and thou is one of the many challenges of translating Shakespeare’s sonnets. In the Shakespearean era, the English literary language was developing rapidly, and norms shifted significantly during the lifetime of one generation. In particular, thou had already been perceived as archaic and was on its way to disappear in favor of a more universal you. In private letters, both pronouns could be found even with reference to the same person. As for translating Shakespeare’s sonnets, there were several attempts to distinguish between thou and you, ascribing each one its own meaning. However, these attempts did not produce any convincing results – if not assuming some radical versions claiming that the sonnets were addressed not only to the Lady and the Friend but to a greater number of people who had different relationships with the author. This way one can explain anything but I am not fascinated by such translators’ fantasies. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that the sonnets were not proofread by Shakespeare himself before publishing (that is proved). The text was typed by at least two different typesetters who had different ideas about spelling and punctuation. It may explain the inconsistency in the use of pronouns. Anyway, it is not worth trying to reflect this inconsistency in

90 On the impersonal use of personal pronouns in English, see Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990); in Russian, see Shvedova (1980, 529–534).
translation unless a translator has a clear idea about the use of pronouns and its meaning in the original text. I had no such idea, and that is why I used the familiar *ty* in all cases, though it is disputable” (personal communication, March 31, 2011, translation mine).

Sharakshaně mentions in his letter that some attempts have been made to distinguish between *thou* and *you* in Russian translations of the sonnets. I have found several occurrences of the pronoun *vy* used as a form of address in Russian translations, though not in whole cycle translations but in several separate translations of individual sonnets. As stated in the introductory chapter, the scope of this thesis is limited to translations provided only by those authors who have rendered the entire body of 154 sonnets. For this reason, I do not aim to provide here a detailed analysis of *vy*-occurrences in the individual translations listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source texts (sonnets by number) with 2nd person pronouns</th>
<th>Russian pronouns used in the translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liudmila Vilkina (1904), translated Sonnets 132 and 141.</td>
<td><em>132 (thou)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>141 (thou)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boris Ber (1907), translated Sonnets 16, 18, 33, and 35.</td>
<td><em>16 (you)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>18 (thou)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>35 (thou)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikolai Gumilёv (ca 1920), translated Sonnets 17 and 18.</td>
<td><em>17 (you)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>18 (thou)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sviatoslav Gorodetskii (2006), translated Sonnets 71, 90, and 130</td>
<td><em>71 (you)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>90 (thou)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandr Gurevich (2009), translated Sonnets 1, 69, 71, 73, 77, 80, 115, 116, 130, 140, and 141</td>
<td><em>1 (thou)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>69 (thou)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>71 (you)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>73 (thou)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>77 (thou)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>80 (you)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>115 (you)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>140 (thou)</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>141 (thou)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that, apart from Vilkina’s translation of Sonnet 141, all listed authors follow the original usage of the second person pronouns, translating you as vy, while thou as ty.

4.5. Gender. Summary of Article I

It is generally accepted that languages can be classified according to whether they show grammatical gender or not.91 Most linguists consider gender as a grouping of nouns into classes of masculine, feminine, and sometimes neuter, which, following Greville Corbett’s definition, “implies that there are three classes of nouns which can be distinguished syntactically by the agreement they take” (1991, 4). English, according to Corbett, belongs to the group of languages with so-called “pronominal gender system” that is reflected only in personal possessive and reflexive third-person pronouns (12). Russian is a language that also shows grammatical gender syntactically, though it also shows pronominal gender. Unlike English, Russian adjectives, participles and pronouns have to agree with the nouns they modify both in gender, number, and case. Verbs also show grammatical gender in the past tense form, along with the number.

Russian translators thus encounter problems when translating sex/gender-related instances in Shakespeare’s poems. This is primarily related to the prevailing view discussed in chapter 2, that the first 126 poems of the cycle are addressed to a man, while the remaining poems are directed to a woman. In spite of this conventional assumption, the majority of the sonnets contain no markers of the sex of the characters. As Paul Hammond notes,

All we can say with certainty is that the poems at the beginning of the sequence are unambiguously addressed to a young man; that Sonnet 126 takes leave of him; and that no poems after 126 are explicitly addressed to a male figure, though several are concerned with a man’s relationship with the speaker’s mistress. The ungendered sonnets among numbers 1–126, therefore, are presented within the framework which is created by those surrounding poems which are overtly written to or about a young man. Moreover, we do not know that the sonnets which address a Boy and a Woman are to be thought of as addressing the same Boy and the same Woman. (2012, 5)

Nevertheless, the feminine or masculine character of an utterance is much more conspicuous in Russian than in English, since a gender distinction is marked grammatically to a much greater extent. Therefore, a Russian translator is often forced to make important decisions about whether to

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91 For various reasons, the term “sex” has been often substituted by the term “gender” within language and gender studies. In this thesis, “gender” refers to the linguistic category, while “sex” refers to the biological classification.
convey the information about the sex of the sonnets’ addressees or not, and in what way. This question is strongly connected to the existence of ideological factors in the target culture, discussed previously in chapter 3.

The very first whole cycle translation into Russian by Gerbel was affected by the translator’s self-imposed censorship.92 Gerbel’s decision to readdress a number of sonnets, originally directed to the Fair Youth, to a woman, was the translator’s option to give the words in question an interpretation appropriate for the demands of the receiving culture and public morals. For example, the first two lines of Sonnet 26 reads in original:

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit (1–2),

where the “Lord” is a conventional address, which “asserts the respectful distance of the poet from the lord”, for whom the speaker “performs all his servants-like duties in the service of love” (Gurr 1982, 9). Gerbel translated the lines as

\[\text{Vladychitsa liubvi, moë ocharovan´e, Skovavshaia menia, chego ia ne taiu...}\]

[Mistress of love, my charming, (who) has chained me, and I do not hide that fact]

The translation contains two clear feminine markers: the noun “vladychitsa” which means “mistress”, and the participle “skovaushaia”, which refers to the noun and expresses the feminine gender by using the feminine ending -aia.

Another example stems from Sonnet 87, which begins with the line:

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing (1)

The lack of explicit gender markers in this line allows the translators to interpret it depending on their preferred strategy and their understanding of the nature of relationship between the characters. This can be demonstrated by two Russian translations from the pre-revolutionary period:

\[\text{Proshchai, ty dlia menia uzh slishkom doroga} \quad \text{(Gerbel 1880) female}\]
\[\text{Proshchai, ty slishkom dorog dlia menia} \quad \text{(Chaikovskii 1914) male}\]

92 In 1640, John Benson decided to bring out a second edition of the sonnets titled Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare Gent, which marked the beginning of a long campaign to bowdlerise Shakespeare. Benson changed some masculine pronouns to feminine and introduced titles aimed to make it appear that most of the poems are addressed to a woman. This practice led to censoring of the poems in the centuries that followed not only in the English-speaking world but also in numerous translations into other languages.
The first translation refers to a female, the second to a male. The distinction is denoted by the adjective ending (doroga/dorog [dear]). Overall, there might be three choices that a translator of the sonnets might be forced to make: a sex-specific solution, with options for male or female addressee, and a unisex solution, with more generic reference like “moia liubov’” [my love], “sokrovishche moe” [my treasure] or with the use of the ungendered second person pronoun ty. The solutions used in seventeen Russian translations of the ungendered thou-Sonnet 87, are illustrative of this point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerbel</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shchepkina-Kupernik</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>ungendered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaikovskii</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshak</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berger</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finkel</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fradkin</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepanov</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuznetsov</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikushevich</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>ungendered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badygov</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trukhtanov</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadetov</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozarovetskii</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>ungendered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifshits</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharakshanê</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberman</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grammatical gender may generate yet another type of difficulties that have a considerable influence upon the translation process and, therefore, on how the target reader might perceive it. This difficulty concerns different connotations gender as such conveys in different languages, which may be seen as an instance of the limits of translatability. As Uwe Nissen notes, “this is especially true with respect to metaphors and personifications, and an ideologically determined clash may occur if a specific gender in one language connotes certain properties, while the translated word in the target language belongs to another gender that conveys quite different connotations” (2002, 28). For example, the noun “smert’” [death] belongs to the feminine in Russian and is always pictured as a woman, while in, for

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93 For more details about connotations of gender, see Ervin (1962).
example, German, the word “death” is masculine (“der Tod”), and the same character is usually personified as a man.94

One example of such difficulties is the translation of direct address in the “Rose” Sonnet 109, as shown in Article I, “...thou, my Rose,...’: Translating the Direct Address of Shakespeare’s Sonnet into Russian”. In the couplet of Sonnet 109, the speaker addresses the Fair Youth as “thou, my Rose” that contradicts with the feminine grammatical gender of roza. The difficulty that arises for a Russian translator is how to translate the source language’s male direct address “my Rose”, where the literal translation into Russian is moja roza, which is grammatically feminine.

The problems of translation of the gender of nouns from English into Russian is linked to the evolution undergone by the English language before its appearance in the present modern shape. During the Middle English period (between the late eleventh and the late fifteenth century) the language was in transition and began to lose its gender system, and the shift away from grammatical gender had been completed long before the Elizabethan era (Barber 1997, 160). As a result, there are numerous words, among them the noun “rose”, which dropped their grammatical gender before Shakespeare had an opportunity to use them in his texts.

The article is a comparative analysis of fourteen different Russian translations covering the period from 1880 to 2009, and the approach is based on the concept of the dichotomy domestication/foreignisation. The terms were introduced by Lawrence Venuti (1995), who suggested that the domesticating approach involves the process of the identification of domestic values by the reader, while a foreignising translation makes the reader feel the linguistic and cultural peculiarities.

The article’s overview of the grammatical and historical background demonstrates that the English tradition is flexible in the use of the word “rose”, which can refer to either male or female addressee since the word does not possess grammatical gender. The application of the same word in Russian is different, however. The direct address “my Rose” in Sonnet 109 contrasts sharply with the traditional Russian association of the flower with female beauty, which is strongly supported in the grammar of the Russian language.

The article addresses some possible solutions available to the translators, which have been analysed in the light of the dichotomy domestication/foreignisation as two basic strategies. In simple terms that means that translator may consider whether to adopt the foreignising approach or to favour more domesticating approach. The question arises whether any

94 Analysing the gender and representations of death in the Western art and literature from medieval times to the present day, Karl S. Guthke notes that, similar to German culture, in English “Death more often than not appears as a man [...] in a large number of variations: violent or friendly, inexorable or weak, horrifying or alluring” (1999, 7).
balance, and what kind, can be achieved in the process. There are some obvious reasons suggesting what choices been made by translators of different periods of time and for what reasons. It should be noted, for example, that the practice of a male author addressing romantic poetry to another man, not to a woman, is not typical in the Russian literary tradition. Therefore, when a translator opts for such interpretation his approach should be clearly viewed as foreignisation. On the other hand, when a translator substitutes a male with female addressee in order to avoid cultural confrontation, this clearly represents domesticating approach.

With the exception of Chaikovskii, all the translators I have analysed opted for a clearly domesticating approach or a combination of both. Gerbel and Marshak used the domesticating strategy in translating the Sonnet: they did not employ the direct address and the use the feminine grammatical gender for the addressee. Chaikovskii introduced a different perspective with regards to the addressee’s gender, emphasising the “correct” sex of the addressee by using the masculine word rozan. Overall, the results show that domestication has been the most pervasive translation strategy throughout the whole history of the translation of the direct address used in this particular sonnet, even though there have been some variations in the approaches.

4.6. **Wordplay (puns) and bawdy language. Summary of Article II**

The terms *wordplay* and *pun* have been used variously by different scholars. Some (Chiaro 1992, 4) state that puns are a separate category of wordplay related to ambiguity, whereas Dirk Delabastita uses the terms interchangeably to mean the same concept. He defines wordplay as follows:

> Wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings. (1996, 128, emphasis in original)

In other words, the purpose of wordplay is to create ambiguity through the use of words which look or sound similar, but which have different meanings within a text. Depending on how the pun components are arranged in the text, the pun can be classified as either *horizontal* or *vertical* (Delabastita 1993, 78-79). A *vertical* pun is created by “the simultaneous confrontation of meanings,” based on polysemy, although only one of the pun components is

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95 In this thesis, I adopt Delabastita’s approach.
physically present in the text. The other component, the secondary meaning, is activated by the employment of the contextual setting. Wordplay in which all the lexical components are present in the text is called a *horizontal* pun.

Many scholars have commented that wordplay is one of the most difficult rhetorical devices to translate (Nida 1964; Delabastita 1996; Davies 1997). Delabastita states that at least two types of constraints will be encountered by a translator: linguistic constraints related to the translatability of the wordplay and cultural norms “pertaining to the acceptability” of, for example, taboo matters in the target system, which may be “hostile to obscenity” (1993, 251). Poetry presents another challenge to translators. As discussed earlier in chapter 1, the process of translating poetry is particularly difficult due to its close connection with rhyme and metre. The situation becomes even more complicated when a translator comes across a pun in a poetic work. Peter Newmark argues that “puns made by punning poets are most difficult to translate, since they are limited by meter. Often, the pun simply has to be sacrificed” (1988, 217). Thus, with regard to translating Shakespeare’s sonnets, there are in fact three types of constraints: linguistic, cultural, and literary.

Molly Mahood notes that “wordplay was a game the Elizabethans played seriously”, and Shakespeare, whose “imagination as a poet works through puns”, was ready “to break one word into a spectrum of meanings”, as well as “to fuse two or more words into a complex meaning” (1957, 16–20). In many sonnets, puns cluster different images and enrich the imagery of the poem, or, as in the couplet of Sonnet 130, they may reveal what can be assumed to be the real intention of the poet.

Scholars often call this Sonnet “anti-Petrarchan”, because it contradicts the stereotypical worship of a fair woman that the Italian poet established in the fourteenth century. Instead, Shakespeare offers here a parody of Petrarch’s highly romantic sonnets to his beloved Laura. In contrast to those, the Dark Lady in Sonnet 130 is endowed with all kinds of unflattering characteristics that go against Petrarchan conventions of beauty: the beloved does not embody a pure beauty but her breathing “reeks”, music sounds lovelier than her voice, and she does not walk like a goddess. Still, many critics share the view that the concluding two lines of the Sonnet negate all the humiliating descriptions and declare that the Lady remains beloved and desirable:

> And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
> As any she belied with false compare (13–14)

The lines have been usually interpreted as a declaration of love, in which false comparisons are invoked in order to contrast them with the natural beauty of the mistress. Yet, as Mariia Novikova argues, there is a pun on the
word *belied* (1985, 224). In terms coined by Delabastita, this is a *vertical* pun based on polysemy. The *Oxford English Dictionary* accounts for two meanings of the verb *belie*: “to deceive by lying, tell a lie to”, and “to have sexual intercourse with”. Similar wordplay occurs in the tragedy *Othello*:

Iago: Faith, that he did – I know not what he did.
Othello: What? what?
Iago: Lie...
Othello: With her?
Iago: With her, on her; what you will.
Othello: Lie with her! lie on her! We say lie on her when they belie her. (4.1)

The word *belied*, then, plays a decisive role in the Sonnet since it determines its main idea that, depending on the meaning of *belied*, may produce two alternative readings of the couplet, either

1) My mistress is far from being perfect; still I love her, or
2) My mistress is not perfect; however, she is not worse than any other woman to be flattered/seduced.

In light of the above, it seems obvious that the *vertical* pun on *belied* poses a significant challenge for translators, arising from the presence of reference to two different meanings, one of which has sexual allusions. Since Russian does not contain an exactly corresponding word with the same meanings as *belied*, the translators have to look for other solutions. As the examples below show, a number of Russian translations of the couplet clearly fall into two different groups dependant upon the translators’ choice as how to read the key word *belied*:

1. My mistress is far from being perfect, still I love her

*I vsê zhe dla menia ona stokrat milee*
*Vsekh teh, kogo sravnit´ vozmozhno bylo b s neiu.*
(Gerbel 1880)

*[And yet, she is a hundred times dearer to me than all the others, whom I could compare with her]*

*I vsê-taki, klianus´, ona milee,*
*Chem luchshaia iz smertykh riadom s neiu*
(Chaikovskii 1914)

*[And yet, I swear, she is more beautiful than the best of all the living near her]*

*I vsê zh ona ustupit tem edva li,*
*Kogo v sraven´iakh pyshnykh obolgali*
(Marshak 1948)

*[And yet, she is hardly worse than others slandered by splendid comparisons]*)
2. My mistress is not perfect, however, she is not worse than any other woman to be seduced.

A ia klianus’ – ona ne khuzhe vsë zh,
Chem te, kogo v sravnê iakh slavit
lozh’
(Finkel 1977)

But I swear – she is still not worse
Than those, whom lying glorifies by
making comparisons]

I vsë zh, klianus’, moia liubov’
prekrasna,
Khot’ pyshnoi lzhi ne slyshit
ezhechastno
(Sharakashanë 2009)

[And yet, I swear, my love is very
beautiful, although she does not hear
the pompous lies hourly]

Klianus’, ona ne khuzhe tekh, ei-ei,
Chto lzhets vozñës, chtob ulozhit’ vernei
(Fradkin 1990)

[I swear – she is not worse than those,
whom a liar lifts up in order to be sure
that he later gets her in bed]

No ia klianus’ – ona prekrasnei tekh,
Kogo tsvetistoi lest’iu vvergli v grekh
(Kuznetsov 2004)

[But I swear, she is more beautiful than
those, who were plunged into sin by
elaborate flatter]

I vsê zhe mne, klianus’, ona dorozhe
Vsekh soblazñënnkh vystelennoi
lozh’iu
(Kozarovskykii 2009)

[Still, I swear she is dearer to me
than any other who has been seduced by
spread lies]

The translations from the first group outnumber those from the second one. The vast majority of available Russian translations of Sonnet 130 would also be placed in the first group, of which these five were selected as representative cases. At the same time, the three translations from the second group are the only three with “sexual” connotations that I have been able to find. It is noteworthy that the translations from the second group, with “sexual” connotations, were produced during the most recent three decades when the political milieu has changed after the Soviet era, and, as a consequence, sexuality in literature translated into Russian, for a long time subject to social taboos and censorship, has recently been freed of such ideological constraints.

In Article II, Shakespeare’s “Will” Sonnets in Russian: The Challenge of Translating Sexual Puns, I pay special attention to the issue of sexuality in Shakespeare’s Sonnets 135 and 136 that are concerned with the emotional and physical aspects of lovemaking, although they do not speak of sexual experience directly, but rather through puns.
Shakespeare’s attitude towards sexuality and his use of bawdy and sexually suggestive language has been one of the most controversial and widely debated issues. His plays and poems are replete with sexual allusions, ranging from the humorous and frivolous to the borderline forbidden. Shakespeare’s sexual language presents a challenging and complicated task for translators for a variety of linguistic, historical, and cultural reasons. The article examines strategies implemented by Russian translators of puns on the word *will*, which appears nineteen times in Sonnets 135 and 136. In Delabastita’s terms, these puns are a *horizontal* one because all the lexical components are present in the source text. Since there are connotations of *will* which clearly refer to sexuality and can be identified with genitals, both of these aspects, wordplay and sexuality, provide challenges for a translator. According to scholars, *will* was an Elizabethan slang term for the male/female sex organs. The fact that this word may imply several different connotations, some of them quite bawdy, makes the message of the Sonnets heavily dependent upon interpretation.

Seven translations covering the period from 1880 to 2011 have been selected for the analysis. These renderings of Shakespearian puns represent a wide range of translation strategies and their various effects within the target texts. The analysis has also undertaken to demonstrate the evolution of the subject of sexuality in the translation of literature into Russian, which after a long period of being positioned as social taboo under strict censorship, has recently been allowed a significant degree of liberty. The article attempts to present an argument that the translation of sexual puns may also be illustrative of the ways in which the target language’s norms influence translators’ choices.

Apart from the linguistic and social norms that influence translator’s choice of certain strategies, Russian governmental censorship played an important role in the creative manipulation and appropriation of the original text. Throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, literary texts have been subjected to restrictions on political, religious, and moral grounds. Literary translations have always been considered a potential threat to the ideological values traditionally attributed to the Russian people and fiercely guarded by successive governments. This, as Friedberg notes, accounts for Russian censorship before the Revolution and especially “the infinitely more rigid censorship” after complete change of the social structure in 1917 (1997, 13).

A process of liberation of the Russian culture, art, and literature began in the second half of the 1980s and culminated in the abolishment of censorship in the print and other mass media in 1991. The suspension of strict censorship helped to reconsider some of the established taboos, including those on eroticism and sexuality, and contributed to changing views of the norms of sexual morality in Russia. These changing views are
reflected in several new translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets that have appeared at the beginning of the new millennium.

While discussing the role of the translator in the history of literature, it would be interesting to point out that the translator’s own worldview and ideological values also come into play when it comes to choosing the translation strategy. Levý discusses translation as a dialectic process in terms of both reproductive and interpretive art. Being simultaneously faithful and independent, the art of literary translation is comparable to that of the actor or musician (2011, 58). Various factors of external nature (politics, cultural preferences, contemporary views on certain phenomena), may influence the translator’s choice of strategies.

In the case of the translation of sexual puns in Shakespeare’s sonnets, the primary factors that have influenced the choice of translation strategies appear to be the translators’ own cultural background and concerns about political censorship and the pressure to meet the target readers’ expectations. The majority of the sonnet’s translators from English into Russian have made every effort to conceal the sexual connotations of will. In my view, this indicates that translation is an ideologically governed activity and is strongly influenced by cultural norms and limitations imposed by them.

4.7. **Culture-specific items. Summary of Article III**

The issue of translating culture-specific items has attracted the attention of a number of scholars. Their primary concern has traditionally been with specific words and phrases, deeply rooted in one culture, presenting particular difficulties for translation, because they do not exist in the target culture or are perceived differently (Aixelá 1996, 57). Newmark distinguishes five types of **cultural words** according to the following major fields: ecology, material culture, social culture, customs and organisations, and gestures and habits (1988, 94–103). Vlakhov and Florin suggest three categories of **realia**: geography (including physical geography and particular places), ethnography (words denoting, for instance, everyday life, work, art), and politics and society (for example, administrative offices and military realia) (1980, 50–56).

Analysing Shakespeare’s language as it is used in his plays, Charles Beauclerk notes that the playwright exhibits the knowledge of court politics, science and culture, and aristocratic pastimes, such as hunting and hawking, as well as the daily life of the common people (2010, xv). The same can be said about the sonnets. Allusions to chemistry, music, theatre, navigation,

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96 In translation studies, there are various terms to denote culture-bound words: **culture-specific items or cultural concepts** (Davies 2003), **culture-specific concepts** (Baker 1992), **cultural words** (Newmark 1988), **realia** (Robinson 1997, Vlachov and Florin 1980), **culture-bound elements** (Hagfors 2003). In this thesis, I use Davies' term **culture-specific items**.
politics, economics, militaria, etc., are scattered throughout the sonnets cycle. They reflect some of the key themes underpinning the Renaissance worldview, which involved aspects of the life of an individual human being, the material world and the humanities. According to Gasparov and Avtonomova, the poetical use of technical terms associated with specific fields of literature and poetry was one of the favourite artistic techniques and a common phenomenon during the Renaissance period ([1969] 2001). For example, love, being the main subject-matter of the sonnets, is often portrayed by Shakespeare through such culturally bound analogies as, for example, the relationship between a lord and his vassal or between a creditor and his debtor; as a judicial process or a military campaign. It has been pointed out also by many that instances related to realities associated with various aspects of Elizabethan time’s life require special attention in the translation process.

Kozarovetskii, for example, takes the noun “plague”, used in Sonnets 14, 114, 137, and 141, as an example of a culture-specific item. Shakespeare’s contemporaries were undoubtedly familiar with this kind of reference, because plague was the most dreaded disease of the Elizabethan time. It broke out in London repeatedly during the time the poet lived there, sometimes causing closure of the theatres (Singman 1995, 52). Although the word “plague” in these sonnets has other, metaphorical, meanings “the evil” or “the suffering”, Kozarovetskii argues that, in his opinion, it should be translated by employing the immediate corresponding term in the target language, which would be chuma in Russian. This would be well understood by the target audience (2009, 132). Following his own recommendation, the translator rendered “plague” as chuma in all the four target poems. The same maximum number of the usage of chuma has been found in the work of only one more translator of the complete sonnet collection, Iakov Berger:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translators</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerbel</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaikovskii</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshak</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berger</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finkel</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fradkin</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepanov</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuznetsov</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikushevich</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badygov</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trukhtanov</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadetov</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifshits</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The other challenging cultural area for translation refers to the field of law because legal language is not only culture-specific but is also considerably different from ordinary language with respect to vocabulary and style. Legal terminology plays a significant role in the imagery of many poems within Shakespeare’s sonnet cycle. One example is Sonnet 46, which is built on the metaphor of the civil law trial and is characterised by the extensive use of legal terminology. In Article III, *Translating Culture-Specific Items: The Legal Terminology of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 46 in Russian Translation*, the legal terms used by Shakespeare are considered. Therefore, the question arises to what degree the cultural experiences and semantic associations within the field of law in Elizabethan England are shared by the Russian culture of the past 140 years.

As José Rodríguez Herrera points out, the use of legal terminology was part of daily life in Elizabethan England, to the extent that many theatregoers regularly attended courts and were familiar with all sorts of legalisms and court proceedings: “Far from feeling alienated, the audience instantly recognised many of technical terms heard for the simple reason that they were more or less regularly exposed to them in the course of their daily lives” (2015, 167). Sonnet 46 considers a conflict between the speaker’s eye and heart over the possession of love as a legal battle that is to be decided by a jury. The court hearing between the heart and the eye is described through a large number of legal terms: *bar, right, plead, defendant, plea, deny, title, empanelled, quest, tenants,* and *verdict*. The bitter enemies, the eye and the heart make “pleas” for their cases thus becoming the plaintiff and the defendant in a civil dispute. In the elaborate extended metaphor of a miniature trial scene, the heart pleads for the possession of the friend’s beauty. However, the defendant (eye) denies the plea, declaring that the friend’s beauty is rightly his. To establish (“find”) ownership, the case is brought before a jury of thoughts, which are all the “tenants to the heart”. This jury will determine the part due to each. In the end, the speaker suggests that a truce should be made, and the eyes’ share will be the friend’s outward appearance of love, while the heart’s will be the “inward love of heart”. The legal terms employed by Shakespeare in Sonnet 46 may be considered culture-specific items as they reflect everyday life of the Elizabethan era in the impaneling of a jury to decide the matter.

The aim of Article III is to analyse translation strategies applied to cope with the legal terminology of the Sonnet and to present the strategies that have been used by Russian translators. The works of eleven translators have been analysed, starting with two translations from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Nikolaj Gerbel (1880) and Modest Chaikovskii.
(1914). They are followed by two translations from the Soviet era, by Samuil Marshak (1948) and Aleksandr Finkel (1977), and finally seven recent translations of the early 2000s. I have also analysed what strategies the translators have used to deal with the culture-specific metaphor of a civil trial and the reasons motivating their choice. It has been evaluated whether the translations contain a similar degree of explicitly legal terminology in the target language and imagery as the original.

Researchers vary in their approach to classification of translation strategies aimed to optimise the translation of culture-specific items. Vlakhov and Florin identify such strategies as transcription, transliteration, calque, translation, substitution, approximate translation and contextual translation. Davies distinguishes seven groups: preservation, addition, omission, globalisation, localisation, and creation (2003, 72ff). These and other classifications differ with regards to the most relevant distinctions between the strategies. However, for the purposes of the current analysis, Davies’ classification seems to be able to capture and explain most of the relevant differences between the investigated Russian translations, and in the subsequent discussion Davies’ classification and terminology have been used.

In the case of Sonnet 46, it is debatable whether a Russian reader has particularly “different textual expectations”, because, as the analysis demonstrates, the legal concepts and references used by Shakespeare in Sonnet 46 have much in common with the Russian legal vocabulary. Nevertheless, the Russian audience of the period from the late nineteenth century until the early twenty-first century may not be familiar with all details of the culture-specific concepts of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 46 nor with the particular situation described in the text as a court trial.

When we consider the translators’ individual decisions, we notice that the overwhelming majority of translators employed only two to five words with legal connotations, choosing the strategy of preservation of these particular terms. It would not be strictly correct to suggest that the translators omitted legal terms where correspondences are not present in the translations, because they failed to find the way to convey the legal connotation of the words in question. As Davies suggests, it can be argued that the translators applied another strategy, globalisation, which allows the replacing of culture-specific items with more culture-neutral ones.

Finally, the choices of certain strategies made by different translators reveal their tendency to adapt Shakespeare’s text to the changing norms of the Russian culture. The eleven translations, analysed in the frame of the article, were produced during a period of almost 140 years, which means that they were conditioned by different socio-cultural constraints. The historically changing norms have affected the strategies used by translators for rendering the legal vocabulary of the Sonnet 46.
4.8. Metaphors. Summary of Article IV

The translation of metaphors is closely related to the subject of translating culture-specific items since the latter often manifest themselves by means of metaphors. For example, the scene of a legal dispute between eye and heart presented in Sonnet 46, which was discussed in the previous section, is a conventional Renaissance conceit but Shakespeare uses it in the form of an elaborate extended metaphor.

Other traditional concepts that function as metaphors in the sonnets are, for example, life, death, nature, and time, which were highly personified almost getting the status of characters. In nine sonnets, Shakespeare even capitalises the word “Time”.97 Although the Quarto capitalisation is inconsistent, there is a possibility, as David Crystal assumes, that individual words have been capitalised in order to emphasise their special importance over the rest of the other words, and “this is a matter of individual interpretation, line by line” (2008, 52). Throughout the sonnet cycle, we find Time, both capitalised and not, as “a monstrous force – an unconquerable enemy that corrodes, devours, and destroys – with whom the poet is locked in combat, fiercely opposing the power and immortality of his art” (Bates 2012, 347). Based on my findings, I conclude that the majority of the translators made determined efforts to mark the personification of Time by capitalisation, for example, in line 9 of Sonnet 116 “Love’s not Time’s fool […]”:

\[
\begin{align*}
Ei \text{ byt} \ ’u \ Vremeni \ &v \ shutakh \ ne \ sled \quad \text{[It should be not to be Time’s fool]} \\
(\text{Fradkin 1990}) &\quad \text{} \\
Liubov’ \ &– \ ne \ shut \ u \ Vremeni \quad \text{[Love is not Time’s fool]} \\
(\text{Stepanov 2003}) &\quad \text{} \\
Liubov’iu \ &Vremia \ protbuet \ igrat’ \quad \text{[Time is trying to play with Love]} \\
(\text{Mikushevich 2004}) &\quad \text{} \\
Liubov’ \ &– \ ne \ shutka \ Vremeni \ pustaia \quad \text{[Love is not Time’s empty joke]} \\
(\text{Sharakashanë 2009}) &\quad \text{}
\end{align*}
\]

Apart from Sonnet 116, the majority of Russian translators choose to capitalise the word Vremia (“Time”) in many other sonnets including those, where Shakespeare used a lowercase letter. The last figure in the table below indicates a number of sonnets in which the translators capitalise Vremia:

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97 Shakespeare capitalises Time in Sonnets 12, 15, 16, 19, 60, 64, 77, 116, and 123. In Sonnets 60, 77 and 123 the word “Time” begins the lines or a sentence, but since Time is also humanized in these poems, I suppose the capitalisation might be intended.
It can be concluded that the translators tend to make a clear distinction between the direct and figurative meanings of the word *vremia* in their translations. Thus, they indicate graphically many, if not all, instances, where Shakespeare, in their view, uses “time” metaphorically, whether capitalised or not.

In Article IV, *The Language of Alchemy: Translating Alchemical Metaphors of Shakespeare’s Sonnets into Russian*, I have examined ten Russian translations of two particular sonnets, 119 and 33, which both deal with the theme of alchemy, though from different perspectives. In Sonnet 119, Shakespeare employs alchemical terminology extensively, and I have focused on analysing words that seem to be of special importance for the translation of the Sonnet. Another problem is posed by Sonnet 33, which is organised as an extended alchemical metaphor.

Different approaches to the study of metaphor and its translatability/untranslatability have been discussed. Metaphor can normally be transferred into another language. A considerable degree of lack of inter-linguistic and intercultural equivalence, however, should be expected. Critics, such as Mary Snell-Hornby, state that since metaphors are related to different cultural domains, the main problem posed by them in translation is that the sense of the metaphor is frequently culture-specific and varies in different languages (1988, 57).

The view of metaphors as lexical items and the culture-based approach to translations seem to suggest a number of strategies for translating metaphors: to reproduce the same metaphorical image in the target language; to substitute it with a different image having a similar sense; to translate it with a simile, retaining the image; to translate a metaphor with a
simile with an additional explanation; to render it as a paraphrase; to omit it; or to use the same metaphor together with an additional gloss or an explanation in order to ensure that the reader will understand the metaphor (Newmark 1988, 107ff).

More recently, another approach to the concept of metaphor is becoming increasingly more popular. The new approach was initiated by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who claimed that the conceptual system of the human mind is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. They suggest that metaphors are basic resources for thought processes because “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action” (1980, 3).

Having discussed different approaches to the study of metaphor, I made an analysis of the translation strategies used in the rendering of the alchemical metaphor identified in Sonnets 119 and 33.

Alchemy, as an early version of chemical science, had been concerned with the transmutation of matter, in particular with attempts to convert base metals into gold and finding a universal elixir. Alchemy included not only experimental chemistry, but also had a philosophical connotation with practices and knowledge related to various fields. For centuries, it had a significant influence on the minds of many people and played an important role during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and even in the seventeenth century. It served as a great source of imagery and associations, and many allusions in Elizabethan literature may be clarified with the help of alchemical concepts.

When Shakespeare wrote sonnets, an interest in alchemical ideas was rising in England. In Shakespeare’s time many poets frequently used materials drawn from the fields of alchemy, numerology, philosophy and cosmography to shape their meanings and thoughts. Alchemical metaphors, such as distillation and purgation, were often employed as literary symbols for transformations of human souls, having at their end perfection and purification.

There seems no doubt that Shakespeare was influenced by both theoretical and practical aspects of alchemical ideas and symbolism (Carney 1977; Healy 2011; Linden 1996, Cora Alonso 2004). Many studies discuss Shakespeare’s frequent use of alchemical metaphor and symbols in his oeuvre including the cycle of sonnets. In fact, many of the sonnets use alchemical metaphors, especially Sonnets 5, 33, 54, 114, and 119.

My intention in the article was to examine ten Russian translations of two particular sonnets, 119 and 33, that both deal with the theme of alchemy but in different ways. I have tackled the challenges by analysing Shakespeare’s use of alchemical terminology in Sonnet 119, and compared the lexical choices made by the translators.

Sonnnet 119 describes the process of distillation in some technical detail, specifying devices and methods used, for example, ‘limbecks’ and
‘distillation’. These terms would very likely incite the images of alchemy in the minds of the Renaissance audience. It would be difficult, however, to say to what extent a modern reader would be able to comprehend the reference to alchemical processes. It may still evoke alchemical connotations with modern English-speaking readers providing they are familiar, with the historical background of the period. We should probably recognize that the type of technical metaphor, based on specific alchemical terminology, may leave a degree of uncertainty about the true meaning.

Unsurprisingly, a native English speaker has an advantage when comprehending an English old text, compared to the Russian reader who can enjoy reading only the work produced by a translator which bears his/her interpretation of the text. The issue is further complicated by the fact that the translator himself/herself is facing an enormous task of having to get a good grasp of a metaphorical connotations found in the text dating back three or four hundred years, while not necessarily being sufficiently familiar with the cultural context. Despite every effort by the translator who may perceive the cultural implications as very important, there is still no guarantee that he/she will succeed in preserving them in translations.

The alchemic terminology has mainly been employed by Shakespeare as material for creating numerous metaphors, and the translators have to deal with the problem of reproducing metaphorical language. The study has traced and defined the strategies used in translation of a particular alchemical metaphor identified in Sonnet 33. Concerning the translations of the metaphorical expression found in this poem, the results demonstrate that translators used various strategies. The domesticating strategy has been found to be the preferred choice, which manifested itself in replacing the source metaphor with a descriptive metaphorical expression without reference to alchemy. It remains open for discussion on what reasons lie behind the choices made by translators with regards to the translations strategies, which seem to be co-related with the particular historic periods encompassing their political and cultural characteristics.

This demonstrated itself by the changes observed after the collapse of the USSR and the social developments that followed in the aftermath. The newly acquired openness and freedom of expression could have influenced the approaches and norms adapted in contemporary translations. In relation to the alchemical terminology and metaphorical expressions crucial for translation of Shakespeare’s sonnets, a more flexible approach has been developed and used by many translators.
Conclusions

The overall objective of the present thesis was to examine the evolution of Russian translations of Shakespeare’s sonnets as a phenomenon over the years. The efforts invested by translators to produce so many versions of the same sonnets may be seen as an indication of the many reasons and motivations that inspired the translators. A more specific goal of this study was to describe particular linguistic, literary and cultural challenges to the translation of the sonnets, as well as the strategies adopted by several generations of translators in an effort to resolve these challenges.

It is widely recognised that translation plays a significant role in the origins and development of national literatures in certain periods. In this sense, the history of translations of Shakespeare in Russia may be viewed alongside the history of Russian literature. More specifically, the history of the sonnets’ translation into Russian cannot be viewed outside of context of the evolution of Russian poetry and developments within the society over the centuries. Each step of the process of familiarising the Russian audience with Shakespeare’s sonnets has entailed updated aspects of their perception within the Russian culture. After their first appearance in the middle of the nineteenth century, numerous translations of Shakespeare’s poems have been produced and published both in print and online, but mostly during the last three decades.

In order to achieve the study objectives, a number of sonnets and their Russian translations have been selected as a sample representing translation strategies used in the practical application of various translation tasks. In other words, being a qualitative study, it limits itself to the aspects which are perceived as difficult for translation into Russian. The method of cross comparisons between several translations of the same source text is applied in the study. The selected translations represent a number of challenging areas that have been more closely investigated in four articles, each of which addresses a certain issue arising in the process of translating the sonnets. Thus, Article I discusses difficulties arising while translating grammatical gender. The so-called ‘Will’ sonnets, 135 and 136, have been investigated in Article II in order to examine strategies when dealing with sexual puns. Article III addresses the Russian translators’ strategies dealing with Shakespeare’s vocabulary and culture-specific items within the legal domain, while Article IV focuses on Sonnets 33 and 119 with regard to the special alchemical terminology and metaphors that seem to be of special importance for the translation of these sonnets.

Since the thesis includes a diachronic comparative investigation of a number of retranslations of Shakespeare’s sonnets into Russian, it was located within the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, concerned with finding shifts between source language and target language, using the
results to reveal the processes which gave rise to them, as commented by Toury (1995, 174). I referred to a wide spectrum of the theories within Descriptive Translation Studies, with a focus on the norm, rewriting, and retranslation theories, in the light of the extraordinarily great attention Russian translators have devoted to Shakespeare’s sonnets.

The translator is always faced with the choice being guided by either the cultural norms of the source language, or by those of the target language. The choices influence the character of the final product. Since the translation has a great deal more to do with the target culture, there are certain target forces that dominate the translation framework. In other words, translation, undertaken in certain circumstances and for certain purposes, takes the form of the rewriting of an original text (Lefevere 1992). The rewriting theory is applicable to the case of Shakespeare’s sonnets, and I pay special attention to this issue. Furthermore, the repeated translation of Shakespeare’s sonnets into Russian constitutes an important subject for study in the context of literary retranslation (Berman 1990). Berman’s retranslation hypothesis suggests that, while original texts remain “eternally young”, translations age and lose their acceptability to the target culture. The outcomes of this study, however, do not support the retranslation hypothesis. Samuil Marshak’s 1948 translation of the sonnets has been considered to be the “great” one by many and remained the most widely available Russian translation for the next seven decades. At the same time, many critics and poet-translators have complained about the mediocre, even poor, quality of most of the recent translations. Today’s efforts to translate Shakespeare’s sonnets into Russian means engaging in a competition with Marshak’s work. Or, at the very least, to face strict evaluation against his background (Shaitanov 2005).

Having discussed in chapter 1 the issue of translatability of poetry, I was interested to find that, in general, Russian translators try to overcome various problems connected to the characteristic formal features of English and Russian prosody. Considering the importance of rhythmic patterns in the sonnets, many translators believe that it is necessary to reproduce iambic pentameter despite the difficulty to reproduce the rich content of a poem within the bounds of the original metre in Russian. It was also demonstrated that the masculine rhyme used by Shakespeare throughout the sonnets posed a special challenge for many translators due to different degrees of traditional usage of masculine and feminine rhymes in English and Russian verse. Although some translators have sometimes preserved the original masculine rhyming, the amount of target texts where only masculine rhymes have been used is rather small. The analysis shows that, among the vast number of Russian translations of the sonnets, one can find all possible variants of the masculine-feminine rhyme combinations.

An issue that has never been the subject of research within translation studies in Russia, to the best of my knowledge, concerns the translation of
the second person pronouns *you* and *thou* in the sonnets. Shakespeare’s fluctuating use of pronouns *you* and *thou* in the text of the poems may indicate the constantly changing relationship between the sonnets’ personalities, as well as their status. I argue that a Russian translator of the sonnets has to consider the value of *you* and *thou* in the sonnets in order to decide upon what strategy to choose when translating the poems, bearing in mind that the Russian system of second person pronouns corresponds almost perfectly to the Early Modern English one. Quite surprisingly, it transpired that no Russian translator of the whole cycle of 154 sonnets has chosen to follow the original pattern strictly in regard to the distribution of the two second person pronouns. The findings revealed that the translators, without exception, ignore the pronoun *vy* in favour of *ty*.

The result of this study provided evidence for initial statement that translation competence, namely a deep understanding of the context and its fundamental cultural and social features, motivates the translator’s decision in relation to the interpretation of the contradictions and uncertainties of Shakespeare’s poems. Those include the sonnet genre, should it be perceived as a collection of love poems or parody on contemporary custom; relation to Shakespeare’s biographical aspect: was he homosexual or not; the order of the poems in the Quarto: a coherent cycle or a collection of separate poems. The decisions are eventually reflected in the ultimate results in the target text.

As far as grammatical gender is concerned, the study highlighted some gender-specific results. The challenge is primarily related to the prevailing view that the first 126 poems of the cycle are addressed to a man, while the remaining poems are directed to a woman. It is found that a Russian translator is often forced to make some important decisions about whether to convey the information about the sex of the sonnets’ addressees or not, and in what way. This question is strongly connected to ideological factors in the target culture. The present thesis explored how the translated texts of the sonnets have related to the prevailing ideologies of the Russian/Soviet societies in which they were produced. The various translation solutions of the gender issue (directing the sonnets to either a male, a female or a unisex addressee) indicates that translators often manipulated the linguistic material of the source texts in accordance with the political and moral censorship of the time. The main traits of Soviet practices in translation stood in sharp contrast to the more creative approaches of the earlier, as well as later, epochs. This applies to a high degree to translation of Shakespeare’s bawdy language. All the examples considered in the thesis provide evidence for a certain regularity in the strategies applied by different translators when dealing with the source texts’ instances regarding sexual matters. The translators of the earlier target texts seem to deliberately modify the expressions related to the subject, for example, the punning on the word
“will” in Sonnets 135 and 136. This indicates some constraints imposed on translators of pre-revolutionary and Soviet periods, owing to the concept of “immoral” topics and the translators’ perception of the target readers’ expectations. In contrast, the translators of the later target texts seem to make erotic aspects of the sonnets more explicit, which appears to be a result of the changed political milieu in Russia after the end of the USSR.

The process of translating and retranslating Shakespeare’s canon, including the sonnets, in Russia has always taken place against the background of the opposition between two translation extremes – the “literal” (foreignising) versus the “free” (domesticating) translation. We can observe alternating periods of domination of either strategy. On the whole, the study’s results do not contradict the correlation between translation strategies chosen for translating the sonnets and Gasparov’s model describing the pendulum-like movement from “free” to “literal” approaches through the history of Russian literary translation.

I understand translation as a multi-layered process, which, as the present thesis has revealed, apart from the pure linguistic tasks, combines historical, political and ideological aspects. I hope that my work will contribute to some extent to the development of not only the field of translation of Shakespeare’s sonnets, but shall also provide support to Translation Studies in general, in Russia and elsewhere.
Summary in Swedish
Shakespeares sonetter på ryska: en utmaning för översättarna

Syftet med den här avhandlingen är att undersöka utvecklingen av olika översättningar av Shakespeares sonetter till ryska. I studien beskriver jag specifika språkliga, litterära och kulturella utmaningar som översättarna har brottats med samt de översättningsstrategier som de använder.

Under vissa perioder kan översättningar spela en stor roll i utvecklingen av nationella litteraturer. Översättningar av Shakespeare i Ryssland ska därför ses i kontexten av den ryska litteraturens historia. Sedan de första översättningarna av Shakespeares sonetter i mitten av 1800-talet har många nya versioner tillkommit, särskilt under de senaste trettio åren.


I den sammanbindande textens första kapitel redogör jag för teorier inom deskriptiv översättningsvetenskap med fokus på normer, omskrivning (rewriting) och nyöversättning i kontexten av översättning av Shakespeares sonetter till ryska. I det andra kapitlet betonar jag vikten av översättarens kulturkompetens som ger utslag i hans/hennes måltext. I det tredje kapitlet diskuterar jag Shakespeares roll i den ryska litteraturen både som dramatiker och poet. Det fjärde kapitlet behandlar några praktiska aspekter och utmaningar som är specifika för översättningen av Shakespeares sonetter. Dessa inkluderar versmått, rim, rytm, grammatiskt genus och tilltal samt ordlekar, metaforer och kulturspecifika fenomen.

Studiens resultat tyder på att de undersökta ryska översättarna har varit medvetna om traditionella skillnader mellan engelska och ryska när det gäller versmått, rytm och rim. För att bevara det rytmsiska mönstret vid översättningen av sonetterna utelämnas ofta vissa innehållsdetaljer. Det sker på grund av att den genomsnittliga ordlängden i ryska är större än i engelska. När det gäller rim använder sig de ryska översättarna i regel av en för rysk poesi traditionell kombination av manliga och kvinnliga rim trots att källtexterna med enstaka undantag endast innehåller manliga rim.

Analysen av tilltalsformerna i sonettöversättningarna visar att de ryska översättarna har valt att genomgående använda det ryska informella pronomenet ty (andra person singular). Det är oväntat med tanke på att
dagens ryska skiljer mellan två tilltalsformer, ty och det mer formella vy (andra person plural), på ett sätt som ungefär motsvarar engelskans bruk av thou och you under Shakespeares tid.

När det gäller översättarens kulturella kompetens visar de undersökta måltexterna på tillämpningen av olika strategier. De inkluderar hanteringen av sonetternas genre (kärleksdikter eller parodier), förhållningssätt till Shakespeares biografi (hans sexuella läggning), dikternas ordningsföljd i den första tryckta utgåvan (en cykel eller en samling av separata dikter).

Studiens resultat tyder på att samhällsklimatet ofta har påvercat strategier vid översättningen av grammatiskt genus och sexuellt laddat språk. Under den sovjetiska perioden tenderar översättarna att ändra tilltalet i måltexterna för att anpassa dem till censurens krav och rådande normer. Som regel framstår måltexterna som att de är tillägnade en kvinna trots att källtexterna är tillägnade en man. När det gäller sexuellt laddat språk visar analysen att de postsovjetiska översättningarna tenderar att bevara erótiska konnotationer medan tidigare versioner är mer restriktiva och utelämnar ”omoraliska” inslag. Till exempel ersätts ordeken kring will i sonetterna 135 och 136 ofta av ordlekar av icke-erotisk karaktär.

Analysen bekräftar att Michail Gasparovs pendelmodell för dominerande översättningsstrategier (främmandegörande och domesticerande) även gäller för översättningar av Shakespeares sonetter. Likt pendeln kännetecknas den försovjetiska perioden av främmandegörande strategier som följs av den sovjetiska perioden med dominans av domesticerande strategier. Under den postsovjetiska perioden har pendeln svängt igen, och i de senaste översättningarna dominerar på nytt främmandegörande strategier.

Studien belyser vikten av att förstå översättning som en mångfacetterad process som inbegriper såväl språkliga val som hänsynstaganden till historiska, kulturella och ideologiska aspekter. Förhoppningsvis bidrar avhandlingen även till fortsatt idéutveckling inom översättningsvetenskapen.
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