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Teaching Texts Today:

Twentieth Century Russian Literature in the Language Classroom

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by

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Teaching Texts Today:
Twentieth Century Russian Literature in the Language Classroom

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This dissertation examines the methodology behind using literature to teach Russian as a foreign language to intermediate level students. Due to the unpredictable trends in Russian student enrollment throughout the twentieth century, the development of a method to match student needs and encourage retention will benefit the field of Russian studies. To this end, this dissertation explores some of the past research regarding the role of the reading skill in foreign language classes. In addition, an examination of previous use of literature as a teaching tool in foreign language classrooms prompted development of possible materials for the Russian language. Based on the investigation of this research, current Russian language textbooks were analyzed in light of their inclusion of literary texts and overall methodological tenor.

Following the textbook evaluations, a suggested methodology is elaborated for a textbook that integrates literary texts from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with

exercises for Russian language development. Samples of proposed teaching materials and a proposed table of contents for a textbook of applied literature are presented. The proposed materials focus on twelve literary texts of five hundred words or less, chosen from among twentieth and twenty-first century works of Russian prose. The twelve texts span the length of the twentieth century with one text representing each decade and two for the first decade of the twenty-first century. Different Russian authors, some of whom intermediate students may recognize but most of whom will be unfamiliar, represent each decade. Several sample materials were then tested for their feasibility in a second-year, second-semester Russian language course. Student volunteers were solicited to comment on and work with the test materials, determining a baseline for the practicality and necessity of the materials. Suggestions for future research recognize the importance of expanding the study beyond a limited scope. Finally, the place of applied literature is examined in light of current global tendencies and academic developments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.....	2
REASONS FOR PROJECT.....	7
STUDENT ENROLLMENT DATA.....	13
HYPOTHESES.....	18
DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	22
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	25
GENERAL PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH.....	25
(i.) <i>Basic reading skills</i>	27
(ii.) <i>Foreign language reading skills</i>	31
(iii.) <i>ESL literature experiences</i>	36
(iv.) <i>CTL literature experiences</i>	41
(v.) <i>LCTL literature experiences</i>	46
RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING.....	51
(i.) <i>Novice</i>	54
(ii.) <i>Intermediate</i>	58
(iii.) <i>Intermediate-High – Advanced</i>	62
(iv.) <i>Readers</i>	64
ANALYSIS.....	68
CHAPTER THREE: SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY.....	70
THE FIELD OF APPLIED LITERATURE.....	70
(i.) <i>What is literature?</i>	71
(ii.) <i>Why the twentieth century?</i>	75
(iii.) <i>Why intermediate level?</i>	80
(iv.) <i>Why reverse chronological order?</i>	85
(v.) <i>Why these authors?</i>	89
(vi.) <i>Why these texts?</i>	98
(vii.) <i>Sample pedagogical text</i>	101
ANALYSIS.....	107
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS	108
FEASIBILITY TEST.....	108
(i.) <i>Session details</i>	110
(ii.) <i>Evaluation of feasibility test</i>	115
(iii.) <i>Statement of limitations</i>	120
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS.....	125
APPENDICES	133
APPENDIX A: PROPOSED TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	133
APPENDIX B: LIST OF SUGGESTED AUTHORS AND TEXTS.....	135
APPENDIX C: STUDENT PREPARATORY MATERIALS.....	141
APPENDIX D: "THE ALARM CLOCK".....	145
APPENDIX E: "THE BRIDGE I WISHED TO CROSS".....	149
APPENDIX F: INFORMATIONAL SURVEY.....	159
APPENDIX G: SAMPLE SYLLABUS AND GLOSSARY.....	160
APPENDIX H: STUDENT HOMEWORK EXAMPLE.....	166

WORKS CITED.....	168
VITA.....	176

Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation comprises several parts. Chapter One provides an introduction and justification for the project. Chapter Two is a review of the scholarship concerning the pedagogy of foreign language reading. The examination of the reading skill in general is followed by discussion of the special considerations necessary in foreign language reading, including specific examples of using literature in the classroom. The second part of Chapter Two briefly explores the current state of Russian textbooks with an eye toward teaching reading skills. Although this review does not include every published Russian textbook, the selections are intended to represent the most popular textbooks in use by United States (U.S.) Russian programs (see Kagan and Rifkin). Chapter Three proposes and examines a specific program for intermediate Russian learners. This section includes comments on choices of authors and texts for a proposed textbook, as well as samples of possible materials. Chapter Four explores the feedback from a materials feasibility test where a set of applied literature materials was tested with a group of volunteer students to determine the usability of those materials with a specific group of students. These results are then analyzed in light of the possibility for further research and development. Chapter Five draws conclusions from the project and places the feasibility test within the context of general pedagogical research.

Statement of Purpose

From the very first cave drawings to the latest in video messaging, communicative artifacts populate and promote understanding among people and cultures. With written artifacts, another facet is added to the complex equation of communication. Once ideas are written and preserved, communication does more than instantaneously convey a need from one person to another; the longevity of written documents allows for ideas and stories to be passed beyond the scope of human memory. As this longevity is purposely exploited, the literary genre espouses one goal: to communicate imagination, culture, and beliefs across time.

The utility of literature in a language learning and teaching environment emerges when it is considered as a communicative document. If a document is created in order to express and discuss the concerns of a culture at any given point in its history, that same document provides an embedded example of language, culture, and thought to anyone who examines it. This examination can be outlined in different ways: simply reading to gain information, reading as a diversion from the everyday, reading for a scholarly purpose (such as to delve into the stylistics of an author or genre), or decoding for a special purpose (to acquire vocabulary or grammatical structures). It is the position of this author that all of these modes of literary interaction have a place in the language classroom. For instructors to aid students in becoming proficient users of a foreign language, however, proficiency must expand beyond the decoding of vocabulary or grammar. The proficient student will (eventually) be able to engage in any activity in the foreign language that s/he usually performs in the native language. Thus s/he will be able

to project an "authentic self-presentation" (Horwitz "Class Lecture") in the foreign language. Such is the goal of the applied literature methodology presented throughout this dissertation.

Given the immensity of this goal, a student's language learning career must proceed through a series of stages that incrementally advance proficiency. These steps should develop a student's ability to perform and expand his/her own personal daily activities in the foreign language, getting closer and closer to achieving authentic self-presentation. The student should be able to face any situation requiring use of the foreign language with the same personality, facility, and expertise as s/he would in the native language (whether it be reading a news article online or helping a native speaker at the post office). Authentic self-presentation consists of many and various skills, and literature has a role to play in this development. Literature can be an effective medium for teaching communicative and analytical skills.

A further facet in developing a student's authentic foreign language self-presentation concerns the access to and negotiation of segments of the foreign language community that match a student's interests in his/her native community. In other words, if a student is intent on learning all s/he can about the history of Byzantine art, or the role of rhyming in hip-hop music, foreign language skills should develop such that s/he can pursue those interests through the medium of the foreign language. An important goal of language learning is to facilitate access to information (or communities) unavailable to a monolingual. Again, the many and varied styles of literature have a wealth of offerings to meet this demand. Development of reading skills allows the student the flexibility to

explore as many topics as s/he is interested in. And, unlike other modes of communication that require immediate interaction (such as speaking or listening), reading skills are highly portable and highly versatile. The opportunity to read online articles or to check out books from the library allows a student to interact with the foreign language at his/her own pace.

Although not without limitations, written texts have a great potential for developing understanding due to their static nature; they place less immediate demands on the learner. Rivers cites reading as the most durable of the four language skills. In discussing the importance of reading, she asserts,

The reading skill, once developed, is the one which can be more easily maintained at a high level by the students themselves without further help from a teacher. Through it they can increase their knowledge and understanding of the culture of the speakers of the language, their ways of thinking, their contemporary activities, and their contributions to many fields of artistic and intellectual endeavor.
(Teaching Foreign-Language Skills 260)

Given the stability of the reading skill (once students learn the basic tools), the teaching of language through literature takes on an even more potent function. The use of literature in particular to develop reading skills also provides students with a glimpse into models of language and culture that have stood the test of time.

Although there is a body of research that is predicated on the belief that second language activities are simply the transfer of native language skills to a new code, there is

adequate documentation of distinct second (or foreign¹) language processing to undermine these theories. In particular, the process of second language reading, although similar to native language reading, has been rightly examined as its own phenomenon. One main proponent for examining second language reading in this light is Bernhardt, who asserts "second language *anything* and, in this case, *second language reading* in particular, is a phenomenon unto itself — not just a less accurate version of something else" (*Reading 2*). Given that developing second language skills requires building new sets of cognitive frameworks, reading in a foreign language can also be a mode to develop new cognitive skills. Reading and discussing literary texts can develop cognitive and critical thinking skills. With these new skills, students take another step closer to authentic self-presentation.

The methodology of this dissertation includes only a narrow swath of texts encompassing only short (less than 500 words) fiction from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. When student interests and needs are so diverse and texts are available for every detail, why confine the scope to a limited genre in a limited time frame? The answer to this question lies in a broader visualization of the foreign language curriculum. While meant to exemplify the diversity of applied literature,² the project outlined here is intended as only a portion of instruction for intermediate Russian students. It is assumed that students will also be receiving direct grammatical instruction, conversation practice,

¹ For the purposes of this dissertation there will be no distinction between second and foreign language.

² Similar to the more common term, *applied linguistics*, *applied literature* can also be used to refer to "the study of second and foreign language learning and teaching" (Richards, Platt and Platt 19). However, rather than implying the "restriction in scope to the application of specifically LINGUISTIC theory" (Johnson and Johnson 9), *applied literature* treats the practical application of literary texts to language learning.

and listening drills, as well as chances to discuss cultural questions. While not necessarily intended as a stand-alone component, it is meant to demonstrate the variety of activities and skills that can be built using literature as a textual basis.

Instructors should easily be able to use the materials proposed here. For those instructors who have a very constrained syllabus where classroom activities are prescribed, these materials can serve as supplements for students who either require or desire further assistance. This assistance can come in the form of individual meetings or simply through recommending some of the texts and exercises. Ideally, these materials would be used as supplemental texts. For instructors with more flexibility in their curriculum, the materials could be presented as weekly reading assignments or as substitutions for the readings found in any textbook. In this manner, any of the units could be isolated to fulfill specific needs and each text could be integrated at the appropriate time. Finally, an instructor could develop a full-scale supplemental course for interested students who wish to meet outside of regular classroom hours. These supplements could either be used to review classroom materials through new texts, or to expand classroom materials in completely new directions. This last use would assume that students would be able to meet at least twice a week outside of their regular Russian class in order to get the full benefit of a supplemental applied literature course.

Reasons for Project

This project proposes a methodology for incorporating literature into the language classroom. Examination of the trends of foreign language teaching throughout the past century, and especially following the virtual exclusion of literature brought about by the audio-lingual method (ALM),³ shows the importance of developing effective and innovative ways to make reading literature once again a central part of the language learning experience. According to Chastain, one of the main tenets of ALM is that "skills are acquired basically by setting up teaching-learning situations in which the students are conditioned to give correct responses to oral or written stimuli. They must not be allowed time to think about their answers... The very core of audio-lingual teaching is to condition [native-like] responses by means of dialog [sic.] memorization and pattern drills" (111-112). Furthermore, Moulton recognizes one of the "slogans" of ALM as "language is speech, not writing" (86). Such an emphasis certainly undervalues the place of reading and especially of literature within a foreign language learning context.

Despite the ALM adages, the language of authentic literary texts remains one of the most effective sources for students to interact and become familiar with a foreign language. In addition to the linguistic benefits, the cultural cues contained in literary texts provide an accessible and contextual means for transmission of cultural mores to students who are not necessarily able to travel to the foreign country. Finally, literature provides a

³ According to Omaggio-Hadley, "the combination of structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology resulted in a new theory of language learning which described the learning process in terms of conditioning. This theory was translated into practice in the 1940s [and] ... was to dominate academic programs in the [US] in the 1950s and 1960s" (110).

range of material wide enough to cover the interests and abilities of any student, from first year to professor. By teaching the skills needed for exploring such a broad spectrum of language examples, students can take those skills well beyond the walls of the classroom and into their own daily lives. Given these advantages, it is the purpose of this dissertation to outline a possible set of materials to be used for instruction with intermediate Russian students studying in the U.S. at institutions of higher education. The proposal given here covers theoretical, methodological, and practical concerns for the introduction of applied literature to the Russian classroom of the twenty-first century.

The author's own motivation and desire to read Russian literature as a foreign language student, even at the early stages of language study, initially prompted this project. During the perceived monotony of learning the alphabet or memorizing case endings, there was always the promise of eventually being able to access texts that were out of the reach of monolingual English speakers. Comparing that experience to those of colleagues confirmed that the excitement of discovering new material through a new medium was a constant draw for all motivated students. This personal experience spurred further research, becoming the second inspirational step in developing the current project.

In order to discover the motivating factors behind undergraduate enrollment in Russian classes, the author conducted several surveys (Blech "Student Surveys"). Beginning with informal conversations and interviews with students in the Slavic and Eurasian Studies Department at the University of Texas at Austin, the author began to notice that although every student had a different specific reason for studying Russian, most wanted to be able to access material otherwise unavailable to them. Whether that

material fell in the realm of literary texts or current newspaper articles, the need to expand their avenues for learning led many students to study a foreign language, and specifically Russian. These initial findings led to more formal written surveys conducted during the 2001–2002 academic year for both students and instructors in Russian language courses. In these survey results, many students professed an aspiration to be able to read in Russian as well as some interest in Russian literature (Blech "Text"). In addition, teachers of Russian also wished to incorporate literature in their classroom activities, but frequently expressed frustration at not accomplishing that feat. This frustration was based predominantly on a lack of classroom-ready materials for specific language levels, especially at the early stages of language learning (novice through intermediate-mid learners).

How, then, can literature most effectively serve the needs of a foreign language classroom? A resource of great value was found in the discourse surrounding the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL)⁴ in the past fifty years. By examining the techniques and experiences of practitioners who had long been using literary excerpts in ESL classrooms, the benefits and possibilities of an applied literature classroom became evident. An eclectic methodology that includes applied literature has become a popular and effective teaching tool for foreign language practitioners. It is on the basis of theoretical expectation, documented experience, and current research that the following project promotes the use of literature in the Russian language classroom.

⁴ ESL is considered to be any context in which English is taught to non-native speakers. The distinction between ESL and EFL will not be made here, due to space constraints.

The benefits of the proposed methodological plan are multi-faceted. As foreign language teachers advance into the twenty-first century, many new challenges present themselves in addition to the long-recognized needs of the language teaching profession. Of course instructors will always struggle with the issue of motivating students to gain the skills needed to become proficient in a foreign language, whether that means reading, listening, speaking, or writing. Linguistic difficulties remain the main obstacles students perceive when learning a foreign language. The troubles faced in cross-cultural communication are far from students' minds. However, in an increasingly global world where contact between cultures occurs daily, the navigation of cultural differences has become increasingly significant.

Previously unforeseen needs are arising with the rapid development of technology as well. Innovations such as instant messaging, webcasting, and streaming video can open endless paths for learning, but these same technologies can paralyze individuals who lack the requisite skills. The effect is magnified further for those in foreign language fields, where coping with technology in another language seems daunting. Whether through innovations for teaching by using technology, or even finding a way to use email with a different alphabet, the technological demands for language learners are substantial. Both instructors and students must grapple with the complications of this foreign technological world and be proficient enough to navigate it.

Still, technology can aid students and instructors in accessing and exploring authentic language examples. As part of a well-balanced catalogue of exercises, active reading and interpretation of literature can help students recognize, become familiar with,

and utilize authentic Russian language. The context of literature also provides multiple examples of usage, stylistics, and language creativity that are sometimes missing from traditional classroom models. Literature also contains the added benefit of displaying a snapshot of a culture in a more or less static form that allows students the chance to recognize, discuss, and assimilate those cultural cues. For example, a simple description of a holiday meal found in a short story can be saturated with cultural artifacts. Students can discover the types of foods consumed in the foreign culture, the manners employed during a meal, or even what constitutes appropriate dinner conversation. These seemingly negligible tableaux can provide some of the richest cultural clues available to students. One of the main cultural benefits that can be derived from this methodology is in allowing students a basis for conversation and discussion with their peers in Russia through a medium that is less changeable than the daily news. By making students familiar with recent and popular literature, they are given possible topics for interactions with native speakers. As technological advances give students (and instructors) the chance to disregard physical distance in communication, any common ground that students can find for discussion with their peers must be considered an advantage.

One final, and not to be understated, benefit of this methodology is to enhance the match between foreign language programs and the desires and needs of today's students, especially where students may not see the immediate benefit of studying a foreign language such as Russian. Although all students arrive in a classroom with their own goals and needs, Russian studies must truly capture the interest of a student for a commitment to the field to develop. Students must perceive foreign language skills as a

means to achieve their personal goals or a mode to discover new opportunities. Although the research is just beginning, there is certainly a link between students' motivation and success in language learning. According to Benson, "intrinsic motivation leads to more effective learning and ... is promoted by structures and events that are 'informational' rather than 'controlling' and by situations in which the learning is self-determined and the locus of control lies with the learner" (69). By giving students the skills to decipher and enjoy texts of their own choosing on their own time, students can exploit their own intrinsic motivation. In turn, students will gain more interactive time with the foreign language through their own interests, making them more likely to continue interacting within a foreign language context. If the students are successful, those leaving foreign language classrooms can be more skilled, more fluent, and more willing to remain in the field.

Student Enrollment Data

One of the main reasons behind examination and alteration of teaching methods has always been to recruit new students, whether in something as informal as community tutoring or as extensive as a university program. While Spanish language programs in the U.S. remain extremely vital, for instructors in the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), attracting and keeping students from year to year has always been a matter of concern. A recent letter to the editor of "Kartochka"⁵ addresses this concern. Andrew Kaufman muses on the perpetuation of the belief that Russian is "an unusually difficult" language. He suggests "that a current priority is to market a different message: that the study of Russian is for everybody, not just the elite, and that a B.A. in Russian can lead to many interesting career opportunities, as well as have many other intellectual and personal benefits for a wide range of students" (5). By exploiting the versatility of a Russian career, programs can attract students with a better understanding of the place of Russian language skills in today's career world. In turn, foreign language programs can encourage more diverse courses and thereby enhance the perceived status of Russian as a foreign language.

While each program has its own agenda and rubric for measuring success, one of the greatest markers of system-wide trends has been the Modern Language Association (MLA) enrollment survey, which has been in place since 1958. The most recent survey conducted in the fall of 2002 and published in the *ADFL Bulletin* presents the results from more than 2,700 two- and four-year institutes of higher education in the U.S.

(Welles 7). In the MLA survey, Russian is categorized as one of the fifteen most commonly taught languages in the U.S. These fifteen languages are then divided into five separate groups based on enrollment numbers. Russian is in the fourth smallest group, along with Chinese, Latin, and ancient Greek. This group comprises approximately four percent of all language enrollments in the U.S. Languages with higher enrollments include Spanish (with more than half of all foreign language students), French and German (just over 20%), and finally Italian, American Sign Language (ASL), and Japanese (accounting for 17%). The final group consists of biblical and modern Hebrew, Arabic, Portuguese, and Korean (under two percent of all enrolments) (Welles 8). While Russian has never held a substantial percentage of the enrollments (only 4.8% at its height during the Cold War), the current rate of 1.7% hardly seems encouraging.

The history of teaching Russian as a foreign language in the U.S. has been fairly brief in comparison to languages such as French and German, finding its beginning in 1896 at Harvard University (Shaw 23). However, as with many of the LCTLs, Russian studies really came into its own during World War II. With America's increased involvement in world affairs, languages such as Russian and Japanese suddenly came to the attention of the government and military. A sign of this change is seen in the founding of a professional organization for Slavic studies (the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages or AATSEEL) in December of 1941, only weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor (Shaw 3). Following WWII, however, attitudes toward Russian studies turned suspicious as the Cold War got underway (Shaw 31). The second

⁵ "Kartochka" is a publication of the Central Association of Russian Teachers of America (CARTA).

surge in interest for Russian studies came in 1957 with the launch of the Soviet satellites (Shaw 8). Russian (along with other foreign languages) reached its enrollment peak in 1965 and then experienced a sharp decline until 1980 (Shaw 98). With Gorbachev's rise to power, a renewed interest in Russian studies was seen in the mid-1980s that lasted through to 1990 (Shaw 121).

While the figures for 1998–2002 show a small increase in enrollment, the trend from 1995–2002 shows an overall decrease in enrollment, even if slight. The stability perceived in the 1990s must be considered in terms of the previous forty years, during which Russian enrollments fluctuated greatly. Depending on the decade in question, Russian enrollment ranged from a highpoint of over 44,000 to the lowest recorded enrollment in 1998 of just over 23,000 (Welles 13). During the 1980s, Russian enrollments had an increase of 86% for the decade, as opposed to the current 0.5%. No other language in the history of the survey reported such a radical and unpredictable fluctuation.

Perhaps the most discouraging portion of the data reported in the MLA survey is the loss of 56 Russian post-secondary programs between 1998 and 2002 (Welles 18). This statistic shows the true state of Russian programs in a way that generalized enrollment data cannot. Whereas the overall enrollment in Russian language classes for all institutions surveyed has increased by the miniscule amount of 0.5%, the reported discontinuance of 56 programs shows that enrollment numbers do not take into consideration the number of programs available. What this data seems to suggest is that enrollment is only "growing" through consolidation of programs and not due to

development of new (or even maintenance of current) programs. The Russian situation contrasts vastly with that of a language such as ancient Greek. Although grouped in the same enrollment category as Russian, ancient Greek has seen a positive increase in the number of institutions reporting enrollments approximately equivalent to the decrease in Russian programs (Welles 18). In fact, of the fifteen most common languages, Russian exhibits the greatest decrease in programs between 1998 and 2002. Although one cannot compare the Russian numbers with reports of 436 new ASL programs, one must wonder what is happening in Russian departments to cause such an unmatched decline (Welles 18). Part of the answer can be found in geo-politics; the perceived importance of Russian skills has fallen away since the fall of the Soviet Union. The geo-political factor is also mirrored by the data concerning Arabic programs, which have increased by 40% over the last four years (Welles 18). Certainly no language instructor can predict or control the political state of the world; however, educators and Russian language specialists must consider how the steep fluctuations of enrollments can be minimized in order to keep programs afloat.

A word must also be said concerning regional distinctions. The distribution of language students across the country can be attributed to several factors including population size, geographical distribution of higher education institutions, and local language influences (such as a prevalence of a minority language group). While a certain correlation between language study and region are both understandable and encouraging, as far as Russian is concerned, educators and professionals who use foreign languages in their daily lives must make a concerted effort to promote language study to all students

across the U.S. Currently the highest concentration of Russian programs can be found in the Northeast region of the U.S, where approximately 26% of all Russian programs are located (Welles 25). The Midwest region follows with 21%, while the South Atlantic and Pacific Coast regions boast about 17% each. The Rocky Mountain and South Central regions represent far less with 10% and 6%, respectively (Welles 25). Such a disparity is not surprising given the demographics of the regions as well as the language distribution for non-English/non-Spanish languages in the U.S. (United States Census Bureau). However, for instructors who find themselves in an uphill regional battle, the expansion of materials and techniques for student attraction are even more vital.

Hypotheses

It is necessary to pose the question concerning the desired consequences of implementing an applied literature program. What benefits will students receive from this methodology that would otherwise be lost? Broadly stated, these projected benefits are as follows: more students in Russian classrooms, more proficient students graduating from Russian programs and finally, a more effective Russian language teaching environment. Although gaining more students benefits Russian programs overall rather than benefiting students directly, it must be acknowledged that maintaining enrollment is the only way to maintain programs. Without students, Russian pedagogical discussions are moot. While all of the projected advantages are interconnected, each presents its own individual contribution. However, before proceeding, it is important to note that these are merely projected benefits. They can neither be the reason behind applied literature programs nor the measure of their success. This dissertation espouses the use of applied literature for projected gains in student proficiency and enjoyment, not for the express gain of student enrollment.

The benefit of gaining more students in Russian programs can certainly be labeled as both a start and an end goal. In order to keep Russian programs alive, more students must enroll in them. In order to attract more students, the needs of those future students must be anticipated and met. Student needs and requests are both ever changing (e.g., reading Russian websites) and ever the same (e.g., communicating with Russian relatives), necessitating a balanced and wide-ranging curriculum plan. Students' needs can be met by integrating the many facets of literature, in the classroom and out.

Ironically, students cite small class sizes as one reason they choose to take Russian (Blech "Surveys"), creating a paradox for instructors who wish to increase enrollment figures without compromising individual attention. Applied literature opens an avenue to solve this problem through the creation of supplemental courses and individual materials, such as those presented here. The needs of each program vary, but the flexibility of these materials allows for highly motivated students to advance on their own, as well as offering additional assistance to other students. By giving instructors the ready-made tools to make learning Russian a self-directed and self-fulfilling task, they can continue to focus on classroom activities, without compromising attention to individual students (even with larger enrollments).

Although an increase in overall enrollment numbers may appear a hearty measure of the success of U.S. Russian programs, the real test must be in the overall proficiency and progress of students leaving those programs, especially as concerns the role of Russian in students' future endeavors. The students who leave these programs should be both more proficient and more committed to advancing Russian studies. It is unrealistic to imagine that all students who study Russian will automatically enter Russian-related fields, but taking steps to increase the percentage of those who follow a career related to Russian will be beneficial. Once again, the reality of a global society underscores this benefit. Whereas foreign language skills may have been less vital to a "normal" citizen 100 or even 50 years ago, the current reality forces all citizens to interact globally. The skills honed by reading and studying foreign language literature may at first appear to have little bearing on students' careers. However, when placed in the framework of media

analysis, literary and critical thinking skills are among the most vital for interacting within a global society. By providing students early on with the practice and the scaffolding to hone attention to detail, decoding skills, analytical thinking, and aesthetic training, the reading skill surfaces as a greatly under-appreciated commodity. Language programs can also train students to be more proficient in using general communication skills in addition to specific reading skills.

A final benefit of applied literature is in creating more effective foreign language classrooms in general. This benefit can be seen through increasing student autonomy, increasing learner-centered environments, and promoting students' own cultural and linguistic awareness. By giving students both more freedom to choose the content of the materials they read as well as to determine what specific skills they will require for future endeavors, students can advance more quickly toward their language goals. Since literature provides a nearly endless amount of material with diverse perspectives, students become responsible for their own education, if only by beginning to choose what they will read. While the early stages of literary study should be guided by an instructor (due to the linguistic and cultural complexity inherent in literary texts), students can be responsible for choosing the focus of their own literary endeavors, even at beginning levels. As their language and cultural proficiencies increase, the burden of text choice can fall more squarely on the shoulders of the students themselves. At that stage, students will interact more easily with texts outside the boundaries of the classroom, thus increasing the amount of time they spend interacting with the foreign language in general.

Eventually, as students begin to read more and choose their own texts, they will become increasingly aware of the linguistic and cultural features of literary texts.

Finally, the broadness of literature encourages students to expand on and express their own opinions, rather than depending on either the instructor or the textbook to define the "correct" response. While many students may consider foreign language classes as environments where answers are either correct (read, grammatical) or incorrect (incomprehensible), the introduction of literature and of literary discussions can go a long way toward dispelling the image of language learning as black-and-white grammar drills. Although every student must progress through a stage where grammar drills are necessary, the introduction of literature can provide a welcome diversion in exploring different ideas. Especially for those students whose prior training may be in scientific or mathematical fields, the fluidity of literary studies opens many new avenues. For students trained in the humanities, the presence of literature in the otherwise unfamiliar foreign language environment can be comforting. In either case, the variety that literature provides within the foreign language classroom is an incontestable benefit.

Definition of Terms

Before proceeding through the dissertation, it is important to establish several definitions of terms employed throughout. The first consideration is the word "text" itself. Although a text can be defined very broadly to include any discrete form of discourse whether written, aural, visual, or cultural, the use of the term here will be limited. Since this dissertation is primarily concerned with printed material, "text" will hereby be considered limited to the more traditional definition — a section of writing that develops a complete plot structure. As Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes write, "pedagogically-useful texts, oral or written, are texts whose primary intent is to *communicate meaning*. Such texts are generally written by native speakers of the language to be read by other native speakers" [emphasis added] (190). In addition to expressing the text's communicative purpose, Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes also introduce the idea of "authentic" materials, which are commonly defined as those written by native speakers for native speakers. While this dissertation advocates the use of authentic texts wherever possible, a distinction will be made between authentic and pedagogically altered texts where necessary.

A further refinement of the definition of "text" is provided by Cook who considers that "the notion of text is semantic rather than grammatical. ... *Text* then, ... is a number of sentences bound together by cohesive ties, and giving meaning to each other" (152). While this definition is predicated on the vision of text as a written item, the idea of text as semantic can be extended to include all media. For the purposes of this

dissertation, the semantic ties of text help to delimit why some excerpts can stand alone as text while others fail to meet the basic criterion of semantic intactness.

Additionally, an examination of the term "literature" yields many conceptions. Just as is the case with "text," a broad definition of "literature" is to be preferred in general contexts, but must understandably be limited for the scope of this dissertation. While "text" makes no consideration of linguistic or conceptual variations, "literature" most commonly refers to those texts written in distinctive language style and with the intent of relaying a story. While categories such as biography or memoirs can fit into this definition, Lazar presents a narrower view. She provides a definition of literature as texts that are "fictional and convey their message by paying considerable attention to language which is rich and multi-layered" (5). Tying together the link between authentic text and authentic literature, Collie and Slater recognize that "literature is 'authentic' material. By that we simply mean that most works of literature are not fashioned for the specific purpose of teaching a language" (3). Within the context of this dissertation, both "authentic text" and "authentic literature" will be used to refer to a sample of writing intended for native speakers that has not been linguistically or culturally adapted.

Finally, as concerns the teaching feasibility test, results were based on a formative evaluation technique. As Horwitz defines it, "formative evaluation assesses ongoing educational programs for the purpose of improving instruction ... [and] is especially valuable when teachers experiment with new teaching approaches" ("Formative Evaluation" 83). Although this project only specifically concerns the use of literature in intermediate Russian classes, the overall intention of the evaluation is to suggest changes

for current program parameters. As such, the data gathered here through feasibility testing sessions are evaluated for relevance to all intermediate Russian language courses and suggestions are made for future changes, thus meeting the required definition for formative evaluation. Through careful consideration of these definitions, it is hoped that this dissertation will further promote the benefit of using authentic modes of literature in the language classroom.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

General Pedagogical Research

In asserting the necessity of bringing authentic Russian texts into the foreign language learning environment, an explication must first be presented: justification (the value of authentic texts), requirements (the way authentic texts complement other teaching activities), and methodology (effective ways to present authentic texts). The initial step toward understanding the place of literature in the language classroom must be to explore the reading skill in general. Research on reading and processing texts has been conducted on many fronts from child native language acquisition to foreign language adult decoding. A complete recounting of the research conducted concerning reading is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, by offering a basic analysis of the general research, conclusions can be drawn about the specific Russian language context.

Once the general reading process has been examined, a more specific look toward foreign languages will be undertaken. This examination will encompass general agreements concerning the difference between the process of native language and foreign language reading. Within the foreign language perspective, the most widely studied foreign language situation remains ESL. Many studies have been conducted in observation of adult learners of English, and the findings of those projects provide great insight into the applications and difficulties of foreign language reading. The next step will be the examination of reading research in other commonly taught languages in the U.S., including Spanish, French, and German. Given the considerably larger size of these

fields in comparison to the LCTLs, research concerning these languages proceeds much more quickly. Finally, while all language reading research lends perspective to the Russian context, it is the documented research in the LCTLs that, logically, offers the closest comparison. After this general examination, the specific case of Russian will be explored. Conjecture as to future objectives will be presented in the conclusion.

(i.) Basic reading skills

In order to establish the benefit of teaching Russian language through reading, one must first ask what reading offers that other skill sets do not. In examining reading, one of the first questions that must be posed concerns the process of comprehension. In her article "Proficient Texts or Proficient Readers?" Bernhardt begins by defining comprehension "as the process of relating new or incoming information to information already stored in memory" (25). She then draws on Perkins to recognize that "understanding is not a process of breaking complex units of language into simpler ones but, rather, a process of taking multiple units and building them into representations" (25). Indeed, Bernhardt sees reading as a truly multifaceted skill that is "conceptual and inferential — not explicitly linguistic but, rather, largely based on information in the cognitive network. References and inferences are made within conceptual representations of discourse" (26). Such a general and overarching view of the reading skill serves as a guide to examining what might be needed when focusing on second language reading.

Once the background of reading comprehension is established, Bernhardt continues by positing what attributes make for proficient readers, especially in a second language. Her first assertion centers on the knowledge that proficient reading develops most easily from texts that concern familiar topics. Accordingly, "since comprehension seems to be the match between the new and the known, it will be highly dependent on what the reader already knows. If the topic is known, the reader will be more proficient than if the topic of the discourse is not known" (Bernhardt "Proficient Texts" 26). She regards topic familiarity as more vital to comprehension even than linguistic factors. In addition,

metacognitive awareness of the reading process serves as another high predictor for comprehension as does the speed of text processing. In other words, students who consciously use reading strategies (such as using keywords, taking notes, or self-monitoring) to process texts are more successful. In addition, the faster a student is able to process a text, the higher the level of comprehension achieved (Bernhardt "Proficient Texts" 26). This seeming paradox stems from research proving that faster reading involves less letter-by-letter or even word-by-word processing, and more closely resembles the automatic reading of the native language. In Bernhardt's understanding, the most proficient readers will be aware of what is required in the reading process, be able to process text quickly, and finally and most importantly, be familiar with the topics of reading passages.

Cohen, who presents reading as a set of active skills encompassing many varying abilities and perceptions, examines another perspective on the skills and necessary conditions for successful reading. He advises students that "your success at reading depends on how alert you are, how motivated you are to read the particular text, how good the fit is between what you are reading at a current moment and what you already read, your familiarity with the topic and the complexity of the material" (75). Amidst the array of advice, Cohen echoes Bernhardt: successful reading is built on knowledge of the topic addressed.

However, Cohen proceeds to develop other facets that he suggests improve the reading skill. One of the main tenets of Cohen's theory of successful reading is the use and understanding of reading strategies. Cohen delineates four types: support, paraphrase,

establishing coherence in a text, and supervising strategy use (91–2). Each type is meant to provide compensatory aid when ideal reading conditions are not met. By making students aware of the strategies that they inherently use, one can augment or alter them to become more effective. Cohen asserts that if "learners have greater conscious awareness of the strategies that they select, this awareness can lead them to genuine gains in reading comprehension" (74). However, Cohen provides caveats: "recent research has shown that reading strategies are not in and of themselves 'good.' It depends on *who* is using them, with *what* text, at *what point* in the text, under *what circumstances*, and with *what purpose* in mind" (84). Cohen prescribes the judicious use of these many strategies to assist readers in processing and comprehending texts more fully and quickly. To draw his arguments together, Cohen stresses that reading must be approached as an active rather than a passive skill. Taking into account not only the many situations in which reading occurs, but also the many compensatory strategies that can be used, Cohen sets forth a complex understanding of how text is processed.

While Cohen focuses specifically on the use of reading strategies, a review article by Grabe develops ten instructional implications for second language reading. The ten implications Grabe discusses are as follows:

1. Ensure word recognition fluency.
2. Emphasize vocabulary learning and create a vocabulary-rich environment.
3. Activate background knowledge in appropriate ways.
4. Ensure effective language knowledge and general comprehension skills.
5. Teach text structures and discourse organization.
6. Promote the strategic reader rather than teach individual strategies.
7. Build reading fluency and rate.
- 8.

Promote extensive reading. 9. Develop intrinsic motivation for reading. 10. Plan a coherent curriculum for student learning. (46)

Each implication is supported by empirical research conducted in first language (L1) and second language (L2) reading. Grabe then presents suggestions for further studies, especially in order to examine curricular ramifications. He therein provides a fairly unique perspective on the many ties between the L1 and L2 research available and the actual instructional techniques that will aid students in becoming better readers, whether in their L1 or L2. Grabe concludes that, although L1 and L2 reading processes are different, they have enough overlap to merit examining the implications from L1 research to influence L2 practices.

(ii.) Foreign language reading skills

Despite the wide influence and acceptance of ALM in the 1960s, a concurrent attempt grew to keep reading and literature a part of the foreign language curriculum. As with the communicative approach, which began in the 1980s, the 1960s saw foreign language classrooms predominantly filled with listening and speaking while reading and writing acquired second tier status. However, neither trend's popularity completely excluded reading from all classrooms. One of the greatest proponents for balanced four-skill classes (and later, five-skill, including culture) has been Wilga Rivers. Beginning in the 1960s, she has consistently placed great importance on preparing teachers to engage their students through reading, listening, speaking, *and* writing. Some of her most acclaimed work has been in promoting the values inherent in reading texts.

Initially released in 1968 during the heyday of ALM (the second edition appeared in 1981 as the proficiency movement took hold), Rivers's *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills* remains an important asset to understanding the progression of foreign language pedagogy. Rivers explores the goal of having students who can "think in a foreign language and understand it without mental translation, in both oral and graphic form" (259), which she takes as the end goal for every foreign language user. Although many of her suggestions remain rooted in ALM, she understands that reading and texts provide a unique link to the target language for any student. Rivers recognizes that even "students who will never have the opportunity of conversing with native speakers ... will have access to the literature" (*Teaching Foreign-Language Skills* 260). With a goal of creating lifelong learners and users of the foreign language, Rivers's perception of the importance

of having an out-of-the-classroom tool is noteworthy. She adds the caveat that "unless students have been taught to read the target language fluently, without deciphering it laboriously word by word, and to approach a book or magazine article independently with confidence, it is unlikely that they will want to continue to read in that language after they have completed their studies" (260). Rivers also brings forth some of the other justifications of using literature in the language classroom. The portability of texts and the autonomy that they can promote in the learner is difficult to match in any other format. The richness of the textual format serves as one of the greatest benefits supporting the reading skill.

Without a doubt, literary texts also carry some of the most vivid cultural material available for foreign language learners. An article by Mueller et al. explores the benefits of using texts to exploit cultural information and promote the teaching of culture as an integral part of a complete foreign language curriculum. In addition, they purport that one of the most rewarding ways to advance student cultural literacy is to employ texts for pedagogical purposes. In defining their goals they clarify:

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking in a foreign language should not ... be treated as mere 'skills,' independent of solid cultural knowledge. By cultural knowledge we do not mean the stereotypical and picturesquely touristic kind often found in textbooks, but the fundamental cultural knowledge that expresses the values, attitudes, and self-image of a people and constitutes an indispensable referent in any discussion of literature. This, combined with the cultural awareness necessary for successful social interaction (which is also amply

demonstrated in literature), will truly enable our students to put their grammatical skills to use. (59)

This is not to suggest, however, that the mere presence of cultural information is sufficient for students to acquire an ideal knowledge base. Rather, the authors recognize that language and literature must be expertly linked in order to achieve student comprehension on a profound level.

In making a case for bringing literature into the classroom as a cultural artifact, Mueller et al. offer several suggestions. They present their own methodology for approaching the difficulties of integrating literature and language, suggesting that "by anchoring all linguistic activities in the literary text and exploiting its cultural and creative richness, [interactive methods] teach language on many levels, each of which clarifies and strengthens the others" (59). The final recommendation is that literature not be reserved only for the most advanced levels of study. By integrating literature and language interactively at an early stage, students gain a more intimate comprehension of the foreign language and culture from the outset. Mueller et al. then hope that "thus literature no longer represents the ultimate point to be reached after a long period of language study but is revealed as an integral part of the culture, one of many means of expression specific to the language and available to its users" (70). From the outset, students can receive expanded cultural input leading to deeper understanding of the foreign language, literature, and culture.

In addition to imparting information concerning the foreign culture, literary texts can present topics that specifically interest students and relate to their own lives. Although

Mueller et al. emphasize the cultural side of foreign language texts, part of the reason students study a foreign language is to understand the situation their foreign peers experience. Given the universality of the human experience, many foreign language texts will be relevant to students yet reflect the subtle differences between life in their native culture and life in the foreign culture. As Papalia notes, "students mentioned that, *when the reading passages concerned topics that interested them, inferencing and prediction of meaning were facilitated*" (72). This realization supports the idea that linking student interests to texts not only makes the texts more interesting but indeed makes them more accessible. Presentation of appropriate background knowledge is expected to bring students closer to a native perception of texts. By focusing texts on areas known to be of interest to students, there is a greater chance that more of the knowledge that is transferred to the foreign context is appropriate.

At this stage, reading in the foreign language also becomes a more personal activity as it is centered on the learner rather than the directives of a teaching authority. Ideally, if all students were able to read a text that interested them personally, sharing of information between students would be facilitated rather than relying on the instructor for all information and meaning negotiation. Papalia agrees that "students should be given the opportunity to relate their own lives, activities, and interests and concerns to the second language and to what is being read in the second language" (77). Despite Papalia's suggestion, a word of caution must be given: allowing students to choose their own reading texts must be pedagogically guided such that students interact with authentic language and ideas. For example, if student interest is centered in counter-culture, the

instructor must ensure that this is not the only language input the student receives, lest the student's language be inappropriate in other settings. The student's interests should be taken into account, but the greater linguistic and pedagogical benefits of each text must remain the focus of classroom activity.

(iii.) ESL literature experiences

Once an instructor reaches the conclusion that literature and texts should be included in the curriculum, the far more difficult task of selecting materials begins. Even among those who agree that texts should be part of a classroom, the argument over what types of texts are appropriate for classroom attention is far from resolved. Many instructors and programs have selected modified or edited texts in order to ease the grammatical difficulty or vocabulary diversity. However, research of the last twenty years concludes that the benefits of carefully selected authentic materials far outweigh the perceived improvement of altered texts.

Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes report that "authentic materials may be easier to comprehend" (189). This assertion is based on the observable discourse markers (such as function words, changes in standard word order, or phrases that connect global features of the text) that are naturally contained within a well-written text, which make comprehending a text simpler. They maintain that it is easier to digest language that has not lost its original structure as it is more likely to resemble texts which students are familiar with in their native language. Even more powerfully, they assert that "a major reading difficulty arises when edited or culturally sanitized texts eliminate discourse markers of authorial intent" (192). It therefore appears that the very desires that drive instructors to "simplify" texts may in fact make those texts much less comprehensible. Without the original, often subconscious, details found in authentic texts, students may have a more difficult time processing and interpreting them.

Concerning the subject matter in authentic texts, Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes acknowledge that not all texts are created equal nor are all subjects appropriate. They assert that "texts in which people talk about themselves or which can be adapted to activities in which students can talk about themselves tend to be easily comprehended" (196). Although the actual texts are not altered in this vision, by carefully selecting materials that deal with familiar or personal topics, students may gain in comprehension. The tasks that instructors provide to accompany these texts are just as vital, if not more so, as the choice of text itself. For example, although students may be dealing with an authentic text from Bulgakov, if the task is to locate all examples of adjectives, such an interaction becomes much more valuable for novice or intermediate students than any attempt to force them to perform a literary analysis of the text. Again, and especially, "at this early stage in reading, students will be best able to read in terms of semantic fields — locating the vocabulary of familiar topics" (Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes 196). This sentiment concerning textual topic echoes the beliefs of Bernhardt and Papalia, who make a plea for comprehensibility through topic familiarity.

The final factor in the classroom equation examines not the text itself, or the activities conducted around it, but rather the response that instructors give to students' efforts. Again, Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes caution against the decision to comment strictly on the form of language the student produces. Although foreign language teachers must be concerned with grammatical forms and correct spelling, the benefit students receive from such comments is minimal at best and harmful at worst. In fact, "teacher feedback about content leads to significantly higher gains in written fluency than instructional feedback

on error" (Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes 200). They propose that content feedback be accomplished by asking students to do more than simply read foreign language texts. By exploiting texts not only as stimulation for content discussions, they can be used as an example of successful writing in the foreign language. In this vein, Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes propose the following: "(1) Students need a language model to improve their own writing; (2) They need to practice both rhetorical structure and surface structure in their L2 writing; (3) To accomplish the foregoing it is useful to combine reading and writing tasks" (201). Such a structured approach allows students the maximum amount of authentic input by giving them texts which are unaltered, then asks them to interact with the texts based on content, and evaluates their thoughts rather than their forms. These techniques eventually lead to more proficient language users.

The adjoining side of this approach explores the actual cognitive processes that students must develop in order to be successful foreign language readers. While many students (and instructors as well) remain focused on the word-by-word technique of reading in another language, the focus on content and discourse suggested by Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes echoes the work of Mikulecky. She warns against the dangers of "decoder" reading which ignores cultural differences. She asserts that "reading a language requires more than the mechanical decoding of print — it requires knowledge of particular ways of thinking and talking about print — not only recognizing words and sentences, but recognizing culturally-based forms and making culturally-favored interpretations" (9). Rather than asking students to be accountable for every word found in a text, the idea of reading for gist promotes not only a less "foreign" reading of the

text, but also a development of cultural comprehension. However, in order to gain fully from this type of textual interpretation, students must be armed with cultural knowledge and interpretation skills that approach those of the target language community. Mikulecky recognizes that "when second language learners rely too heavily on top-down processing to comprehend a text, they can be misled if their interpretations are based on cultural schemata which do not match those the author had in mind" (4). Such a potential danger requires great lengths of flexibility and understanding from both student and instructor when considering the background for each text.

Yet Mikulecky recognizes that full textual comprehension is more than just background information or reading strategies. Despite the best intentions and preparations, students can still fall short of full comprehension of textual richness due to lack of cultural information. Full-fledged foreign language reading requires a complete if gradual acquisition of another vision of the world. Mikulecky proposes that "in order for students to comprehend texts ... they need to develop new schemata of language, text, and interpretation, as well as schemata of alternative cultural practices and values" (5). She proposes that achieving such a design comes not only from linguistic or grammatical study, but also from a much more comprehensive and extended vision of foreign language reading. Without downplaying the importance of grammar or vocabulary, Mikulecky asserts "it is how one *thinks and talks* about the text that matters. That is the cultural part of reading which second language students must learn" (10). While this process is long in coming, its effects are long lasting. Students who develop the

appropriate foreign language patterns interact more fully with texts for the remainder of their foreign language study.

(iv.) CTL literature experiences

Leaving the realm of ESL, the next most active sphere of pedagogical research is in the more commonly taught languages (CTLs) of French, German, and Spanish. One of the main arguments proposed for the integration of language and literature is that such a requirement will develop students as critical thinkers in the foreign language rather than simply as mimics or parrots of foreign language phrases. Scott and Tucker have edited a collection of articles that address the ties between language and literature instructors entitled *SLA⁶ and the Literature Classroom: Fostering Dialogues*. According to contributor Schultz, the requirements necessary for addressing literature in a foreign language will produce higher-order thinking skills, which are necessary for full competence in the foreign language. Coming from a literature perspective, her approach suggests a change from seeing "text as cultural artifact" to "text with plural meanings and multiple interpretive possibilities" (xiii). In altering the view of literature in the classroom from its traditional base as a grammar tool, Schultz describes an inclusive approach that fosters deeper interactions with a text. She notes, "the cognitive strategies that come into play in the process of learning a foreign language—the fragmenting and reconstituting, the synthesizing and generalizing—are precisely the strategies that come into play in the literary text" (27). Approaching texts with interpretive goals enhances not only linguistic, but also cognitive and cultural skills.

In the same volume, Frantzen suggests that by beginning the integration process earlier rather than later, students stand a better chance of developing full competence and

the ability to interact with the foreign language on a mature and literate level. Although Frantzen acknowledges the traditional taboo against using literature early on, she supports techniques and approaches that advocate not altering the text, but rather changing the activities in which students engage. The common categorization of literature as "too difficult" for any but advanced students is countered by the benefits of bringing the richness of literature into the classroom early on. Frantzen explains, "using some care in selecting texts and in preparing materials to help students access the texts, both linguistically and culturally, teachers can expose their students to poems, short stories, plays, and novels that will enhance their language learning experience" (113). Taking this approach puts great responsibility on the instructor as textual guide. However, developing materials that carefully assess students' abilities and limitations and integrating them into the language learning classroom can lift some of the burden for instructors.

As Frantzen suggests, a highly structured approach to integrating literature that scaffolds input serves students most effectively. Two plans are laid out by Swaffar and Katz in their respective articles, "Reading the Patterns of Literary Works: Strategies and Teaching Techniques" and "Teaching Literary Texts at the Intermediate Level: A Structured Input Approach." Swaffar designs what she terms an "r+1" technique, as modeled on Krashen's "i+1" (see Krashen). For Swaffar, "the 'r' component assumes a reading process that reconstructs the macropatterns of a text out of recognizable details. The '+1' component is reflected in the discovery process that this reconstruction involves" (133). Similarly, Katz models literary exploration on schema theory: building new

⁶ Second Language Acquisition

material on the basis of the familiar. Specifically, "students should incorporate any background information that they already possess into their understanding of the text, [while] an instructor should provide students with an appropriate knowledge base before they begin reading" (Katz 159). This structured input technique is then applied to output as well, eventually leading students to discourse-level responses to literary texts.

A third technique for literary integration is suggested by Berg and Martin-Berg in "A Stylistic Approach to Foreign Language Acquisition and Literary Analysis." As is evident from the title, this strategy takes a more literary bent and aims for higher skills in the foreign language to be developed through skillful reading and analysis. The framework for this approach is centered in interpretive skills as they pertain to language exposure. They surmise, "if literature is the highest form of linguistic expression, it is so in one sense precisely because it causes us to witness the workings of language, the very goal of the foreign language classroom" (Berg and Martin-Berg 173). In arguing for a study of style, Berg and Martin-Berg continue,

The concept of style permits the student to perceive the difference between ordinary speech acts, intended to communicate a specific message efficiently through transparent expression, and literary texts, designed to suggest an additional or alternative message by highlighting and even problematizing the very means of expression. (173)

Of course the study of style and meaning nuances is to be explored primarily at the advanced level of linguistic proficiency when time will not need to be spent on more basic comprehension. The overall goal of stylistic examination, though, is to show

students the versatility of the foreign language and to begin to develop that same conceptual framework in their own usage.

However, in order for students to understand the expansiveness of the foreign language, instructors must espouse the many facets of language. In order to address one condition of this requirement, Scott and Tucker present a set of articles that deal with the perceived dichotomy between language and literature professors in foreign language departments. Bringing together scholars from traditional literature and language classes, as well as those who aim to integrate the two, the articles explore the processes that challenge the traditional split. Although the schism may at first appear unimportant, the beliefs engendered in such a split shape the very structure of foreign language education in the U.S. In dividing foreign language departments into two "camps," not only are professors isolating themselves from each other's scholarship, but students perceive the dichotomy and begin to separate foreign language tasks into distinct sections. This separation, which passes from scholarly generation to generation, profoundly limits the reaches and possibilities for language integration at all levels of study.

When professors segregate the tasks of reading and language learning, students will follow suit and come to believe that learning a language is somehow independent from the literary (and cultural) output of the linguistic community. Imagine learners being placed in isolation where their only contact with a foreign language was through grammar drills or culturally empty "learning" texts. This situation, in effect, has been created and is being perpetuated throughout departments across the country where students are not "allowed" to interact with literature until they have reached a "suitable"

level of language proficiency. The end result, as proven by Scott and Tucker, is a set of students whose cultural and literacy levels are far below those necessary for full foreign language proficiency. They argue that the integration of language (linguistic) and literature study will give students the necessary skills to advance beyond the current limited language proficiency level predominating undergraduate language study.

The final article in the collection, contributed by Bernhardt, reviews the past research supporting the use of literature in the foreign language classroom. It also gives suggestions for communicating the benefits of an approach focusing on educating tomorrow's professors to make the change to integrated classrooms. Bernhardt's central thesis is as follows:

Graduate students must learn that they are to teach students not literature; they must understand the linguistic and conceptual framework that individual students come with; and they must learn to see that the acts of language and literature teaching are far more alike than they are different—each is an act of text construction and reconstruction based on the conceptualization of available linguistic and cultural data. (197)

Bernhardt here brings together prior research and advocates the use of that research in sculpting tomorrow's classrooms. Graduate students convinced of the value of integration will dismantle the traditional barrier between language and literature.

(v.) LCTL literature experiences

One of the most recent volumes to examine the issues at stake for teachers of LCTLs focuses on the Slavic languages. A compendium of articles, *The Learning and Teaching of Slavic Languages and Cultures*, edited by Kagan and Rifkin, explores many different facets of the Slavic language classroom. One article in particular focuses on the topic of bringing literature into the Russian classroom. In her contribution, "Teaching Literature at the Intermediate Level of Proficiency: An Interactive Approach," Rosengrant sets forth the considerations inherent in bringing Russian literature into a classroom.

Rosengrant begins by acknowledging the place of nineteenth century literature in the Russian classroom and the activities that surrounded the exploration of literature in the classrooms of the past. Taking into consideration the proficiency movement and the goals of students, she notes, "today, when student interests, background, and needs are increasingly varied, and when teachers themselves are devoting more attention to the students' ability to function in the 'real' world, the primacy of literature is being challenged" (81). In spite of, or perhaps due to, this challenge to literature, Rosengrant recognizes the profound benefit that literature can have in the classroom. Rather than a mere exercise in comprehension or translation, she argues that "the ability to comprehend cultural and literary references and to appreciate nuances in language usage very often is acquired by reading literature" (Rosengrant 83). In a situation where more and more students have access to "real" Russian whether via the internet or through travel, any increased cultural knowledge contributes exponentially to the student's overall proficiency. In addition, the increased linguistic awareness motivated by bringing

literature into the classroom provides students new ways to approach any language they may encounter. The skills built by reading encourage analyses of broad-spectrum ideas (top-down reading) as well as close linguistic analysis (bottom-up reading). By promoting the maximum amount of interaction with authentic Russian, cultural and analytical, not to mention linguistic, skills will be developed.

In considering the overall scheme of presentation for literature in the classroom, Rosengrant offers three models: cultural, linguistic, and personal growth. The cultural model puts greater emphasis "on the text as a product about which students learn to acquire information" (83). Such a model tends to be fairly teacher-based, focusing on literature as an example of the culture that can be studied and learned. On the other hand, a language-based model recognizes that "literature is *made* from language and that the more students can read in and through language the better they will be able to come to terms with a literary text" (Rosengrant 83–84). In contrast to the cultural model, the language model remains more focused on the learner and his/her obligation to tease out linguistic information on his/her own. Finally, the personal growth model, another learner-centered approach, hopes "to motivate the student to read by relating the themes and topics depicted in a literary text to his or her own personal experience" (Rosengrant 84). Although this last model is least prescriptive, it has the chance to be the most beneficial if it can indeed inspire students to continue interacting with Russian texts, even after the completion of a language course. Each of the above models has its strengths and benefits and they can all be utilized together to form a classroom plan from which the students reap the greatest benefit.

Rosengrant also emphasizes that literature does indeed belong in the intermediate classroom, however counterintuitive that may seem when considering the linguistic and cultural complexity inherent in every piece of literature.

Students with intermediate-level reading abilities are capable of reading and appreciating Russian literature if they are given linguistically appropriate texts and if they are adequately prepared to read those texts. . . . The teacher guides the discussion and activities so that the students can make their own discoveries about the work and thus become better interpreters of literature. In the process the students inevitably also make progress toward their long-term goal of becoming superior readers, writers, and speakers of Russian. (88–89)

Rosengrant focuses most specifically on classic literature and its importance and applicability for today's students. However, as she notes at the start of her article, students' needs and desires when entering the Russian classroom are so varied that an expansion of the definition of literature must be considered in order to meet the modern and interactive necessities of today's students.

In an empirical article, "How do *Dzon* and *Dzejn* Read Russian? On-Line Vocabulary and its Place in the Reading Process," Comer and Keefe explore the influence of using online texts and dictionaries among intermediate Russian students. Based on research concerning the place of predicting and guessing in the reading process, Comer and Keefe examine the "issues of looking up vocabulary, inferring word meaning from context, and measuring comprehension [as students] read authentic newspaper texts in a computerized hypertextual environment" (311). Comer and Keefe expected that students who had

access to feedback concerning contextual vocabulary decoding would benefit from continual meaning reminders and would thereby have increased comprehension of a text on subsequent readings. After several trials, they found their "hypothesis that the repeated guess and verification routine would have a significant positive effect on the students' comprehension was *not* supported" [emphasis added] (319). In addition, they discovered that the use of background knowledge, usually considered an asset in reading comprehension, had contradictory effects when that background knowledge was culturally incorrect or insufficient. Such a finding supports the need for establishing cultural competence along with linguistic competence; although texts cannot be understood without sufficient language abilities, even a decoded text can be misinterpreted without substantial cultural awareness. Finally, they recognize that although glosses are common in reading software, their presence alone is insufficient for increased comprehension. Instead, Comer and Keefe propose the following: "reading software for Russian needs to offer beginners assistance with reading beyond the individual word level, including pointing out syntactic features (especially impersonal constructions and passives), discourse features, and rhetorical organization" (321). Such a recommendation has much to say about the infrastructure necessary for effective reading in Russian.

Both Rosengrant's and Comer and Keefe's articles discussed above deliver a positive endorsement for the teaching and exploration of the reading skill in the Russian classroom. While Rosengrant volunteers her ideas on the benefit of maximizing students' encounters with classic texts, Comer and Keefe undertake a technologically enhanced

view of reading non-fiction newspapers and everyday Russian realia. Although the texts emphasized are at opposite ends of the prose scale, the awareness of structured teaching and activity planning remains constant in both approaches. While texts and reading must remain a part of the Russian classroom of the twenty-first century, there remains no doubt that the pedagogical issues ought to be examined anew. Refocusing on the learner requires an approach that takes into consideration the variation from individual to individual and an eclectic methodology that emphasizes the importance of structure when presenting literature in the classroom.

Russian Literature in Language Teaching

As research shows, there are great benefits to bringing authentic literary texts into the foreign language classroom. The wealth of cultural knowledge inherently contained in each text, as well as the natural discourse markers, illuminate the reason for utilizing authentic texts. Although these benefits have been previously noted in this dissertation, the initial concern of complex vocabulary and grammar has continued to influence the teaching materials in place in Russian classrooms today. Even as authentic texts find their way into advanced Russian classrooms, modified and adapted texts remain the mainstay for novice and intermediate learners. In order to bridge the gap successfully between today's adapted texts and authentic texts, it is vital to review the methods and texts that populate the most common Russian language textbooks in use in classrooms today.

In examining the current situation, several factors ought to be discussed. First, one should consider the text selection itself. This decision includes not only the author and the specific work, but more importantly whether the text is adapted, modified, or edited. The text can then also be analyzed in terms of its cultural significance, its historical value, and its current relevance. Once these criteria are taken into consideration, the next step is to examine how the text is presented. Presentation options include the treatment of unknown vocabulary and difficult grammar, as well as the exercises students are required to complete. These approaches should fit together to achieve a pedagogically sound framework where the students' reading comprehension, cultural understanding, vocabulary and grammar acquisition all advance.

In order to focus on the most current situation in Russian classrooms, only textbooks published from 1986 to 2007 are considered here. This decision is based on the belief that most American programs have attempted to replace Soviet-era textbooks with those that reflect the situation in the Russian Federation following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. In addition to historical concerns, the tendency toward implementation of the communicative method that was the focus of textbooks in the 1980s and 1990s also influenced many programs to move away from older textbooks. A note must also be said about textbooks that have long been in use due to frequent releases of new editions but which embody the methods and ideals of pedagogy prior to the introduction of the communicative method. These texts include Kostomarov's *Russkii iazyk dlia vsekh [Russian for Everybody]*⁷ (5th ed., 1988), Davis and Oprendeck's *Making Progress in Russian* (2nd ed., 1997), Khavronina's *Russian As We Speak It* (9th ed., 1987), and Shchukin's *Russkii iazyk v dialogakh [Russian in Dialogues]* (5th ed., 1987). Despite the recent repackaging and re-release of these texts in the past twenty years, they remain essentially textbooks of the age prior to the Communicative Approach and will therefore not be reviewed here. Finally, a word concerning the extent of the textbook reviews. Although there are many Russian programs throughout the U.S. that rely on various materials, only those most widely published and distributed (as suggested in Kagan and Rifkin) will be considered here as representing the median situation in American classrooms today.

⁷ All translations are the author's, unless otherwise noted.

The presence of literature and literary texts within classroom textbooks will be much more prevalent at the intermediate-high and advanced levels of instruction with the majority of unedited texts found in supplementary readers intended for students at the third-year level or beyond. When dealing with students at a lower proficiency level, textbooks integrate short modified or adapted texts alongside the grammatical discussions and exercises that must remain the focus of students at this early stage. One would expect, however, that the other most common choice for textbooks at the novice stage of Russian instruction would provide texts written specifically for the textbook, using only grammar and vocabulary that the authors introduce. As shown by Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes, it is these culturally innocuous and grammatically empty texts which offer the least to students for linguistic and cultural development.

(i.) Novice

Despite evident shortcomings, instructive texts remain a staple in many novice-level textbooks. This approach for developing reading skills in the first year of Russian study provides short excerpts written specifically using the grammar and vocabulary of each unit to develop a story. Such an approach is illustrated in the textbook by Davidson, Gor, and Lekic entitled *Russian Stage One: Live from Moscow!* Throughout the textbook, students follow the story of an American visiting Russia and his many adventures along the way. As reading practice, each unit contains a two- or three-page reading sample, written by the textbook authors to develop the story of the characters and to help students interact with and internalize the vocabulary and grammar introduced in the unit. The students are then asked to recount the text in their own words as guided by scanning and skimming questions.

It is noteworthy that *Live from Moscow!* employs this technique since it is a revision of the original *Russian Stage One*, which used "adapted texts taken primarily from internal Soviet journalistic sources" (Bitekhtina et al. xvii). The original *Russian Stage One* aimed to develop "two types of reading skills: ... reading for general meaning and close reading for complete comprehension of contents" (xvii). Despite the division of skills, every text was adjusted to fit the grammatical knowledge and vocabulary of novice students. Bitekhtina et al. assert that "each reading section consists of pre-reading drills, basic text (for complete comprehension), post-reading exercises, a passage designed for reading for the general sense only, and some supplementary reading materials" (xvii). Given that *Russian Stage One* drew its reading materials from authentic sources that were

then adapted, the move to culturally vacuous constructed texts in *Live from Moscow!* comes as a surprise. Although these pedagogical texts may be easily comprehensible for learners on a linguistic level, they fail to present the discourse markers of native Russian writing, and lack any residual cultural information that may have remained in adapted texts. Although the Soviet-era journalistic texts would not have been appropriate for *Live from Moscow!* (published in 1996), a similar approach using current Russian media would have been preferable to the artificially created texts.

Virtually the same strategy is adopted by the authors of *Nachalo: When in Russia*, another novice text that creates a story specific to the learning context. Ervin, Lubensky, and Jarvis developed a play about an American student in Russia and his experiences, the aim being to "constantly place the student users in the Russians' and [the American's] shoes both linguistically and culturally" (xxiv). Each episode of the play is followed by "personalized questions, based on the grammar and vocabulary of the reading" (xxiv) which are meant for student-instructor or student-student interaction. Within the actual reading, the authors have chosen to highlight important vocabulary by printing it in boldface while contextual vocabulary and marginal translations are marked by special symbols. These enhancements are meant to alert the student to the importance of these words in contrast to the rest of the story. In addition to the regular readings, there are several practical excerpts such as television programs and train schedules in the final chapters of the textbook. However, these texts seem to be presented as mere visual aids rather than as bases for exercises. Without any focused interaction with these items, the

student's main reading texts remain the constructed story, which once again does not provide an authentic reading context.

A far more useful strategy for introductory texts is found in *Golosa: A Basic Course in Russian*. This textbook emphasizes a four-skill approach that "strikes a balance between communication and structure" (Henry, Robin, and Robin xiv). Within this framework, the tactic chosen for teaching reading skills utilizes "authentic reading texts ... supplemented with activities that direct students' attention to global content [and] learning strategies for guessing unfamiliar vocabulary from context" (xvii). Each lesson contains a reading section with texts that vary from short newspaper advertisements to biographical sketches of Russian authors. All texts could be found in daily Russian life; there are no literary excerpts. In addition, in the first lesson, students are given a primer concerning reading strategies, including anxiety-lowering activities, pre-reading questions, as well as specific practice in learning vocabulary through contextual clues instead of resorting to a dictionary. In this system, students are given adequate practice interacting with the type of texts they will be most likely to encounter in Russia, and can gradually develop the ability to interact efficiently with these texts.

Another tactic is presented in Nummikoski's textbook *Troika: A Communicative Approach to Russian Language, Life, and Culture*. According to the preface, the textbook contains "authentic readings ... where they are most applicable to the theme ... as a break from the routine of oral activities. Reading tasks consist of skimming or scanning for specific information with pre- and/or post-reading activities ... intended to be discussed in English" (viii). The vast majority of the reading excerpts found in *Troika* are presented

without citations, making it impossible to track down the original sources. However, similar to the progression found in *Nachalo*, the final chapters of *Troika* begin to present authentic, cited, literary passages. For example, the fifteenth unit presents Chekhov's "The Winning Ticket," accompanied by biographical information about Chekhov, marginal vocabulary glosses and word-building activities, as well as post-reading comprehension questions in English. This format is repeated in two other "extra" sections, one with an excerpt from the magazine *Sputnik*, and the other an excerpt from Chekhov's "Lady with a Lapdog." Although these extra activities are to be found only in the final chapters of the textbook, Nummikoski presents students with a sampling of the authentic texts they may encounter in their future Russian experiences within and outside of the classroom.

(ii.) Intermediate

Using a similar approach to *Troika*, Kagan and Miller's *V puti!* extends the four-skill model into the intermediate proficiency level. Intended for students with a previous introduction to the grammar and vocabulary of Russian, *V puti!* emphasizes communication, hoping to further the language skills that the student has begun to acquire. Although as a communicative text *V puti!* remains heavily weighted toward speaking and listening skills, each unit also contains an authentic non-fiction excerpt from a Russian newspaper, encyclopedia or other everyday item. Pre- and post-reading activities as well as comprehension guides accompany these excerpts. While longer texts are marginally glossed with marked stress, the "brief newspaper articles are printed the way they appear in Russian newspapers — unglossed, unstressed, and without the letter ë" (Kagan and Miller v). The authors also acknowledge the importance of poetry in Russian culture and have chosen to include a short poem in nearly every chapter that "may be read aloud and even memorized, and may assist in developing correct pronunciation while increasing one's vocabulary" (v). For all excerpts, the authors assert that although "some readings have been slightly shortened ... they have not been simplified for the second language learner" (v). This layout assists students in developing and employing individual reading strategies to be used with each successive text.

In addition to the textbook, the workbook contains two types of reading selections: "newspaper texts (reading for information) and original (occasionally slightly shortened) literary texts (reading for pleasure)" (Kagan and Miller *Workbook* iv). The newspaper texts are printed without marked stresses or vocabulary glosses. The English

pre-reading exercises are meant to home in on the main topic of the article and get the student to activate all prior knowledge concerning the topic. Post-reading Russian exercises are meant as comprehension checks, asking for specific and clear ideas from the text. In addition, the workbook contains excerpts from fictional writing, such as Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or a variety of children's literature and folklore. These "pleasure" readings are presented with significantly more pedagogical support than the newspaper articles. The lines of each story are numbered so instructors and students can have an easy reference. In addition, stress is marked throughout the texts and unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases are marginally glossed. There are no pre-reading exercises for these texts and post-reading activities continue to focus on comprehension checks. In addition, there are mini-composition cues at the end of each reading, allowing students to practice writing. The remainder of the workbook is devoted to vocabulary and grammar building exercises linked to the textbook lessons.

Another work at the intermediate level, Martin and Sokolova's *Russian Stage Two* focuses on activating the skills that are introduced at the novice level. There is a strong focus on vocabulary development, especially regarding speaking. The reading portion of the textbook is designed to give intermediate students "some basic tools for reading and [to show] them how to approach a text containing unfamiliar elements, [preparing] them for independent work well beyond their intermediate language courses" (Martin and Sokolova vii). Each text relates to the theme of the unit and is considerably shortened, although otherwise "for the most part, unadapted" (x). Each unit includes pre- and post-reading activities as well as commentaries and a glossary. The authors recommend

instructor supervision for the initial contact with each text and strict adherence to the materials presented for each reading in order to provide the student with the best balance of guidance and exploration.

Another version of this textbook entitled *Russian Stage Two: Welcome Back!* was published in 2001. Although Martin remains the main author, Zaitsev collaborated to update the presentation and material in the 2001 edition. The reading sections in the new edition are updated, including excerpts from Pristavkin, Chukovksy, and Shukshin, among others. Each unit is complete with pre- and post-reading activities that maintain a balance between grammatical focus and general comprehension. Students are also given short biographies of each author prior to the exercises. In addition, the students are reminded to use reading strategies such as comprehension questions. *Welcome Back!* appropriately takes the *Stage* series into the twenty-first century.

Another option at the intermediate level is Rifkin's *Grammatika v kontekste* published in 1996. Rifkin suggests that the book is appropriate for students "who have completed at least one year of college-level instruction or at least two years of high-school-level instruction" (xix). Although designed to be a stand-alone textbook, due to its modular design, various sections of the textbook could also be used as supplements. The textbook presents "targeted grammar structures in authentic texts: [nineteenth and twentieth century] literary excerpts, extracts from magazines and newspapers, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions" (xx). Each unit centers on a grammatical topic, followed by exercises and excerpts. Pre-reading activities are designed to scaffold student reading while post-reading activities help students check their comprehension and strategy use

(xxi). Rifkin also presents a preface for students explaining that "texts were selected because they show the grammar or syntax emphasized in the unit. I don't expect you to understand every word of the reading texts. Rather, as you read, try to understand the main ideas so that you can answer the questions in the exercises"(xxiv). By emphasizing reading strategies from the outset, students are prepared for the tasks and texts that follow.

Each stress-marked excerpt is presented within a text box to set aside the reading from other grammatically focused exercises. Within the excerpt, necessary vocabulary words are glossed in the margin outside of the text box, while grammatically relevant structures are underlined. Each text concludes with a citation of the author, title, and date. Indexes of grammatical and literary terms in Russian found at the back of the book also provide an invaluable resource to students. The modular structure encourages use in many learning contexts but the detailed nature of grammatical explanations, especially in the later units, is more suited to an intermediate-high or advanced course. Use of *Grammatika v kontekste* as the main text for a course after only one year of Russian instruction may prove more challenging than students can handle. However, the principle of utilizing supplemental authentic works as examples for grammatical acquisition follows the pedagogical suggestions of foreign language learning research.

(iii.) Intermediate-High – Advanced

Within the series published by Kendall/Hunt, *Russian Stage Three*, by Lekic, Efremova, and Rassudova completes the expected progression to authentic excerpts. Each excerpt in this textbook contains a short introduction in Russian, giving students some information about the text's author and one or two sentences to set up the situation of the text. The text provides stress marks and intertextually glossed vocabulary. The exercises that follow each text are presented solely in Russian, asking for textual summaries and speculation. A similar excerpted text is provided for each unit of the textbook, although later texts are sometimes included in their entirety. *Russian Stage Three* proves to have the most excerpts of the series, which is unsurprising given its target for advanced students. The approach taken to these texts also requires students to interact at a high proficiency level using the literary excerpts as a starting point.

Another option for third year texts comes from the joint effort of Rosengrant and Lifschitz in their volume, *Focus on Russian*. *Focus* emphasizes "an interactive approach to communication" (i) where vocabulary and grammar building are the main tasks promoted within the book. Text selection again contains one excerpt per lesson, all of which are adapted. Each text begins with focal questions to introduce the topic and is followed by comprehension questions to be answered in Russian. Finally, a brief vocabulary chart is given along with a prompt to expand the scope of the textual topic for discussion. The textbook mainly aims to develop students' skills in conversation and composition by building vocabulary stores and clarifying difficult grammatical points,

rather than developing specific reading skills. Unfortunately, all the textual excerpts given are adapted, decreasing students' exposure to authentic language.

(iv.) Readers

Along with basic four-skill textbooks, there are certainly a wide variety of readers available to Russian students and instructors. Indeed, probably every Russian instructor or program has at one time or another developed a reading supplement in order to fulfill specific needs. Of course, many of these remain "homegrown" texts: used for one class or program and never extended beyond that very specific purpose. Still, there have been a good number of published supplemental works specifically targeting the reading skill.

At the novice and intermediate levels of Russian, one of the more widely distributed readers remains Thompson and Urevich's *Reading Real Russian*. The authors intend for the textbook "to provide instructors and students with a wide selection of authentic materials and task-oriented reading activities to facilitate the development of reading comprehension skills" (v). Reading skill development is aided by an introduction which serves to "make [students] aware of some reading strategies that [they] now use when reading English" (vii). The text contains authentic samples of written Russian from many different sources such as newspapers, menus, and official documents. The accompanying activities offer a range of tasks from comprehension checks to analysis and speculation. Through the texts and activities presented, students interact with those texts they would be most likely to encounter in Russia and gain the conscious skills to process them. This approach to presenting "real Russian" helps students to take the first step in engaging critically with authentic texts.

At the intermediate-high level, Rosengrant and Lifschitz offer a companion volume to their third year text, which focuses on reading skills: *The Golden Age:*

Readings in Russian Literature of the Nineteenth Century. As the authors proclaim in the foreword, the volume hopes that "by reading, discussing, and writing about the works in this volume students do become better readers of Russian, and they become acquainted with the main literary tendencies and figures of the nineteenth century as well" (v). The book is divided into twelve chapters, each of which focuses on a specific text, giving a lengthy introduction to the author and work in English before proceeding. Each unit contains several pre-reading exercises preparing students both topically and linguistically. The text itself is presented without stress marks and with vocabulary unobtrusively presented in the margins. The text is interrupted at various points with questions meant to check comprehension and provide guidance for hypothesizing. Each chapter concludes with a vocabulary exercise as well as prompts for further classroom discussion or compositions. Other than the textual interruptions made necessary by comprehension checks, this reader goes the furthest in offering students an authentic reading experience in Russian.

Landsman and Rodimkina take a similar approach in their 2001 volume entitled *Rossiia v zerkale sovremennoi prozy [Russia in the Mirror of Modern Prose]*. The authors present two goals for the advanced Russian reader: "to acquaint the English-speaking world with some authors that sadly are not too well-known in the West ... [and] to help students improve their grammar and vocabulary by means of a wide range of varied exercises" (6). In order to achieve these goals, the authors selected ten literary works giving a "representative sample from the literature of the early period of the Thaw ... and the last thirty years of the twentieth century" (6). The textual excerpts, although

shortened in length, "have not been tampered with [as concerns] the original Russian ... leaving the reader to savour the actual feel and texture of the Russian style" (6). Each excerpt is then given a separate section, prefaced by a brief biography of the author and an introduction to the literary work, both in English. The excerpt is reprinted with stress marks and vocabulary glossed in the margins. Finally, each section contains a set of exercises, some in English and some in Russian, meant to check comprehension, clarify vocabulary and grammar, and finally to speculate about and analyze the events of the story. This technique, which encompasses many of the skills necessary for independent reading, serves advanced students well as they bridge the gap from the stories used in novice and intermediate classes to a time when they will be reading Russian without the aid of pedagogical tools.

Along similar lines, Filenko's pedagogical treatment of Druzhnikov's *Smert' Tsaria Fëdora* [*The Death of Tsar Fyodor*] develops a guided reader for advanced and heritage speakers of Russian. The author's intention is to help students expand their vocabulary, increase their grammatical and cultural proficiency, and gain ease in conversation (*Instructor's Supplement*). In order to accomplish this goal, Filenko splits the novella into fifteen chapters, in which each segment has pre- and post-reading exercises in Russian meant to scaffold student's comprehension and analysis. The text itself is presented in short, unstressed segments with a few marginal glosses. The final chapters are devoted to an overall discussion of the novella, the author, and the underlying subject matter. Filenko's approach takes one more step toward giving students a completely authentic reading experience by eliminating the stress marks as well as

presenting exercises that are more widely focused than those in Landsman and Rodimkina. For students with the appropriate Russian level, Filenko's reader will enhance the skills appropriate to working with authentic materials in the future.

While Filenko aims at improving the linguistic skills of students, Nemirovskaya takes another approach in her book *Inside the Russian Soul: A Historical Survey of Russian Cultural Patterns*. Here, Nemirovskaya promotes specific acquisition of cultural knowledge for advanced students, assuming sufficient linguistic skills for the exclusively Russian excerpts. According to her introduction, the "goal is to provide readers with *sine qua non* cultural and linguistic patterns that shaped and modeled modern Russians' thinking, attitudes and behavior, and to give readers ideas, images and historic realia that a native Russian learns in his early years, builds associations upon and relates to" (iii). Given the book's linguistic demands, Nemirovskaya suggests that "memorizing the outlined expressions will inevitably increase the language proficiency of the student" (iii). As a native Russian, Nemirovskaya utilizes the natural discourse markers of modern Russian in her writing and thereby provides a fine linguistic model within the context of her project. However, given the brevity and data-heavy nature of each entry, this text is better kept as a reference rather than as a tool for developing language proficiency on its own.

Analysis

Russian language teaching materials take three approaches to the quandary of integrating literary texts: total exclusion, modification, and authentic presentation. Many introductory texts predictably opt for one of the first two options, and certainly this decision at first seems justified. However, when a text's range of possible activities is taken into consideration, there seems no reason not to include "real Russian" for tasks as simple as identifying adjectives or learning correct spelling. Once students progress to the intermediate proficiency level, the presentation of literary texts is much more prevalent, although a preponderance of books still uses edited and modified versions. Currently, authentic literature is almost exclusively preserved for the intermediate-high or advanced levels, and as such is most often found in separate readers. While any use of authentic texts is to be commended, it is vital that students can begin interacting with real Russian language far earlier in their language learning careers.

As shown above, the majority of novice and even intermediate level textbooks rely not on authentic Russian materials, but on constructed pedagogical items that are meant to ease the student into a familiarity with reading in Russian. Despite these best intentions, "easy" texts fail in the most important ways to prepare students for encounters with the vocabulary, grammar, and discourse that represent daily life in the Russian language. There is a tendency to begin incorporating minimal authentic articles into textbooks as early as the first stages of Russian, and, once a student reaches the third year of study, interaction with literary and authentic texts becomes much more common. The appearance of readers that aim to develop both linguistic and literary skills has greatly

enhanced the materials available for Russian classrooms. Indeed, the decision to separate reading texts into a separate volume does not in and of itself imply a de-emphasis on the reading skill. The freedom that students gain by having one volume which can provide a sample of Russian at any place or time may in fact encourage reading in a way that integrated textbooks do not. Yet, there is still more work to be done if students are to gain the necessary skills for interacting authentically and skillfully with Russian texts. The most proficient students are those who develop their reading skills consciously, constantly, and early. In order to examine some of the possibilities for a reader aimed at novice-high and intermediate level students, the following chapter will present a sample of a twentieth century Russian text pedagogically developed. This sample will exemplify ways students can bridge the gap from novice to advanced reading skills necessary to interact successfully with texts in daily Russian life.

Chapter Three: Suggested Methodology

The Field of Applied Literature

The term "applied literature" refers to the use of literary texts in the teaching of foreign language. This methodology is most commonly found within an ESL setting. A few scholars, such as Wilga Rivers and Gillian Lazar, are proponents of the technique (see Lazar *Literature and Language Teaching*; Rivers *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*; Rivers *Teaching Languages in College: Curriculum and Content*). Within other foreign language contexts, however, "applied literature" and the foreign language reading skill are rarely paired. For many instructors, especially those whose own language skills were gained during the height of ALM, the decision to "apply" literature may seem awkward at best. The idea of requiring students to apply literature to language learning conjures nightmares of the grammar-translation method, where students sat with dictionaries deciphering single sentences, one after another, hour after hour. Misconceptions like these prompt a closer examination of the term "applied literature" and the methodology that lies behind the nomenclature. Rather than focusing on one methodological approach, applied literature can be selectively integrated into many pedagogical practices. In this chapter, arguments will be made for the appropriateness of applied literature in the second-year Russian classroom. Finally, a text will be given a pedagogical treatment to exemplify the goals of applied literature.

(i.) What is literature?

By couching this dissertation within the field of applied literature, a very immediate question arises concerning the definition and boundaries meant by "literature." The term conjures different representations for each individual, and finding one central definition to fit all circumstances and disciplines is neither possible nor desirable. Debates concerning the definition of "literature" and "text" evolve as technology advances: there are now categories for blogs and podcasts that would never have been considered ten years ago. Additionally, the use of multi-media containing images and sounds as well as words has begged the question about how broadly one can define "text," let alone "literature."

Although this author ordinarily chooses to define "text" broadly to include multi-media, film and audio, in the case of this methodological proposal "literature" will be defined more strictly. In addition, the method espoused in applying texts to teaching contexts can be expanded to include any text, as implied by the title of this dissertation. The basis for the definition of literature used here is presented by Lazar in *Literature and Language Teaching*. She opens the discussion by noting the many variable definitions "literature" can embody, depending on the individual person, situation, or purpose for the definition. However, she finalizes her definition as "those novels, short stories, plays and poems which are fictional and convey their message by paying considerable attention to language which is rich and multi-layered" (5). In addition, she recognizes that a definition should not be restricted to only allow room for the traditional canon (especially of

concern in English-language teaching contexts), but that other, non-traditional contemporary works from non-dominant cultures should be included.

A necessary addition to this general definition must recognize the cultural component conveyed in literary texts. Any literary text automatically conveys the linguistic commonalities shared by author and audience; however, the cultural match is equally, if not more, important for second language readers. Especially within the English-language context, cultural differences can be extensive with texts from different countries, even if they are written in the same language. This cultural divide also appears in Russian literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in terms of socio-economic, geographic, and political divides. Therefore, it is advisable that any definitions of literature include works whose author or subtext differs from the defined "norm" of the society. Considering the volatile social history of the Russian territory in the twentieth century, no definition of contemporary Russian literature should be constrained by "majority rule" that excludes all non-conformist writing.

A further constraint especially salient in discussing texts to be used in foreign language classes regards the term "authentic literature." Although defined earlier, a few more words must be said concerning this designation. Throughout *Reading for Meaning*, Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes discuss the different components that serve to confer the term "authentic" to a text. While they never give an overt definition, one may recognize as authentic a text written by a native speaker of a language for another native speaker of that language. From this baseline, the text must also retain its discourse structure and linguistic integrity in order to be considered authentic for pedagogical purposes.

Although such delimitation does not preclude excerpting a text, it does prevent the "simplification" or altering of a text from its original. Therefore, the simplification of texts that runs rampant through many pedagogical attempts at "applied literature" removes such attempts from the designation "authentic," even if the pedagogical treatment is initially based on an authentic source.

One consideration of authenticity that arises in discussing the presentation of Russian texts is the question of whether or not to mark word stress in a text. Since Russian stress patterns are not fixed, nor are they particularly predictable (especially for beginning students still struggling to decipher grammar and vocabulary), many textbooks and pedagogical readers mark the stress in every word of a text. According to the limitations presented by Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes, the marking of stress would constitute a step away from authenticity, given that Russians do not require stress markings in their own reading. However, even in authentic contexts, occasional stress marks must appear in the case of homonyms. By strict definition, then, authentic Russian texts, even for pedagogical uses, should not contain stress marks except in rare cases. However, the authentic reading experience in which a student is able to make sense of a text without the aid of a dictionary, grammar book, or cultural guide, cannot arise overnight. Each student gains segments of grammatical, vocabulary, and cultural knowledge gradually as s/he progresses through language study. This progression must be supported along the way through tools designed to eventually make language-processing activities automatic. Until that stage is reached, integrity of the text must be balanced with student ability. The pedagogical magic occurs at a continually shifting

intersection where comprehension and language building meet. The use of stress marks, therefore, must be reevaluated each time students progress to a higher proficiency level.

For the consideration of this project, several concessions to "authentic" texts will be made in order to strike an appropriate balance between the complexity of text and the abilities of intermediate Russian students. The texts chosen for this project all constitute authentic pieces of literature according to the above definitions. The eventual goal of the methodology is to prepare students with the appropriate linguistic, decoding, and cultural skills to interpret such texts. However, any instructor will recognize the limitations within these categories that any student faces after only two or three semesters of language study. Therefore, each presentation will include concessions to students' limitations, such as aids to vocabulary acquisition, grammatical explanations, pronunciation guides, and cultural and historical elucidation. All aids should be as unobtrusive as possible, whether through notes in the margin or a grammatical appendix. Pedagogical aids include but are not limited to pre- and post-reading exercises and explanations, vocabulary definitions or grammar glosses, and overt stress markers. By keeping the actual text as clean as possible, students at least become accustomed to the appearance of authentic texts even as they employ overt learning tools to aid comprehension.

(ii.) Why the twentieth century?

Students and instructors currently find themselves in a unique position as concerns the literary canon. Although each passing day expands the number of works available, the act of passing into a new century inspires the reexamination of past canonical choices. The temporal end of the twentieth century was no different. Scholars remain deeply engaged in examining the breadth of history encompassed by the past century and consider the implications that history will hold in the future. No less can be said of the scholarly debates over the century's contributions to the literary canon, whether speaking of English, Russian, or world literature as a whole. The expansion of literacy and technology throughout the world has had a great impact on the sheer volume of works open for consideration. Representation for groups that were formerly considered in the academic minority also expands the depth and breadth of works available. The diversification of scholarship, which was the hallmark of the twentieth century, continues to have far-reaching consequences as texts and authors are chosen for the classrooms of the future.

In examining both the traditional and the budding Russian literary canon, the trends outlined above are equally salient. Where the nineteenth century literary canon was characterized (as it was throughout the West) by deference to what are now termed the "dead white guys," expansion into the twentieth century begins to see a willingness and desire for diversification and expansion beyond the realm of wealthy, empowered males. This diversity can be seen in many categories including gender, socio-economic status, geographical location, educational background, and ethnicity, among other

categories. Especially in the Soviet case, diversity is gained from the annexation of the outlying republics where many bilinguals chose to write in Russian in order to reach a larger audience. The problem of audience is equally important for those who fled the Soviet Union and were forced into émigré communities where Russian, although not a majority language, remained the most solid link to their own historical and linguistic homeland. These historical circumstances forcibly underlie many literary endeavors coming out of the Russian-Soviet territory in the span of the twentieth century. In order to represent the historical circumstances influencing Russian writers (taken in the broadest sense as those who express themselves creatively in the Russian language, wherever they may live) of such a historically momentous time period, the authors discussed here reflect some of that diversity.

In addition to the question of diversity, there is another reason to select authors from the twentieth century for this project. By having the historical luck to experience the completion of a full century, current scholars have the privilege to begin to showcase the span, development, and progress that will exemplify the preceding century. Just as specialists delimit the ages of Classicism or Romanticism, the categories of the twentieth century can now be brought to final form. The intellectual exercise of defining and recognizing the attributes of literary periods has always been a significant task given to the literary academy, but the opportunity to define a whole century comes about much more rarely. How fortunate that students can be involved in discussions and debates concerning the definitions and limitations of such movements as Modernism, Post-Modernism, or even, Post-Post-Modernism. In bringing attention to the varieties and

attributes of authors spanning the twentieth century, instructors grant students the chance to participate in discussing terminology while training them to pursue such objectives in the categorization of future twenty-first century literature. Currently, scholars and students also have a unique psychological perspective as participants in twentieth century events. Given this connection to historical events, it is important to capitalize on that link while possible.

In addition to these more esoteric concerns, one should directly consider what the students themselves wish to read. Although the belief has been promulgated that students come to Russian classes only interested in "Tolstoyevsky" or t.A.T.u., one actually finds a much wider range of curiosity and interest (Blech "Text" 25; Blech "Surveys"). One of the main connections students wish to make in their classes is in understanding what their peers experience in Russia. This curiosity is understandable and certainly a valid inroad to attract students to learning about contemporary Russian literature. At first, students mostly want to find out what is "cool" in Russia, in order to impress their friends, whether through music, movies, or literature. Students certainly gravitate toward the immediate gratification that can be had from such sources as iTunes or YouTube, but a deeper intellectual curiosity concerning the daily life of Russian students can be shared through more permanent artifacts like literature. American students share in the literary curriculum their peers experience in Russia, they can begin to find common ground with the foreign culture and the speakers of the foreign language. In turn, instructors can capitalize on this initial curiosity in order to develop student interest in Russian culture and language as well as to challenge and provoke them to higher intellectual pursuits.

In an increasingly global society where travel between countries is more common, mutual understanding of the culture and history of foreign peoples becomes paramount. Especially for students whose chances of participating in a study abroad experience are greater than in the past, arriving in-country culturally prepared becomes just as vital as being linguistically prepared. Whereas the importance of the correct usage of the accusative case will never be debated, the significance of preparation for correct cultural usage has been minimal. In understanding the benefits that can be provided by giving students the tools to interact in an informed manner with their peers, instructors can link this benefit to the intrinsic interest students already have. Twentieth century literature provides a perfect medium for such a convergence. The literature is inherently rich in the cultural and historical markers that have greatest significance for Russians today. Whether they be texts discussing freedom of press after the fall of the Soviet Union, texts carefully written to avoid censorship, or texts openly celebrating the Bolshevik Revolution, students can gain a perspective on Russian history and culture.

Of course the argument can be made that students should still be reading the literary works of earlier centuries, assuming instructors are interested in giving them a history lesson. However, there are solid arguments against the rigid retention of nothing but "classic" texts. Indeed, the first comes from the students themselves who typically fall into two camps: those who have already read "Tolstoyevsky" in English classes and those who are only tangentially aware of Russian literature at all. In either of these cases, cannot the argument be made that presenting material that is new to all students is more effective? Highlighting the works of the nineteenth century remains vital, but as students

are further and further separated from any personal connection to such texts, instructors must consider that the difficulties *behind* the text will make it less enjoyable and less comprehensible. Rather, students are better served by texts that contain references to items they see in their own lives (think planes instead of carriages, and computers instead of quill pens) and can therefore be assured of the conceptual framework necessary to decipher the material. It is therefore most helpful to begin with those works that students demand, and work backward through history's vast web.

(iii.) Why intermediate level?

By focusing on the intellectual goal of aiding student's development of analytical skills in a Russian context, much of the anxiety stereotypically found in typical language classes can be reduced. By freeing students from the pressure of constant grammatical drills, they begin to find ways to formulate and express their personal opinions in Russian. In addition, a further goal of the suggested approach asks students not only to decipher texts, but also to begin to interact intellectually within the foreign language classroom. When students are encouraged to develop not only decoding abilities, but also critical thinking and persuasion skills in Russian, they advance closer to being able to present themselves authentically in Russian. Of course, authentic self-presentation will still be far from accomplished at the conclusion of a second-year course. But by beginning to train students fairly early in their foreign language study, they can build a firmer foundation for future advancement, including enrollment in language courses beyond the minimum requirement.

It is important to reiterate that literary texts themselves provide only the basis for pedagogical exercises and not the activities themselves. Any text can offer a student the chance to advance foreign language skills at any level. That is not to say that all texts are appropriate for all contexts but simply to restate the versatility that is inherent in every text. Instructors and students must make decisions concerning the types of textual activities based on linguistic, cultural, and external influences, and work together to reap the most benefit from each textual exploration.

Given that caveat, a reminder of the expectations for intermediate students is in order. The earliest "set of verbal descriptions defining six levels of general language proficiency, ranging from no functional proficiency in the language (Level 0) up to proficiency equivalent in all respects to that of an educated native speaker (Level 5)" was developed in the 1950s (Peckham). The U.S. Government required a standardized device in order to measure the foreign language skills of Foreign Service Officers. This initial experiment was refined during the 1970s in a joint venture between the Peace Corps and Educational Testing Service (ETS) and became known as the "Common Yardstick." Following further collaboration, language guidelines were publicized in the 1980s by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). According to these descriptions, someone with novice reading proficiency would have "sufficient comprehension to read very simple connected written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript" (ILR). The next significant level (intermediate) encompasses a "limited working proficiency" and encapsulates the following skills: "sufficient comprehension to read simple, authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context" (ILR). These two descriptors form the boundaries for students in a second-semester, second-year Russian class. Of course, each class will have a range of students between these two points and the goal of any course is to elevate their skill level to the next step, whatever those may be. Overall, however, these two descriptions define the proficiency level of students addressed by this project.

While the ILR served as a starting point for development of proficiency guidelines, those most in use today in the foreign language field remain those generated

in 1986 by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (The full Standards were revised in 1989. Speaking and Writing were also revised more recently, in 1999 and 2001, respectively.) The ACTFL Guidelines divide proficiency into descriptors of Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished (with the addition of "Low," "Mid," or "High" as appropriate). At the Intermediate-Mid proficiency, students are "able to read consistently with increased understanding simple, connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs" (ACTFL "Proficiency Guidelines"). In addition to the generic guidelines, ACTFL also developed language-specific descriptors. According to the Russian Intermediate-Mid description, a student "can get main facts and some details from simple political announcements ... simple descriptions of services and places ... [and] slightly more detailed announcements of public events, weather, and sports reports" (ACTFL Russian 190). Interestingly, the ACTFL Russian Guidelines do not mention any fictional texts until students reach the advanced-high proficiency level. This author asserts that the characteristics of the less advanced proficiency level descriptors can also be applied to literary texts, especially where students are regular readers in their native language or are familiar with the subject matter of the literary text.

The most recent revision of foreign language descriptions, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, was published by ACTFL in 1996 and is aimed at elementary rather than higher education. The Russian Standards were developed by the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) jointly with the American Council for Collaboration in Education and Language Study. Veering away from the previous

descriptions, which defined proficiency strictly by levels, the new standards are divided into five language learning tasks: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities⁸. Each area is then described according to the types of language tasks it entails (for example, the communication standard includes conversation, providing and obtaining information, expressing feeling and emotions, and exchanging opinions) and progress indicators are suggested for grade levels four, eight, and twelve (*Standards* 392). Although the document is aimed at elementary and secondary education, a proposal defining the skills and components of "knowing" a foreign language exemplifies a unique and useful approach to classifying foreign language proficiency.

The question follows: what methodology best provides movement from one proficiency level to another within the reading skill? The methodology presented here advocates an early and gradual introduction to complex texts whereby instructors modify tasks, as students become more proficient. Rather than assuming that enough grammar drills or vocabulary lists will make students able to discuss complex texts at an advanced level, students must learn from the very start the activities and strategies required to function at higher levels. Such a suggestion is modeled on Krashen's input theory but also relies on the adage that "practice makes perfect." If students can begin to interact with

⁸ According to the ACTR Executive Summary, the five tasks are defined as follows: "*Communication* is at the heart of second language study, whether the communication takes place face-to-face, in writing, or across centuries through the reading of literature. Through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the *cultures* that use that language and, in fact, cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs. Learning languages provides *connections* to additional bodies of knowledge that may be unavailable to the monolingual English speaker. Through *comparisons* and contrasts with the language being studied, students develop insight into the nature of language and the concept of culture and realize that there are multiple ways of viewing the world. Together, these elements enable the student of languages to participate

authentic texts from the outset of their language learning, then the format, language, and style of the texts will become gradually more familiar. Practitioners must dispel the idea that learning the rules of a language is separate from learning to authentically interact in that language. Only by being exposed to language in context can students become proficient at correctly using the foreign language themselves. This is not to say that there is no place for overt grammar or vocabulary instruction, but rather that the natural features of language are best presented when they give clues to assist students in comprehension or production. Certainly students cannot (and should not) be expected to spend all their time gathering linguistic clues from literary texts, but by emphasizing authentic language activities through authentic media, students will gain the skill set necessary to advance their own proficiency. It is the task of instructors and materials developers to scaffold the learning curve that students must traverse in order to expedite the benefits of every learning effort.

in multilingual *communities* at home and around the world in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways" (3).

(iv.) Why reverse chronological order?

The choice of twentieth century literature was made to provide an appropriate window for students who are interested in delving further into earlier Russian literature, as well as those who want to follow the most recent literary trends. Presenting texts in reverse chronological order gives students those works that they report are the most compelling first. By introducing students at an early stage to the most current literature, expansion into the earlier decades builds on an already established interest. In addition, this methodology allows students to practice literary analysis such that reference to past texts will build upon current events. Although seemingly backward at first glance, this tactic requires historical texts to be used as references for current circumstances. Since this approach mimics the patterns of daily life, where all reference to the past must be filtered through the present environment, it is hoped that students will begin to see literature as a discipline integral to and reflective of daily life. Although students will likely be much more accustomed to progressing linearly through an anthology of readings from oldest to newest, it is believed that this approach will in fact provide students with the tools for better analytic function in the future.

Especially important for students, who will continue in academic fields, the development of analytic skills is vital. Since successful scholarship requires staying abreast of current developments in a chosen field, giving students contemporary texts helps to set an example of how to approach future problem-solving pursuits. In addition, using past contributions in support of innovation is a highly prized skill in any endeavor. Teaching students to consider the present and future in light of the past will have benefits

that reach far beyond the scope of one applied literature course. Since no one can observe history except in hindsight, students should not be expected to approach literature from a falsely linear perspective. Intellectual curiosity should be peaked by the desire to delve backward to see what events or trends have led to current circumstances, and then to how to improve them for the future. Requiring students to be retrospective gains great ground in teaching students how to be intellectually introspective. Indeed, a recent trend among college students to reexamine the popular music of their parents' generation has led to an outpouring of both "re-mixed" songs of the 1960s, as well as new musical developments among today's popular musical groups.

The analytical skills that will be developed through this reverse chronological approach are beneficial for other reasons as well. When students are able to read texts whose temporality matches their own frame of reference, the base of similarity between their own lives and the "life" of the text is enhanced. By finding the maximum amount of connections between text and reader, the comprehensibility and the interest in the text are enhanced. Students who have more in common with the characters they read about are more likely to understand the text, and to continue reading similar texts. Since the overarching goal is to inspire and prepare students to read more Russian texts in the future, maximizing the appeal of each text is vital.

There are additional benefits in focusing first on the present. Offering students authentic examples of the Russian language as it is being used, written, and discussed in contemporary Russia provides the perfect primer for any student who plans to travel to a Russian-speaking area or interact with a native speaker. By emphasizing contemporary

texts, students are given a record of the concerns and issues that are most vital for Russian authors and their own peers. Even for those students who may not be able to travel to Russia, the ever-increasing communication available through technology provides an endless source for authentic interaction. Literary language, even from the beginning of the twentieth century, presents students with an inexhaustible collection of authentic Russian, which in turn can develop linguistic familiarity as well as linguistic sensitivity. The best way to improve reading in Russian is to read in Russian. Giving students early guidance when they first interact with texts provides the foundation for future reading endeavors that may not include the assistance of an instructor.

Literary texts provide more than simple linguistic examples. Rife with cultural clues, both subtle and overt, texts expose students to a measure of cultural information difficult to gain without access to a native speaker or time in-country. Relying on exposure to breed understanding, students whose cultural sensitivity is activated through literature will be able in turn to interact with native speakers with more cultural decorum. Indeed, taking it one step further, students will gain a modicum of the Russian culture themselves by reading authentic and culturally rich literary texts. In this manner, they will also be able to converse with native speakers on various cultural topics, including, of course, literature. By matching student interests with text subject matter, this gain is enhanced. Believing that students will be able to interact with native speakers whose interests parallel their own, providing Russian perspectives on those topics and interests once again aids students' preparation for authentic encounters. This confluence remains true for recent historical as well as immediately contemporary texts. Providing access to

texts that discuss similar cultural phenomena can develop a context around which to construct beliefs about Russia and Russians, and to reflect further on native beliefs.

Finally, utilizing texts that provoke students intellectually allows for the development of critical thinking skills within the Russian context. Since students are in the process of refining their general intellectual abilities in other college classes, Russian instructors can also provide a venue for provoking and challenging pursuits. With each literary text, students experience a new intellectual venture, whether it concerns morality, the struggles of family life, or any other subject. Providing these challenges to students is vital to their intellectual development overall. Being able to develop them in a foreign language enhances the attraction of these classes, not only for students, but for curriculum evaluators as well. Presenting an overt declaration of how a foreign language class improves analytical skills will go a long way in the perception of language classes as vital to a core curriculum, rather than the more common bracket as "elective" or "optional" courses. Applied literature can provide such a mode for foreign language promotion.

(v.) Why these authors?

The selection of authors and texts is the cornerstone of the applied literature approach. In this dissertation, authors whose work epitomized the twentieth century were chosen to represent each decade. In choosing these authors, special consideration was paid to works as well as appropriate division into time periods. Balanced alternatives are presented: iconic figures and lesser-known authors who students are unlikely to have read before. For the most part, authors were chosen who are familiar to Russian audiences but whose prominence in English-speaking domains is less likely. Selection of the authors was made based on suggestions from several sources. Initially, advice was solicited from native Russian speakers and experts in Russian literature of the twentieth century (Bychkova-Jordan; Garza "Personal Interview"; Pichova). As a follow-up to interviews, a list of authors whose works are regularly taught to graduate students studying Russian literature was solicited from the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies (DSES) at the University of Texas at Austin. Finally, several published encyclopedic guides to Russian authors and anthologies were consulted (Goscilo and Lindsey; Nemirovskaya; Rydel; Terras). The final choice of works rests solely with the author of this dissertation. A brief introduction to each author to be included in the proposed anthology follows. Authors are presented in the order in which they are listed in the "Proposed Table of Contents" (see Appendix A).

Viktor Pelevin's (b. 1962) extreme literary success in the past decade has given him cult status among young Russians. Entire websites are devoted to Pelevin "sightings" and fans track his literary "appearances" in a manner usually reserved for movie or rock

stars. In an informal survey conducted among students at higher education institutes in St. Petersburg, Russia, Pelevin topped the list as the most popular and most read of all authors, classic or contemporary (Deane). He skyrocketed to popularity in the 1990s with such novel works as *Generation P*, *Yellow Arrow*, and *The Life of Insects*. As described by Salieva, "*ego romany povestvuiut o virtual'nykh mirakh, osnovannykh na sistemakh lozhnykh simvolov*" [His novels relate virtual worlds based on systems of false symbols] (par. 2). With a style infinitely post-modern, Pelevin's popularity has been attributed to "his depiction of the grotesqueries and absurdities of contemporary life in his country, of its anarchy and corruption and of the despair of its citizens, [which make him] especially popular among young Russians" ("Pelevin," par. 1). Although his novels remain the most popular genre of his oeuvre, the work here is a brief sketch chosen to give students a sense of his writing style.

Vasilii Aksenov (b. 1932) represents the voice of Russian exiles. Born into a Communist family (and famously the son of memoirist Evgeniia Ginzburg), he practiced medicine briefly before becoming a writer. His writing style, "sprinkled with colloquialisms, slang, and foreign borrowings, especially Americanisms" (Terras 17) and choice of subject matter presents a less than favorable picture of Soviet reality. Coming of age as a writer in the 1960s lends his prose an initial euphoria following Stalin's death that quickly turns to disillusionment when censorship remained a staple of the literary reality. Indeed, his official disdain (along with 22 other authors, including Viktor Erofeev) and his subsequent emigration are attributed to the attempted publication of a collection of works, *Metropol'*, in 1979. The selection chosen here comes from a more

recent publication following his exile. Aksenov provides a discussion of a subject familiar to students from a foreign perspective.

A deceptively simple selection comes from Liudmila Petrushevskaja (b. 1938). Even though her name is most commonly associated with *glasnost*, much of her writing career has been epitomized by the struggle against censorship. Especially as a dramatist, her oeuvre was commonly suppressed during the Soviet period, with very few of her plays ever reaching the stage. To combat this stifling loss of audience, Petrushevskaja turned to short story writing, finding her niche while writing deceptively simplistic stories and fairy tales. In many of her short stories, characters "live on the brink of disaster, of a despair that finds expression in verbose, deflective outpourings of linguistically idiosyncratic chatter that mingles with ... folksy speech. These ... passages ... camouflage as much as they reveal for the telling omission plays a key role in Petrushevskaja's fiction" (Goscilo and Lindsey 463). In fact it is the lack of human beings in many of her fairy tales that allows Petrushevskaja to explore problematic situations outside the retribution of censorship. In reading one of Petrushevskaja's illusive tales, students are faced with a plot line that provides very little complication, but a "between the lines" situation that begs extensive discussion.

As one of the driving forces behind *Metropol'*, Viktor Erofeev (b. 1947) has also experienced censorship and publication difficulties. Although predominantly known as a critic and scholar, Erofeev gained entrance into the Writers' Union in 1978, only to be expelled a year later. His writing continues to challenge official viewpoint; it tends toward the violent and the explicit. In general, "Erofeyev [sic] favors ... a linguistically

suggestive style of unexpected juxtapositions" aiming to shock the reader and "violat[e] readers' sensibilities in the process" (Goscilo and Lindsey 456). Although much of his work concerns "the underbelly of Existentialism" (Goscilo and Lindsey 456), the selection chosen here offers only a shred of plot, challenging students to extract as much information as possible from only 27 lines of text. This very post-modern approach to literature requires that students reconsider their traditional definitions of "story" and "plot," while keeping linguistic distraction to a minimum.

In contrast to the incendiary literature that has become common surrounding the fall of the Soviet Union, the oeuvre of Yurii Nagibin (b. 1920) epitomizes the writing tradition of the Soviet post-war period. While many of his early stories deal with World War II, the predominant feature of his prose is its exploration of everyday life. Many of his stories represent "conflict-less" sketches, much in the style of Turgenev (Terras 291). The true merit of his works is in the exploration of "ordinary people in ordinary situations ... [who] experience an illumination, a catharsis, and finally a new understanding of yet unrealized recesses of personality" (Terras 291–292). From his work, students gain a sense of the everyday inner thoughts of *homo Sovieticus* and a further description of how people react in different situations, especially those that challenge complacency. Linguistically more complex than the more recent works, the development of Nagibin's style and unique storytelling technique provides foundations for evaluating the situation for writers in the Soviet period.

Another author who ran afoul of the Soviet censorship machine, Vladimir Maramzin (b. 1934) began his career as an engineer, publishing some prose on the side.

In the 1960s, he became a full-time writer, writing predominantly television and movie scenarios. Throughout the 1970s, Maramzin became active in *samizdat*⁹ and was instrumental in the underground publication of much of poet Joseph Brodsky's work, leading to his own arrest in 1974 (Terras 274). A conviction in 1975 for "disseminat[ing] anti-Soviet propaganda" led to his exile to Paris where he continues to be active in literary affairs (Terras 274). The short story selected here provides a humorous look at marital relations in the Soviet Union, especially in light of the social problem of alcoholism. Students are presented with a difficult situation and a unique argument for a solution, which can spark discussion of gender issues and social ills in the Soviet Union and broader communities.

Aleksandr Vampilov (1937–1972), primarily known as a dramatist, also wrote several engaging short stories. His overall style has been characterized as "vaudevillian," and his plays in particular "are marked by lyricism, a deep feeling for nature, a keen sensitivity to the ironies of life, and fondness for dramatizing transitions from light-hearted self-centeredness to sobering self-awareness" (Terras 116). Although less dramatic, the story chosen here follows many of these attributes as the characters explore the reversals of power that can be produced by memory. Students are offered a humorous tale of a man wooing a young girl, which ends unexpectedly and can lead to discussion of the divisions of power between men and women.

The first among the anthologized writers to be born outside of Great Russia, Yurii Olesha (1899–1960) spent many of his formative years in Ukraine, eventually meeting

⁹ *Samizdat*, literally "self-printed," is the practice of passing manuscripts or documents among groups of

other young writers (including Il'ia Il'f) in literary discussion groups in Odessa. Rejecting the tsarist sympathies of his parents, he joined the Red Army in 1919, an experience that led to one of his most well known works, *Envy*. He remained an official Soviet writer until the time of Stalin, when he turned away from his own works and managed to earn a living through odd literary jobs in translation or film. His work is characterized by an "extraordinary acuity ... convey[ed] with imagery ... [and] a liking for indirect description, especially through simile and metaphor, creat[ing] an effect which has been called 'estrangement' " (Terras 322). His stories present detailed descriptions of his world, including the role of the author in creating it. Students benefit from examining the role of the writer as well as from his close observations of life at the birth of the Soviet era.

Perched on the cusp of the previous century, Ivan Bunin (1870–1953) epitomizes the loss of "Old Russia" in the push for industrialization and progress. Born into the aristocracy and inspired by Turgenev and Tolstoy, much of Bunin's early works represent nostalgia for the passing of Russia's tsarist splendor. However, during the initial upheaval leading to the Soviet era, Bunin turned to restless travel, not only in Europe but also in the Middle East, North Africa, and elsewhere, eventually using these locales as settings for his prose works (Terras 64). Bunin's travels from 1907–1911 are immortalized in a collection of travel stories entitled "Ten' Ptitsy" [Shadow of a Bird], wherein he gives "*poeticheskoe vospriiatie prirody ... s razvernutyimi razmyshleniiami — filosofskimi, istoricheskimi, religioznymi, eticheskimi i esteticheskimi*" [poetic interpretation of nature ... with extensive reflections — philosophical, historical, religious, ethical, and aesthetic]

people without official publication or government permission (Terras 383).

(Krutikova 595). His prose contains a visual component indicative of his passion for art and much of his imagery reflects "the richness of nature, its melancholy beauty ... loneliness, and death" (Terras 64). As Nemirovskaya notes, "*Bunin mechtal stat' khudozhnikom; stav pisatelem, on sokhranil sposobnost' videt' i virtuozno peredavat' v slove krasotu mira*" [Bunin dreamt of becoming a painter; as a writer, he maintained the ability to visualize and virtually transfer to words the beauty of the world] (324). Most notably in his career, Bunin received Russia's first Nobel Prize for Literature in 1933. As a Nobel Laureate, Bunin's work serves as a fine literary example for students.

Another highly renowned writer from Odessa was Isaak Babel' (1894–1941). Born into an Orthodox Jewish family and highly influenced by French literature, Babel' wrote his first stories in French, switching to Russian only in the 1910s. Like Olesha, Babel' enlisted in the Red Army in 1917, but was quickly sent home due to illness. However, by 1920 he had returned to the army, this time as a war correspondent and propagandist (Terras 32). Back in Odessa, Babel' participated in literary discussions and organized his notes into the collection of short stories, *Red Cavalry*, to which the story chosen here belongs. As a whole, *Red Cavalry* explores the horrors of war, "with emphasis on grotesque, premeditated cruelty toward civilians as well as toward the foe, brutality unjustified by military necessity ... recorded with matter-of-fact brevity" (Terras 33). This collection quickly found Babel' out of favor with Soviet authorities due to "avoidance of simplistic political tendentiousness, his partiality for contradiction and paradox and above all the equivocation and ambiguity of the didactic message contained in the work" (Terras 33). Babel' was arrested in 1939 and had unofficially disappeared by

1941. The brief epistolary work presented here examines two men facing the difficulties of war.

Similarly drawing his early writing experience from political sources, Aleksandr Grin (1880–1932) led a life almost completely beyond the notice of Soviet critics. Inspired by adventure tales, his prose mixes reality with the fantastic, "recombin[ing] the relations of reality in accordance with his poetic purpose" (Terras 186). By setting his stories outside the concrete, they retain a sense of Romanticism reminiscent of a past age, but are general enough that they avoided the ire of the early Soviet censors. The work chosen here epitomizes Grin's carefully constructed line between reality and a romanticized or imagined past.

An anthology of twentieth century work would be incomplete without inclusion of Maksim Gor'kii (1868–1936), the "officially designated ... founder of socialist realism and originator of Soviet literature" (Terras 180). Although he never officially fell out of favor with the Soviet authorities, many of his political values did not always reflect the Party line. Still his larger-than-life personality influenced much of Soviet literary policy, including many interventions on behalf of fellow writers. Unashamedly vocal for the rights and responsibilities of the proletariat, Gor'kii more or less signals the end of Russia's love affair with the peasant and begins the idealization of the working class. Along with this focus, in "many of his best short stories, plot is not the main thing — a character, a fact of life, or an ambience is" (Terras 181). It is therefore of great benefit for students to have the chance to examine the genesis of the de-emphasis of plot and focus

on the abstract, which quickly came to signify the attributes of much of Russian twentieth century literature.

(vi.) Why these texts?

To select the final texts presented in the dissertation, several approaches were taken to narrow down the possibilities. First, twentieth century texts were chosen as the overarching time frame for the literary selections due to student interest as well as linguistic considerations. Secondly, the decision to include only prose¹⁰ helped to delimit the scope of the project. Next, a determination was made that each decade from the twentieth century should be represented by three texts, each from different authors if possible. In addition, an attempt was made to suggest as many authors as possible, allotting one author no more than three selections total. For each author, only texts no longer than 500 words were considered. Although this necessarily excluded many authors whose greatest contributions to literature were through poetry, drama, or novels, the narrow scope is necessary for a proposal of this type, which would otherwise prove unmanageable.

Each text met the following criteria: fictional account, 500 words or less, inception or publication in the twentieth or twenty-first century and general accessibility (both linguistic and pragmatic). Once possible texts were gathered, a problem arose in determining which texts would allow the greatest diversity and span for each decade. The decision was therefore made to choose one prose selection for each decade from a different author to be included in the "final" table of contents (see Appendix A). More will be said concerning the table of contents later. The readings are presented in reverse

chronological order, providing an innovative alternative to the typical literary reader. The list of suggested readings (see Appendix B) represents those prose works which met all other standards, but which duplicated some condition of the twelve texts previously chosen.¹¹ The decision to include this list was made to provide instructors with the greatest flexibility in choosing and recommending resources to students.

The twelve selections presented take one text from each decade of the twentieth century (ten in total) and two from the twenty-first. Other than time period, criteria for choosing texts were based on several categories, as suggested by Lazar: length and availability of text, linguistic proficiency of students, students' cultural background, students' interests, and overall fit with the syllabus plan (56). Especially given that the students in mind will be at only at an ACTFL intermediate level,¹² one of Lazar's suggestions became especially salient in text selection: "although your learners are at quite an elementary level linguistically, their emotional and intellectual understanding is rather sophisticated. So you need to select texts which are linguistically relatively simple but which challenge them in other ways" (52). Since the texts chosen here are authentic in their linguistic presentation (i.e., no vocabulary or grammatical editing, or shortening

¹⁰ Prose was chosen in preference to other genres due to American students' familiarity with narrative prose. In addition, prose remains the most accessible both linguistically and pragmatically and therefore allows the broadest consideration for pedagogical development.

¹¹ In order to round out the selections, one "extra" text from the 2000s was chosen. This decision was made based both on student input, as well as the pragmatic wish to develop enough texts. Twelve texts will allow one text to be explored each week of a traditional fifteen-week semester while still allowing time for class mechanics such as exams.

¹² According to the online descriptor, intermediate-mid reading proficiency is described as follows: "Able to read consistently with increased understanding simple, connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs. Such texts are still linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make minimal suppositions and to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples may include short, straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things written for a wide audience" (ACTFL "Proficiency Guidelines").

of the text), the initial ease of understanding was of paramount consideration. However, believing that students can be given tasks that exploit their intellectual abilities while building but not overreaching their linguistic skills, the texts remain in their original form while the required pedagogical tasks vary to allow for the greatest flexibility.

The proposed table of contents indicates only the stories, dates, and authors but does not delineate the pedagogical activities to accompany each item. The introductory and concluding materials are meant to assist students in developing the skills to interact with the texts at hand. The first segment discusses the principles of applied literature, making students aware of the instructor's goals in using literature in a language classroom. The second introductory unit presents students with suggestions for overall language learning effectiveness, especially as suggested by Oxford, and more specific suggestions of ways to approach reading in Russian (see Appendix C). The concluding segments supply expected reference materials such as a glossary of vocabulary and culture items from the texts, a list of literary terms in Russian (to be used for discussions and assignments), and finally, a list of further readings. In addition, a textbook of applied literature would also need to contain an instructor's supplement that could delineate the specific linguistic difficulties inherent in each story, since the table of contents is organized chronologically rather than according to any linguistic measure of perceived difficulty (as suggested by Rosengrant and Lifschitz in *The Golden Age*). Since the methodology suggested here recommends using the same texts for multiple tasks, any ranking or grading of the texts according to linguistic determiners would prove counterproductive.

(vii.) Sample pedagogical text

In order to elucidate the proposed methodology, it is beneficial to examine one sample text for its pedagogical potential. It is hoped that some of the range of possibilities for applied literature will be illuminated. In order to mimic most closely the intended classroom environment of this project, the following text will be presented for second-semester, second-year college students of Russian. On the basis of both institutional observation, as well as Thompson (266–267), these students will enter the class at the novice-high or intermediate-low level. The objective of the class is to raise each student by one increment in the reading skill by the end of one fifteen-week semester (i.e., if a student enters at intermediate-low, s/he should exit at intermediate-mid) where the class meets twice per week for 75-minute sessions. Since the project is intended as a reading-intensive supplement to a "regular" second-year course, proficiency gains will only be measured in the reading skill. However, on the basis of in-class discussions (conducted primarily in Russian), preparation of course materials and individualized assistance, students are expected to progress in other proficiency skills as well.

The sample text is Petrushevskaja's "*Budil'nik*" ["The Alarm Clock"], written in 1990. This story details the thoughts of and constraints on an alarm clock who wishes to get married but cannot find a suitable mate. Superficially, it appears to be nothing more than an entertaining description of the imagined life of a common household appliance. However, given the historical and cultural framework in which it was written, the brief tale supplies many possibilities for discussion. The entirety of the text is provided in

Russian and English in Appendix D. In addition, a second pedagogical text, "*Most, kotoryi ia khotel pereiti*" ["The Bridge I Wished to Cross"] is found in Appendix E.

Pre-Reading Tasks:

1. Introduction: You are about to read a text by Людмила Петрушевская [Liudmila Petrushevskaiia¹³] entitled «Будильник» ["The Alarm Clock"]. Петрушевская [Petrushevskaiia] was born in 1938 and still lives в Москве [in Moscow]. «Будильник» ["The Alarm Clock"] was published in 1990 in a collection of short stories, *Чемодан чепухи*¹⁴ [*Suitcase of Rubbish*]. Петрушевская [Petrushevskaiia] became well known in the Soviet Union for writing plays, although many of them were never performed until after 1991. Her short stories are frequently about seemingly simple people in everyday situations, but the complexity of life is always hidden between the lines.

Before reading the text, make some predictions about the kind of story you will read. What is the significance of the title of the story collection, *Чемодан чепухи* [*Suitcase of Rubbish*]? Why would Петрушевская [Petrushevskaiia] imply that her writing is "rubbish"? Based on what you know of her style and the history of the Soviet Union in 1990, what kinds of characters do you expect to read about? What will they be doing? Where and when do they live? Why are they the subjects of this story? Who is this story written for?

¹³ Students would not be provided with transliterations or translations.

2. Categorization: Read the first line of the story. Have you read any other Russian texts that start with this same phrase? How about: Жили–были три медведя... [Once upon a time there were three bears...] or Жили–были дед и баба... [Once upon a time there was an old man and an old woman...]? What is the English equivalent of this phrase? What does it suggest about the story? Does this change your mind about the predictions you made?

3. Key Words: As you skim the story for the first time, you will notice that there are a lot of numbers written out in the story. Based on the title, what do you think the numbers mean? Why are there so many?

4. Vocabulary: There are several vocabulary items vital to understanding the progression of this story. Make sure you are familiar with the following words before continuing.

жениться/выйти замуж [to get married (for men/women)]

сделать предложение [to propose]

(Presentation of the Text)

Reading Tasks:

1. First Contact: Read through the story once without a dictionary. Try to discover the gist of the plot and figure out who the main character is. Make a list of the characters you encounter.

2. Vocabulary List: During your second reading, underline words that you do not know. Try to guess at as many as you can from context.

¹⁴ чепуха – rubbish, nonsense

3. Telling Time: Make a chronology for the times that are given. You don't necessarily have to know what happens at each minute, but do figure out what times are mentioned in the story.

4. Clarification: This time, look up any words you still do not understand and circle any grammatical endings that are unclear. Fill in the rest of your chronology — who gets married at the end?

Post-reading Tasks:

1. Fact Checking: Now that you understand all the actions of the story, revisit your initial predictions about the text. Were you right? What surprised you about the characters? Did the story have a happy ending?

2. Genre: The first words of the story, «жил–был» ["once upon a time"] seem to indicate that this is a fairy tale. Does this story remind you of other fairy tales you know? Why or why not? Do you think this story was written for children?

3. Critical Response: How do you think this story was received in 1990 in the Soviet Union? Do you think it would be received in the same way now? Have you changed your mind about why the collection of short stories might be called *A Suitcase of Rubbish*?

4. Grammar: Look through the verbs used in this story. Make a note of all the verbs that are reflexive and those verbs that indicate indirect action. What does Petrushevskaja's use of verbs tell us about her characters? What does this style tell us about the world in which they live? Is there any significance to this linguistic choice? How would the story be different if all the verbs were action verbs?

Homework:

1. Daily Schedule: This story contains many different times. Make a schedule for what you do at eight different times during the day. Try to use as many different times as possible (for example, getting up at 6:45, breakfast at 7:20, or walking to class at 4:38).

2. Description: While Petrushevskaiia's alarm clock is searching for a mate, she describes many of the other items in the room. Choose one room in your apartment and describe as many items you can (at least ten). Make sure you include at least one item of each gender.

3. Re-creation: Now that you have read Petrushevskaiia's fairy tale about the secret life of an alarm clock, try your hand at this technique. Choose an everyday item from your own life and write a short (one-page) story about what it does when you aren't around.

This sample exemplifies the range of cultural, linguistic, and critical thinking skill activities that could be constructed around a text of this type for students at the intermediate proficiency level. Each class will, of course, have its own needs as far as vocabulary and grammar building are concerned, but the contextual clues exploited through texts of this sort can greatly assist students in learning how to approach texts when they are on their own. As suggested by Lazar, the linguistic matter of this text should not pose an overwhelming problem to novice-high students. However, the deceptively simple plot and characters should actually provide much fodder for discussion about censorship, fairy tales, and linguistic double-entendre. A text of this sort will provide students with the motivation to continue reading as they realize how much

language they have already acquired and how a few good strategies can assist them in deciphering other materials in the future. A companion teacher's edition would contain further suggestions for exercises and organizational aids to integrate literature into the classroom.

Analysis

Applied literature as a field presents practitioners with a nearly endless supply of language in context to be exploited in the classroom. Activities based on literary texts can bring together the many-faceted conditions of language learning to form a concrete whole, bridging the gap between the false divide of "language" and "literature." The lexico-grammatical complexity of language found in literary texts has frequently been judged a disadvantage; however, if students are to be successful language negotiators in a global world, they cannot escape the high demands that will be placed on their linguistic and cultural knowledge. Students must be able to access grammatical, lexical, and cultural knowledge immediately and correctly if they are to communicate with native speakers. Therefore, any method that provides students with the skills to interact authentically with language in context must be considered advantageous to language teaching. Heavy editing of texts and simplification of language, long thought to be a service to students, must cease as a technique; careful consideration of the tasks students are asked to perform when interacting with a text is much more important and beneficial.

In addition to the linguistic benefits that can be reaped by giving students practice dealing with authentic Russian, the diversity and complexity of ideas addressed in literary texts also present an amazing opportunity to students. No matter the reasons students give for studying a foreign language, every student enters the classroom a curious and interested participant; foreign language instructors can provide no better service than to enable students to broaden their awareness and deepen their understanding of the world through a new medium.

Chapter Four: Analysis

Feasibility Test

This portion of the dissertation project set out to test a set of applied literature teaching materials for their feasibility. The goal of the test was to procure experiential feedback from current students concerning both the applied literature methodology and the specific teaching materials. Given the limitations of the feasibility test (discussed further below), measurable language gains were not expected and were not evaluated at this time. However, the materials for second-year, second-semester Russian language students were examined for practicality (such as time required to complete an exercise), accuracy (such as elimination of typos or inconsistencies), and student response (would students register for a course in applied literature or not?). Students ranged between the ages of 18–30, were of both genders and of various ethnic backgrounds. Since there was no outside benefit to participating in the test, participants were not considered to be vulnerable or under coercion. All students were concurrently enrolled in a second-year Russian language class at the University of Texas at Austin. The feasibility test extended throughout the month of February 2007. The experience posed only minimal increased anxiety associated with observation in the foreign language classroom. All participants were debriefed following the feasibility test.

Two sets of students participated. The first was a control group who was observed during their regular Russian course (four days a week for an hour). These observations set a baseline for an average proficiency level concerning language and cultural

proficiency. The second group consisted of a subset of four volunteer students.¹⁵ These student volunteers met for one hour once a week to discuss the applied literature materials. These sessions covered general impression of the materials, students' opinions about the language teaching potential of such a method and overall appeal to students. The majority of the feedback and suggestions for further development arose out of these sessions.

¹⁵ Difficulties of volunteer studies will be discussed in the statement of limitations.

(i.) Session details

During the first session, volunteers were presented with an introduction to the project, including a description of the duration and extent of their participation. They were told that they would be investigating materials for teaching Russian language by using literary texts and that those materials were specifically developed with second-year, second-semester students in mind. They were also told that throughout the sessions, they should engage in think-aloud protocols so that the instructor could evaluate their reading and learning strategies. These verbalizations allowed the instructor to evaluate not only what the students were outwardly doing in each exercise, but also the techniques and strategies they used to approach the tasks.

Students were next given an informational survey asking them about their past Russian study, reasons for studying Russian, a self-evaluation of their reading skills, and their knowledge of Russian literature (see Appendix F). These surveys indicated that the majority of each student's language training had been at the University of Texas, although some had additional experiences elsewhere including a summer study abroad. All students had different reasons for beginning their Russian study, but most planned to continue into the third year of study. Many students expressed a desire to have more reading in their language classes, as well as more vocabulary-building activities. Students self-rated their reading ability in Russian to be average and expressed only a passing knowledge of Russian literature (*War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Crime and Punishment*).

A preface describing "applied literature" was given to students (see Appendix C). They were asked to comment both on the content of the description as well as the effectiveness of textbook prefaces. Students found the description to be helpful, especially as none were familiar with the term "applied literature" previously. However, they recommended that the description should be incorporated into the body of the textbook, rather than as a preface. They reported that only as an active part of the textbook with exercises would it engage students. Finally, students were given a document for learning-strategies training (see Appendix C). Students once again approved of the materials, but suggested making the training a portion of the textbook, rather than leaving it as front material or relegating it to an appendix.

During the second session, students discussed the organization of the proposed applied literature textbook and a course based on it. Students were presented with the proposed table of contents for the textbook (see Appendix A), a proposed syllabus and a trial glossary (see Appendix G). Students expressed great enthusiasm for these materials. All students echoed the idea that a course in applied literature was much needed and missing from their current Russian curriculum. Indeed, the students expressed a desire to enroll in the course in the summer session, if it were to be offered. At first students were intimidated by the number of texts proposed, but upon learning that no text exceeded 500 words they decided that such a high number of texts would be manageable in the span of a semester.

The third session proved the most valuable as it explored the sample pedagogical treatment of Petrushevskaiia's "The Alarm Clock" (see Chapter Three and Appendix D).

The hour-long meeting was treated as a "regular" class period in which students progressed through the designated activities under the supervision of a language instructor. Students succeeded in making appropriate predictions about the story, especially in determining the meaning of the Russian title, which was not initially understood. When reading through the story for the first time, students immediately highlighted those vocabulary items unfamiliar to them, without stopping to consult a dictionary. In addition, one student read the story aloud to herself during the first reading. She later shared that she approached all Russian texts in this manner and had found that by hearing the words, she was able to understand them better. Students were able to make brief (four sentence) summaries of the story after the first reading. After a second, more thorough reading, students were able to answer questions about details in the story as well as make hypotheses about events not directly addressed in the story. In addition, students completed one of the homework assignments in which they chose an item from their own lives about which to write a story. These "retellings" were very brief, but kept in the same humorous, fairy-tale vein as Petrushevskiaia's work (see Appendix G for an example). Students reported that the homework assignment required approximately one hour.

In the final session, students were given a text by Viktor Pelevin with exercises similar to those in the previous week's lesson (see Appendix C). They were then told to work through the exercises and the story on their own, all the time engaging in think-aloud protocols, thereby allowing the instructor to be aware of their approaches to the story. As students worked through the pre-reading exercises, they used compensation

strategies such as skipping over words they did not know, or even skipping tasks that seemed too difficult. All students read the prompt questions before reading the story, giving them an idea of what to look for in the text. Many students expressed frustration over not having a larger store of vocabulary words, especially as they began reading the story. However, students were very excited whenever they were able to guess correctly at the meaning of a word. The same held true for grammatical difficulties. Although they were clearly frustrated at some of the more complex grammar points they did not know, successfully using contextual clues to figure out meaning was a considerable affirmation. For example, one student was able to determine the meaning of *teplokhod* [motor ship] based on its proximity to its synonym, *barzha* [barge].

At the end of this session, students felt that they had not been given sufficient time to complete all of the activities (which was expected). Overall, students were frustrated by the time constraints and felt that they needed more time to read the story multiple times. Answers to the questions presented were minimal, proving that students did not get through the entire text successfully in the time given. Nevertheless, students used many contextual clues and compensation techniques to gather as much as they could from the text. Without exception, students avoided the use of dictionaries on the first reading, choosing instead to underline words they did not know. The decision not to use dictionaries could have been due to the time constraints, although this was not overtly stated. In addition, one student chose to write down the English equivalent for words whose meaning he was able to determine solely from context. All students were able to report some understanding of the basic setting and plot of the story.

They also stated that the Pelevin story was significantly more complex than the Petrushevskaia text. This complexity of language was deliberately chosen so students would be required to employ more strategies for understanding the text. While the overall comprehension of each text was important, it was more vital to examine how students approached each task. Only by presenting students with a challenging text would there be an indication of whether or not students learned to use the applied literature methodology. Given the evidence from their think-aloud procedures, each student gained an understanding of the methodology as well as use of context and good reading strategies in order to advance their language. Students were also intrigued by the activity of reading authentic literature and expressed pleasure and surprise with how much they were able to accomplish. Indeed, the students were so captivated by the story that they requested an additional week outside of the feasibility test to continue the discussion.

(ii.) Evaluation of feasibility test

The feasibility test suggested three conclusions: 1) students perceive a lack of reading practice in their current Russian curriculum; 2) students want to read more in Russian; and 3) students found the proposed materials helpful. Due to the informal nature of the volunteer sessions, each of these conclusions can be drawn from student comments and is supported by linguistic analysis of student responses. In terms of language acquisition, the short time period of the test limited the amount of change in linguistic ability. Although no major proficiency gains were expected or reached in such a brief period of time, students did make some progress in terms of vocabulary acquisition. Students gained the greatest enhancement in their use of reading and compensation strategies. By comparing the volunteers to the control group, a measurable difference in techniques for reading a text was noticed. One final gain noted during the feasibility test was in the students' familiarity with Russian authors. Students who could previously only name two Russian authors expanded their knowledge of Russian authors, through both active reading and passive name recognition.

From the outset of the project, students acknowledged a decided lack in reading activities both in their current Russian class, as well as in past courses. Students reported that they had received little if any reading practice in their first year of Russian and that their current second-year course was highly focused on oral and written skills. Certainly this focus is understandable as instructors are working toward helping students achieve the proficiency level necessary to produce Russian, both in conversation and composition. However, students expressed a frustration with this spotlight on productive

skills. Students recognized reading as a good avenue for exposure to new vocabulary as well as helping to reinforce grammatical points. When asked if they could read in Russian on their own time, they said they would likely not do so unless it was part of a required class. In addition, they felt that their current Russian skills, especially vocabulary, were not sufficient to read without the guidance of an instructor. None of them reported reading Russian on their own outside of class.

Based on this lack of reading instruction, students expressed an overwhelming desire to see an applied literature class for second-year students. When asked whether literary endeavors should wait until third year, students expressed trepidation at taking the literature course currently offered for third-year students. They feared that it would be too demanding and that they would be unprepared for the activities and texts they would be required to read. An informal survey of a third-year literature course confirmed these fears (Blech "Literature Surveys"). A group of third-year students who were already in their second semester of literary study in Russian all felt that they had been unprepared their first semester. In addition, these students felt that some sort of "bridge" class was required between the second-year language and the third-year literature course in order to develop reading skills in Russian. The "bridge" idea was very appealing to the second-year students and they suggested offering an applied literature course during the summer.

Throughout the teaching sessions and at the conclusion of the feasibility test, students expressed an overall satisfaction with the proposed materials. Students contributed both written and oral comments concerning the general textbook materials. They provided insights as to what textbook materials they actually use and what of the

proposed materials might be superfluous or ignored (such as prefaces or stand-alone explanations). Students were especially persuasive in their assertions that any front material in the textbook would be missed if not incorporated into exercises or evaluated activities. One interesting and unexpected discussion revolved around whether or not to include grammatical charts in an applied literature textbook. Students first asserted that charts were absolutely necessary and reported using the charts in their current textbook frequently. However, on further consideration, they came to the belief that exclusion of the charts might in fact be more helpful. They all admitted that if they had to look in a separate book each time they needed a grammatical ending, they would be more likely to memorize the endings to avoid the dilemma. This discussion was very rewarding both for the students and the instructor.

Above all, the students expressed the greatest enthusiasm for the actual pedagogical texts and model classes. The teaching sessions in which students were asked to read a new text resulted in the highest usage of Russian language by the students. When asked to engage in tasks that required speculation, students were animated in discussing their differing hypotheses. During these activities, students also interacted more frequently with each other, having conversations that did not involve the instructor. During reading activities, students at first feared that they would not be able to understand anything from the stories. However, they worked diligently to decipher vocabulary from context and to outline their understanding of the stories as they progressed. After reading the first story, each student expressed great surprise at how much they had gained just from the first read. The expansion of their comprehension on

the second pass through the story made quite a favorable impression as they felt that they not only understood what had happened, but could talk about it together. At the conclusion of each session, students expressed great satisfaction (and some surprise) in their own abilities and declared a desire to repeat the experience.

Due to the short duration of this project, it was not possible to make any determinations concerning the linguistic gains made by the volunteers. In comparison to the control group, their linguistic knowledge remained more or less at the same proficiency level. The only noticeable differences lay in acquisition of certain vocabulary words as well as the new literary experiences that the exposure to the stories had provided. These vocabulary items were unfamiliar to the control group, but were retained by the volunteer students after the reading activities. Another clear difference between the volunteers and the control group was their use of reading strategies. While the control group approached texts with decoding techniques, the volunteers attempted to get an overall picture of a text before proceeding to decipher specific words or phrases. Volunteer students were also more willing to skip through exercises and to ask questions during activities. This willingness could be attributed to a familiarity with the instructor as well as with the activities. Overall, volunteer students were able to extract more meaning from a text and to focus on content rather than decoding individual words.

The final gain measured during the feasibility test was in students' familiarity with Russian literature and authors. During the first session, students reported knowing only Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, having read segments from both authors in English classes. By the end of the feasibility test, students had expanded their personal reading experiences to

include Pelevin and Petrushevskaia. In addition, students were made aware of the other ten authors whose works comprise the proposed table of contents. Finally, students were given the "List of Suggested Authors and Texts" (see Appendix B) with works from more than twenty Russian authors. Several of the volunteers stated their intention to check out more Russian literature from the library and read some of the suggested stories in Russian.

(iii.) Statement of limitations

While the results of this feasibility test suggest that applied literature materials are a much-needed addition to current language programs, some caveats must be made. The scope of the project outlined here is limited in several capacities: number and selection of participants, length of time and valid proficiency measurements. Given these constraints, this project is meant to be only a feasibility test for the methodology and materials. The feedback that was gathered in this feasibility test advocates further exploration of both the methodology and the specific materials in a wider and more controlled environment (i.e., with a larger group of non-volunteer students). The effects of the feasibility test should be corroborated in other contexts. The results reported here, however, are considered to be an initial indicator of student interest, ability, and progress. In order to further recognize the limitations of the feasibility test and in an attempt to eliminate them in further studies, an examination of several follows.

The student participants in this feasibility test were necessarily limited to those already enrolled in a second-semester, second-year Russian language course at the University of Texas at Austin. Given both monetary constraints and the nature of this project, other universities were not involved at this time. Therefore, the scope must be considered in light of the restrictive nature of choosing only one level at one institution. In addition, although every effort was made to include a variety of students, the final data was drawn primarily from a group of volunteers. As with any study, the use of volunteers with no outside compensation presents several issues. These students are likely to be interested in the subject matter before volunteering, thereby not giving a clear

representation of what role initial interest may play in the results. There was no attempt to discover background knowledge or previous foreign language study other than anecdotally within the sessions. In addition, volunteers are typically at the higher end of the proficiency scale within any participant pool. However, based on examination of past language class performance, this stereotype was not a factor in this project as participants included well-performing as well as struggling students. The final number of volunteers was also unintentionally limited by the availability of classroom space for only one hour each week. Therefore, several students who had professed a willingness to participate were eliminated due to scheduling conflicts.

Scheduling also proved a factor regarding the duration of the project. Since the materials under consideration were developed for second-year, second-semester students, the project was forcibly on hold until those students had registered for the class. In addition, several university-wide delays affected the start of the semester, thereby compromising a week of time. The final constraint was determined by the availability of student volunteers who chose to give up their own time in order to participate. Since no compensation could be offered to those participants, it was vital to delimit the duration of the feasibility test to a manageable length. It was therefore decided that within a month's time, enough feedback on the sample texts could be gathered to merit conclusions. However, as stated earlier, this brief period of instruction did not allow for any measurable language gains. Since these gains would need a much longer period to be adequately measured, the condensed time frame provided the best compromise.

Perhaps the most important limitation of this feasibility test is in the tools used to measure the limited language gains that were reported. Although ideally a well-tested measure of reading comprehension and strategies would have been administered to both the control group and the volunteers, such an evaluation is not currently available. While there are many tests of general Russian proficiency (such as the Oral Proficiency Interview, or department-sponsored exams), none of these assessment tools adequately measure language gain due to reading exposure. In future studies, development of an assessment tool to accompany the materials will be a vital addition. For the current situation, students were asked to engage in tasks that mirrored those they had been studying throughout the project. By using similar tasks with an unfamiliar text, student ability to adapt known skills to a new environment was tested. This measure also provided the best available source of comparison between the volunteers and the control group who had received no explicit training.

Hopefully, future studies will be able to take these limitations into consideration and compensate for some of the shortcomings discovered here. Ideally, a wider test-teaching program would engage a larger number of second-year, second-semester Russian students from a variety of institutions with similar programs. By making an elective course in applied literature available for students at this level, a natural split can be made to measure a control group against students in the applied literature course. If both sets of students are given the same assessment tools throughout the semester, there will be a verifiable way to measure language acquisition differences. By promoting such a study at several different institutions, the results can be justified beyond curricular and

individual differences. Overall, a study lasting at least one academic semester should be sufficient for measuring temporal language change. Allowing for the normal proficiency gains made in a semester (and represented through the control group), estimation for enhanced proficiency can be measured. However, such a solution does not control for the problem of using only volunteers. As long as the course is an elective, students will self-select. Only by comparing two equivalent classes can that variable be removed.

Finally, including all twelve texts proposed here will reduce the possibility that any individual story will affect the results. While the above two texts provided some linguistic variety, they alone cannot be the litmus test for students' understanding of the methodology as related to all types of texts. By increasing the number of texts studied, students' techniques and strategies will become more apparent as they tackle different reading situations. The various texts will also provide a range of subject matter, thereby reducing the possible influence of background knowledge on the final results. It is hoped that the twelve texts proposed in this dissertation (see Appendix A) would serve as adequate examples of the variety necessary to continue further exploration of the methodology in the conditions suggested above.

One final limitation that has not been noted previously is the influence of the materials developer. Since these materials were conceived of, developed, and taught by the same individual, there can be no judgment for the transparency of the methodology to an outside instructor. The initial conception for the format of the materials was drawn from studies bringing video materials into the language classroom (Garza "Beyond MTV"; Garza "What you see"; Garza and Lekic) as well as other applied literature

examples (Henry, Robin and Robin; Kagan and Miller *V puti!*; Rosengrant and Lifschitz *Golden Age*). Since the author was intimately acquainted both with the methodology and the texts, there was no measure of whether or not the presentation would prove equally effective when used by another instructor. By expanding the feasibility test to a full-scale study that includes various courses at multiple institutions, this shortcoming can easily be eliminated.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

The growing demands for methods suitable to the contemporary classroom require an ever-changing outlook by students and instructors alike. Understanding the influence of technology on the learning environment is one of the first challenges faced by all language practitioners. The role of technology, however, must be considered both inside the walls of traditional classrooms, as well as in expanding the contexts of learning. As the pace of societal change accelerates, so must the flexibility of learning environments; students are already becoming more decentralized and are requiring that more of their learning experiences be self-directed and self-monitored. Methodologies such as applied literature that shift the learning directive from instructor to student fit well into the individualistic tendencies produced by the current educational situation. Especially considering the wealth of accessible information available to students through various media, techniques that allow students to be active in exploring their own interests will best benefit the needs of each individual student.

This dissertation has explored several tenets that aim to promote this type of autonomous learning environment without compromising the influence of expert instruction or community experience. Based on the personal anecdotes of Russian language students, instructors, and those who use foreign languages in their careers, reading and comprehension skills are paramount to successful negotiation in any situation. The past research of practitioners in languages more commonly taught than Russian supports these views. Especially as documented by ESL instructors, students have experienced great personal and linguistic benefit from using literary texts as tools

for language learning. In addition, when literature is a part of classrooms from the earliest stages of language learning, students are able to achieve higher levels of reading proficiency more quickly, and ultimately become more competent than students who do not interact with texts until the late stages of their language career.

The situation in Russian classrooms since the implementation of the Communicative Approach¹⁶ in the 1980s has not been favorable for applied literature. An examination of the textbooks most frequently in use in college Russian programs found a trend to relegate literary texts to intermediate-high or advanced proficiency levels. At the novice level, very few textbooks employ any texts at all, and still fewer introduce any authentic texts. While this dissertation does not disregard the natural limitations of instruction at the novice proficiency level, the fact remains that an overwhelming number of Russian students never read a single authentic text unless they are Russian majors or progress beyond the third year of instruction. As has been suggested by other language instructors and researchers (see Bernhardt; Garza; Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes), students can interact with authentic texts at different levels by adjusting the tasks required of them, not by adjusting the text itself. Through this approach, students can begin gaining the fundamental skills necessary for textual interaction early in their foreign language careers.

In order to address the need for students to be introduced to authentic texts earlier, this dissertation sets forth a plan for a textbook of twentieth and twenty-first century

¹⁶ Omaggio-Hadley cites several activities representative of the communicative classroom: "interactive language games, information sharing activities, task-based activities, social interaction, and functional communication practice" (117).

applied literature. In order to represent some of the possibilities for classroom implementation, twelve texts by different authors were chosen for a proposed textbook as well as supporting material including learning-strategies training, glossary, and further readings. These texts all met requirements of length and linguistic accessibility as well as representing each decade of the twentieth century and various Russian-speaking authors. The recommendation to present texts to students in reverse chronological order also facilitates the development of critical academic skills by replicating scholarly experience. Two of these texts were then presented as samples for the pedagogical activities that could be accomplished through an applied literature methodology. Each text placed different linguistic, cultural, and communicative demands on the students through a variety of tasks.

Finally, these two texts were examined by a group of student volunteers from a second-year, second-semester Russian class at the University of Texas at Austin during the spring semester of 2007. This group of four students met weekly for mock classes wherein the sample materials were debuted. In addition, these sessions asked students to conduct think-aloud protocols allowing the author to understand the strategies that students used as they interacted with each text. Student volunteers also offered advice concerning additional materials such as a strategies-training program, a glossary of literary terms, and a syllabus for a proposed course in applied literature. Ultimately, these volunteer students were compared to a control group of their peers on a textual analysis activity that mimicked the simulated applied literature classroom experience. The results of these activities showed little difference in proficiency gain between the two groups,

but the volunteer group did show an increased ability to strategically approach a text. The feasibility test gave rise to several suggestions for further research to be conducted in the field of applied literature in the Russian language context. It is hoped that this dissertation will thereby serve as a spark to explore the possibilities for integrating modern Russian literature into language classrooms.

Despite the generally encouraging results of the project, several disadvantages to the implementation of applied literature must be acknowledged. The most contentious problem with applied literature falls within the realm of the linguistic and cognitive challenges posed to students who are required to interact with complex language before they appear to have sufficient proficiency. Indeed, a poorly-executed reading task can easily discourage a student from continuing in a language even if that same student has had many other different types of successful language interaction. In addition, Lazar recognizes another possible disadvantage to applied literature to be found in the implied cultural content of a text. She queries, "if we do assume that a literary text in some way 'reflects' its culture, then exactly what aspect of that culture is being mirrored and how reliably" (16)? Although this issue has been peripherally addressed here through text variety, students are bound to encounter texts that contain cultural modicums that are not completely veracious. By encouraging students to keep an open mind and to continuously search for corroboration to the facts presented in a text, this perceived disadvantage becomes a new avenue to develop critical skills.

Different students and different language programs will have different needs, not all of which can be addressed through applied literature. Some of the greatest advantages

professed in this methodology, such as learner autonomy and classroom flexibility, can be detrimental in certain situations where student or instructor needs do not match with the methodology. At its core, applied literature is predicated on an interest in and enjoyment of literary texts; for some students (and instructors) this prerequisite may not be met. Other professorial and student responsibilities do not simply disappear with the inclusion of applied literature in a language program. Even for individuals who enjoy reading in their native language, not to mention those who do not, the idea of exploiting classic literature for grammar may seem misguided, even incomprehensible. Since most applied literature courses are currently electives, uninterested students naturally self-select out of these classrooms. However, if applied literature is to become common at every proficiency level in every course, there will no doubt be resistance from some students.

There is certainly justified fear as well that the freedom allowed students in an applied literature classroom will not enhance language learning, but will instead encourage students to cast off responsibility for learning grammar rules or vocabulary words. The immediacy of interactive skills such as speaking and listening can also be compromised within the framework of applied literature. However, these disadvantages, as well as other shortcomings of the methodology, should not discourage instructors from exploring the possible benefits of adding an applied literature component to any language learning environment. There is even potential to bring applied literature into foreign language classes at the high school or middle school level where increased reading

practice may have an effect on standardized tests that rely on reading comprehension skills.

The field of applied literature, heretofore seen as a rather restricted and limiting area of study, has the potential to address the needs of the ever-changing classroom. Due to the wide range of materials that can be subsumed through the applied literature methodology, instructors have the potential to engage virtually any student with any interest in communicative activities. By approaching applied literature as an avenue for addressing student needs in a pedagogically sound manner, instructors can expand the scope of their classroom to aid students in navigating the global society of the twenty-first century. Whether a student wishes to study oil fields in Siberia or the everyday life of an urban Moscow school teacher, the strategies and methods of applied literature can advance that student's proficiency in Russian.

Despite the difficulties inherent in bringing literature into the classroom, the possible benefits require that applied literature be considered as a feasible portion of foreign language learning. Although the artificial separation of language learning from literary studies is well entrenched within current academic programs, this unnecessary division should be reexamined. In the majority of university departments where foreign languages are taught, the instructors who are responsible for language classes also have a secondary specialty, such as literature or cultural studies. Students could be benefiting from both areas of an instructor's expertise; at the same time, this interaction would reinforce the understanding that language is not a separate entity from culture.

The texts and authors recommended in this dissertation represent a starting point to bring authentic Russian literary texts into an intermediate classroom. By examining the short prose publications of the twentieth century, a broad range of subject matters was included, thereby allowing any instructor to begin a journey of literary exploration. Proposing that this applied literature method be directed at intermediate students aims to raise the bar for foreign language study in the U.S., rather than discounting American students as uninterested and incapable of advanced foreign language proficiency. In advocating that students address authentic language from the outset of their language study, this methodology predicts a more profound and long-range effect on students. By giving them the skills to address difficult linguistic and cultural situations in the environment of fictional prose, they will develop the ability to negotiate real-life situations using their language and cultural skills.

The evolution of higher education throughout the course of the twentieth century marks a shift from elitist to inclusive paradigms. As the definition of classrooms, teachers, and students becomes broader, development of instructional materials will advance as well. In a period of time when more students are taking more responsibility for their own learning experiences, the role of an instructor is also expanding. No longer are instructors (in any discipline) seen as the sole source of knowledge in the classroom; rather, instructors are taking on the role of facilitator for students in navigating the paths of education. Self-directed and autonomous learning environments have become far more widespread and could conceivably replace the traditional structure of the classroom.

Within this individualistic atmosphere, flexibility and adaptability to change will become the most prized educational skills.

In the overarching field of language teaching and learning, it is vital to recall that each individual holds to his/her own goals and precepts. However, at the core of knowing a foreign language is accessibility to knowledge otherwise unavailable. For whatever reasons and in whatever ways, a foreign language learner aims to expand his/her horizons beyond their current limit. In advocating an applied literature methodology, practitioners can expand the range of tools available to advance the proficiency and skills of any language student. Indeed, whether in the field of linguistics or literary study, foreign language scholars are all faced with the task of advancing the perpetuation of knowledge from one generation of students to the next. The passing of knowledge from one individual to another will always remain the cornerstone of human communication, be it through cave drawings or podcasts. Applied literature offers techniques and strategies for exploiting communicative artifacts and strengthening the bonds between diverse individuals in a worldwide community.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Proposed Table of Contents

Что такое «Практическая литература»?

Как читать лучше

«Мост, который я хотел перейти» (2006) Виктор Пелевин

«Чарли» (2004) Василий Аксёнов

«Будильник» (1990) Людмила Петрушевская

«Русский календарь» (1989) Виктор Ерофеев

«Гибель Дергунова» (1974) Юрий Нагибин

«Водка» (1966) Владимир Маразмин

«Девичья память» (1958) Александр Вампилов

«Зеркальце» (1945) Юрий Олеша

«Маска» (1930) Иван Бунин

«Продолжение истории одной лошади» (1924) Исаак Бабель

«Дуэль» (1910) Александр Грин

«Перед лицом жизни» (1900) Максим Горький

Русско–английский словарь

Словарь литературных терминов

Что читать дальше?

Указатель грамматики

Proposed Table of Contents (trans.)

Introduction to "Applied Literature"

Introduction to Reading Strategies

"The Bridge I Wished to Cross" (2006)	Viktor Pelevin
"Charlie" (2004)	Vasilii Aksenov
"The Alarm Clock" (1990)	Liudmila Petrushevskaiia
"Russian Calendar" (1989)	Viktor Erofeev
"Death of Dergunov" (1974)	Yurii Nagibin
"Vodka" (1966)	Vladimir Maramzin
"Girlish Memory" (1958)	Aleksandr Vampilov
"Little Mirror" (1945)	Yurii Olesha
"Mask" (1930)	Ivan Bunin
"Continuation of a Story about a Horse" (1924)	Isaak Babel'
"Duel" (1910)	Aleksandr Grin
"In the Face of Life" (1900)	Maksim Gor'kii

Russian-English Glossary

Russian Literary Terms

Suggested Further Readings

Grammatical Index

APPENDIX B: List of Suggested Authors and Texts

Что читать дальше?

2000

- Аксёнов, Василий. "Чарли." (2004). *Американская кириллица: проза и стихи*. Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2004. 523–524.
- Белов, Василий. "Конфликт." (2002). *Медовый месяц*. Москва: Дружба народа, 2002. 266–267.
- Пелевин, Виктор. "Мост, который я хотел перейти." (2006). 15 ноя. 2006. <<http://pelevin.nov.ru/texts/>>.
- Попов, Евгений. "Райская жизнь и вечное блаженство." (2002). *Веселые Русы*. Санкт Петербург: Амфора, 2002. 87–88.
- Сорокин, Владимир. "Морфофобия." (2001). *Первый субботник*. Москва: Ad Marginem, 2001. 267–268.

1990–1999

- Петрушевская, Людмила. "Будильник." (1990). *Чемодан чепухи: сказки и стихи*. Москва: Вагриус, 2001. 99–100.
- Солженицын, Александр. "Утро." (1996). *На изломах: малая проза*. Ярославл: Верхняя Волга, 1998. 597–598.
- Зиновиев, Александр. "Университет." (1997). *Глобальный человек*. Москва: Центрполиграф, 1997. 80–81.

1980–1989

- Абрамов, Фёдор. "Как Лукеша свою Маньку замуж выдала." (1981). *Собрание сочинения в шести томах*. Том. 4. Ленинград: Художественная литература, 1990. 250–251. 6 том.
- Ерофеев, Виктор. "Русский календарь." (1989). *Избранное, или, Карманный апокалипсис: рассказы, повести*. Москва: Третья волна, 1993. 112–113.
- Петрушевская, Людмила. "Страна." (1988). *Бал последнего человека: повести и рассказы*. Москва: ЛОКИД, 1996. 59–60.

1970–1979

- Абрамов, Фёдор. "Две грамоты." (1977). *Собрание сочинения в шести томах*. Том 6. Ленинград: Художественная литература, 1990. 99–100. 6 том.
- Нагибин, Юрий. "Гибель Дергунова." (1974). *Ты будешь жить: повести и рассказы*. Москва: Современник, 1974. 20–21.

Петрушевская, Людмила. "Зайчий хвостик." (1975). *Чемодан чепухи: сказки и стихи*. Москва: Вагриус, 2001. 50–51.

1960–1969

Гинзбург, Евгения. "Телефонный звонок." (1967). *Крутой маршрут*. Франкфурт: Посев, 1967. 8–10.

Марамзин, Владимир. "Водка." (1966). *Тянитолкай*. Анн Арбор, Мичиган: Ардис, 1981. 36–37.

Вампилов, Александр. "Ревность." (1960). *Избранное*. Москва: Искусство, 1984. 431–432.

1950–1959

Гулия, Г. "Доктор." (1953). *Зелёные когти: рассказы, повести*. Москва: Художественная литература, 1982. 137–139.

Солженицын, Александр. "Мы то не умерём." (1958). *На изломах: малая проза*. Ярославл: Верхняя Волга, 1998. 354–355.

Вампилов, Александр. "Девичья память." (1958). *Избранное*. Москва: Искусство, 1984. 418–419.

1940–1949

Олеша, Юрий. "Зеркальце." (1945). *Избранное*. Москва: Художественная литература, 1974. 268–268.

Пришвин, Михайл. "Хромка." (1941). *Собрание сочинении в восьми томах*. Том 4. Москва: Художественная литература, 1982. 404–405. 8 том.

1930–1939

Бунин, Иван. "Маска." (1930). *Собрание сочинении в шести томах*. Ред. Бондарёв, Михайлов, и Рынкевич. Том 4. Москва: Художественная литература, 1988. 575–576. 6 том.

Ильф, Илья и Евгений Петров. "Честность." (1930). *Собрание сочинении*. Том 2. Москва: Художественная литература, 1994. 335–336. 5 том.

Олеша, Юрий. "Наташа." (1936). *Избранное*. Москва: Художественная литература, 1974. 263–265.

1920–1929

Бабель, Исаак. "Продолжение истории одной лошади." (1924). *Сочинения в двух томах*. Том 2. Москва: Художественная литература, 1990. 103–104. 2 том.

Ильф, Илья и Евгений Петров. "Башня молчания Октябрьской дороги." (1927). *Собрание сочинении*. Том 5. Москва: Художественная литература, 1994. 67–68. 5 том.

Серафимович, Александр. "Две Божиматери." (1928). *Собрание сочинении в семи томах*. Том 6. Москва: Государственное

издательство художественной литературы, 1959. 282–283. 7 том.

1910–1919

Грин, Александр. "Дуэль." (1910). *Собрание сочинения в пяти томах*. Том 1. Москва: Художественная литература, 1991. 455–457. 5 том.

Серафимович, Александр. "Проводил." (1918). *Собрание сочинения в семи томах*. Том 6. Москва: Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1959. 106–107. 7 том.

Замятин, Евгении. "Картинки." (1916). *Избранное произведений: повести, рассказы, сказки, роман, пьесы*. Москва: Советский писатель, 1989. 506–507.

1900–1909

Бунин, Иван. "Десятого сентября." (1903). *Собрание сочинения в шести томах*. Ред. Бондарёв, Михайлов, и Рынкевич. Том 2. Москва: Художественная литература, 1988. 433–434. 6 том.

Горький, Максим. "Перед лицом Жизни." (1900). *Полное собрание сочинения: художественные произведения*. Том 5. Москва: Наука, 1968. 490–491. 25 том.

Толстой, Алексей. "Иван-царевич и Алая Алица." (1909). *Полное собрание сочинения*. Том 1. Москва: Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1951. 163–164. 15 том.

List of Suggested Authors and Texts (trans.)

2000–present

- Aksenev, Vasilii. "Charli." (2004). *Amerikanskaia kirillitsa: proza i stikhi*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2004. 523–524.
- Belov, Vasilii. "Konflikt." (2002). *Medovyi mesiats*. Moskva: Druzhba naroda, 2002. 266–267.
- Pelevin, Viktor. "Most, kotoryi ia khotel pereiti." (2006). 15 Nov. 2006. <<http://pelevin.nov.ru/texts/>>.
- Popov, Evgenii. "Raiskaia zhizn' i vechnoe blazhenstvo." (2002). *Veseliie Rusi*. St. Petersburg: Amfora, 2002. 87–88.
- Sorokin, Vladimir. "Morfofobiia." (2001). *Pervyi subbotnik*. Moscow: Ad Marginem, 2001. 267–268.

1990–1999

- Petrushevskaiia, Liudmila. "Budil'nik." (1990). *Chemodan chepukhi: skazki i stikhi*. Moscow: Vagrius, 2001. 99–100.
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexandr. "Utro." (1996). *Na izlomakh: malaia proza*. Yaroslavl: Verkhniaia Volga, 1998. 597–598.
- Zinoviev, Alexandr. "Universitet." (1997). *Global'nyi cheloveinik*. Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 1997. 80–81.

1980–1989

- Abramov, Fedor. "Kak Lukesha svoiu Man'ku zamuzh vydala." (1981). *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*. Vol. 4. Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990. 250–251. 6 vols.
- Erofeev, Viktor. "Russkii kalendar'." (1989). *Izbrannoe, ili, Karmanyi apokalipsis: rassказы, povesti*. Moscow: Tret'ia volna, 1993. 112–113.
- Petrushevskaiia, Liudmila. "Strana." (1988). *Bal poslednego cheloveka: povesti i rassказы*. Moscow: LOKID, 1996. 59–60.

1970–1979

- Abramov, Fedor. "Dve gramoty." (1977). *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*. Vol. 6. Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990. 99–100. 6 vols.
- Nagibin, Yurii. "Gibel' Dergunova." (1974). *Ty budesh' zhit': povesti i rassказы*. Moscow: Sovremennik, 1974. 20–21.
- Petrushevskaiia, Liudmila. "Zaiachii khvostik." (1975). *Chemodan chepukhi: skazki i stikhi*. Moscow: Vagrius, 2001. 50–51.

1960–1969

- Ginzburg, Evgeniia. "Telefonyi zvonok." (1967). *Krutoi marshrut*. Frankfurt: Posev, 1967. 8–10.
- Maramzin, Vladimir. "Vodka." (1966). *Tianitolkai*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1981. 36–37.
- Vampilov, Alexander. "Revnost'." (1960). *Izbrannoe*. Moscow: Isskustvo, 1984. 431–432.

1950–1959

- Guliia, G. "Doktor." (1953). *Zelenye kogti: rasskazy, povesti*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1982. 137–139.
- Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. "My to ne umerem." (1958). *Na izlomakh: malaia proza*. Yaroslavl: Verkhniaia Volga, 1998. 354–355.
- Vampilov, Aleksandr. "Devich'ia pamiat'." (1958). *Izbrannoe*. Moscow: Isskustvo, 1984. 418–419.

1940–1949

- Olesha, Iurii. "Zerkal'tse." (1945). *Izbrannoe*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974. 268–268.
- Prishvin, Mikhail. "Khromka." (1941). *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*. Vol. 4. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1982. 404–405. 8 vols.

1930–1939

- Bunin, Ivan. "Maska." (1930). *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*. Eds. Bondarev, Mikhailov, and Rynkevich. Vol. 4. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1988. 575–576. 6 vols.
- Il'f, Il'ia and Evgenii Petrov. "Chestnost'." (1930). *Sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 2. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1994. 335–336. 5 vols.
- Olesha, Iurii. "Natasha." (1936). *Izbrannoe*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974. 263–265.

1920–1929

- Babel', Isaak. "Prodolzhenie istorii odnoi loshadi." (1924). *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh*. Vol. 2. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990. 103–104. 2 vols.
- Il'f, Il'ia and Evgenii Petrov. "Bashnia molchaniia Oktiabr'skoi dorogi." (1927). *Sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 5. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1994. 67–68. 5 vols.
- Serafimovich, Aleksandr. "Dve Bozh'imateri." (1928). *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*. Vol. 6. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959. 282–283. 7 vols.

1910–1919

- Grin, Aleksandr. "Duel'." (1910). *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*. Vol. 1. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1991. 455–457. 5 vols.
- Serafimovich, Aleksandr. "Provodil'." (1918). *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*. Vol. 6. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959. 106–107. 7 vols.
- Zamiatin, Evgenii. "Kartinki." (1916). *Izbrannoe proizvedeniia: povesti, rasskazy, skazki, roman, p'esy*. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1989. 506–507.

1900–1909

- Bunin, Ivan. "Desiatovo sentiabria." (1903). *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*. Eds. Bondarev, Mikhailov, and Rynkevich. Vol. 2. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1988. 433–434. 6 vols.
- Gor'kii, Maksim. "Pered litsom Zhizni." (1900). *Pol'noe sobranie sochinenii: khudozhestvenie proizvedeniia*. Vol. 5. Moscow: Nauka, 1968. 490–491. 25 vols.

Tolstoi, Aleksei. "Ivan-tsareevich i Alaia Alitsa." (1909). *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*.
Vol. 1. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1951.
163–164. 15 vols.

APPENDIX C: Student Preparatory Materials

I. Preface: What is Applied Literature?

Although you have probably spent a lot of time in your language classes reading and talking about literature, the term "applied literature" may still strike you as odd or incomprehensible. Despite knowing both words, "applied literature" means nothing to you. However, "applied literature" can easily be explained, along with what it means to have a textbook of "applied literature."

One of the easiest ways to define "applied literature" is to think of it as using actual literary works (such as short stories or poems) as teaching tools for everyday language learning activities. Different from just reading, applied literature brings a text into the classroom to teach all language skills: reading, listening, speaking, writing, and culture. Using different activities, active reading and interpretation of literature can help you recognize, become familiar with, and utilize authentic Russian language.

Literature also inherently portrays culture, allowing you to recognize, discuss, and incorporate those cultural cues into your own language. Knowing the culture that is common to all Russians can also give you a basis for conversation and discussion with native speakers. Finally, a class in applied literature will help you to find your own texts to read in the future. Applied literature will eventually allow you to read and understand the texts you are most interested in.

*II. Strategies Training*¹⁷

One of the most valuable things you can do to help yourself in your language studies is to become aware of how you approach language learning. Everyone comes equipped with certain beliefs and strategies for facing the problem of "learning Russian." By becoming aware of your own ideas and techniques, you can find out what works best for you and how to compensate for weaknesses. When reading in English or in Russian, notice how you deal with problems when faced with a word you do not know, or how you read different types of texts, or where you read. Think about how to make reading in Russian as effective as reading in English.

When dealing with new vocabulary in Russian texts, try some of the following strategies to help you decipher and remember words: link the new word to something you already know, create a memory device, or look at the text more than once. Some good tips to help link new words include finding roots (such as **ВОДИТЬ** [to drive] and **ВОДИТЕЛЬ** [driver]), finding cognates or borrowings (such as **ИНТЕРВЬЮ** [interview] or **РЕЛИГИЯ** [religion]), or even making up a sentence with the new word in it that you can memorize (**Я НИКОГДА НЕ ПЕРЕСЕКАЛ ЭТОТ МОСТ.** [I never crossed that bridge.]). You can also create memory devices like drawing pictures, acting out motions, or saying the new word aloud when you write it. Also, by looking over material more than once, you see each vocabulary word more often; preview and review your texts as often as you can.

¹⁷ *Modified from:* Blech, Annalise. "Learner Training Project." Unpublished paper. 2001.

In addition to new vocabulary, grammar is one of the areas of Russian that American students have the hardest time grasping. The case system frequently seems overwhelming, but remember, millions of people around the world speak Russian and many do so as a second or foreign language. With some effort, Russian grammar will begin to seem more natural to you. However, case endings are not going to just fall into your brain. Since you have seen all the cases already, you must make an effort to use case endings automatically and to recognize them when you see them. Since people like to learn grammar in different ways, there are many techniques for "getting" Russian grammar. Some people want to memorize all the grammar rules and only then do they feel comfortable with natural Russian language. On the other hand, many people prefer to have a sample of Russian text and try to infer the grammar from what is written. Try both approaches and see what feels best to you. Then, exploit your new knowledge by focusing your grammar on that technique in the future.

No matter what your level of Russian, there are bound to be times when you just cannot understand what you read. For many students, this is one of the most frustrating parts of learning a new language. Since you are already educated and linguistically competent in your native language, it is frustrating when you cannot do the same things in Russian. However, you can use your knowledge of English (or any other foreign language you may have studied) to help compensate for your Russian difficulties. When reading, try to focus on words that you do know and gather the rest from context. This can mean either looking for Russian roots that you recognize, cognates of English words, or using your background knowledge of a subject to understand the ideas being

discussed.

Finally, it is important to recognize the influence that your mood and your feelings have on your Russian study. Since language learning involves discovering different points of view and exploring new and challenging ideas, being in touch with your own feelings may be more important than you would imagine. In order to deal with the anxiety that can sometimes accompany language learning, try defining what your goals are for Russian, listening to relaxing music when you study, or doing relaxation exercises before a particularly stressful task. Some people also find it helpful to talk about their language learning with a friend or to keep a journal of their feelings and their progress in the foreign language.

These strategies will help each person in different ways, and some of them may not work for you. The most important idea to take away from strategy training is that there are ways to cope with the difficulties of language learning and that you can become more aware and more efficient in your learning.

APPENDIX D: "The Alarm Clock"

«Будильник» (1990) – Людмила Петрушевская

Жил–был будильник.

У него были усы, шляпа и сердце.

И он решил жениться.

Он решил жениться, когда стукнет без пятнадцати девять.

Ровно в восемь он сделал предложение графину с водой.

Графин с водой согласился немедленно, но в пятнадцать минут девятого его унесли и выдали замуж за водопроводный кран. Дело было сделано, и графин вернулся на стол к будильнику уже замужней дамой.

Было двадцать минут девятого.

Времени оставалось мало.

Будильник тогда сделал предложение очкам.

Очки были старые и неоднократно выходили замуж за уши.

Очки подумали пять минут и согласились, но в этот момент их опять выдали замуж за уши.

Было уже восемь часов двадцать пять минут.

Тогда будильник быстро сделал предложение книге.

Книга тут же согласилась, и будильник стал ждать, когда же стукнет без пятнадцати девять. Сердце его очень громко колотилось.

Тут его взяли и накрыли подушкой, потому что детей уложили спать.

И без пятнадцати девять будильник неожиданно для себя женился на подушке.

"The Alarm Clock" (1990) — Liudmilla Petrushevskaja¹⁸

Once upon a time there was an alarm clock.

He had a moustache, a hat, and a heart.

He decided to get married.

He decided to get married when the clock struck a quarter of nine. At exactly eight o'clock, he proposed to the water decanter.

The water decanter agreed quickly, but at eight fifteen, she was taken away and her hand was given to the water tap. The deed was done, and the decanter returned to the alarm clock on the table already a married woman.

It was eight twenty.

There wasn't much time.

So the alarm clock proposed to the eyeglasses.

The eyeglasses were old and had more than once married the ears.

The eyeglasses thought for five minutes and then agreed, but at that very moment, they were once again given away to the ears.

It was already eight twenty-five.

Then the alarm clock quickly proposed to a book.

The book immediately agreed, and the alarm clock began to wait for the stroke of eight forty-five. His heart was pounding loudly.

Right then he was taken and put under the pillow, because the children had gone

¹⁸ Students were not provided with transliterations or translations.

to bed.

And at eight forty-five, the alarm clock completely unexpectedly married the pillow.

(Petrushevskaja *Chemodan chepukhi* 99–100.)

APPENDIX E: "The Bridge I Wished to Cross"

«Мост, который я хотел перейти»(2006)–Виктор Пелевин

Pre-Reading

Introduction: Today's text is by Виктор Пелевин [Viktor Pelevin¹⁹] (b. 1962) and is written from the perspective of an adult remembering something from his childhood. Пелевин [Pelevin] remains one of the most popular writers in Russia today, still living and working в Москве [in Moscow]. He is best known for his novels such as *Поколение "П"* [*Generation "P"*] and *Жёлтая стрела* [*The Yellow Arrow*]. His fans are very committed to his work and there is even a website dedicated to "sightings" of Пелевин [Pelevin]. His writing is very Post-Modern and frequently rather absurd and grotesque. The story chosen here, however, is a simple musing about the changes between childhood and adulthood.

Predictions: Based on what you already know about Пелевин [Pelevin] or his works, what do you expect to read about here? О чём он будет писать? Какие идеи будут в рассказе? [What will he write about? What ideas will be in the story?] (Write a few sentences, in Russian, about your predictions.)

Context: Пелевин [Pelevin] begins this story by talking about the work of another writer, Milan Kundera. Kundera is a famous Czech writer who is known not only for his novels, but also for his writing about writing. What do you think Пелевин [Pelevin] is

trying to accomplish by mentioning Kundera? Все знают Кундери? Надо его знать? Можно понимать рассказ без Кундери? [Does everyone know Kundera? Do you have to know him? Can the story be understood without Kundera?]

Vocabulary: Пелевин [Pelevin] uses several images in this story, most notably the bridge mentioned in the title. In addition, you should know the following words:

велосипед—bicycle

шоссе—highway

речка—river

песок—sand

нынешний—present

прошлый—past

граница—border

при-/близиться—approach

¹⁹ Students were not provided with transliterations or translations.

Key Words: Based on the story, what do you think the following words mean in Russian? Give a Russian synonym, if possible.

Вопрос *похож* на мост: [A question *resembles* a bridge:]

ехал по шоссе к *каналу*: [went on the highway toward the *canal*:]

мимо проходил речной *теплоход*: [nearby a *motorboat* passed:]

Один и тот же человек: [*one and the same* person:]

я ведь не делал в жизни ничего *иного*: [I hadn't done *anything else* in my life:]

Reading Activities

Now that you have made some predictions about the story and learned some of the vocabulary that you will encounter, read through the story once without a dictionary.

Underline or circle words you do not know but try to discover the main plot of the story.

Кто *главные персонажи*? [Who are the main characters?]

Где *происходит рассказ*? [Where does the story take place?]

Когда Пелевин писал рассказ? [When did Pelevin write the story?]

Когда происходит рассказ? [When do the story's events take place?]

**«Мост, который я хотел перейти» (2006)–Виктор
Пелевин²⁰**

В одном романе Милан Кундера называет вопрос мостом понимания, перекинутым от человека к человеку. Это сравнение работает в обе стороны. Вопрос похож на мост, а мост похож на вопрос, обращённый человеком ко времени и пространству—что на другой стороне? Но бывают мосты, больше похожие на ответы.

Когда мне было двенадцать лет, я каждый день садился на велосипед и ехал по шоссе к каналу, когда-то построенному зэками²¹ ГУЛАГА. Дойдя до канала, шоссе перепрыгивало через него, превращаясь в мост, который держали две металлических дуги—мост был похож на лук, повёрнутый тетивой вниз. Под ним была полоса желтого речного песка, которая и была моей целью. Я строил из песка дома, которые разрушались каждый раз, когда мимо проходил речной теплоход или большая баржа. Часами лёжа на берегу, я видел отблеск солнца в стёклах с той стороны канала, далёкие деревянные заборы, пыльную зелень фруктовых садов. Странно, но я никогда не пересекал этот мост, хотя иногда хотел.

²⁰ See page 156 for a translation of this story.

²¹ Заключённый (прост.)

Через пятнадцать лет я снова оказался на этом шоссе – и опять на велосипеде. Я вспомнил мост, который собирался когда-то пересечь. Мысль о том, что я сделаю это сейчас, наполнила меня неожиданной радостью. Я понял: сделав это, я пересеку границу между собой нынешним и собой прошлым, и это будет значить, что тот мальчик и я–один и тот же человек. Это было бы самым настоящим алхимическим актом. Предвкушая его, я поехал медленно. Уже почти добравшись до цели, я заметил странность: шоссе расширилось и уходило вправо от того места, где лежало раньше. А потом я увидел новый бетонный мост, по которому оно теперь шло. Старый стоял в сотне метров слева–он ничуть не изменился, только участки дороги перед ним были разрушены, и с обеих сторон он обрывался в пустоту. Это было хорошим ответом.

Но у меня есть подозрение, что Лета²²–это не те воды, в которые мы вступаем после смерти, а река, через которую мы переплавляемся при жизни. Мост у нас под ногами. Но есть ли берега? Границы, по которой я иду, я не помню. Границы, к которой приближаюсь, не вижу. Можно ли говорить, что я иду

²² В древнегреческой мифологии, источник и одна из рек в подземном царстве Аида, река Забвения.

откуда-то или куда-то? И всё же меня утешает сходство жизни с прогулкой по мосту, который я отчаялся пересечь. В сущности, думаю я иногда, я ведь не делал в жизни ничего иного, а только мерил шагами этот висящий в пустоте отрезок никуда не ведущей дороги–мост, который я так хотел перейти.

Post-Reading Tasks

Contextual Deductions: Choose **five** of the words you underlined in your first reading. Without using a dictionary, do your best to estimate a definition based on context. Remember to determine the word's function in the sentence, its gender, number, and case or conjugation, if appropriate. Use roots to help you make guesses.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Summary: Write out a 4–5-sentence summary of what you understood from the story.

Don't worry about details; just try to get the gist of the story. **Что случилось?** [What happened?]

"The Bridge I Wished to Cross" (2006)—Viktor Pelevin

In one novel, Milan Kundera calls a question a bridge of understanding from one person to another. This comparison works on both sides. A question resembles a bridge, and a bridge resembles a question, addressed by a person toward time and space—what's on the other side? But there also are bridges that more closely resemble answers.

When I was twelve years old, every day I got on my bike and went along the highway towards the canal, which was built some time ago by cons of the GULAG. Reaching the canal, the highway jumped over it, changing into a bridge, which was held by two metal arches—the bridge looked like a bow, turned string-side down. Underneath there was a circle of yellow river sand, which was my goal. I built sandcastles, which were destroyed every time a motor ship or big barge passed by. Lying for hours on the shore, I saw a reflection of the sun in the glass from the other side of the canal, distant wooden fences, and the dusty green of fruit orchards. Strange, but I never crossed that bridge, even though sometimes I wanted to.

About fifteen years later I once again found myself on that highway—and again on a bicycle. I remembered the bridge, which I had decided someday to cross. The idea of doing so now filled me with an unexpected happiness. I understood: having done so, I would cross the border between my present self and my past self, and that would mean that that boy and I were one and the same person. It would be the very truest form of alchemy. Anticipating it, I proceeded slowly. Already nearly reaching my goal, I noticed a strangeness: the highway widened and veered off to the right from where it had been before. And then I caught sight of a new concrete bridge, over which the highway now

passed. The old bridge stood about one hundred meters to the left—it hadn't changed one bit, only the part of the road in front of it was destroyed, and from both sides it stopped suddenly in emptiness. It was a good answer.

But I have a suspicion that Lethe is not the water into which we are cast after death, but the river, across which we swim in life. The bridge is under our feet. But is there a shore? The borders along which I walk, I don't remember. The borders that I approach, I don't see. Can it be said that I come from somewhere or that I go somewhere? But still it comforts me, the similarity between life and a stroll along a bridge that I despaired to cross. In essence, I sometimes think that in my life I haven't done anything other than measured with my steps this empty slice of road that leads nowhere—the bridge, which I so wished to cross. (<<http://pelevin.nov.ru/texts/>>)

*APPENDIX F: Informational Survey*²³

1. Please list any Russian language courses you have taken at the University of Texas or elsewhere.
2. Why did you begin studying Russian and why have you continued?
3. What are your goals for studying Russian? Do you plan to continue after the spring semester 2007?
4. What skills or materials would you like to see taught in your Russian class?
5. Do you believe reading to be an important part of your Russian studies? Why?
6. How would you rate your reading ability in Russian [1(poor)–5 (excellent)]?
7. Are you familiar with any Russian literature? If so, please briefly list authors or titles.

²³ *Modified from:* Blech, Annalise. "Student Surveys." in "The Text's the Thing: A Case for Using Authentic Literature in Introductory Russian Language Courses." Thesis. University of Texas at Austin. 2002.

APPENDIX G: Sample Syllabus and Glossary
The Steel Age: Readings in Russian Literature of the 20th Century

Course Information:

Class hours: Twice a week in 75-minute sessions.

Required Texts:

- Packet of readings
- *A Comprehensive Russian Grammar*, Wade, Terrence, Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, 1992.
- Russian/English Dictionary

Recommended:

- *The Russian Context: The Culture Behind the Language*, Boyle and Gerhart, eds, Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2002.

Course Content: As you progress through your study of Russian language and culture, you will gradually be able to accomplish more and more complex interactions in Russian. Following three semesters of Russian study, you have already begun to understand and use the complex grammatical system of Russian and have along the way acquired a good deal of Russian vocabulary. In addition, your previous instruction has begun to introduce you to the lives and cultures found in the large region of the world we know as Russia. However, with only a few hours of Russian each week, you are still unable to converse comfortably with native Russian speakers and have found that your cultural knowledge and reading skills still do not allow you to read Russian very easily.

This course will address many of the problems you have faced in using your Russian skills so far. By adding to the number of hours each week that you interact with Russian, you will gain further familiarity with the grammatical cases and sentence structures found in Russian and will have a chance to develop this comprehension in class. Since the main content of this course is Russian literary texts, you will also be

exposed to a far broader scope of vocabulary and begin to acquire some of the words you may have seen elsewhere. Finally, by focusing our studies on exploring literature, you will be provided with a unique chance to examine the Russian culture and the lives of Russian people through their own stories. By putting all of these factors together, your Russian skills will continue to advance, preparing you to use Russian more often and more complexly in your own life.

Requirements: Given the small size of this class, each student will be responsible for a significant portion of class preparation and participation. Each student is expected to keep two portfolios. One will document the linguistic facets of your learning including any vocabulary, grammar, or usage notes you gain from the texts and our class meetings. The other will monitor your personal reactions to the texts we read. This portfolio should include your thoughts about the content of the text, including the author's purpose, the text's relevance to today, or even what your favorite scene was! Treat this portfolio as you would a "letter home" telling about the text and why it is interesting. Both your language and your reaction portfolio should be in Russian. Each portfolio will receive two grades: one for linguistic accuracy and one for content.

Your class participation grade will reflect your preparation of texts as well as your contributions to in-class discussions. In addition, every student will be the responsible "discussant" for one text during the semester. The discussant will be responsible for preparing topics of conversation and establishing the main focus for that text. Finally, each student will have an oral interview with the instructor at the beginning and conclusion of the course to mark progress. The first interview will serve to establish your Russian level at the start of the course and will therefore not be a separate grade. The final interview will serve two purposes: to determine the progress that you have made from your initial interview and to establish your Russian level at the completion of the course. The final interview will therefore have two grades, one for improvement and one for final achievement. Further details of each assignment will be distributed as necessary. The division of course credit is as follows:

Language portfolio	20%	Reaction journal	20%
Participation		Interview(s)	
In-class	10%	Progress	20%
Discussant	20%	Achievement	10%

Course Calendar:

Week 1: Course introduction. Basic texts, assignments, and assumptions.

What will we read? How will we read? How will we gain Russian by reading literature?

- **Sign up for an Initial Interview.**

Week 2: Literary introductions: Russia's great authors of the 20th century

Who will we read? Why will we read these works? What do Russians think of them?

- **Sign up for Discussant Text. Begin Reaction Journal.**

Week 3: Russia Right Now: Viktor Pelevin, "The Bridge I Wished to Cross" (2006)

What are college students in Russia reading today? What do you think of it?

- **Begin Language Portfolio.**

Week 4: Finding a Russian Voice: Liudmilla Petrushevskaja, "The Alarm Clock" (1990)

What happened after the fall of the Soviet Union? What would happen if the US separated?

- **Discussant #1:** _____
- **Perestroika and glasnost worksheet.**

Week 5: On the Brink: Viktor Erofeev, "Russian Calendar" (1989)

What happened in the 1980s in the Soviet Union? Were there early signs of disaster?

- **Discussant #2:** _____

Week 5: Détente: Yurii Nagibin, "The Death of Dergunov" (1974)

Was the USSR really calm? How did the Afghan war affect society?

- **Discussant #3:** _____

Week 6: The Space Race: Vladimir Maramzin, "Vodka" (1966)

Did Sputnik change the world? How did it effect the mentality of Soviets?

- **Discussant #4:** _____
- **View excerpt from Soviet news.**

Week 7: Freedom or Falsity: Aleksandr Vampilov, "Girlish Memory" (1958)

How did Stalin's death free people? Was Khrushchev a successful successor?

- **Discussant #5:** _____

- **Turn in Reaction Journals for review.**

Week 8: The War Years: Yurii Olesha, "Little Mirror" (1945)

Who went to war? Why does WWII evoke such patriotism? What was life like back home?

- **Discussant #5:** _____

Week 9: The Time of Stalin: Ivan Bunin, "Mask" (1930)

What was life like in the GULAG? What did it mean to be left behind?

- **Viewing of clips from *The Inner Circle*.**

- **Discussant #6:** _____

Week 10: Legend of Lenin: Isaak Babel, "Continuation of a Story about a Horse" (1924)

Who was Vladimir Ilych Lenin? Did his light stay on all night? Could the USSR afford it?

- **Listen to interviews.**

- **Discussant #7:** _____

Week 11: Revolution: Aleksandr Grin, "Duel" (1910)

What is it like to live through a revolution? What happens to the "way things used to be"?

- **Discussant #8:** _____

Week 12: Last Days of a Dynasty: Maksim Gorkii, "In the Face of Life" (1900)

Who was Nicholas II? How did it all fall apart? What was there to hope for?

- **Discussant #9:** _____

Week 13: The Steel Age: A Summation of the 20th century

What did the literature of the century prove about Russians? What's to come?

- **Discussant #10:** _____

- **Turn in final Reaction Journals.**

Week 14: Russian Language Week

- **Turn in Language Portfolios.**

*Sample Glossary of Literary Terms*²⁴

абзац	paragraph
автор	author
действие	action
драма	drama
герой/героина	hero, protagonist
жанр	genre
ирония	irony
контекст	context
литературный приём	literary device
метафора	metaphor
мотив	motif
<i>образ</i>	<i>image</i> ²⁵
<i>остранение</i>	<i>estrangement</i>
параллелизм	parallelism
пересказ	paraphrase
<i>персонаж</i>	<i>character</i>
писатель	writer
предложение	sentence
произведение	work (of literature)
проза	prose
рассказ	short story
рассказчик	narrator
<i>речь</i>	<i>speech</i>
сатира	satire
символ	symbol
сказка	fairy tale
<i>событие</i>	<i>event</i>
<i>содержание</i>	<i>content</i>
<i>сравнение</i>	<i>comparison</i>
стиль	style
страница	page
<i>сюжет</i>	<i>plot</i>
тема	theme
точка зрения	point of view

²⁴ Based in part on Rifkin (1996) and Rosengrant and Lifschitz (1996).

²⁵ Italics represent those words which students indicated as unfamiliar.

характер
художественная литература
читатель
фабула
фигура речи
эпилог

personality
creative literature
reader
plot
figure of speech
epilog

APPENDIX H: Student Homework Example

The following is the prompt given to students for a homework assignment after reading "The Alarm Clock." The student's response is given below exactly as it was submitted.

Re-creation: Now that you have read Petrushevskaja's fairy tale about the secret life of an alarm clock, try your hand at this technique. Choose an everyday item from your own life and write a short (one-page) story about what it does when you aren't around.

«Ложка»

Жила была ложка. Она молодая.

Она хорошая, большая, и деревянная ложка.

Она знала толка яркие свет магазина.

Но внезапно, она живёт в тёплом выдвижном ящике.

«Где я? Что делать?» Она думала себя.

«Алло, кто там?» спросил старый голос. «Вы новые здесь?»

«Да, Да. Где Я? Я просто околачивала, и потом кто-нибудь носил меня здесь. Я боюсь. Где мои друзья?»

«Не боются молодая ложка. Нас намерение-огромное.»

Старая ложка говорила рассказы о своей приключении.

Молодая ложка заснула с виденей тортов, супов и вкусним пиц она скоро будет встречать. [sic]

"The Spoon"

Once upon a time there was a spoon. She was young.

She was a good, big, wooden spoon.

She only knew the bright light of the store.

But suddenly, she was a living in a warm sliding drawer.

"Where am I? What to do?" she thought to herself.

"Hello? Who's there?" asked an old voice. "Are you new here?"

"Yes, yes. Where am I? I just lounged about, and then someone carried me here. I am afraid. Where are my friends?"

"Don't be afraid little spoon. To us is a purpose—huge."

The old spoon told tales of her adventures.

The young spoon fell asleep with a vision of cakes, soups, and with delicious foods that she will soon meet.

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