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COMPILATION IN THE ART OF FAZIL' ISKANDER
AND AS A KEY TO SANDRO IZ CHEGEMA

by

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Abstract

Fazil' Iskander's *Sandro iz Chegema*, an eclectic compilation, reflects the diversity of its literary age. It compiles on the thematic, stylistic, and narrative levels, combining a surface conventionality with a potentially innovative disregard for the niceties of form.

The first chapter retraces the piecemeal emergence of *Sandro* and the often contradictory critical response. The second focuses on the period's proclaimed goal of expanding into larger and ultimately epic forms. A compilative impulse based on recurrence and a quasi-oral tone is shown in the third to run throughout Iskander's work.

Chapters Four and Five compare parallel cycles with *Sandro* to demonstrate the compartmentalization effect of aphorism and autobiographical reminiscence. The final chapter discusses the I-narrator's compilative position within and without the narrated world.

This structural isomorphism, together with a vertical dynamics replacing the more familiar linear development, is considered to lend to Iskander's compilative method its own, open-ended unity.

LA METHODE DE COMPILATION DANS L'OEUVRE
DE FAZIL' ISKANDER:

VERS UNE COMPREHENSION DE *SANDRO IZ CHEGEMA*

Resumé

Sandro iz Chegema, une compilation éclectique de Fazil' Iskander, reflète le caractère disparate de son époque littéraire. Sa méthode se manifeste sur le plan thématique, stylistique et narratif; un semblant de conventionalisme s'allie ici à une négligence plutôt innovatrice des finesses de la forme.

Le premier chapitre retrace la parution parcellaire de *Sandro*, dont la critique fut également contradictoire. Le second chapitre met l'accent sur l'aspiration de l'époque vers des formes de plus en plus "larges," et finalement vers l'épopée. Dans le troisième la compilation est traitée comme une tendance globale qui, basée sur un principe de récurrence et une tonalité quasi-orale, parcourt toute l'oeuvre d'Iskander.

Les quatrième et cinquième chapitres, en comparant *Sandro* avec divers cycles parallèles, découvrent l'effet de compartimentation produit par l'aphorisme et l'autobiographie. Enfin on retrouve cette méthode de compilation dans la position de l' "auteur" à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de son monde fictif.

C'est cet isomorphisme structurel, ainsi qu'un dynamique verticale remplaçant le développement linéaire du roman traditionnel, qui prête une unité unique à la grande compilation perpétuelle d'Iskander.

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Any inaccuracies and mistakes that may exist in this study are, of course, my sole responsibility.

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Proper names appearing in the English main body of the text are transliterated according to the modified Library of Congress system, i.e. without the diacritics and ligatures required by the strict style. Exceptions are made when quoting directing from an English-language publication, preserving the system followed in the given article or book.

Citations and source references, on the other hand, are given in the original Cyrillic.

COMPILATION IN THE ART OF FAZIL' ISKANDER
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INTRODUCTION

The reader who first opens *Sandro of Chegem* confronts-- besides the sheer delight of discovery--a labyrinth of rambling tales. Plots and sub-plots weave in and out of each other in bewildering profusion and stiff competition with an even more elaborate maze of digressions within digressions. At every twist and turn along the way crowd characters from every walk of Soviet life. There are peasants both wily and wise; talking mules and stalwart oxen; feasting politicians, cautiously carousing bureaucrats and Menshevik marauders bested at tableside by the truest of toast-masters; evil dog-catchers and forest rangers; journalists in search of soft drinks, a story and some sense to it all; disturbingly precocious children enthralled by wreckers, spy movies and the unspeakable truths of the Stalinist thirties; teenaged Brezhnevites clutching cartons of Marlboroughs and dutifully chanting their well-rehearsed outrage against modernist art; store managers that philander or cool their heels ... in refrigerators; batteries of Gargantuan beauties whose combined body heat shimmers in the shade. There are detached thumbs--of mountain bandits in desperate flight from reluctant posses; mouldering bones--of potential relatives, of Lenin, of remote descendants in a hopefully postponed future; corpses to be bartered for grape vodka from Bolshevik

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guards who turn out to be "good-hearted rogues"; cast-off longjohns that long outlast the dictator who so graciously bestowed them.

There are, as well, more sober moments, and more stolid characters to convey them. A patriarch holds forth on the Mystery-capitalized for full rhetorical impact--of the peasant's love for the land. Stung to the quick by the sight of hackwork on a kolkhoz field, he wields his ever present hoe in moral indignation and in the interests of a job well done for its own sake. A saintly son of the people steps out of a genuine folk legend, reproduced in plodding detail, to deliver homily after parable on the right--and righteous--way to live. An Abkhazian writer transplanted to the "valley of valleys" in Moscow returns to his mountainous homeland to mourn the loss of his sister and, at no little length, the passing of the traditional family ethic. He is a stand-in, an all too transparent stand-in for the 'author' who recalls his mother as a young girl. Her chapter is a litany to that traditional ideal. bees must return to their hives, chicks to the shelter of their mother's wings, a toddler cousin to his mother's arms; and every buzz, cluck and lisp is made to join in an all-out assault on the reader's sympathy.

Nor does the author lose any opportunity to intervene on his own behalf and in a voice insistently identified as his own. He comments, continually, on the customs of his people, on his relationship to his characters and theirs to him as a character in his own right and as their humble "historiographer." He expounds on the trials and tribulations of a Soviet writer and author of *Sandro*; on humour, satire and truth in literature; on the ethics of history, on politics, religion and, last but not least, inter-ethnic encounters.

He exults in the diversity of the "sweet Babylon" that was the Caucasus of his youth; he eloquently bemoans its dwindling to Stalin's various mass-exile campaigns. From poking fun at the petty prejudices of any and all of its members he goes on to defend himself against the bigot's charge of intolerance,--and gets more and more deeply embroiled in a self-perpetuating monologue that masquerades as a brilliantly orchestrated debate.

The result is a composite of astonishing dimension and scope. It embraces the comic, the tragic, elegiac, satiric, idyllic and essaistic--the full gamut of tonal qualities. A generous range of thematic genres is represented, at least in miniature, by elements of a rural detective novel, an allegorically up-dated folk legend, a picaresque satire on Soviet history, a farce on contemporary Soviet mores, a family saga, a national epic, animal tales on morality and ecology, ethnographic vignettes and even lyric childhood reminiscences.

Narrative strategies of every stripe are brought into play, from first-person, relay-narration, through quasi-direct and quasi-indirect to straightforward omniscient narration. In this pre-eminently discursive work almost everyone--from the chatty I-narrator, to the garrulous Uncle Sandro, to his father's pontificating mule--yearns to tell a tale. Secondary narrators quoted directly or indirectly at identifiable length include a local party boss, a scatological huntsman, a miles gloriosus doing duty as a barman, an amorous photographer, a drunken Mingrelian, a grandmother whose advancing years oblige her to forego the more picturesque but less decorous supporting gestures to her story.

Thematically, structurally, and in generic terms as well, then, *Sandro of Chegem* presents its reader with a unique challenge.

This is the work of Fazil' Abdulovich Iskander, a writer whose own biography is a tale of diversity in and of itself. A bilingual Abkhazian, he has chosen to write, both poetry and prose, exclusively in Russian, and must continually field questions from his critics and readers on that score. 1989 marked the celebration of his sixtieth birthday and the twenty-third year in the on-going production of *Sandro of Chegem*. For the better part of a decade he had straddled the geo-political boundaries of *tam-*, *sam-* and *gos-izdat*, so that now, in the age of *glasnost*, he finds himself in yet another anomalous category well nigh unto himself: he is a 'returned writer' as well as one who never left.

In quite simple terms, *возвращенная литература* means a re-entry into the literary mainstream, an elusive notion, perhaps, but one that can be taken to encompass, first, popular appeal--a latterday, depoliticized version of *народность*,--and second, a general adherence to the more purely literary values of folk-ness, its conventionality.

On the first count: a poll of October-December 1988 placed Iskander at the top of writers then being read by "the sophisticated Moscow reader." An impressive 93% of those surveyed had his current publications in hand by the end of that year, ahead of Okudzhava (89%) and even Solzhenitsyn (84%).¹ They could chose from venues as prestigious as *Знамя*, as broadly based as *Огонек* or even as peripheral as *Работница*, where a chapter from *Sandro*

¹С. Шведов, "Что дальше?: Возвращенная литература и обретающий себя читатель," *Литературное обозрение* 1989:6, с. 62.

shared print space, and a print run of over twenty million, with knitting patterns.

On the second count: "народность" has its darker face as well-- as the conveniently vague standard by which for too many years works of a more experimental nature have been rejected by a literature officially proclaimed to be populist and accessible to all. Its influence continues to make itself felt even in today's more liberal times, as in the reverse snobbery which rejects out of hand the canons of yesteryear. This is perhaps what lies behind the perpetual search, among Western and other students of contemporary Soviet prose, for a new avant-garde to rival that of the 1920s. The feeling is summed up in a recent statement by no less a figure than Venedikt Erofeev, who maintained that "there is no crisis" in contemporary Soviet literature because there is no Soviet literature, apart from a small group of poets "trailing in the wake of the Oberiuty."¹

Against these expectations, Iskander's highly conventional choice of themes, his relatively conventional stylistic bent, would seem to offer disappointment. Yet it could be said, and indeed this thesis will endeavour to demonstrate, that he does innovate, in a most peculiar way--by drawing on the potential embedded deep within those conventions themselves, and probing deeper still, into the very underpinnings of narrative forms.

Still the question remains. where does Iskander and his *Sandro* fit into this picture, into a contemporary Soviet literary

¹Венедикт Ерофеев, "Умру, но никогда не пойму," интервью с писателем Венедиктом Ерофеевым зал. Игорь Большчев, *Московские новости*, 10 декабря 1989, 13.

process that is now more than ever burgeoning with variety? Is he, as some of his reviewers contend against their more modernist colleagues, an anomaly? Or does he, as this thesis will attempt to show, provide a uniquely rich reflection of and response to his literary times?

And the simplest question of all--just what is *Sandro*? Where does it, in sheer physical terms, begin and end? Until recently, the work existed as a hodge-podge of scattered publications, by no means all of which were identified as parts of the larger whole. Even the latest version, in the author's own admission, is far from complete. Exuberant critics, taking a cue from the popularized Bakhtinian notions that inform some of the more stimulating discussions of contemporary Soviet prose, have even struck claims on this simple textological basis for the novel's fundamental "open-ended-ness."

Apart from the potential extendibility of *Sandro*, the reader must contend as well with its present--and equally bewildering--limits. Iskander's work as a whole abounds in explicit cross-references that meander in and out of his tales knitting one and all,--it could be said,--into one vast mega-cycle of truly daunting proportions. For close to three decades these cross-references, together with the author's engaging tendency to discuss his work in progress directly on the pages of an ostensibly fictitious text, have made of *Sandro* a kind of 'do-it-yourself' novel, one that must be pieced together by the reader him- or herself from these obligingly supplied hints. What is more, these spill over into prefaces, into such mundane areas as the simple listing of chapters to be found in

other publications, into the many and most articulate interviews granted by this most accessible of writers. From yet another angle, such accessibility and popular appeal can be seen as but one facet of Iskander's own supra-sensitivity to the reception of his work, for one would be hard pressed to find any other writer so willing to engage his critics in debate right on the very pages of his work, to play fast and loose with the very boundaries of fiction and literary endeavour on the one hand, and on the other an extra-textual 'reality' that must forever defy definition but will always form the fascination of Russian prose.

The critical response itself teems with contradictions. Over the years Iskander has been interpreted as anything from a loyal Soviet writer to an outright 'dissident' to some strange hybrid of the two. His satire has been seen as either gentle or vitriolic or some vaguely if eloquently expounded cross-breed. Critics have debated any number of facets in his work in jointly published 'dialogues' arguing diametrically opposed views. Others have felt themselves obliged to reverse their own previously published opinions. Almost all have struggled mightily with the classification of *Sandro*, as a novel proper, as a Bakhtinian challenge to the entire genre system, as a "string of semi-independent tales," as a compilation.

That term too is fraught with ambiguity. At worst, it is no more than a last-ditch tag, a carpet-concealer for recalcitrant forms. At best, its investigation could possibly shed light on the literary aspirations of an age now known as "the era of stagnation."

Throughout the 1970s, as will be seen, commentators on the Soviet literary scene, either mourned the death of the novel or eagerly predicted its triumphant return. Large and small forms were continually jockeying for position in a genre hierarchy that occupied a strangely prominent place in critical concerns. As a work that grew right before its critics' and readers' eyes throughout that decade, *Sandro* cannot help but capture its straining towards the proverbial epic sweep. Perhaps that entire debate reflected a still more fundamental need--to slip beyond not only the confines of literary genre, but further still, beyond 'literary-ness' itself to unconstrained contact with the reader.

Here too *Sandro* stands out for the lengths its author is prepared to go to. Chattiness is his mark in trade. Whatever tale the first-time reader should happen to chose, from either within or without his master-work, it will overwhelm him or her by its lack of literary pretension. The stories seem to write or rather 'talk' themselves, to tumble out onto pages that can be forever reshuffled, to ramble on and on with a supreme indifference to order, editorial tidiness or length. Thus they can be seen as miniature compilations in their own right, patchwork compromises between a diffuse authorial skaz and more straightforward, even expository prose. Throughout it all there remains the nagging suspicion that this lax and loquacious author never once truly relaxes control.

Added to the chatty, a-literary author is the voice of his compilative counterpart, that of the master aphorist who looks back to the hoary tradition of well-crafted rhetoric. The two are interspliced--surely a feat that only compilation can aspire to--

throughout *Sandro*. Where the aphorist delves into the fertile ground of Aesopian under- or overstatement, he compiles on yet another level, by pitting the infamous 'sub-text' against its supposed camouflage. A similar sort of semantic compilation can be found in the many allegorical moments of Iskander, where tenor and vehicle are both extended to face each other in a frank and thoroughly exploited symbiosis.

Memoir prose, specifically that of childhood autobiographical reminiscences, is compiled into *Sandro*. The genre itself bears the potential for compilation, in its tacit overlaying of the child's 'then' and the memoirist's 'now.' This is developed to an overt extreme by Iskander. It is in this vein that he deliberately plays on such hallowed devices as 'making-strange', by forcing both the naive and the sophisticated perspectives to confront each other in starkly delineated, highly didactic contrast. Plot-snippets from past and present constantly vie for the upper narrative hand. The very basis of memoir prose--its implicit bifurcation of the central figure into both the object of narration and its subject--is challenged by their deliberate isolation one from the other and their compilative re-combination.

Finally, the author of *Sandro* confronts his own tenuous relationship to the world his ever-expanding work has spawned. The confrontation, in true compilative fashion, proceeds on any number of levels. On that of plot, he must eventually come to terms with its kinship network. On that of narrative strategy, he grapples with his status as that of observer, participant, recorder and commentator, turning each and every one of these assiduously compiled roles

into springboards for expansion. And on the deepest level of all, he reverts to the question of moral commitment, of personal loyalty to an ideal that serves as his unending inspiration.

These are the issues this thesis seeks to explore. It will investigate the growth, the breadth and the infinite potential of *Sandro*; its unique place in and supremely symptomatic response to a literary generation that emerged from the Thaw, survived a series of freezes and a spell of stagnation to stand at the head of a new and, one hopes, promising age. It will look at the novel in the context of Iskander's work as a whole by comparing its compilative method to that developed in or applied to other cycles from the same pen, and by attempting to discover what permitted and continues to fuel its organic expansion. The emphasis will be on the astonishing diversity of that work and its still more amazing, if highly idiosyncratic unity. To the latter end will be cited the unprecedented recurrence of character, incident, theme and style, crossing the lines between chapter and story, cycle and novel, poetry and prose, even fiction, non-fiction and film.

As the first full-length study of Iskander and his *Sandro*, this dissertation must also address the textological question. Its appendices trace the publishing history of the novel itself, its various compilation orderings, links to peripheral works and adjunct cycles. These, together with the body of my dissertation, are offered with a view to clearing the way towards a proper appreciation of the man and his art. For, as will be seen, the response to date has been lopsided, focusing on isolated aspects of what should rightly be treated as dramatically diverse but distinct whole.

No academic monograph can ever hope to re-capture the thrill of one's first encounter with a remarkable work of art. I set out to seek what propels Iskander's magnificently wandering prose ever onward, what beguiles the reader to follow him through its unabashed jumble of tones, periods and genres, what left me with the feeling that I had been well and truly led. 'Compilation' in all the many senses of the term that will be applied below is a working hypothesis, as is *Sandro of Chegem* and its compelling, forever compiling dialogue with the reader.

Разговор -- о книгах, а о книгах, как известно,
 можно говорить без конца.
*Фазиль Искандер*¹

CHAPTER 1

THE BACKGROUND

In February 1966, *Неделя*, the weekly supplement to *Известия* carried a short story by a fairly well established poet but recently turned to prose, Fazil' Abdulovich Iskander. 'Fairly well established' in this case and at that time meant six collections of verse, three published in his native Sukhumi of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic and three in the much more prestigious publishing houses of Moscow, as well as two volumes of short stories, both put out in the all-union capital. It also meant a certain amount of pigeon-holing: once having crossed the publishing border into the Russian Federated Republic and almost concurrently into prose, Iskander was in the latter field often relegated to the younger reader, and not only to the Holden Caulfield aficionados of *Юность* and the well-known 'youth prose' movement of that decade, but also to children of the 'middle and upper age bracket,' as his publishers at *Детская литература* recommended in their subtitle to his sixth volume of verse, *Зори земли* (1966).²

¹Фазиль Искандер, "Из любви к читателю," *Литературная газета*, 11 августа 1956, 2.

²Он же, *Зори земли: Стихи* [Для среднего и старшего возраста] (Москва: Детская литература, 1966). An early biographical note on the author reads far-reaching significance into the poetry-before-prose chronology and children's literature association of Iskander's first prose publications, starting with the appearance in 1956 of the short story "Первое дело":

In fact, until well into the 1980s this official categorization was to receive lipservice at least in a curiously disproportionate number of critical discussions of his prose. Overt indications can be found in the simple fact of their publication in periodicals such as *Детская литература*, *Семья и школа* and even *Воспитание школьников*, devoted specifically to children's literature, and in those such as *Юность*, *Смена*, *Московский комсомолец* and *Молодая гвардия* covering the range, in theory at least, from liberal to conservative tastes, from avant-garde to epigonic standards in what might be called the Soviet 'teenage market.' The notion makes a more subtle appearance among the many critics who noted and for the most part justified his penchant for "moralizing ends"¹ precisely on the grounds of the age range of his supposed reader. Greater still is the number of commentators--both Soviet and Western--who quite rightly point to the balance of lyric childhood and adult satiric themes in his work as a whole.

Рассказ был напечатан в журнале *Пионер*. Выбор журнала не случаен. Герой первого прозаического произведения Искандера -- мальчик. Он познает мир, приобщается к труду. И этот мир окрашен детскими впечатлениями, яркими и светлыми, настолько органическими, что их, будучи взрослым, смог довести до читателя только поэт. ("Фазиль Искандер," в кн. *Библиотека произведений советских писателей в пяти томах*, Приложение к журналу *Сельская молодежь*, т. 4 (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1964), 536).

A still more striking example of the tendency to read Iskander as a children's author is to be found in an article discussing the inclusion of the short story "Дедушка" in the curriculum of national schools (М.А. Плохарская и Н.И. Шапиева, "К проблеме жанрово-стилевого анализа современного рассказа," в сб. *Актуальные проблемы современной науки* (Махачкала: Дагучпедгиз, 1982), 137-38). Most typical of all is the effort to link lyricism, the purity of a child's vision and the freshness of satire, as in Беденикт Сарнов, "Часть, превосходящая целое: О прозе Фазили Искандера," *Неделя* 1972:29 (17-23 июня), 10-11.

¹See, for example, К. Ковальджи, "Сквозные картинки," *Дружба народов* 1966:11, с. 282-83; Г. Красухин, "Частица жизни твоей: О рассказах советских писателей," *Детская литература* 1966:9, с. 11; А.А. Лебедев, "Улыбнись во гневе," *Новый мир* 1966:9, с. 246-248; Ю. Смелков, "Плоды дерева детства," *Семья и школа* 1971:10, с. 49; И. Андреева, "Владелец счастья," *Детская литература* 1975:4, с. 14.

In the beginning of 1966, however, Iskander had yet to achieve the *succès du scandale* that was to burst upon him a scant six months later with the August publication in Tvardovskii's *Новый мир* of "Созвездие козлотура." For many years this was to remain his best known work both in the Soviet Union and abroad. Before its appearance, not a single critic had ventured his opinion in print of Iskander's prose, with three exceptions: in addition to the biographical note mentioned above, a scanty foreword by one A. Chernov to the 1965 appearance in *Московский комсомолец* of the short story "Урок игры в шахматы,"¹ and a brief entry in *Краткая литературная энциклопедия* (1966) that merely noted his then recent transition to a prose featuring "reminiscences, [and] colourful satiric sketches from life." Response to the "Goatibex Constellation" was swift, abundant and nothing if not lively. Iskander's reputation as a satirist was instantly entrenched: where the critics could commend or deny his much-discussed "gentle irony"² or even

¹А. Чернов, Вступ. заметка к рассказу "Урок игры в шахматы," в газете *Московский комсомолец*, 17 октября 1965, 4.

²Critical opinion on this subject would seem to fall into three categories. (1) Unqualified acceptance of Iskander's benevolence, a Horatian reading, as it were, maintained for example by И. Грекова, "Под знаком Козлотура," *Литературная газета*, 15 января 1966, 3; С. Рассалин, "Веселая проза," *Ленинское знамя* (Термез), 1 ноября 1975, 4; Carl Proffer, "Writing in the Shadow of the Monolith," *New York Review of Books*, 19 February 1976, 9; Brigitte Agna, "Iskander, Fazil Abdulevitch," in *Handbook of Russian Literature*, ed. Victor Terras (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 202; Edward J. Brown, *Russian Literature Since the Revolution*, rev. and enl. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 331. To some, Iskander's irony is even too gentle. See Михаил Геллер и Владимир Максимов, "Беседы о современных русских писателях: Фазиль Искандер," *Стрелец* (Jersey City, NJ) 1988:1, с. 16-17. Michael Scammell makes "gentle ridicule" and "whimsical sentimentality" the scapegoat for characters who "remain figures in a comic opera, all lukewarm pleasures and pale regrets" ("Dancing for the Dictator," *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 November 1983, 1215). To Sivokon', this, the single most outstanding feature of Iskander's prose, is without precedent in Russian literature; he can only conjecture that it might be traced to some "Oriental" tradition (С. Сивоконь, "Не только смех," *Семья и школа* 1967:9, с. 45).

celebrate the dawn of a new positive satire heralded by his work,¹ his readers regarded him first and foremost as a humourist--to the point where, in a story printed some three years later, "Начало" (*Смена*, 1969:19) he confronted the issue head-on:

Но вот что плохо. Читатель начинает мне навязывать роль юмориста, и я уже сам как-то невольно доигрываю ее. Стоит мне взяться за что-нибудь серьезное, как я вижу лицо читателя, с выражением

(2) Stout denial of this stereotype, insistence that there really are tears to be sought through the laughter, a more Juvenalian approach. Klepikova connects this serious content to the affirmative sublimity of folk humour (E. Klepikova, "Правда смеха," *Нева* 1971:9, с. 187); Pitliar -- to the purer vision of childhood (И. Питляр, "Невероятная история с Козлотуром," *Сибирские огни* 1967:4, с. 131). Vickie Babenko devotes an entire article to the hypothesis ("Fazil Iskander: An Examination of his Satire," *Russian Language Journal* 34, no. 106 (Spring 1976): 131-41). Arnold McMillin speaks of Iskander's "lightweight but entertaining satires" ("Russian Prose in the 1970s. From Erofeev to Edichka," *Journal of Russian Studies*, no. 45 (1983): 28).

(3) A compromise between the above: in the case of Lebedev, a reversal of the first stance in favour of the second, "repenting" his 1966 article "Улыбнись во гневе" to argue in 1987 for an evolution in Iskander's work ("Смешно сказать," в его же кн. *Обязанность жить* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1987), 177). Sidorov maintains a development within Iskander's individual tales: спокойное, в крайнем случае добродушно ироническое начало, неторопливое развитие, -- и насмешливый, язвительный финал (E. Сидоров, "Закалять душу смехом," *Литературная Россия*, 13 сентября 1974, 11). Finally, as testimony to the persistence of the "gentle" stereotype, consider the case of Vasiuchenko, who has only recently begun to doubt the entrenched image of Iskander as a "жизнерадостный талант, благородный, по-доброму насмешливый мастер" (Ирина Васюченко, "Дом над пропастью," *Октябрь* 1988:7, с. 199).

The most eloquent comment on this issue belongs to Iskander himself. When asked: "Вас считают писателем-юмористом. Как вы к этому относитесь?", he replied: "С юмором." ("Удивительный мир Фазиля Искандера: Беседа с писателем," зап. Н. Назаров, *Коммунист Таджикистана*, 14 ноября 1985, 4.) He has also indicated, without elaboration, that from an early age he has preferred the "humour of Shakespeare" to that of Voltaire; yet described his own brand of satire as stemming from "injured love," passionate and all-embracing in that its targets are meant to join in the fun. ("Коротко, но не короче истины: С Фазилом Искандером беседуют Григорий Анисимов и Марина Бондарюк," *Литературное обозрение* 1985:11, с. 37, 40.).

¹See Л. Кроячик, "Диалектика утверждения," *Полем* (Воронеж) 1967:1, с. 142. The critic takes issue with the demand that Soviet satire should portray the victory of positive over negative heroes. His argument for a moral as opposed to "plot victory" cites "Теркин на том свете" and "Созвездие Козлотура" to reveal the declarative key in which Iskander's work was then often read: "Утвердительное начало сатиры не обязательно в благополучном конце, но обязательно в четкости идейной позиции автора."

добродетельного терпения ждущего, когда я наконец начну про смешное.
[ДД: 19]¹

The story that appeared in *Неделя*, though, was wholeheartedly, unabashedly funny. It lacked the lyric-childhood aspect so prevalent in its predecessors and indeed so consistently, distinctively dominant throughout Iskander's corpus. An nonagenarian peasant, an Abkhazian, boasts of his pre-revolutionary and Civil War exploits--sexual and picaresque--to a humbly attentive first person 'author' with a trick or two up his own sleeve. The story was short--some two pages, lower columns (подвалы) at that, of newspaper print. Its 'cast of characters' was equally limited: besides the two principals, a Svanian or North Caucasian princess who could milk a buffalo and ride astride, a hotheaded young reprobate and rival to the lusty picaro, the latter's unnamed grumpy father, a passel of nameless sisters, an Armenian tobacco dealer and his family, a self-serving village scribe and a sheepish band of Mensheviks. Its time span was short: from an undefined point prior to the revolution to a similarly vague date during the hostilities in the Caucasus. Its title, in honour of the garrulous old raconteur himself, was "Сандро из Чегема."

The critics ignored it. A comparable tale, featuring a somewhat less venerable Abkhazian peasant, equally lusty--though not for the opposite sex, but for life itself--and just as anideologically cunning as the indomitable Sandro, appeared just

¹The reference is to the collection Фазиль Искандер, *Дерево детства* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1970). Appendix One lists Iskander's prose collections to date, together with the citation references used in this dissertation.

over a year later, in the April issue of *Новый мир* (1967). This time the response came quickly. "Колчерукий" was commended in *Литературная газета* (12 July 1967) as among the best pieces to appear in thick journals for that year; the Soviet-produced English-language literary monthly *Soviet Literature* managed an English translation, under the title "Old Crooked Arm" by June 1968, despite the stricter ideological and hence slower editorial procedures then obtaining in Soviet foreign-language publishing houses.¹ The respected Soviet writer Andrei Bitov singled it out for mention in his thoughtful discussion of current literary, generic processes.² And it continued to attract more critical attention in official Soviet circles well into the next decade.

In the meantime, the Sandro story had begun to grow. By June 1969, a second fragment, "Дядя Сандро у себя дома" had appeared, strangely enough, in a rather marginal publication, *Сельская молодежь*. Other relatively minor periodicals--*Крокодил*, *Неделя*, *Труд*, *Смена* (minor in the sense of exclusion from the rank of thick journals, with their traditional dominance over serious Russian letters; in a sense, then, that even excludes the widely read *Литературная газета*, which also excerpted Iskander's work)-- such publications continued to carry fragments over the next few years, some with introductory remarks penned variously by critics or the author himself, and many with subtitle-cum-genre definitions clearly

¹Based on personal experience, both with *Soviet Literature* itself, and with Progress (now Raduga) Publishers, Moscow USSR, 1979-1982. The translation, by Robert Daglish, appears in *Soviet Literature* 1968:6, pp. 67-92.

²Андрея Битов, "Границы жанра (Мастерство писателя: Рассказ сегодня)," *Вопросы литературы* 1969:7, с. 74.

indicating expansion into "larger forms," from повесть and novella to cycle all the way to the pinnacle of the Russian genre hierarchy, the novel. This development will be discussed in detail below.¹ For the moment, it suffices to note its purely external aspect: like Turgenev's *Записки охотника*, also published piecemeal and also largely ignored until those selfsame pieces were collected, physically, under one title a little over one hundred years before it, *Сандро из Чегема* the novel would seem to have relied for its impact on a cumulative effect.

Specifically as a novel, albeit a structurally most unusual one, *Сандро* 'broke the prestige barrier,' as it were, entering the more exalted echelons of the thick journals with serial publication in *Новый мир* (1973:8-11). To be sure, this was no longer the vibrant lodestar of literary opposition it had been under Tvardovskii, ousted from his editorship and, some say, hounded to his death within the two previous years,--a circumstance symptomatic of the times. It was against this background that the Soviet reader was presented with a severely truncated version of the work. In 1977, when the publishing house Советский писатель brought it out in book form, it felt obliged, for reasons one can only speculate about, to flesh out the scandalously thin volume with other, unrelated stories. Of the earlier publication, slightly exaggerating the case, the unsigned commentary to an excerpt published in a 1982 Ardis anthology claims it represented a mere ten per cent of the

¹See also Appendices Two and Three: "*Sandro* Publishing History" and "*Sandro* Compilation Orderings."

uncensored whole.¹ Carl Proffer, in his 1976 overview of the then current literary situation, offers a more conservative, and accurate, estimate of the loss: some forty per cent.² Proffer himself printed the first full Russian version (Ardis, 1979) which together with its supplement, *Новые главы* (Ardis, 1981), Iskander until recently considered the most accurate, if not to say canonical version.³

External political circumstances notwithstanding, the fact remains that *Sandro* attracted significant critical attention, both at home and abroad, only as something more, in terms of length and genre labelling, than the short story which served as its original impulse and which entered all subsequent versions virtually unchanged to serve as the centrepiece of a work bearing its name, its spirit, and as shall be demonstrated, its primary principle of complementary overlaying. Whereas the editorial board of *Новый*

¹Carl Proffer and Ellendea Proffer, eds., *Contemporary Russian Prose* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1982), xx.

²Proffer, "Writing in the Shadow," 9.

³Fazil' Iskander, interview by author, Moscow USSR, 19 February 1988. Where possible, text citations will refer to these two editions, as the most widely available. *Сандро из Чегема* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979) as 1979: page number, and *Новые главы* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981) as 1981: page number. It was at this interview that Mr. Iskander kindly gave me a chapter listing for a more current version of *Sandro*, which this dissertation has followed for chapter numbering. There are, unfortunately, slight divergences from the most recently published version, that put out by the Московский рабочий house after considerable delay only towards the end of 1989. For these I must beg the reader's indulgence--keeping abreast of this on-going, organic growth is an on-going challenge.

An interview appearing in the interim indicated work in progress on chapters never before seen in print ("Если остановимся, нас понесет назад: беседа с Фазилем Искандером," *Московские новости*, 12 марта 1989, 16). The thought is repeated in the Author's Foreword to the 1989 version (vol. 1: 4-5). Thus, strictly speaking, there is no canonical version of *Sandro from Chegem*. It will be the task of this dissertation to demonstrate that there can be no such thing. In the meantime, faute de mieux, Appendix Two traces the novel's chapter-by-chapter piecemeal publication, while Appendix Three displays their various compilation orderings.

мир lost no time in recommending, persistently if fruitlessly, "The Goatibex Constellation" for the USSR State Prize (1967:l, 1968:l), no such honour was then accorded *Sandro*,¹ which continued to languish, as it were, on the periodical fringes mentioned above. In 1970 the newspaper *Труд* awarded second prize in its annual contest for the best story published in its own pages to a fragment of what was to become the chapter "Дядя Сандро и его любимец" and,-- more germane to the present discussion,--what was specifically labelled as belonging to a cycle (Из цикла "Рассказы давних лет"). The same newspaper granted first-place honours in its 1973 and 1975 competitions to "Дядя Сандро и зубной врач" (yet another part of the chapter "Дядя Сандро и его любимец") and "Дядя Сандро и пастух Кунта" (later incorporated with major alterations into the final chapter "Дерево детства").² Again, what is of interest to this argument is the fact that the former was explicitly identified as belonging to a larger work ("Из цикла новелл о приключениях дяди Сандро из Чегема"), while the latter's publication came after Uncle Sandro had, thanks to the 1973 *Новый мир* serialization, been officially and physically established as the central figure of a full-flown novel.

To be sure, literary prizes, whether state or single-publication, serve more as a barometer of political rather than aesthetic pressures. Turning to the slightly less politicized area of

¹The novel has at long last been proposed for the 1989 State Prize. See *Московский комсомолец*, 21 мая 1989, 2.

²Prizes announced in *Труд*, 31 December 1970, 1 January 1974, and 1 January 1976, respectively. In a May 1989 interview, Iskander confirmed the rumour that "Goatibex" had been dropped from the competition in retaliation for his having signed a letter of protest. He does not recall the specific issue ("Глоток кислорода," интервью с Фазилем Искандером зап. Петр Сливак, *Московский комсомолец*, 21 мая 1989, 2.).

critical articles and reviews, the cumulative effect of integrating individual anecdotal tales under the all-powerful rubric of 'novel' is immediately evident. No fewer than eight articles on the work were to follow its appearances in *Новый мир* and the Советский писатель lists, in the space of some four years.¹ Now this figure is by no means outstanding in absolute terms, but it does gain considerably in significance when set against the one lone article, actually three paragraphs of introductory remarks, vouchsafed a chapter published separately *after* the 1973 turning point and concerned mainly with reminding the reader of its link to the novel.² Compare the attention inspired by such separate shorter publications as that of "Созвездие Козлотура" (fourteen articles in three years) or "Колчерукий" (four articles over a similar timespan).³

Outside the Soviet Union, particularly in the United States, thanks to the efforts of Carl Proffer, the difference in pre- and post-novel response also gives pause for thought. To tackle first the more immediate area of translation: by 1982 versions had appeared in Bulgarian, German, Polish, Turkish, French, Czech and Swedish;⁴ closer to home, Susan Brownsberger produced an admirable translation in two volumes (1983, 1984).⁵ Once again,

¹Listed chronologically in З.Б. Михайлова, *Фазиль Искандер: Библиографический указатель* (Ульяновск: Библиотека Профсоюз, 1982), 87.

²Е. Клепикова. "О рассказе Фазиль Искандера «Чегемские сплетни»: [Примечание к публикации рассказа]," *Аврора* 1975: 7, с. 29

³Listed chronologically in Михайлова, *Библиографический указатель*, 83-84, 85, respectively. It should be noted, however, that "Колчерукий" is included in the 1988 projection of the novel (see app. 2).

⁴*Ibid.*, 141-42.

⁵Fazil Iskander, *Sandro of Chegem*, trans. Susan Brownsberger (New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, and Ardis, 1983) and *The Gospel According to Chegem: Being the Further Adventures of Sandro of Chegem*,

comparison with "Old Crooked Arm" would indicate that this is not simply a matter of length: its translation by Robert Daglish in *Soviet Literature*, mentioned above, was followed by two separate renderings.¹ To date, the only tale from *Sandro* to have been offered on its own to an English-reading public is "Belshazzar's Feasts," in an anthology which explicitly identifies the tale as "one of the twenty-one currently existing chapters" of that novel.² It would appear that only the Bulgarians have presented a fragment ostensibly independent of the larger work.³

The critical response, in English, presents a much motlier picture. "The Goatibex Constellation" would seem to be the novel's chief rival in this field. It attracted the attention of Deming Brown, in his presentation to the Seventh International Congress of Slavists (Warsaw, 1973), as well as in his book *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin* (1978), inspired a masters' and doctoral thesis (1971 and 1975), discussion in *The Russian Language Journal* (Spring 1976), and, following its Ardis translation (1975), a blistering review in *Books Abroad* (Autumn 1976).⁴ Even as late

trans. Susan Brownsberger (New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, and Ardis, 1984).

¹Fazil Iskander, "Kolcheruky," trans. Marcia Satin, *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, no. 5 (1973): 165-89. Reprinted in *The Ardis Anthology of Recent Russian Literature*, ed. Carl Proffer and Ellendea Proffer (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1973), 165-91. As "Old Crooked-Arm," *Afro-Asian Writings* (Cairo) 1, no. 4 (January 1970): 95-115.

²Fazil Iskander, "Belshazzar's Feasts," trans. Susan Brownsberger and Carl Proffer, in *Contemporary Russian Prose*, 335-378. The identification with *Sandro* is noted in the foreword (xx). "A Sexy Little Giant," trans. Carl Proffer, in *Metropol: A Literary Almanach*, ed. V. Aksyonov and others (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 322-58 represents what is now Chapter 24 of the projected version of 1988 (see app. 3).

³Ф. Искандер, "Чичо Сандро и черният лебед," *Пламък* (София) 1976:10, с. 192-201.

⁴Deming Brown, "Narrative Devices in the Contemporary Russian Short Story: Intimacy and Irony," in *American Contributions to the Seventh*

as 1986, in a study of *Soviet Fiction Since Stalin*, "'Goatibex" eclipsed *Sandro* entirely.¹

With respect to the novel itself, Carl Proffer characterized Iskander as "in many ways the most translatable and transportable of Soviet writers, in spite of his provincial subject matter."² Western reviewers placed the book alongside classics of both Russian and European satire, the epic, Faulkner and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.³ The staggered release of the two-volume Russian version received mention in *World Literature Today*.⁴ Olga Matich's review singled out the Stalin chapter excerpted in *Contemporary Russian Prose* for some insightful, if cursory comment on reader response.⁵ Loseff's study of Aesopian language

International Congress of Slavists (Warsaw: August 21-27, 1973), ed. Victor Terras, vol. 2, *Literature and Folklore* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), 53-74. Idem, *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 206-209. Craig Newell Packard, "Contemporary Soviet Satire: Fazil Iskander's *Sozvezdie Kozlotura* (M.A. diss., Ohio State University, 1971). Idem, "Contemporary Serbian and Soviet Satire: Erih Kos and Fazil Iskander" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1975). Babenko, "Fazil Iskander." Byron Lindsey, review of *Goatibex Constellation*, by Fazil Iskander, trans. Helen P. Burlingame, in *Books Abroad* 50, no.4 (Autumn 1976): 905-906. Lindsey panned the work in no uncertain terms ("a trivial socialist satire with an Abkhazian soul").

¹Rosalind J. Marsh, *Soviet Fiction Since Stalin: Science, Politics and Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 219. The focus on the Lysenko theme accounts for the omission of *Sandro*.

²Proffer, "Writing in the Shadow," 9.

³Herbert Gold, "Satire Survives in the Soviet Union," *Los Angeles Book Review*, 24 April 1983, 1. Susan Jacoby, "An Abkhazian Mark Twain," *New York Times Book Review*, 15 May 1983, 9. Jeri Laber, "Caucasian Collective Circus," *New York Times Book Review*, 10 June 1984, 9. Scammell, "Dancing for the Dictator," 1215. Carl Senna, "A Writer Who Captures the Russian Character," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 September 1984, 22.

⁴Margot Frank, review of *Sandro iz Čegema: novye glavy*, by Fazil Iskander, in *World Literature Today*, 56(Spring 1982): 360-361.

⁵Olga Matich, review of *Contemporary Russian Prose*, ed. Carl Proffer and Ellendea Proffer, in *Slavic Review* 43, no. 2 (Summer 1983): 328.

dealt briefly with several episodes, and a 1986 doctoral dissertation included it in a treatment of Soviet satirical devices.¹

To date, however, there has been no study, in English, devoted exclusively or even primarily to what Carl Proffer described as "the major work of Iskander's life," noting the "epic, universal quality of his writings."² Iskander himself considers *Sandro* to be his "central [...] work," his "main creation."³

Russian-language critics, operating until recently under quite different restraints, have been much more active in this area. Natal'ia Ivanova in a November 1988 issue of *Литературная газета* produced a full-page article on perestroika publications of chapters omitted by earlier Soviet editions, where she indicated a forthcoming monograph on Iskander's oeuvre.⁴ Many of her arguments, curiously enough, echo key points in the exuberant articles on *Sandro* by the emigré team of Vail' and Genis.⁵ Another team, representing both East and West but publishing only in the latter, has studied the Faulkner and Marquez connections obtaining

¹Lev Loseff, *On the Beneficence of Censorship: Aesopian Language in Modern Russian Literature*, *Arbeiten und Texte zur Slavistik*, ed. Wolfgang Kasack, no. 31 (Munich: Otto Sagner, 1984), 90-91. Karen Lee Ryan-Hayes, "Soviet Satire After the Thaw: Tvardovskij, Solzhenicyn, Vojnovič and Iskander" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1986).

²Carl Proffer, "A Disabled Literature," *The New Republic*, 14 February 1981, 27.

³Искандер, "Глоток кислорода" (интервью), 2.

⁴Наталья Иванова, "Сон разума рождает чудовищ," *Литературная газета*, 2 ноября 1988, 4. See also her interview, Фазиль Искандер, "Неизвестный Сандро.: С прозаиком Фазилем Искандером беседует литературный критик Наталья Иванова," *Московские новости*, 10 июля 1988, 11. The monograph has been announced by the Советский писатель house as slated for release under the title "Смех против страха" for the second quarter of 1990.

⁵Петр Вайль и Александр Генис, "Сталин на чегемском карнавале," *Время и мы*, no. 42 (июль 1979): 151-69. Они же, "Дядя Сандро и Иосиф Сталин," глава в их же кн. *Современная русская проза* (Ann Arbor: Эрмитаж, 1982).

in the novel.¹ From Moscow, two "candidate's" dissertations defended in the past three years have begun at last to place Iskander in the context of the Abkhazian tradition, comic and narrative.²

Whatever the external ideological circumstances impinging on both critical and scholarly response in any language or on either side of the East-West divide, the fact remains that Iskander's patchwork novel has from the outset been consistently treated as an integral though idiosyncratic whole, and this despite the fact that each of the components in this "series of semi-independent tales"³ would seem to be so eminently detachable from that same, supremely loose structure. "Semi-independent" they are, with a true vengeance: individual chapters, parts of chapters, separate plot incidents, even digressions--("Рукопожатие: вместо рассказа," printed in *Неделя* (16-22 January 1978), a Sternian *tour de force* from the chapter "Кутеж трех князей на зеленом дворике"⁴--have for one reason or another--publishing convenience, Iskander's 'creative method' and perhaps sheer frustration with the censors--have all appeared and continue to appear separately. All the more astonishing, then, is Iskander's achievement. For surely no other

¹Борис Брикер и Пер Дальгор, "Самро из Чегема и магический реализм Искандера," *Scando-Slavica* 30 (1984): 103-15.

²Е.В. Кобахия, "Национальное своеобразие комического и художественные средства его воплощения: На материале абхазской литературы" (Автореф. дисс. ... канд. филол. наук, Ин-т мировой лит. им. А.М. Горького, 1986). Т.Ш. Джоуа, "Формы повествования в современной абхазской прозе: Автор-повествователь-герой," (Автореф. дисс. ... канд. филол. наук, Ин-т мировой литературы им. А.М. Горького, 1987).

³Proffer, "A Disabled Literature," 30.

⁴Corresponds to 1979: 527-35. See app. 2, no. 25. This 'handshake monologue,' with its spiralling interweave of pseudo-concessives and qualifications, represents expansion on a major scale of Iskander's qualification technique.

writer working so persistently in the short-story,--the *малая форма*--mode, has ever produced and published a work piece by piece over a period now entering its third decade, managing all the while to maintain in his international audience the conviction that we are participating in the creation of a single major work, the *большая форма* par excellence: a magnum opus.

Its dimensions are now truly enormous. In concrete terms: the two-page story of 1966 swelled, according to Natal'ia Ivanova's calculations, to one hundred and fifty pages in *Новый мир*, to 800 pages of small print in the uncut Ardis version.¹ The three-volume edition of 1989 totals thirty-two chapters, as against the twenty-one encompassed by Proffer's effort. Its cast of characters now numbers, to quote the cliché, in the thousands, including a delightfully confusing interweave of Sandro's kith, kin and fellow villagers, historical figures overtly incorporated à la Walter Scott, from an 'Abkhazified' Nicholas I obsessed with a Caucasian sense of family honour and a similarly pre-occupied Lenin (1981: 60-64), a Trotskii more interested in the joys of hunting wild goats than defending the permanent revolution (1979: 553), a Beria who unwittingly shares the favours of an attractive, latterday lady *without* a dog with a boardwalk Abkhazian photographer,² a doddering Voroshilov cherished for his post-Khrushchevian fidelity

¹Иванова, "Сон разума," 4.

²"Маленький гигант большого секса," first published in the ill-fated almanach *Метрополь: Литературный альманах*, ред. В. Аксенов и др. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 381-443. For other publications see app. 2, no. 24. In 1988 this became the title piece of a pot-pourri of themes from Iskander's prose and verse, including several incidents from *Sandro*, compiled by Евгения Каменьковича and mounted by Moscow's Hermitage Theatre (Spring 1988).

to Stalinist ideals while his granddaughter teaches modern dance (the twist?) to lesser Party officials... (1979: 427-29). This list culminates in the figure of Stalin, the bankrobber and murderer of the 1910s, the feaster in his heyday familiar from Allilueva's memoirs, the older tyrant in physical decline who distributes the largesse of his cast-off long winter underwear while literally deciding the fate of nations. On the local, Abkhazian scale, real-life persons in power are either explicitly identified by name (Nestor Lakoba and family) or supplied with tantalizingly transparent pseudonyms (Abesalomon Nartovich for a local party secretary,¹ and "Roi Roison," whose visit to the "sunny, hospitable autonomous republic" readily exposes him for the black American singer, Paul Robeson (1979: 478-87). On an entirely different level, Iskander even gives us a glimpse of God, retreating with drooping wings in some thankfully postponed future (1979: 365-67).

Time too is elastic, stretching back from the original tale's dual perspective of pre-revolutionary and Civil War reminiscences set in a 1960s present, via the memories of an older generation, Sandro's parents, to the Abkhazian national tragedy of the 1840s-1860s, the *маладжирство* or Turkish exile that decimated the Abkhazian people and eliminated entirely their cousins, the *убыхи*, their language and their very culture.² In what will surely

¹Fazil' Iskander, interview by author, Tape recording, Moscow, 21 May 1988. Compare the Gogolian disclaimer in Iskander's "Море обаяния": "Я разработал целую систему маскировки своих литературных прототипов. [...] Все равно узнают или, что еще хуже, выискивают кому-нибудь, что он узнан и оклеветан при помощи правды" (*Юность* 1988:2, с. 34). Self-identifying prototypes create comic chaos in *Sandro* (1979: 494-97).

²Extensive migrations, prompted by dissatisfaction with the Russian annexation of 1864 and misleading promises by coreligionists in Turkey,

remain in a stable position as the final chapter of the work, "Дерево Детства," reference to the Great Wall of Abkhazia, built in the sixth century A.D., takes us back to another era of dependence on a larger power, when Abkhazia was a vassal of the Byzantine Empire.¹ Inclusion of the chapter "Джамхух: Сын Оленя" extends the temporal scope further still, to a folkloric past impossible to date in calendar years, but indisputably associated with a golden age when this ancient people were confident of their ethnic integrity and just beginning to experience contact with other cultures. In the opposite direction, expansion on the author's plane carries the novel into the eighties, and, in the philosophical digression on God mentioned above, into a misty apocalyptic future for the whole of humanity.² Geographical expansion operates, not on the

took place in 1858-64, 1870 and 1877. For a literary treatment of this theme, one of particular interest by way of contrast with Iskander's low-key handling, see Б.В. Шинкуба, *Последний из ущелий* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1976). Whereas the tragedy in Iskander's work is evoked only once, in the chapter "Большой день Большого дома," and otherwise allowed to hover over the novel as the emotional impulse behind the larger scheme of national identity and agony over its decline, Shinkuba deals directly and exclusively with the death of an entire people. Iskander reviewed his compatriot's work for the central press in "Голос абхазских ущелий: Рецензия на кн. Б.В. Шинкубы *Песнь скалы*," *Литературная газета*, 18 ноября 1965, 2.

¹Fazil' Iskander, interview by author, Moscow, 19 February 1988, where Mr. Iskander confirmed this hypothesis, even while outlining chapters still in composition, i.e. not included either in his 1988 projection or in the 1989 edition. By deferring any mention of the connection between the Great Wall and Chegem, Iskander heightens the effect of its nostalgic overtones: the monument is shown in ruins, by the remnants of the 'Big House' of the family's patriarch.

²Katerina Clark comments on expanding the chronotope of socialist realism in the 1980s. In her interpretation, the movement is towards expanding the severely restricted time and space coordinates of Stalinist fiction via the introduction of the "infinitely distant past of folk legend or the distant future [...]" In both cases, the "old Stalinist time frame" preserves its essential contrast with "contemporary Soviet reality." ("Political History and Literary Chronotope: Some Soviet Case Studies," in *Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case Studies*, ed. G.S. Moser (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 244.

surface, as in the preceding categories of character and time, but rather on a "deep level" structure, to borrow, loosely, the Chomskian terms. On the surface level: the original locus of the mountain village Chegem shifts to Mukhus (for Sukhum, the authentic Abkhazian form of the name of the republic's capital, as opposed to the 'Georgified' Sukhum_i) and further afield, to Moscow itself. The series 'village--town--megalopolis' comes into its own, however, on the deep level, with the development of the interlocking themes of 'rural/urban,' 'older/younger' and 'Abkhazian/Russian' confrontation.¹

The final, ethnic component of this homologation stands as one of the linchpins of the awesomely sprawling construction that *Sandro of Chegem* has become. For surely no overview of this work would be complete without consideration of the Endurian theme. First, the author's own assessment of 1987:

Эндурцы абсолютно выдуманная нация, при помощи которой я в самом начале работы над *Сандро* пытался высмеять национальный предрассудок.

¹A comment by Iskander on the effect of his choosing Russian over Abkhazian as his literary language reveals the interlocking of the mountain/valley and Abkhazian/Russian (or Russified) terms: "Абхазский язык -- язык горного народа. Русский язык -- язык долинного народа. Возможно, сам того не замечая, я вношу в свой русский язык некоторую излишнюю эвергию, призванную перекриковать шум горных рек и водопадов." (Искандер, "Короче, но не короче истины" (интервью), 38-39.) Such spiralling "isotopies complexes" (A.J. Greimas, *La sémantique structurelle* (Paris: Larousse, 1966), 97) and the intertextual polyvalences they establish, of course, reflect a universal function of literary texts in general. Unique to Iskander, however, is their incredible surface proliferation, both within *Sandro* and without, knitting the entire body of Iskander's writings into one vast 'megatext,' as it were, and prompting the suspicion that such isotopic or paradigmatic energy virtually replaces, if not actually impedes, the more familiar linear, or syntagmatic strategies (e.g. plot continuity, character development) for text unity. Some hint of the straightforward, declarative orientation of Iskander's prose (and indeed verse) permitting this kind of 'clearing the decks' for interminable homologation, is to be seen in the statement above, where the simple copula constructions are extended, not developed, into an eloquent metaphor.

Но теперь я понимаю, что это не только образ национального предрассудка, но это и образ всякой нечестивости, и образ рока, сниженный иронией автора до уровня мировой глупости, готовой завоевать нас, и наша собственная глупость внутри нас. То есть, наш внутренний эндурец, склонный собственные глупости сваливать на козни внешнего эндурца. Из этого опять же не следует, что внешнего эндурца нет.¹

Iskander's definition bears witness to the remarkable tension underlying this concept, a tension operating on the extra-literary plane of interaction between the author as a public figure, his contemporary readers and the text as a public document of moral purport. While Iskander is by no means the first Russian-language writer (for his work partakes as well of a specifically Russian tradition) to find himself drawn into an extra-literary debate, he surely stands out for sensitivity, in purely literary terms, to his reader's reactions, not only engaging in literary polemic in the text itself, but showing himself as an author-agent face-to-face with, to coin a term, a reader-agent. The passage from "Начало," quoted above, is a case in point. And the Endurian theme, the search for possible prototypes for these universal 'bogeymen' has excited an all but prurient interest among his readers. "Эндурцы -- мистика национального предрассудка," wrote Iskander in his "Foreword" to the novel (1979: 8). The term itself, he declared in a 1988 public appearance, originated in a childhood playtime fantasy, one of two battling mythic peoples, the эндурцы and the кенгурцы, and nothing

¹Iskander's response to his critic Lebedev in a monograph that parallels in miniature the compilation method of the novel itself. It incorporates an earlier article, "Улыбнись во гневе" (1966), as well as a review of several of Iskander's Soviet prose collections, entitled "Смешно сказать" (*Литературное обозрение* 1984:10, с. 53-56). The title of the latter effort is then applied to the monograph, which includes an 'interview on paper' with Iskander. The final version is to be found in Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), from p. 205 of which Iskander's definition is cited.

has so disappointed him as the persistent attempt to force upon it any narrower reading.¹ 'Endurians' have been interpreted to represent "Russifiers" imposing a foreign culture on the smaller nation, an interpretation based on the author's citation of the rumour that

эндурцы захватили власть в Москве. [...] при этом говорится, что одной из первых реформ, которые эндурцы проведут в ближайшее время, -- это объявление всех народов нашей страны эндурцами [...].²

The interpretation, however, manages both to cite and, ultimately, ignore the author's ironic treatment of these rumours. From a different perspective, a Western reviewer detects in the theme a more contemporary ring, one which ridicules "excessive Muscovite fears about Chinese invasion and semi-fantastic neighbors."³

The emigré critic Iverni, with more finesse, construes the term as "simply other people, belonging to a different nation,"⁴ -- raising the issue to the universal problem of inter-ethnic confrontation and respecting Iskander's delicate, tactful treatment. Her ex-compatriot Lebedev goes further still, to read into the novel a vast symbolism of worlds and anti-worlds (Chegemia and Enduria).⁵

Abkhazian readers, in private conversation at any rate, are more prone to point to the Georgian threat, and alternatively, that posed by their Mingrelian neighbours. This latter association, at

¹Фазиль Искандер, Творческий вечер, Московский государственный университет, Москва, 26 марта 1988. *Сопраге* 1989/1: 4.

²Брикер и Далгор, "Сандро из Чегема и магический реализм," 107. Citing from 1981: 33. Loseff, *On the Beneficence*, implies the same interpretation (91).

³Frank, review of *Novy glavy*, 306.

⁴Вioletta Иверни, "По ту сторону смеха," *Континент*, no. 21 (1979): 357.

⁵Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 220.

least, has some basis in fact. Compare the following passage from the 1966 *Неделя* variant:

В те времена он [дядя Сандро] считал, что все меньшевики зугдидского происхождения. Конечно, он знал, что у них есть всякие местные прихвостни, но сама родина меньшевизма, самое осиное гнездо, сама идейная пчеломатка, по его мнению, обитали в Зугдиди. (23)

All subsequent variations substitute Эндурск and the related adjective for Zugdidi, the regional administrative centre most heavily populated by Mingrelians.

Abkhazian/Mingrelian tensions may well have served as the original model for the Chegem/Endursk rivalry, but the theme of prejudice, mistrust, and its corollary, self-vaunting chauvinism, is from the outset handled with such 'gentle irony' (with all the implications of a second perspective that irony inevitably bears), as not only to challenge Uncle Sandro's contention that the Endurians were parachuted into Abkhazia even before the invention of the airplane, but even to tease the would-be witch-hunting reader. Consider the hilarious episode in which the author loses a bet with the old man that eight out of ten bureaucrats on any floor of an administrative building will turn out to be of Endurian origin (1981: 29-33). More to the point, recall the fact that the entire parachutes-and-bureaucrats debate is placed in a chapter subtitled

¹Comparison of pre-perestroika and perestroika publications of the chapter "Дядя Сандро и его любимец" reveals some adjustment on this theme. Uncle Sandro blames the pratfall he suffered after a local celebration on an Endurian neighbour (1979: 286), in the latter version--"an Abkhazian Endurian" (*Знамя* 1988:10, с. 60). Subsequent references to "the Endurians" (e.g. 1979: 287) are softened to an ethnically indifferent "они" (*Знамя* 1988:10, с. 60-61). A passage in the 1989 edition identifies the Mingrelians openly with Beria and the enforced 'Georgification' of Abkhazia (1989/2 160). Alternatively, the Endurian label can be applied to any form of chauvinism, ethnic or ideological, as in the re-working of an all too well-known slogan as "Эндурское -- значит отличное!" (1989/1: 4; 1989/2: cover).

"The Endursky Enigma," where the cunning defender of racial purity is outfoiled: having instructed his sweetheart to inform her princely suitor she carries the taint of Endurian blood, he is dumbfounded to learn that the wife he won by such subterfuge was simply telling the truth.

These and similar incidents scattered throughout the novel fuel the temptation that the Endurians are an identifiable--either ethnic or social (bureaucratic)--group, the "external Endurian" Iskander keeps perpetually in reserve.¹ Without them, there would be no basis for the "internal Endurian," as unidentifiable as he is pernicious. Evidence for the latter is to be found in Kiazym's description of Sandro as "the world's first Endurian." Yet even here, the judgment is instantly qualified: "Нет, второй. Первый в Москве сидит"--which Aesopian flirtation with anti-Stalinism is then immediately qualified again, as Kiazym, in his cups, claims he is the world's sole remaining non-Endurian and continues:

-- Но иногда мне кажется, [...] что я тоже эндурец. [...] Потому, что не у кого спросить, эндурец я или нет. Кругом одни эндурцы, а они правду тебе никогда не скажут. А чтобы узнать, превратился я в эндурца или нет, нужен хотя бы один неэндурец, который скажет тебе правду. Но второго неэндурца нет, потому я иногда думаю, что я тоже стал эндурцем. [1981:124-25]

Thus, the Endurian theme represents a masterful interweaving of all possible levels of irony, ranging from the verbal or Aesopian (Stalin), through the situational (Sandro's marriage, the wager), to the dramatic (the author and reader aligned against the magnificently illogical Sandro and his parachutes) to a structural

¹He even extends the concept to the intelligentsia, or rather that part of it which has succumbed to modern pressures and thus earned the name "эндурешия" (1981: 34-35).

irony that toys with all of these, dangling on-again, off-again identifications before the reader's nose.¹ Moreover, it embodies a key feature of his style: the emblematic use of the concrete for the abstract, universally significant. The author's introduction to the 1979 Ardis edition illustrates the point:

История рода, история села Чегем, история Абхазии и весь
остальной мир, как он видится с чегемских высот, -- вот канва замысла.
[1979: 5]

It is this 'zoom-out' pattern which would seem to have powered the compilation process, assuming that a pattern can be found in retracing the chronological order of the novel's publication, if not composition. From the earliest tale, dealing first with an individual, and then with the confrontation between that individual and the historical upheaval of the Civil War, the central figure acquires, in concentric rings, a family of well delineated individuals in their own right--the patriarch Khabug and sons, the hunter Isa, the shepherd Makhaz, the kolkhoz foreman Kiazym, not to mention Sandro's own daughter, the enchanting Tali, whose chapter ends the first, 1973 compilation in *Новый мир*. A second ring encompasses the Chegemers, represented both by episodic characters entering the narrative limelight, so to speak, at sporadic intervals (the exuberant hunter Tendel, the hunchback Kunta and his ominously evil brother, Omar), and by a collective plural cited throughout the novel in a whimsical flirtation with narrative

¹A more detailed study of the workings of irony in Iskander, both as it relates to the sensitive Endurian theme and to the author's adoption and overt signalling of the *ieron* pose, does not enter into the scope of this thesis. The present argument is, for simplicity's sake, limited to the terminology outlined in M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3d ed (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), 80-84.

privilege reminiscent of Dostoevskii's хроникер or the scrupulously precise, teasingly obscurantist narrator of the closing chapter of *Мастер и Маргарита*. Sandro's descent from the mountainous Chegem to Mukhus on the sea brings him in contact with Iskander's own narrator and a variety of other, more modern urban types, including the old gentleman's friend and perhaps by-blow (1979: 291), the decidedly unscrupulous Tengiz. Here the proliferation--of characters, of incidents both private and historical,--accelerates to almost breathtaking speed, as does the narrative pace in any of a number of family chronicles, from Galsworthy's *Forsythe Saga* to Marquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; the latter, as we have seen, being a favourite object of comparison with *Sandro*.

Analogous as well with Marquez' work is the theme of decay, seeping in *Sandro* up from the urbanized valley (where the amorous photographer pursues his, to say the least, catholic tastes, from a tamer of boa constrictors to a Lilliputian charmer; where Tengiz reaps the bounty of garage service with the MVD and later, the traffic police; where a loquacious ex-parachutist suffers and survives six bullets, one through the heart, in his mock-heroic defense of a lucrative barman's position ("Бармен Адгур"); where an ex-patriate Chegemer drifts like Blok's unknown woman through cafés and the drug world of the 1980s, dallies with men like the Carmen whose image the title of her chapter, "Чегемская Кармен," bestows and finally, in a desperate defence of family feeling, is shot by her father. Unlike the eerily imprecise Marquez, however, the decay is seen on a specifically national scale,--specific in the sense of repeated, overt reference to the ethnic identities of the

victim and his or her neighbours, in the declarative treatment of their various encounters, and finally, in the flirtation with the Endurian theme and its on-again, off-again ethnic identification. Thus the novel's spiralling rings flex back in on themselves to attack the concept of family that stands as its thematic, ethnic--the author intervening ever more frequently to explain the Abkhazian cult of respect for elders--and metonymic core.

A parallel development can be traced in the theme of time: here too the expansion turns back, one might even say, implodes in on itself. Citing again from the author's preface:

Краем детства я застал патриархальную деревенскую жизнь Абхазии и навсегда полюбил ее. Может быть, я идеализирую уходящую жизнь? Может быть. Человек не может не возвышать то, что он любит. Идеализируя уходящий образ жизни, возможно, мы, сами того не сознавая, предъявляем счет будущему. Мы ему как бы говорим:

-- Вот что мы теряем, а что ты дашь в обмен?

Пусть будущее призадумается над этим, если оно вообще способно думать.

[1979: 8]

This dual focus, on a nostalgic past and a present that critically challenges the future, is perhaps what informs the aggregate structure. The past/present juxtaposition is the pivot of the loosely constructed "Goatibex Constellation," noted, as mentioned above, by practically all students of this earlier work. Unique to *Sandro* is the explicitness, the urgency which the contrast acquires, an urgency spilling over into the publicistic tone that mounts towards the novel's end as it now stands. In this aspect, of course, Iskander is faithful to the spirit of the late 1970s and 1980s, particularly as manifested by those long-reigning favourites of both Soviet and North American criticism--the writers of rural prose, with their call to re-examine a morally purer past.

Where Iskander differs, and differs significantly, is in his explicit separation of the two components (lyric-elegiac-idyllic and Horatian-oratorical-didactic) on every level.

Thematic discontinuity is maintained by allowing each tonal theme to centre on a character or characters that remain hermetically sealed to their opposites (the most immediately evident example being the non-interaction between the lyrically evoked Tali and her satirically significant picaro of a parent, Sandro; a discretion so skilfully manipulated as to leave Tali untouched by the rollicking farce of the chase scene that follows her elopement).

The method is similar to that described by Iskander, in defence of his deliberate (and frequently attacked) defiance of plot continuity in "Goatibex."¹ The piece's many lyric digressions, he explains, stem from a

желани[е] выявить внутреннюю жизнь героев, поколебать самоуверенность сюжета, время от времени безболезненно покидая его.

Contrast in this spirit can be seen as a static principle, static in that opposite poles tend to function as inert entities, devoting the full force of their energy or dynamism to the opposition itself. This is a poetics of the eternal black and the immutable white, feeding an endless series of never merging greys on the very strength of their persistence. Of the wholly unconnected childhood reminiscences in "Goatibex," of the power of such non-interaction, Iskander goes on to state:

¹Even I. Grekova chides Iskander on this point. See her "Под знаком Козлотура," 3.

я чувствовал, что этот кусок должен врезаться в повествование, превосходить его своей мускулатурой, эпической *независимостью*, лирической *напевностью*.¹

Thus, while "Тали--чудо Черема" certainly exploits certain picaresque elements (most notably, Sandro's outwitting the village mullah and/or agents of higher powers), these are gradually subordinated throughout the chapter to deeper, more ancient substrata of this supremely ambiguous figure. Tali herself becomes a bewitching songstress, a siren, who both lures and threatens the passing traveller from treetops, a singing Stakhanovite who punctuates her workbreaks with melodic parodies on contemporary Stalinist heroes. She is also seen as a female satyr, a goatherdess sucking a splinter from her big toe while her would-be seducer watches spellbound from the nearby bushes; a channel for animistic deities of fertility and ultimately, a martyr figure. Nevertheless, a parallel process pits her explicitly against the picaro tradition, once again illustrating the author's overt and rigorously maintained function of simultaneously combining and separating complementary but distinct tonic themes.

Elsewhere, Sandro's virtual absence from such predominantly non-satiric chapters as "Пастух Махаз," a tragedy of fate, or "Бригадир Кязым," a rural detective story cum morality tale) represents the technique on a mechanical, compositional level. Even within chapters, 'architectonic'--in Bakhtin's sense of the genre-shaping substratum of composition--disjunction firmly segregates the I-narrator's present-time encounters with Sandro from the retrospective settings of the latter's romp through Soviet Abkhazian

¹Фазиль Искандер, "Идеи и приемы," *Вопросы литературы* 1968:9, с. 75, 76. Italics mine.

history or, in a separate thread of the skein, the author's unequivocally nostalgic memories of his grandfather's Big House.¹ Thus the sequel to "Goatibex," "Дядя Сандро и конец козлотура," can be admitted to this carpetbag novel by the simple expedient of assigning to the picaro his traditional role of 'out-smarting,' 'out-roguing' an eminently roguish present. Moreover, it can be inserted (as Shakespearean comic relief?) specifically between two of the novel's most evidently non-picaresque chapters, those devoted to Tali and Makhaz, as mentioned above².

Even the I-narrator participates in this remarkable process of simultaneous aggregation and segregation. Compositionally, he is narrator-witness and narrator-protagonist, as well as--to expand on Friedman's terminology--narrator-relayer, narrator-chronicler, and narrator-commentator, in which latter role he permits himself an ever-increasing Sternian freedom to digress, at length, in marvellously rambling digression-within-digressions. Though it can and has been argued that the narrator in the sum total of these many roles is what cements an otherwise fragmentary structure,³

¹The complex manoeuvring behind this device will be discussed below, in chap. 6.

²Strangely enough, Iskander chose *not* to insert the Goatibex tale itself (see app. 4). This cannot be on the grounds that the earlier piece is too well-known to be included in *Sandro* -- the no less celebrated "Колчерукий" figures as chapter 16a on that list. In an interview, Mr. Iskander explained the latter inclusion on the grounds that "the mother theme" was important to the work as a whole. In fact, the addition to that list was only made, by hand, in my presence by Mr. Iskander's assistant. (Interview by author, Notes, Moscow, 18 February 1988.) "Колчерукий" now appears as Chapter 17 in the 1989 edition. With regard to the exclusion of "Goatibex," it might be argued that the lyric-satiric interplay in that tale is too telescoped, too immediately apparent to warrant its upsetting the slower if no less explicit balance in the larger work. This, however, is pure speculation.

³With regard to *Sandro* itself, Ivanova notes the "breadth of the author's voice" and its "frequent" role in yoking together "several novellas within a

here too the method is dualistic, with an interlayering of focuses on both the self (the narrator) and the other (in which sense, the novel rightfully retains a title honouring its second cementing figure, Sandro himself).

Aggregation, then, plus a rigorously maintained segregation of all components on all levels (narrative, thematic, compositional or architectonic) deliberately and persistently precludes integration. There is and can be no final synthesis. Such a work ultimately defies genre definition. And *Sandro* has certainly challenged its critics on this score. Most have had to resort to all manner of cunningly wrought hybrid terms: Lebedev called the story of Uncle Sandro's life an "epic/farce."¹ Solov'ev deems it a

large chapter" ("Сон разума," 4). Curiously enough, other observations on this distinctive feature of Iskander's method have to date been largely limited to his earlier works. Typical of the many comments made on the integrating function of a single perspective within an otherwise diverse collection of tales, is that offered by Shvarts: "рассказы эти воспринимаются как единое целое. Такое впечатление создается не столько тем, что все они написаны от лица одного маленького героя, сколько объединяющей их темой и авторской мыслью [the depiction of a spiritual coming of age]" (М.С. Шварц, рецензия на кн. Фазила Искандера *Первое дело: Рассказы и повесть*, в журн. *Литература в школе* 1972:2, с. 84).

Klerikova points out the "author's genuine freedom within a genre whose plot (сюжет) is built on his will and desire alone," stressing the particular structural advantages of this ploy in "Goatibex" ("Правда смеха," 197). Lysenko relates Iskander, Bitov and Kataev to a contemporary trend towards what he calls "egocentric prose," based on the central, even dominant function of the authorial perspective. Within this scheme he identifies "self-irony" as the sole means of maintaining a "sufficient aesthetic level" in an "associative text." (Валерия Лысенко, "Читая жизнь мою," *Литературное обозрение* 1982:3, с. 32)

Lysenko's "associative text" is akin to Kazarkin's "spiral composition"--a stringing of first-person reminiscences and reflections onto a single "compositional pivot" or "fact"--in the modern Russian lyric story, represented by Paustovskii, Likhonosov and others, and subsumed into the larger category of "authorial narration" vs. skaz. In his reading, Iskander combines elements of both. (А.П. Казаркин, "Проблема автора в современном лирическом рассказе," *Сборник трудов молодых ученых Тольского университета*, вып. 2 (1973): 200-202.)

¹Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 199.

crossbreed of the novel and an undefined "folklore," asks if such a "generic metamorphosis" is justifiable and replies:

В пределах рецензируемого романа -- несомненно. Тем более, при "гибридном" составе *Сандро из Чегема* любые отступления от сюжета или добавления к нему не выглядят инородно, ибо новая форма создается на глазах читателей и лишена пока что властного гипноза косности и императивного нажима на содержание.¹

Of particular interest here is Solov'ev's comment on the dynamic nature of *Sandro*, which prompts the reader's sense of participation in a work still (and perhaps perpetually) in progress, as well as his ascribing to that dynamism a central role in both the author's liberation from traditional generic restraints and the reader's acceptance of that licence. To contemporary readers, of course, this is a 'chicken-or-egg' argument; we cannot at this point hope to decide whether publication logistics determine creative method or vice versa. Compare a more recent remark on this very dilemma by the same critic, discussing in 1989 the tendency of pre-published works by Iskander to amalgamate into cycles, revealing after the fact a "common idea and common impulse (замысел):

Предположим даже, что первоначально этого общего замысла у Фазила Искандера не было, что он появился в процессе работы, -- удивляться здесь нечему, литературный замысел может меняться катастрофически по мере продвижения к цели, которая в свою очередь претерпевает изменения. Результат не равен первоначальной задаче, ибо нам не дано предугадать не только, как наше слово отзовется, но даже и то, каким будет следующее слово.²

However future generations will resolve this issue, they will surely have to take into account the uniquely participatory response

¹Владимир Соловьев, "С поправкой на время," *Звезда*, 1974:4, с. 214.

²Он же, "Фазиль Искандер в окружении своих героев: К шестидесятилетию писателя," *Новое русское слово* (New York), 18-19 марта 1989, 9.

Iskander invites from his readers, among them the critics who continue to struggle to define his accomplishment.

Smelkov, writing soon after the first, *Новый мир* compilation, placed the work somewhere between a novel and a "chain of novellas," contrasting it with other cycles by Iskander which in his opinion lack its unifying "сверхрентгеновскую наблюдательность" concerned solely with the "exhaustive accuracy" of each individual tale. He elaborates on this somewhat paradoxical view as follows:

в каждой новелле в конце концов вспыхивает какая-то искорка -- вроде бы сама по себе, но, когда окидываешь взглядом все пространство романа, искорки эти соединяются в цепочку оговьков, сигнальных маяков, и роман складывается как бы сам собой, силой взаимного художественного притяжения отдельных эпизодов.

The result of such spontaneous combustion? "*Сандро из Чегема* при кажущейся слабости композиционных связей -- именно роман, причем хорошо сделанный." That the issue was keenly felt is seen from the rebuttal to Smelkov, printed together with his article under the rubric "С разных точек зрения." Inna Varlamova countered that the work lacked the "consistent development" and "the movement of a single thought" of the equally composite *Герой нашего времени*, that she could find in it no unifying plot or ordering principle, that its characters, particularly Uncle Sandro, showed not even a minimum of internal evolution. On the latter grounds she considered and rejected its association with the picaresque novel, to conclude that "*Сандро из Чегема* не стоит [...] приписывать несуществующие жанровые достоинства."¹

¹Ю. Смелков, "Так возникает роман," *Литературное обозрение* 1974:4, с. 32. Инна Варламова, "Несколько чегемских историй," там же, 34-36.

A third critic, Gverdtsiteli, introduced to the discussion an entirely new element, that of the hagiographic tradition. "Роман [*Sandro*] оформлен как житие," he writes, and without further elaboration immediately qualifies the definition:

но старинный жанр разрушен изнутри, ибо застывший фольклорно-анекдотический герой, войдя в быстрые воды современности, выходит из них неузнаваемым, а заодно меняет жанр, тон и концепцию повествования.

Gverdtsiteli's version of the hybridization model is linked to what he sees as a contemporary concern with amalgamating mythic and modern genres, in which context he cites as well Okudzhava's *Похождения Шитова* and Otar Chiladze's *Шел человек по дороге*.¹ An American commentator concurs with the hagiographic definition, declaring that "the original title [...] *The Life of Sandro Chegemsky* makes its relation to the tradition of Russian saints' lives clearer."²

Edward J. Brown displays the caution characteristic of those who would define the genre of *Sandro* by describing the work as

a *kind* of picaresque novel, a series of episodes in the life of one Uncle Sandro, a humorous and absurd character expert in manipulating those around him.³

Agna avoids the question entirely, choosing to concentrate instead on the ethnographical aspect, with her "series of anecdotes and portrait sketches featuring the customs and folklore of the Caucasus."⁴ In a similar vein, Frank would seem to class Iskander

¹Гурам Гвердцители и Владимир Соловьев, "Семьдесят девять в нимбе! Критический диалог о личности героя и индивидуальности художника," *Дружба народов* 1976: 9, с. 245.

²"Fazil Iskander," in Proffer and Proffer, eds., *Contemporary Russian Prose*, xx.

³Edward J. Brown, *Russian Literature Since the Revolution*, 330, italics mine.

⁴Agna, "Iskander," 202.

altogether as an ethnic writer, noting that Abkhazia's "literary heritage leans heavily towards poetry and the folk-hero epic," where Iskander's verse is cited to corroborate the former and his "short stories, including [sic] *Sandro iz Čegema*" the latter observation.¹

Burlingame saw the work as "less a novel [...] than a series of anecdotes and character sketches loosely organized around the central figure of Sandro."² Briker and Dal'gor take issue with such "misconceptions [held by] early critics" of the novel to defend it as an "integral whole," embodying Iskander's intention, cited above, of recording the history of his people and the world at large.³ And while they do point to the novel's evolution beyond the author's original concept of a "parody on the chivalresque novel," their own interpretation is in and of itself a compilation of that genre (with Sandro seen as a picaresque hero), of folklore (with that same character as a parody on the folk hero, and the incorporation of folk legend in "Джамхух--Сын Оленя") and finally, of modern mythology (the simultaneous mythologizing and humanizing of Lenin and Stalin). Indeed, the very recourse to the term 'parody' evokes yet another level of syncretism, when we recall the Formalists' contention that this metagenre adapts outworn canons to new literary sensibilities, and thus can be said retrospectively to stand *in between* two literary genres, as a crossbreed of the old

¹Frank, review of *Novye glavy*, 361.

²Helen P. Burlingame, "The Prose of Fazil Iskander," *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, no. 14 (Winter 1976): 154.

³Брикер и Дальгор, "Сандро и магический реализм," 103.

and the new. Briker and Dal'gor's conclusion that *Sandro* represents a work of "magical realism" adds one more hybrid concept to our list.

Ivanova has over the years offered a wide variety of genre definitions. In 1978 she complained that the critic Sidorov had neglected "различные аспекты условного, гротеска и гиперболы в прозе [...] Ф. Искандера."¹ In 1985 she examined what has since become Chapter 27 of *Sandro*, a piece entitled "Широколобый" and like the earlier "Рассказ мула старого Хабуга" representative of the animal-innocent tradition in Russian literature, from Tolstoi's "Холстомер" to Vladimov's *Верный Руслан*. The story, told from the perspective of a noble ox led to the slaughter, is placed by Ivanova into one of the "major trends of the past few years," something she defines as the genre of the "короткий рассказ-эссе," and subsumes into a larger tendency towards cyclization. This new mongrel addition to the literary family she sees as based on a one-way author-to-reader orientation, in a development of the "oratorical monologue." Its composition works on a "chaining" model, and can include "landscapes, бытовые зарисовки, travel notes, fishing tales, [as well as] perceptively captured details transformed into symbols." "Широколобый" is cited as an example of the indirect, unobtrusive and even non-didactic expression of such an author's position. Its "unhurried, epic manner of narration" is particularly commended.²

¹Наталья Иванова, "Правда -- главное требование," *Вопросы литературы* 1978:9, с. 270.

²Она же, "О живом и застывшем: Poleмические заметки о современном рассказе.," *Литературное обозрение* 1985:2, с. 21-24. The story itself expands on the anthropomorphic traits ascribed this animal in the early poem "Буяволы," first published in *Литературная Абхазия* 1956:1, с. 114; most recent reprinting in Iskander's collection *Путь: Стихи* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1987), 17.

While it might reasonably be countered that the second article was written perhaps before the ox's tale had been incorporated into the novel, the very disparity of traits noted by Ivanova most definitely reflects what *Sandro* has now become. Both articles stand as a tribute to the work's outstanding elasticity. Ivanova's most recent designation is equally broad, equally aggregate:

Искандером [в *Сандро*] был избран уникальный ракурс изображения -- скрещение апокрифа с мифом, мифа -- с его развенчанием, демифологизацией, эпоса -- с пародией.¹

The diversity of definitions put forward by Vail' and Genis is even more striking. An article of 1979 cites the emotionally indifferent epos made comic, the picaresque novel made tragic, and suggests that this "жанровая мешанина" partakes of a tradition exemplified by Chekhov's un-comic comedy, *The Cherry Orchard*. The same article puts эпическая поэма side by side with biographical novel (minus the traditional scenes of birth, childhood and death, flaunting the chronological principle and standard single focus on a single central character to adopt instead the Sophoclean model which operates on the "laws of fate," switching protagonists midstream to make Stalin the hero of a tragedy, albeit a farcical one, of "guilt and punishment"). This plethora of intercontaminated genre mixtures, while somewhat breath-taking in its abandon, does reflect the challenge Iskander's work presents to its reader.

Burlingame notes an anthropomorphic tendency throughout Iskander's work ("Prose of Iskander," 132).

¹Иванова, "Соп разума," 4.

More intriguing is their reading of *Sandro* as an "exploding epos" along the lines mapped out by William Faulkner:

Если фолкнеровская эпичность разрушается изнутри -- бунтующей личностью, то абхазскую разламывает стихия фантастической социальной организации -- советская власть. И фолкнеровский, и искандеровский эпос -- эпос взрывающийся, то есть переходящий в мир романа и всей новой литературы.¹

The epic qualities they note in a later version of this article all proceed from what they identify as the primary, non-counterfeitable fact that "герой Искандера -- народ," that the Abkhazian people are not so much mere window-dressing, as the very "flesh and blood" of the novel.² The Abkhazians themselves are an "epic people," as yet "unsplintered" by the concept of individuality. Thus, Sandro is an epic hero; as such he does not oppose his environment, but merely "stands out" in it and can stand down to yield place to any other character, for all have the potential to grow into central figures each in his or her own right.

The second component of Vail' and Genis' definition is the embryonic novel. The two critics believe it is the novelistic element that "inevitably draws the plot threads towards the present," and contrast this with the closed pluperfect past of the epic mode.³ The allusion, of course, is to Bakhtin's opposition between the two metagenres of epos, with its finite, inviolate and forever irrecoverable past,--Bakhtin's "absolute epic past"--and the novel's constant state of becoming (становление) in an open, dynamic,

¹Ваиль и Генис, "Сталин на чегемском карнавале," 153.

²Они же, "Дядя Сандро и Иосиф Сталин," 19.

³Они же, "Сталин на чегемском карнавале," 153.

ever-changing and always immediate present.¹ The worldview behind epos is holistic; that inspiring its nemesis, the novel--pluralistic. Transition to the modern, manifold sensibility of novel-ness (романность) emerged from a dissolution of the epos' unity of the inner and outer man, and the harmony such an undivided consciousness enjoyed with the external world and his or her social role in it. This would seem to be the analysis of epic consonance that Vail' and Genis applied, above, in their interpretation of the undifferentiated, collective folk hero of *Sandro*, and, somewhat more problematically, its disintegration from without, under the pressures of a wholly alien Soviet reality (recall the "inner Endurian").²

A conspicuous advantage of the compilation technique is its ability to embrace what in more integrated structures would seem to be mutually exclusive. Thus the polar temporalities of the epos and the novel do, to a certain extent, confront each other in *Sandro*, as elsewhere throughout Iskander's corpus. Compare Ivanova's reading of his early, first-person autobiographical stories, which she contrasts with the youth prose of that era, the 1960s:

Время в рассказах Искандера [...] было совсем другим, чем в «молодежной прозе», где оно как бы совпадало с процессом чтения,

¹М.М. Бахтин, "Эпос и роман (о методологии исследования романа)," в его же кн. *Вопросы литературы и эстетики: Исследования разных лет*, ред. С.Л. Лейбович (Москва: Художественная литература, 1975), 447-483.

²The exo-ethnic view is supported by Lipovetskiĭ, in his analysis of the "Джамхух" chapter. (А. Липовецкий, "В некотором царстве: Современная литературная сказка," *Литературное обозрение* 1984:11, с. 21.) Iveni identifies the source of infection not as a foreign ethnos, but as an alien ethos--the modern city--with Uncle Sandro as its unconscious carrier ("По ту сторону смеха," 354-55). Textual support for her hypothesis is to be found, for example, in Kiazym's reflections on the "порча времени" creeping up to mountainous Chegem from the urbanized valley (1981: 97).

действие происходило сейчас, в настоящем, герой-бунтарь был близок по возрасту и читателю и автору. Возраст героев Искандера иной, и время действия -- другое: предвоенные годы, война, после войны. Мир был увиден двойным зрением: глазами ребенка и глазами взрослого, вспоминающего из «сегодня» свое прошлое.¹

Now such a dual perspective proceeds invariably from the fabric of reminiscence itself,--the point here being its exploitation, under another guise, in *Sandro*: much of the core of the novel presents itself as 'third-person' (or relayed reminiscences from the chequered past of a voluble old man, mediated by an author-listener who addresses his reader-listener as a close contemporary). This overlapping of time frames is perhaps what inspired Ivanova's assertion, in obviously Bakhtinian tones, of *Sandro's* essentially novelistic temporality:

Повествование о Чегеме -- своего рода национальные мистерии. Это мир вечно становящийся, праздничный, полный жизненных соков. Комическим эпосом исторической народной жизни стал роман *Сандро из Чегема*.²

Eternal 'becoming' cheek by jowl with historical folk epos -- such is the aggregate achieved by Iskander.

Vail' and Genis' discussion of the novelistic element introduces another well-known Bakhtinian concept, that of carnival. Here they posit a two-fold opposition between the "real" carnival of the Abkhazian застолье and the "false, un-funny," inverse carnival of Soviet life. And the many 'table scenes' presented or evoked throughout the work, its wealth of Rabelaisian 'lowering' devices (Stalin's underwear, the motifs of drink and sex), the irreverent treatment of the Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev

¹Наталья Иванова, "Смех против страха," предисловие к сб. Фазиля Искандера *Кролики и улавы: Проза последних лет* (Москва: Книжная палата, 1988), 4.

²Ibid., 6. Emphasis mine.

eras, would indeed seem, at first glance, to bear out such an interpretation. But carnival presupposes the simultaneous debunking of static and affirmation of dynamic values; its aim is the renewal, the regeneration of an eminently robust *Volkgeist*. That Chegem is losing ground to modernity becomes the dominant theme of the later chapters of *Sandro*, one of which bears the more than meaningful title of "Утраты."¹ That Chegem has receded forever into the past is all too often forgotten by its readers,--tribute, no doubt, to the infectious vitality Iskander has created in its portrait. Nevertheless the closing chapter ends:

Так закончилось наше последнее путешествие в Чегем. И теперь мы о нем не скоро вспомним, а если и вспомним, навряд ли заговорим. [1979: 604]

Chegem has retreated not only from the present but also from the world of memory and memory's communication in the word. There can be no more final departure, for all that the sentence is pronounced with typically Iskanderian circumspection. Similarly, the Endurians' ultimate threat to Chegem is that it will succumb to total oblivion (1979:344). "Тоска по идеалу," declares Iskander, "вот, пожалуй, моя главная тема [...], отсюда и Чегем."² Thus the carnival of *Sandro* as a whole is locked into an irrecoverable past; its life-affirming ethos is subsumed into the larger strategy of nostalgic regret,³ if indeed it does not ultimately serve as the focus

¹Among the many examples of overt declaration of this theme stand the elegy to a "receding Chegem" (1979: 523), the author-narrator's fear that he will never see an Abkhazian shaded court again (1979: 548), his regret that both the wine and his "dear Abkhazians" have "spoiled" (1979: 555).

²Искандер, "Удивительный мир" (интервью), 4.

³The juxtaposition of laughter and regret can perhaps be diagnosed in chronological terms, as evidence of the novel's gradual evolution. Thus, where Ivanova maintains in unmistakably Bakhtinian terms the "life-

of that emotion, as the symbol of just how great a vitality has been lost. Even in the time-scheme of the novel itself, carnival is rooted in the past, via the mechanism of reminiscences by or about old timers. What vestiges survive in the author's present (the scorpion-infested banquet that closes the goatibex affair ends in a scattering of the assembly and the author's turning to the non-collective and hence non-carnavalesque concerns of his private lovelife)¹ are increasingly subservient to the narrower aims of satiric or "reduced laughter," identified by Bakhtin as the very antithesis of carnival.²

affirming" nature of Iskander's "laughter" in *Sandro*, she cites the later chapter, "Бармен Адгур," to support her hypothesis that his comic muse has recently undergone "drastic change," apparently on the basis of the author's increasing alienation from "his own world." (Наталья Иванова, "Смех против страха," *Знамя* 1988:3, с. 222 vs. с. 227.) Juxtaposition, even tonal juxtaposition, is of course a privilege of the compilation mode.

¹See Mann's discussion of the carnival element in Gogol'. The critic ultimately identifies Gogol' as a "writer of the new [post-carnival] age" on grounds that include his author-narrator's tendency to depart from carnival's "universality of action." One of the directions taken in this departure is of particular relevance to Iskander--that proceeding "в сторону какой-то глубокой, томщейся в себе и страдающей духовности." (Ю.В. Манн, *Поэтика Гоголя* (Москва: Художественная литература, 1974), 13, 16.) In *Sandro*, private concerns are to be contrasted with public pomp, as seen in the exclamation which accompanies the author-narrator's flight: "Раз в жизни вырваться и вырвать, пусть с кровью, вырвать забвенье, а там пропади все пропадом! Но сейчас бежать и бежать!" (1979: 435).

²See the characterization of Voltaire: "карнавальные формы превратились в художественные средства (преимущественно сюжетно-композиционного характера), поставленные на службу различным художественным целям. У Вольтера они служат сатире, еще сохраняющей универсальность и мирозерительность; но смех здесь редуцирован до минимума, до голой насмешки. Именно таков пресловутый «смех Вольтера»: его сила и глубина в остроте и радикализме отрицания, но обволакивающего и возрождающего момента он почти вовсе лишен; все положительное лежит вне смеха и носит характер отвлеченной идеи." (М.М. Бахтин, *Творчество Франсуа Рабле и народная культура средневековья и Ренессанса* (Москва: Художественная литература, 1965; репр. Orange, CT: Антиквариат, 1986), 130-31.) It must be stressed that this is a *trend* in Iskander, and not a comprehensive definition. The analogy is offered as a counterbalance to those who insist too sweepingly on carnival as the sole, definitive element in his work. Its abstract, serious aspect will be examined below, in chap. 4.

To focus exclusively on the scenes,--the "пики-эпизоды" as Vail and Genis call them,¹--that unquestionably derive from the carnival, the picaresque, the comic (смех) or other traditions, is to overlook their place in the larger scheme of the novel as a whole. For this surely is the fascination of Iskander's work: the temptation to detach, to isolate thematic or generic elements, even to discard what so many have bemoaned as the 'weaker' moments (the Dzhamkhukh legend to some, to others--the more unequivocally declarative passages of the Mule's Tale), the refusal to recognize in this scheme the didactic voice of a moral commitment that dabbles with moral ambiguities only to burst forth into the occasional philippic,--all these temptations are honourably courted by *Sandro*, and just as honourably succumbed to by its students. They reflect, once again, the novel's composition--as the product of piece-by-piece aggregation, and its architectonics as the non-reducible sum of irreversibly disparate, always segregate parts. To risk a chemical metaphor: *Sandro From Chegem* is not a dissolution, not a compound of ingredients, but rather their eternal suspension, and suspensions are known for their tendency to sedimentize, to decompose. While the analyst must record the by-products of this continual sedimentation, the author-chemist is free to stir in ever more new ingredients. Indeed, one might even conjecture that he is compelled to keep on stirring or else forfeit a balance that is not so much precarious as

¹Вайль и Генис, "Сталин на чегемском карнавале," 167.

pre-eminently dynamic. From this standpoint, *Sandro From Chegem* is a life's work than cannot ever end.

To return to Vail' and Genis' reading of a dual carnival in *Sandro*. That "Iskander has created a world in which the archaic past (арханзм) preserves carnival [in the genuine Abkhazian variant] from the monologic present," as they contend,¹ would seem from the above to be overly optimistic. Yet on this basis, they argue for "duality or rather dialogicality [as the] structural principle" behind Iskander's work, thus adding a third allusion to Bakhtin to their analysis of its novel-ness.

Duality in Iskander's case, however, cannot be identified with dialogue as Bakhtin originally defined it, in conjunction, of course, with his concept of a "polyphonous type of aesthetic thought," positing "a multitude of independent and distinct (неслиянных) voices and consciousnesses," and stressing the full-value assigned to each voice, as well as the equality of all "consciousnesses."²

There is, in the novel as a whole, no two-way traffic, no verbal democracy. The author's "word," his judgment and conclusions most definitely predominate, and such domination is the sine qua non of the monologic mode. Even on the level of the past/present juxtaposition which launched this discussion, there is an unmistakably moral, didactic purpose behind the nostalgic impulse Iskander described in his preface, cited above: elegiac

¹Ibid., 155.

²М.М. Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, изд. 3-ье (Москва: Художественная литература, 1972), 7, 8.

regret, from a single, identified voice, is overlain by a no less 'univocal' oratorical reproach. On a different plane, the narrator-witness is separate from and, in Bakhtinian terms, 'extra-territorial' to the characters he observes;¹ characters may be quoted, at times at length, but their discourse is well delineated from and even invaded by an alien author's text through a variety of author-oriented devices, from the standard manipulation of *verba dicendi*, to his well-crafted and studiously external descriptions of their gestures, to a series of 'provisional rebuttals.' In this, as in so many other respects, the opening chapter foreshadows the strategy that has proven so fruitful over the years: two voices may interact, but the first is subjugated to the editorial control of the second, that of its reporter and the author's stand-in narrator, who enjoys, through the sum total of these tactics, the 'last word':

-- Вот как из-за меньшевиков лучшие люди нашего края вынуждены были покидать его, -- заключил дядя Сандро свой рассказ, слегка вылучив глаза и многозначительно покачивая головой, как бы намекая на то, что последствия разбазаривания кадров до сих пор сказываются и еще долго будут сказываться, как в административном, так и в чисто хозяйственном смысле. [1979: 23]

The passage plays with bureaucratise. It exhibits an eloquent restraint in its not-quite caustic overtones, the conditional как бы not quite dotting the i's on the identification between the Aesopian "Mensheviks" as scapegoats for the all-too real tragedy of the Civil War, and their trivialization in the successors to the real villains of the piece. From it emerges an ironically distanced, less than flattering, *external* portrait of a head-wagging, eye-popping

¹Он же, "Автор и герой в эстетической деятельности," в его же кн. *Эстетика словесного творчества*, сост. С.Г. Бочаров (Москва: Искусство, 1979), 15.

illiterate who, if he did actually utter himself this Brezhnevian mouthful, is probably unaware of just how many layers of irony it contains. This ordering, this multiple awareness is the purview of the author.

Thus, Iskander's many voices are not granted equal status: it is the I-narrator's role to comment, observe and manipulate their various tales, even to digress on matters wholly unrelated to the pristine world of Chegem.

Nor does dialogue in Iskander quite fully accord with the tripartite construct Bakhtin analyzed in Dostoevskii's oeuvre, of "externally, compositionally expressed dialogue, inner dialogue and the grand dialogue of the novel as a whole."¹ Dialogue in Iskander is "externally, compositionally expressed,"--granted, with a consummate skill that can often seem to overwhelm the reader through the sheer abundance of tales-within-tales. Indeed, the transitions from narrator to stand-in narrators, from plot focus to plot incident are so rapid, so freewheeling as to raise the suspicion that their aim is to create the *illusion* of an exchange, or at least to disguise through a proliferating entanglement the fact that strings are most definitely and most resolutely being pulled.

As Ryan-Hayes points out, the "multiple narrative viewpoints" in *Sandro*

share many characteristics and are not separable. They do not stand in a 'dialogical position' vis à vis one another. The debate is not among the multiple narrative voices of the novel, but with an external, adversarial viewpoint. It may be conjectured that true polyphony would weaken the satirical effect of *Sandro iz Čegema*.

¹Он же, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 459.

for satire must present a reasonably united front against whatever is attacked.¹

To see such a variegated work as *Sandro* as purely satiric is perhaps reductionism of another sort, but the adversarial unity described by Ryan-Hayes does indicate a firm, monologic frame for the whole.² What is more, her analysis of the adversarial overlap between narrative voices captures the reduplicating principle behind Iskander's compilation. Aggregation, the external multiplication of viewpoint is paralleled in a jumble of repetitive plot-situations: the many banquet scenes of the novel (discussed below in chapter three), the two elopements (Tali's and her mother's, in Chapters 11 and 14), the two mini-detective-novel episodes (Timur's embezzlement and Kunta's tobacco theft, in Chapters 16 [6] and 31).³ Character rhymes abound: a plethora of variations on Uncle Sandro--his rival raconteurs (Abesalomon Nartovich, Marat, Old Khasan), rival tamadas (Stalin, God) and fellow picaros (Tengiz, Barmen Adgur); Khabug, the chief father-figure spawns a host of would-be fathers of non-existent (Makhaz) or wayward sons (Khabug and Sandro, Kunta and his many foster-sons). The repetition principle permeates every level of the work: descriptively, as the simple reiteration of character traits; figuratively, as extended metaphor, allegory and aphorism; lexically, as the redundancy of *verba dicendi*, proper names and

¹Ryan-Hayes, "Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 208.

²Compare the notion of "dramatized dialogue" and its monologic frame in Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 27-28. In the same work, Bakhtin touches upon the question of "formal polyphony," as in Dante, where voices co-exist, but do not interact (52).

³As indicated above, numerical chapter references correspond to the 1988 Author's Projection, listed in app. 3 as no. V (1988). There too will be found the numeration followed in the 1989 three-volume edition.

the like. Each of these aggregates will be considered below. Of interest now is their cumulative effect, their role in exposing the lack of dialogic interaction proper in the architectonics of *Sandro*.

Whereas in Bakhtin's concept, voices are 'open' by virtue of their orientation on the 'other's' response, potential or actual, Iskander does not work with a variety of perspectives. This is excluded in the novel's growing authorial dominance. Dominant authorial discourse is authoritarian discourse,--a finite, "inert" element set in a zone that excludes "familiar contact" and seeks "unconditional acceptance."¹ Thus, Iskander's multiplicity operates instead on a single plane; it views a potentially infinite chorus of voices from a single, authorial perspective.

Internal dialogue, in the sense of the single consciousness' search for a self-definition both unconstrained by and acceptable to the eternal other (Bakhtin's *расколотое слово*),² remains by and large the privilege of the I-narrator; it is his search for identity, his odyssey to rediscover his Abkhazian roots, his attempt to explain those roots if not to his other, Russified half than to the Russified world he finds himself transplanted to, that becomes one of the central themes of *Sandro from Chegem*. As always with Iskander, however, even this statement must be qualified: we can only say 'one of the central themes,' for another (though perhaps its corollary) encompasses Sandro and company, but always in the capacity, as Bakhtin puts it, as the "object of the author's intention," the latter term understood in Husserl's sense of the

¹Бахтин, "Слово в романе," 156.

²Он же, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 55, 442.

orientation,--in this case, exterior, from the author's self to their other,--of thought. Sandro himself, and to a lesser extent, his family, friends and neighbours, are, as so many commentators have observed, static characters; their healthy, undivided (and, as Vail' and Genis have pointed out, epic) consciousnesses are immune from that plague of the intelligentsia--рефлексия or introspection. Thus, their discourse can seldom become the 'subject' of their own intention; in this ideological respect they remain by and large closed even to the author's text that frames them. In simple, compositional-thematic terms, the Chegemers are indifferent to the author. He can suffer with stoic self-irony their rejection, as, for example, when Sandro leaves him to preside over a feast to which he has not been invited:

Всегда немного обидно, если кто-нибудь в твоём присутствии уходит веселиться, даже если ты и не собирался сопровождать его. Я ещё посидел немного, раздумывая над рассказом дяди Сандро, а потом пошел домой в состоянии некоторой грусти. [1979: 45-46]

He can also salve his '*slightly* wounded pride' (such qualification standing as one of Iskander's most fascinating trademarks) by reinstating his right to the "last word," Bakhtin's последняя смысловая инстанция.¹ The passage quoted above concludes, referring to Sandro's tale of his encounter with a 'Sandrified' God, open to petty, picaresque negotiation:

Помню, в голове застрял *какой-то* обрывок мысли насчет того, что не только люди создали богов по своему подобию, но и каждый человек в отдельности создает бога по своему собственному подобию. *Впрочем, возможно, я об этом подумал не тогда, а несколько позже, а то и раньше.* [Italics mine]

¹Ibid., 348-49.

Does this spate of qualifications--the indefinite pronomial, the concessives--add up to an 'open-ness' of the author's text, his attempt to forestall the reader's *Gegenrede* or counter-word? Perhaps, in this early chapter, the second, entitled "Дядя Сандро у себя дома," given the larger proportional weight it carried in the first, 1973 compilation, before inclusion in 1979 of such chapters as "Дядя Сандро и конец Козлотура," "Хранитель гор" and "Кутеж трех князей" brought the author's more contemporary (in Vail' and Genis' analysis, more 'novelistic') element into fuller play.

Such reader-oriented openness, however, would seem to be reserved almost exclusively for the I-narrator. Sandro is sublimely indifferent to any external response;--this is what shapes his picaresque charm, while the humorous awareness of the possibility of other interpretations stems wholly from the author. Consider the punchline, supplied by the I-narrator, to the old man's confession of having slaughtered, as a "stupid young man," more cattle than necessary at a local magnate's wedding. Divine--not wrath, but disapproval registers itself in the form of a rheumatic wrist:

Дядя Сандро зашевелил вытянутой кистью правой руки, как бы прислушиваясь к действию давнего греха, -- и тогда, помнится, вот так же болело запястье... Глупый был, согласился...

Он задумался, и выражение его слегка выпученных глаз мне впервые показался сентиментальным.

-- Да, -- проговорил он, -- двенадцать незащитных быков...
Мне показалось, что он сейчас разрыдается. [1979: 45]

Sandro is rescued from the depths of bathos by the convenient appearance of a young admirer, who reminds him he is to preside at a local banquet. Dignity restored, he departs, leaving the author to note the tapping of his staff and the gait of a "slightly rakish

prophet" who wends his way through a maze of coffee tables. The incongruities, or rather their observation, remain in the author's purview; what is more, their comic effect rests on the ultimate diffidence of their target.

Similarly, the patriarch Khabug is so opaque, so resistant to self-judgment (the attempt to define the 'self' in terms of, by means of, in spite of and yet in response to the 'other') or even self-questioning, that the poignancy of his silent stoic persistence must be conveyed by his mule, who follows the I-narrator's external technique of interpreting gestures and facial expressions, though without the latter's cautious circumspection:

И теперь иногда на лице моего старика бывает такая горечь, что у меня душа разрывается от жалости к нему. Эта горечь на лице его означает: кончилось крестьянское дело. Но иногда он все же надеется, что эти безумцы образумятся и снова каждый крестьянин заживет сам по себе. [1979: 249, where the reference is, of course, to peasant resentment of collectivization]

Makhaz's internal world, at first glance, would seem to grapple with the question of the self, as the taciturn shepherd petitions God for the right to prove his worth by procreating a son. His chapter is all but unique for the marked absence of overt intervention by the I-narrator, but note the authorial control evident in the device that ends the tale, a lyric fade-out to a dream sequence caught in long-shot, to borrow cinematic terms. The distancing has been prepared throughout Makhaz's tale, by his own curious self-detachment: Makhaz sees himself in terms of epic functions--as shepherd, father, husband, avenger, or male,--each and all of which are simple, undivided and unquestionable standards against which the individual must measure himself as an

equally indivisible, incontrovertible whole.¹ Such wholeness can only be unconscious; it cannot reflect on its own dignity; thus one more degree of removal is necessary in order to point out that dignity (which is, after all, a product of the implied contrast with the less dignified, less epic, more divided psyche of today). First, the visual distancing conveyed by the panoramic view:

Он заснул и ему приснилась далекая молодость [..]

И было множество праздничных людей, махавших платками с пристани, и было множество праздничных людей, махавших платками с медленно пристававшего к пристани парохода.

И юная женщина, которую он никогда не видел, подбежала к нему, ослепив его светлым лицом и сияющей улыбкой, и он ее подсаживал на лошадь, и обнажилось колено, круглое и нежное, как щека ребенка, и он, не удержавшись, поцеловал это колено [...] [1979: 470]

The passage, with its slow majestic pace, repetitions, preponderance of simple conjunction, slips into an emotional distancing which becomes more evident when it is recalled that the scene itself has been presented before, in more immediate terms:

В то далекое раннее утро он стоял на пристани среди встречающих пароход, придерживая за уздечки двух оседланных лошадей. Жена начальника его сразу узнала и, прямо от трапа замахав рукой, подбежала к нему. [...]

Когда она подбежала к нему, поражая его белизной лица и ослепительной улыбкой, он так растерялся, что хотел вскочить на лошадь, но сдержался [...]

Потом они оба засмеялись над его растерянностью и ему стало легко, легко. Он помог ей взобраться на лошадь. [...] Юбка на ее ноге с той стороны, с которой он ее подсаживал, слегка задралась, обнажив круглое и нежное, как щека ребенка, колено. Голова у него закружилась, и он, прилав к этому прохладному колену, поцеловал его.

-- Ах, ты дурачок! -- сказала она [...]

Ему было двадцать пять лет, и он впервые в жизни поцеловал женщину.

[1979: 456-57]

¹ Compare Bakhtin's description of the *Prüfungsroman*, a forerunner to the dynamic novel proper: "готовый человек подвергается испытанию с точки зрения готового идеала." (М.М. Бахтин, "Слово в романе," в его же кн. *Вопросы литературы и эстетики: Исследования разных лет*, ред. С.Л. Лейбович (Москва: Художественная литература, 1975), 204.)

Returning to the reprise of this scene in the chapter's closing dream, we note the author's more pronounced role in the reiteration itself and the heightening of rhetorical impact vouchsafed by its situation at the chapter's end. Authorial control is no less evident in the pruning out of all superfluous detail to achieve a melodic, almost rhythmic effect that concentrates on pure pathos--in the original sense of eliciting the sympathy, the judgment of the other, in this case the reader, most skilfully manipulated:

и женщина сверху, с лошади, трепанув его по волосам, сказала ему самое сладкое, что он слышал от женщины и вообще на этом свете:

-- Ах ты, дурачок!

И он был счастлив во сне и во сне же пронзительно печалился, зная, что это сон, а сон рано или поздно должен окончиться. [1979: 470]

In short, the foray into the inner sanctum of Makhaz's self-identity is subject to external--stylistic and ideological--manipulation. The scene itself is dominated by the dramatic (situational and hence external) irony of an illiterate peasant's having gained his goal (avenging his daughters' disgrace), only to find himself jailed at the very moment when he can at last be utterly certain of begetting the long-awaited son. When next encountered, in the 1960s of "Дядя Сандро у себя дома," Makhaz is presented in wholly external terms as no more than a morosely uncommunicative go-between. No mention is made of any son; the issue of his incarceration in the surely symbolic context of the 1940s is virtually abandoned; a later chapter, the twelfth, shows him drowsing off in a dignified but uncharacteristic and unqualified drunken stupor. The chink through which we glimpsed

the "man within the man"¹ has slammed shut, prompting the suspicion that the glimpse itself was no more than a peep-show interlude, a *mediated* reflection.

A possible exception to this array of sealed characters is Brigadier Kiazym. In the drunken dialogue quoted above, Kiazym would seem to be flirting with self-doubt, as he wonders if he too has not succumbed to epidemic Endurianism. Throughout the chapter, however, the author has intervened to formulate the thoughts of a man as stoic and as outwardly taciturn as his father Khabug before him:

Есть судьба человека и есть судьба рода, думал Кязым. И он по опыту своей жизни точно знал, что есть роды, где многие хорошо чувствуют лошадь. Таким был род Даура. Есть крепкожилые роды, где многие люди обладают огромной телесной силой, хотя выглядят обычно. Таким был род его кровника.

Thus far, Kiazym's reflections are still linked to the main plot line, which has just recalled the death in a vendetta of his close friend and fellow horse-lover, Daur. At this point the privileged glance into his inner thoughts lapses into philosophical generalization, elsewhere the province of the author or I-narrator:

И есть роды, где часто рождаются мудрые, и есть роды тяжелодумов, и есть роды, где много сердечных людей. Но таких мало или они вымирают?

So closely is this philosophizing function and liesurely repetitive syntax associated with the I-narrator, that the question sounds suspiciously rhetorical, Aesopian; it is as though Kiazym were being used here as a mouthpiece for his author, his services valued precisely because of his identification as simple, upright man of the

¹Он же, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 54, 99.

soil. Unlettered in this context means unspoiled, and the passage updates this Tolstoyan syllogism to continue with overt authorial intervention:

И бывают люди, уже ошибочно думал Кязым, переходя на себя, которым не дается грамота. Сам-то он никогда не ходил в школу, потому что в его время никакой школы в Чегеме не было. Но сейчас дети его плохо учились, и он, внешне насмешничая над ними, в глубине души болезненно переживал это. [1981: 105]

Such authorial intervention is based on the 'otherness' of the thoughts thus invaded; for the author does not so much record, edit and 'correct' Kiazym's ruminations, as invite the reader to share in his own admiration for such untutored integrity.

Finally, the 'open-ness' of even the I-narrator can be called into question. Let us return to his self-consoling 'parting shot' at the theology of Uncle Sandro. We have noted the qualifications it brims with, or at least toys with.¹ It remains to point out, in the very same passage, a counterbalance. Sandwiched between the provisos and concessions, exposing them as mere "external, compositional" instances of слова с лазейкой,² stands a telling example of yet another Iskanderian stylistic trademark: the proclivity for aphorisms. Of sententia, sayings, and other such impersonal, universal formulations, Bakhtin writes, with regard to their absence in Dostoevskii, the master of polyphony, and preferential use by Tolstoi, his monologic counterpole, that they are detachable from their context, detachable, that is, from the voice, the individuality, that presents them. This detachability derives from and

¹See Burlingame's insightful description of Iskander's "self-canceling qualifications" ("Prose of Iskander," 140.)

²Ibid., 400-408 passim.

points to their status as finite or finalized (завершенные), self-sufficient units of text, as well as their association with classical and even Enlightenment modes of thought.¹ Thus the passage captures, in miniature, the method and perhaps even the aesthetic thinking that produced the detachability of individual chapters and parts of chapters in *Sandro* considered above, in the overview of the process of compilation. What is more, the passage indicates that the duality Vail' and Genis judged as dialogic could more appropriately be seen as a surface duality of closed entities that lend themselves rather to the monologic aggregation/segregation method I have attempted to describe.

The aim of this discussion of genre definitions of *Sandro* has been two-fold: first, to demonstrate the extraordinary variety of associations the work has evoked, and through their very scope to suggest, secondly, that the compendium model it has so creatively adopted functions on a principle distinct from, as a whole, and yet dependent on, in its parts, the traditional concept of genre, as the integral organization of an integral entity. In its parts, again, *Sandro* bears examination under Bakhtin's more challenging notion of the novel as an open, dialogic form. As a whole, however, and specifically as a whole designed by the very juxtaposition of its parts to convey a moral, at times even didactic message, Iskander's work would seem to resist unqualified definition even in Bakhtin's outstandingly liberal terms.

¹Бактин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 166.

Neither generic nor metageneric categories would seem to apply in any exhaustive, all-inclusive sense. Nor are they to be rejected out of hand. Each captures a separate aspect of this singularly diverse creation, each points to its underlying spirit of admixture (as parody or some other form of hybridization), and yet each loses sight of the larger picture, of the aggregation/segregation formula this thesis tries to put forward in their stead. Furthermore, the attempt to read into Iskander's work a Bakhtinian spirit of renewal of forms is symptomatic of its place in a time identified by Ivanova with today's much-maligned "era of stagnation."¹ The next section will consider Iskander and his magnum opus in the context of those times, that hope and its possible fulfilment.

¹Иванова, "Сон разума," 4.

По-видимому, я все-таки рассказчик. Даже в таких больших вещах, как *Сандро из Чегема* или "Чик." Я думаю, что *Сандро из Чегема* все-таки роман, хотя и нетрадиционный. Но удобнее мне двигать сюжет, идею через рассказ. Это для меня самая предпочтительная форма. Это, если так можно сказать, моя дистанция.
*Фазиль Искандер, 1987*¹

CHAPTER 2

FROM SHORT STORY TO NOVEL, OR HOW LONG IS A PIECE OF STRING?

Compilation can be viewed as the simple process of adding on,--the aggregation half of the aggregation/segregation model now proposed. From this standpoint, genre classification of prose narratives at least revolves to a strangely considerable extent around the question of volume: at some ill-defined point the accumulation of quantity, to quote the Hegelian cliché transforms into a qualitative change, and a short story, no longer short, graduates by sheer weight of page or other numbers into novella and thence to novel.

This is genre in its textbook sense, with--especially in the Russian and Soviet contexts,--its full baggage of prestige values and expectations, in the sense that enters subtitles (particularly those supplied by periodical editors), popular criticism, and the alternating 'agonizing-and-ecstasizing' over the fate of its summit form, the novel. In 1978 the journal *Вопросы литературы* devoted an

¹Фазиль Искандер, "Потребность очищения: Беседа с писателем Фазилем Искандером," зап. Е. Шкловский, *Литературное обозрение* 1987:8, с. 34.

entire issue, the twelfth, to the contemporary realistic novel, noting with some pride the resounding defeat of opinion predicting its imminent demise. 1963 had seen the first "decisive and scientifically argued rebuff" delivered the "claims of the 'new novel'" at a Leningrad symposium on the question.¹ Throughout the intervening years the subject was debated time without number and beyond, *Литературная газета* carrying through 1986 and 1987 a "conversation on the paths of [its] development" in which writers, critics and readers "raised the most vital problems of the genre." These ranged from maintaining the classic tradition (including партийность and народность), to the editor-author relationship, to the most telling issue, that of the "epochal novel which raises on a global scale questions on the destinies of all mankind." To this particular debate Iskander made his own contribution, asking in its title "В чем тайна?" revealing something of his personal reverence, not for the form, but rather for the vocation, an art that lives between the hearth and homelessness, a poignant metaphor for the hospitable breadth of his own work.²

It would be impossible to cover such a vast and protean topic as the polemics on a definition of the novel, especially considering Bakhtin's now widely accepted concept of the form as the eternal iconoclast of literary evolution. The aspect selected in their stead-- the drive towards epic significance, whether or not it carries

¹ *Вопросы литературы* 1978:12, с. 3. Unsigned introduction to the issue.

² Фазиль Искандер, "Судьбы романа -- судьбы реализма: В чем тайна?" *Литературная газета*, 4 марта 1987, 3. An overview of the debate (1986: 48, 50 and 1987-2, 5, 9, 16, 17) is given in the editors' preface.

cyclization in its sweep,--is intended to reflect the response to *Sandro*, and perhaps something of its place in its literary times.

Much of the debate on the status of the повесть, even for those who would defend it against relegation to an intermediary position between the short story and the novel on the grounds of length alone, has if not centred on, then perforce had to address itself to this very issue. Whatever the conclusion drawn by the theorist, the standard procedure is to contrast the genre, taken in this narrower, size-conditioned sense, with its longer and shorter neighbours. This was the spirit in which 1966, when Iskander burst into the literary front ranks with "Goatibex," was hailed as "year of the повесть." That very work was listed among the harbingers of a genre defined in unmistakably quantitative terms as a "capacious and sly form" avoiding the "drawbacks" of its polar counterparts: "the cramped time frame of the short story and the vast temporal expanse of the novel."¹

M. Petrovskii, writing for the 1925 *Литературная энциклопедия* that is even now considered a highwater mark in the formal study of genre, cites (before implicitly dismissing) the classic criterion put forward by Edgar Allen Poe in his famous review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*: that the novella² requires and is therefore

¹Г. Митин, "Условия взлета," *Труд*, 21 мая 1967, 3. Other examples in this liberal, if not vague category include Aitmatov's "Прошай, Гульсары," Belov's "Привычное дело," Astafev's "Кража" and Kataev's "Святой колодец."

²The новелла is more commonly compared to the рассказ, primarily on the criterion of scope, to the extent that Tomashevskii even treats the two as synonymous (Б. Томашевский, *Теория литературы: Поэтика*, изд. 4-ое (Москва: Государственное издательство, 1928; repr. Ann Arbor: Ardis, n.d.), 191). Its almost universally accepted distinguishing features are a severe economy of means and a pronounced plot-, as opposed to character- or mood-orientation, as manifest in the sudden 'twist' (поворот) that propels an

distinguished by a reading time of from one-half to two hours. As a second example of such "external-quantitative definition," Petrovskii points to W.M. Hudson's distinguishing feature of reading "at a single sitting."¹ Almost half a century later the Chudakovs, advancing their concept of the короткая повесть, a new form considered by them to be the flagship of literary evolution in the 1960s-1970s (and including, incidentally, Iskander's "Созвездие Козлотура") felt similarly obliged to deal first with the matter of length:

[повесть] это не укороченный роман и не разбухший рассказ. (Хотя объем, величина -- вовсе не маловажный жанровый признак.)²

Other contemporary students of genre pay the quantitative approach the lesser, backhanded compliment of simple mention and immediate dismissal. Of the short story Pospelov writes

unexpected but retrospectively logical denouement. (See such standard references as *Краткая литературная энциклопедия*, s.v. "повелла"; А. Квятковский, *Поэтический словарь* (Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1966), 176-177.) Повеллистичность vs рассказовость is applied to contemporary Soviet prose, specifically the 1980s debate on бесфабульность in Вл. Новиков, "Думать поступками: Рассказ и современность," *Октябрь* 1987:6, с. 192-99.

A more recent study differentiates between the рассказ and the повелла on the grounds of the latter's preference for "contrastual and laconic means of depiction" (Ю.А. Шубин, *Современный русский рассказ: Вопросы поэтики жанра* (Ленинград: Наука, 1974), 56.)

Given Iskander's discursive style, which precludes any discussion of economy of means, and his reflective, often character-focused sujets, which tend to eschew sudden surprises, the term *повелла* will not be used in this now traditional sense. Rather the discussion as a whole will restrict itself to a consideration of length, in an effort to cast light on Sandro's gradual emergence as a compendium novel or compilation

¹W.H. Hudson, "The Study of the Short Story," chap. in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, 2d ed (London: Harrap, 1913), 451 quoted in *Литературная энциклопедия: Словарь литературоведческих терминов*, s.v. "Повесть," подл. М.А. Петровский Petrovskii's own definition of the genre focuses on its position midway between the повелла and the novel, lacking the former's "complete unification of components around a single organic centre," falling short of the latter's "broad development."

²М.О. Чудакова и А.П. Чудаков, "И тогда приходит повесть," *Литературная газета*, 29 августа 1979, 6.

емкость детали и глубина подтекста как принципиальные качества «малой эпической формы» дают рассказу возможность выйти на самые высокие уровни обобщения. Значит, величина идейно-художественной «информации» не может служить опорой для уяснения жанровой специфики рассказа.¹

Note, however, that 'capacity' and 'depth'--Pospelov's емкость and глубина--can themselves be seen as quantity-conditioned terms. As one of the more extreme examples of the 'numbers' approach, Baranov cites, scornfully, unidentified calculations limiting the short story to 1,500 words.²

Even from this cursory outline of the issue, two significant aspects emerge. First, the stubborn persistence of the layman's classification by length, evidenced by the almost ritualistic procedure of dredging it up, in any textbook definition of the standard prose genres, to decry it or qualify it.³ Second, its influence on the 'qualitative,' content-oriented criteria its decriers

¹Г.И. Пospelов, *Введение в литературоведение* (Москва: Высшая школа, 1976), 388.

²С.Ю. Баранов, "О трудностях определения рассказа как малого жанра," в кн. *Малые жанры в русской и советской литературе* (Киров, 1986), 5.

³For a skilful compromise, see *Краткая литературная энциклопедия*, s.v. "Повесть," подл. В.В. Кожинов: "Объем и охват материала -- существенный жанровый признак, но он играет определяющую роль лишь тогда, когда ярко выражен, напр. в романе при его сопоставлении с новеллой: одну только резкое различие объема кладет между этими жанрами принципиальную грань. [Повесть] же по размерам колеблется между новеллой (рассказом) и романом, ее объем весьма неопределен и сам по себе не может выступать как существ[енная] жанровая черта."

The article puts forward a second classification aligning the повесть and рассказ, as older forms more directly associated with the oral tradition, against the новелла and роман, where the dramatic principle is said to prevail--a distinction reminiscent of Lubbock's 'showing' and 'telling.' The former are then analyzed as more "amorphous" structures focused on "existence" (бытие), and the latter as tighter constructions based on a self-contained "act" (действие). Much consideration is given to the greater objectivity of the повесть, as well as the unifying role of the author and/or narrator.

Even this scheme, however, is obliged to deal with volume; first, by allowing that the рассказ and новелла are junior partners to the larger повесть and роман. Secondly, and more intriguingly, the notoriously broad variation in length enjoyed by the повесть is said to derive from its "chronicle nature," which allows liberal scope in time frame and number of events--quantity-conditioned considerations both.

would offer in its place: for the parameters they propose most typically involve some sort of limitation--of focus, character or event,--and limitation, in the final analysis, has to do with quantity. Limitation to a single, outstanding event is the basis of the well-known definition of the novella attributed to Goethe: "Was ist eine Novelle anders als eine sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit?"¹ A similarly quantitative bias limits the number of events, characters and even the timespan in the short story as defined by the 1978

Краткий словарь литературоведческих терминов

малая форма повествовательной литературы, в которой дается изображение какого-либо эпизода из жизни героя. Кратковременность изображаемых событий, малое число действующих лиц -- особенность этой жанровой формы.²

Even more complex schemes of classification based on narrative strategy, such as those identifying the short story (рассказ) with the presence, explicit or implicit, of a single narrator (рассказчик) ultimately betray the same quantitative bias:

Не случайно в рассказе всегда есть «рассказчик»; это может быть персонафицированный или неперсонафицированный субъект речи, но его голос, его позиция, его оценочные интонации отчетливо слышно. Присутствием рассказчика мотивируется не только *сосредоточенность повествования на отдельном «фрагменте»* жизни, но и столь важное для «*густоты*» рассказа сочетание драматического и повествовательного принципов изображения. И *единство тона* рассказа, его эмоциональное напряжение, цементирующее рассказ и одновременно «заражающее» читателя, тоже идет от активности субъекта речи, от «рассказчика.»³

¹В. Гете, "Разговоры с Эккерманном" (25 января 1927)", цит. по ст. Петровского "Повесть." 598.

²*Краткий словарь литературоведческих терминов* (Москва: Просвещение, 1978) с. 137.

³И. Лейдерман, *Движение времени и законы жанра: Жанровые закономерности развития советской прозы в 60-70е годы* (Свердловск: Средне-Уральское книжное издательство, 1980), 67; italics mine. The theorist goes on to hint at the ideological advantages of volume limitation: "В рассказе более откровенно и настойчиво, чем в романе и повести, «программируется» восприятие читателя." Short stories often provide "listener-characters" whose reaction serves as a direct or reverse model of the desired

Such is the opinion of Leiderman, in his analysis of generic processes obtaining in Soviet prose of the 1960s and 1970s. This single-focus analysis,--centering on the слово, discourse or ideological perspective of an identifiable persona,-- reflects a feature of the contemporary Soviet short story most often associated with Shukshin and, to a lesser extent, Belov. The typical discussion will often even insist on a resurrection of *skaz*, not so much as a syntactic or surface structural device but, in the case of Deming Brown's overview of the 1950s and 1960s, as part of a widespread rejection of the remote third-person omniscience felt to have been exhausted under 'socialist realism' in favour of the more limited, "intimate" and hence honest claims of a personalized perspective. Coincident with this limiting of focus is a reversion from larger to smaller forms.¹ Thus, in Ganina's contribution to a round-table discussion of the issue:

если в больших формах будущее за документальностью или гениальной подделкой под документ, то в малых формах будущее за т.н. «исповедальностью».²

Two decades later, Mikhailov makes the point even more directly, when he discovers yet another turning away from the "synthesis

reader's response. Given Iskander's chatty, conversational tone, the many direct addresses to his reader, the observation seems particularly apt.

¹In the short fiction of the 1960s, the critic finds a "residual distaste against the large forms that represent the legacy of the Stalinist culture," an "urge to avoid the ponderous, pompous falsity of the recent past" and a preference for writing "suggestively rather than explicitly." Finally, he notes as the distinguishing feature of the period "the presence of a subjective narrator who is close to the writer" (Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin*, 145, 146, 151).

²Маяя Ганина, "Без литературщины (Мастерство писателя: Рассказ сегодня)," *Вопросы литературы* 1969:7, с. 77.

and grand generalizations" of the 1970s and their "larger forms" to the miniaturized, personalized preferences of the 1980s.¹

Now Iskander's first experiments in prose, all labelled at the time *рассказ*, created and concentrated on the persona of a mildly ironic first person raconteur recalling his childhood, free-associating from one memory to the next, so that extremely lax, divergent plot structures rely for unity almost wholly on the well-defined personality of their narrator. Consider the short story which begins:

Поговорим просто так. Поговорим о вещах необязательных и потому приятных. Поговорим о забавных свойствах человеческой природы, воплощенной в наших знакомых. Ведь мы об этом говорим, как бы прислушиваясь к собственной здоровой нормальности, и в то же время подразумеваем, что и мы могли бы позволить себе такого рода отклонения, но не хотим. нам это не к чему. А может, все-таки хотим? ["Начало," ДД: 7]

The passage, of course, bears little resemblance to the more traditional concept of *skaz* as stylistically distinct from the prevailing literary norm, the concept which would seem to have prompted the analysis of Shukshin, Belov and other rural-prose writers in this light.² Nevertheless, it is not stylistics that concerns us at the moment, or even the Bakhtinian notion of *skaz* as the orientation on the 'other' as opposed to 'author's word.' At issue here is the kind of 'personalization' which implies a self-assumed restriction in scope. In Iskander's hands, this becomes a masterful imitation of intimate, unpretentious author-reader contact; it crops up time and again in *Sandro*.

¹А. Михайлов, "Пространство рассказа," *Октябрь* 1986:1, 179-80.

²Even Belaia returns to the stylistic criterion in her discussion of rural prose. See Г.А. Белая, *Художественный мир современной прозы* (Москва: Наука, 1983), 86-88.

Чувствую, что сейчас начну признаваться в своих слабостях. Старый испытанный прием. На нем я в свое время сделал свою литературную карьеру. Я думал, что этот прием уже себя исчерпал. Но, оказывается, нет. Оказывается, этот прием вообще неисчерпаем. Читателю приятно чувствовать себя несколько умнее автора. От этого он испытывает удивительный приток энергии, веселья и, в конечном итоге, благодарности автору. А автору, в свою очередь, приятно, что ему удалось слегка задурить голову читателя. Он от этого тоже испытывает веселье. Вот так, взаимно взбодрившись, мы, глядишь, скоротаем вечерок. [1979: 522]

If the personalized perspective does in fact entail a restriction not only in narrative scope but as well in actual volume, then this reliance on an individualized, immediately recognizable narrative voice can to a large extent be seen as what keeps so many of the separate 'blocks' of the *Sandro* compilation structurally anchored in the shorter genres. Paradoxically, it also provides a larger sense of unity for the larger whole.

To return to Leiderman. Like the Chudakovs cited above, indeed, like so many other commentators on more recent developments, he is primarily interested in analysing what are perceived to be re-alignments among the three fundamental prose genres most commonly if simplistically classified by scope--the рассказ, повесть and роман. The distinction he draws between the latter two categories of повесть and роман reveals more clearly the quantitative slant noted above, in his discussion of the short story. Whereas the рассказ presupposes a single point of view, both larger forms admit a plurality of perspectives, the former on the binary principle of contrast, the latter on the multiple principle of addition or suppletion (дополнительность).

Благодаря этому сохраняется присущая повести сосредоточенность на анализе *одного*, ведущего жизненного противоречия []¹

From this quantitative increase (counting up from one, two, to three or more vantage points), Leiderman proceeds to a discussion of the "novelization" of the smaller forms, a process he analyses in a quantitative adaptation of Bakhtinian terms--from monologism in the рассказ, to a dialogism in the повесть that is now stretching to include the "богатые пласты юмора, гротеска, пародирования" and thus bring it closer to the polyphony of the novel.² He distinguishes between novelization in this "broader [Bakhtinian] sense" and the "narrower" approach that specifies a "historical-literary stage" of development. Even from the latter standpoint his reading is a quantitative one, noting

в повестях 60х--70х годов [.] стремлени(е) увеличить емкость жанровой формы; больше времени и пространства, объективировать связи между главным конфликтом и «целым миром.»³

Finally, Baranov, takes issue with all varieties of the 'numbers game,' even the distinction often drawn between the metonymic basis of the рассказ and the metaphoric foundations of the novel.⁴ All such approaches are considered by him to stem

все из того же прочно укоренившегося представления: большому кораблю -- большое, а малому -- каботажное плавание.⁵

¹Лейдерман, *Движение времени*, 96. Italics mine

²Ibid., 108.

³Ibid.

⁴Baranov does not cite any proponents of this theory by name. Typical of those who link the metaphor to the novel is Alla Marchenko. She even applies the association to the argument for a novelization of the smaller forms. Thus, the short story swells by assimilating from poetry "the magic mirrors of metaphor." See her "Для восполнения объема: Заметки о художественном опыте современной прозы," *Вопросы литературы* 1974:8, с. 56-94.

⁵Баранов, "О трудностях определения рассказа," 10.

Critical abstractions notwithstanding, the build-up model certainly underlies the author's own perception of his story's expansion. From the modest label of рассказ accorded its first printing in February 1966, by February 1969 it had added on enough sails and navigational depth--in terms of character, event and timespan,--to graduate, in his eyes, to that of повесть.

Пишу повесть «Жизнь Сандро из Чегема.» Сандро -- великий тамада [.].

Пользуясь его общительностью и подвижностью, я пытаюсь описать *многие места в Абхазии*, в которых я бывал и которые любил и продолжаю любить, а также некоторые деревенские празднества, в которых я принимал участие, разумеется, самое скромное.

Сандро из Чегема -- участник *многих дореволюционных и после-революционных событий*. О них он рассказывает, несколько преувеличивая, как мне кажется, влияние собственной личности на ход этих событий.

Надеюсь весной закончить эту повесть. Начал ее года два назад, но все время отвлекался на рассказы, сценарии и прочие дела.¹

Two years later, in December 1971, the work was still seen as a повесть, a "сатирическая повесть" very near completion, now entitled "Жизнь Сандро Чегемского." The single central focus on a single character, while expanded under the aegis of his proclaimed social and moral mobility, was nonetheless maintained, so much so that Sandro's daughter was then slated for a *separate* sequel:

Не раскрывая всех сюжетных переплетений своей *повести*, скажу о них в общих чертах. Это повесть об абхазском тамаде. Сандро -- человек иронического склада ума и авантюрного характера, председатель всех застолий. Он имеет возможность общаться с людьми самыми разнообразными. Это своего рода народный костоправ: где шум, -- там и он, иногда же он, так сказать, встревает в дела, которых ему не следовало бы касаться... Но этот отрывок не о самом Сандро, а о его дочери, о человеке по характеру, я бы сказал, противположном своему отцу. Она, в моем представлении, возвышенна, она очаровательна, она

¹Фазиль Искандер, "[Над чем работают: Ответ на анкету]," *Литературная газета*, 5 февраля 1969, 3. Italics mine.

для меня идеал женственности, -- и, кстати говоря, я собираюсь писать о ней *отдельную повесть*. Но это совсем другой разговор...¹

That same year, however, saw the publication of an entirely different definition by the author:

«Житие Сандро Чегемского» -- это попытка создания современного плутовского романа. Мой герой [...] -- великий тамада [...]. При всем при том, он воплощает собой народный смысл и неистощимый оптимизм.²

Note that the upgrading in literary rank, to novel, is accompanied here by a claim to greater, almost universal social significance. The association is a common one in the current popular debate on the genre. The novelistic mentality, maintained Sidorov, a critic who has written extensively on the problem as well as on Iskander,

обязательно предполагает известную склонность автора к универсальной постановке животрепещущих идеологических и нравственных, социальных и философских вопросов дня [...]³

The lack of this way of thinking, its "deterioration" has led to a decline of the genre itself:

в русской советской прозе 60-х годов явно ослабело романное мышление. [...] Ведь дело не в охвате событий, не в тематической широте и многолюдности книги, дело даже не в углублении историзма, не говоря уже о лирической или эпической форме повествования. Все решает тип художественного мышления, концепции человека и мира. [...]

¹Он же, примечание к публикации "Девочка Тали: Отрывок из повести "Жизнь Сандро Чегемского," *Литературная газета*, 8 декабря 1971, 7; italics mine. Burlingame comments on the Tali chapter's final position in the 1973 version of the work: "by focusing on Tali rather than Sandro in the last chapter, the narrator sacrifices what little thematic unity the novel has had up to this point" ("Prose of Iskander," 155). Its own internal "greater thematic unity," in her opinion, sets it apart from the rest of that version, so much so that it "would perhaps better have been published as a separate novella" (157).

²Фазиль Искандер, примечание к публикации "Дядя Сандро и черная лебедь," *Неделя*, 19-25 июля 1971, 8.

³Е. Сидоров, "На перепутье," *Вопросы литературы* 1978:1, с. 19. There too the critic argues for the "романизация малых жанров."

Никогда, пожалуй, за всю историю советской литературы так остро не ощущалось отсутствие масштабного, социально-философского романа.¹

When attacked for such statements, Sidorov clarified the connection between genre and social significance, a connection he bases on the emblematic function of a protagonist made to represent, as Iskander claims above for Sandro, an entire people and era:

в романном мышлении [.] заложен для прозаика этот внутренний призыв «преодолеть» пестроту и «головокружение» фактов и выстроить свою, по-своему гармонизированную действительность; [...] когда жизнь человека и жизнь народа начинают восприниматься как единое движущееся целое, а настоящее обнимает в себе прошлое и будущее.²

Others, like Eliashevitch, were to herald its resurrection in the dawn of a new, "крупномасштабная проза" defined in terms very similar to Sidorov's, as

такая проза, где за образом человека и историей о его судьбе проглядывает нечто большее -- судьба народа, а иногда и всего человечества.

Главным героем эпопеи были исторические события, захватывающие в свой водоворот человеческие массы, в сегодняшней «крупномасштабной» прозе -- человек, проходящий через время, несущий на своих плечах [] тяжесть истории.³

¹Е. Сидоров, "На пути к синтезу," в его же кн. *Время, писатель, стиль: О советской прозе наших дней* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1976), 29. Among those who disagreed is Novikov, whose counter-argument includes an expansionist comment of his own. In the reference to "the epic canvas of detail" he discovers in the shorter works of Aitmatov (*Белый пароход*) and Belov ("Прищипное дело"). See Vas. Novikov, "Диалектика взаимосвязей," *Знамя* 1978:6, с. 255

²Е. Сидоров, "Продолжение следует," *Вопросы литературы* 1976:6, с. 45. In this, his reply to critics of his earlier work, Sidorov maintains that "не один роман не способен сегодня на синтез." He indicates a binary surrogate in the повесть, insofar as "современная повесть тоже уравнивает «тягу земную» и «порыв к идеалу»" (ibid). Furthermore, he alludes to the cyclization question. "и рассказ и повесть способны, как в капле, отразить океанские волны жизни, довольствуясь «пунктирным» отражением сущностного, иногда эти повести и рассказы могут слиться в книгу" (emphasis his). Nonetheless, Sidorov insists that the intermediate forms fall short of the novel's "воссоздание целостного образа эпохи в ее существенных закономерностях" (46).

³Арк. Оляшевнич, "В поисках нового эпического синтеза: О современной «крупномасштабной» прозе," *Звезда* 1985:7, с. 171.

Of note here is the tendency, shared by Sidorov, El'iashevich and Iskander alike, to seek a compromise between the stolid impersonality that had overcome the gargantuan epic novel of Stalinist times, and the personalized circumspection of the shorter 'intimate, ironical' prose of the post-Stalin era. For by the end of the 1960s, this cautious self-limitation, manifest in both perspective and scope, had reached the point of exhaustion, had canonized itself into a norm and thus inevitably begun to feel the corrosion of cliché. From non-judgmental or at least non-committal, the ironic short story--according to Marietta Chudakova in her stimulating "Заметки о языке современной прозы,"--had, paradoxically enough, produced the brisk opinionated prose of the youth movement, or at least its less talented followers. It had stagnated into a puerile flippancy passing itself for self-irony. By mid-decade, in her analysis, a counterdevelopment had begun to make itself felt, that of 'serious prose,' adapting its stance of non-commitment to a sharp demarcation between the author's and characters' discourse.

The latter trend, heralded in Chudakova's opinion by Shukshin, was fully launched by the rise of rural prose under Rasputin, Belov and others. Overpopularization of both trends revealed, in their lesser practitioners, what Chudakova diagnosed as their common weakness: the lack of a "clear, unabashed authorial presence," of a "narrative stance taken by an author confident of his moral and verbal competency."¹ Chudakova

¹М.О.Чудакова, "Заметки о языке современной прозы," *Новый мир* 1972:1, с. 238.

concentrates on the stylistic implications of this new-felt need, spawned by recognition of Bulgakov and met by the straightforward, open persona of Iskander's narrator, who confronts his reader face on, works stalwartly within the norms of standard literary Russian and the leisurely syntax of longer, more bookish periods. Chudakova's insistence on the "moral competence" of the authoritative voice she hoped Iskander's prose would usher in is of relevance to the new type of epic universality thought by Sidorov and like-minded students of contemporary prose to be channelled through the individual personality of the hero. The catchword on this aspect of the Great Novel Debate was "центростремительность," seen as a reaction against the "pseudo-epic" or "panoramic" novels of the 1950s, a re-orientation towards "личная причастность."¹ In this context, the moral competency and moral confidence of the author is manifest in his readiness to assume personal responsibility for the personalized view of history and the fate of a nation its individualized hero is meant to embody. Such is Uncle Sandro's function, claimed by Iskander, as the bearer of "народный смысл."

This emblematic role becomes even more evident in the author's announcement of May 1973, where a balance seems to be sought between the individual and his entire community:

¹See Г.А. Беляя, "Ценностный центр," *Вопросы литературы* 1978:12, с. 27-32. According to Hosking, "the main problem of post-totalitarian culture has been to define the nature of the personal." (Geoffrey Hosking, "The Search for an Image of Man in Contemporary Soviet Fiction," in *Studies in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, ed. Christopher J Barnes (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976), 61.

Свой новый роман *Жизнь Сандро из Чегема* я закончил недавно. Композиционно он состоит из ряда новелл [...] О чем эта моя работа? Она о дяде Сандро, человеке, много повидавшем, мудром, лукавом и наивном. И еще рассказы о солнечной Абхазии и ее людях, которые умеют и трудиться с полной отдачей сил, и веселиться искренне, от души. Об их заботах и радостях.¹

The whole is considered a novel, its parts--a "series of novellas," as though the former retained the synecdochal use of the single protagonist for a whole people, and the latter, looser structure allowed that same figure to follow just the opposite line of development, to splinter off, in other words, into a collective that, from this overall perspective at least, is much less sharply defined. Sandro is still the cornerstone of this edifice, his fellow Abkhazians a jumble of outbuildings free to sprawl in any of a number of directions, but like outbuildings, dependent on their centrepiece for the liberal sense of unity that survives, and survives very well thank you, what would seem to be an extremely ad hoc process of addition.

The construction continued. By 1978 some 'tightening-up' is evident, the short stories have been promoted to chapters, and the work itself has climbed one rung higher in the genre hierarchy:

«Харлампо и Деспина» -- глава из романа-эпопеи, первая часть которого была опубликована в журнале *Новый мир*. Судьбы героев этого отрывка [...] прослеживаются и совершаются в других главах романа.²

This new, double-barrelled status points, of course, to Tolstoi, the rallying cry in the epic campaign.³ As applied by Iskander to his

¹Фазиль Искандер, примечание к публикации "Дядя Сандро и его друзья: Отрывок из романа *Жизнь Сандро из Чегема*," *Литературная газета*, 30 мая 1973, 7.

²Он же, примечание к публикации Харлампо и Деспина: Отрывок из романа-эпопеи", *Неделя* 1978:38 (8-14 сентября), 6.

³Sidorov insists that the novel and "the novelistic mentality" ought not be confused with the "epic" (эпопея), the epic consciousness or panoramic narration. "Small novels" (?) can aspire to the genre's quintessential

own effort, it represents a logical development of the individual/community relationship proclaimed in his earlier pronouncements on the work. Note as well the implication, very loosely sketched above, that the work was then considered by its author to be complete. Yet one year later, in 1979, he seems to reverse himself in declaring

Сейчас я продолжаю повесть «Сандро из Чегема.» Она мне особенно дорога, ибо в ней я хотел передать поэзию народной жизни. Сатирические линии в ней -- для противопоставления, как что-то дисгармоничное этому укладу.¹

Not only has completion been postponed, the work has dropped the biographical element it had retained in the pre-*Новый мир* title of "Жизнь Сандро из Чегема" or its variant "Житие..." Biography, even parodied hagiography has expanded into ethnography, the part has retreated, though ever so slightly, before the whole. Even more curiously, this same whole has been demoted to повесть while yet preserving the epic proportions implied in the "poetry of a *people's* life.' The balance between a single protagonist and his community has taken on the new dimension of an overt contrast between satiric and lyric elements, which could perhaps account for its return to a 'lower' status. Compare a similar assessment of "The Goatibex Constellation," where Iskander echoes a number of commentators on that tale:

Along with certain other digressions from the main [satirical, goatibex] theme, my story contains several reminiscences of my grandfather's house and an account of one of my childhood adventures. Why have I included these? Because in the course of writing

synthesis--a concept he leaves ill-defined. See Сидоров, "Продолжение следует," 47, 46.

¹Фазиль Искандер, "Живите интересно: Несколько вопросов писателю о его работе," интервью с Фазилем Искандером зап. Н. Уварова, *Московский комсомолец* 12 января 1979, 4.

about the mannequins of goatibexation I began to feel the need for a breath of fresh air. This need was a purely *subjective* one, but I decided to justify it artistically by letting these childhood memories intrude upon the main theme and overwhelm it with their *poetic* freshness and vigor.¹

It would seem that Iskander's understanding of the term повесть is very close to that of Leiderman, cited above, of a binary opposition between two and no more than two focuses. Certainly "Goatibex" remains the most succinct, unadulterated example of this construct in Iskander's own corpus, one moreover that has never wavered in its genre definition either by the author or in the eyes of his critics. And there is no doubt but that the lyric element in *Sandro* was coming into its own in 1979, on the eve of its second compilation by Ardis, when in this second stage of its composition the author's subjective voice had begun to rival that of Sandro. It was this version that introduced the theme of childhood reminiscences centred around that same grandfather's house, in the chapter "Дерево детства."

In 1981 Iskander still declared himself to be in the process of completing the work, and had once more upgraded its genre rank to that of "эпический роман," where the epithet 'epic' is qualified in the less academic terms of a time scope "охватывающий период с начала века до наших дней."² 'Epic' could be interpreted in its broadest, Hegelian sense as well, as the object-oriented member of the triad of literary genres (род) which includes a subject-ordered 'lyric' and their synthesis in the 'dramatic.' Something of this subject-

¹Idem, "Author's Preface" to *The Goatibex Constellation*, trans. Helen Burlingame (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1975), 6. Italics mine.

²Он же, "Поэзией пронизанные строки: Интервью с писателем," зап. С. Лакоба, *Советская Абхазия*, 13 сентября 1981, 3.

object opposition, and more importantly, something of their interaction in the genre-genus (and even volume) compromise of *Sandro*, is evident in Iskander's impression of Tolstoi:

Толстой в своих художественных произведениях нигде как писатель сам не высовывается. Почти нет. Он всему своему творчеству придает такой совершенно эпический, как бы безразличный характер. Я думаю, основа в этом -- именно его крайняя субъективность. Так как он очень стремится внушить свой образ мысли читателю, он показывает, что этот образ мысли не от него идет, а таков мир. Его крайняя субъективность породила его крайнюю эпичность внешнюю, где он меньше всего говорит о своем соучастии, о своем отношении личном, и т.д. Он говорит, это -- поток жизни. Это не я вас учу, это жизнь вас учит.¹

Both senses are evident in the third compilation, published that very year, adding chapters fleshing out the timespan indicated by the author and shifting the plot balance back away from the subjective pole foregrounded in the "Дерево детства" chapter. Finally, 'epic' might even be taken in the layman's sense of 'large proportions,' which by that point *Sandro* had definitely begun to attain.

Size is the focus of yet another prediction by Iskander and perhaps even the key factor in its non-fulfillment .

В этом году [1983] хочу закончить "Сандро из Чегема." Очень большим получается этот роман.²

Size, under the "catchwords *globalnost* (of global scope) and *masshtabnost* (on a large scale)" was diagnosed by Katerina Clark as the overriding literary concern of the period from 1964 to 1982, stemming from a "reaction against the narrow parameters which characterized so much literature under Brezhnev."³ Clark's

¹Idem, interview by author, Tape recording, Moscow, 19 March 1989.

²Он же, "Души внезапная свобода: Беседа с писателем Фазилем Искандером," зап. Д. Гвилава и Л. Повоженов, *Московский комсомолец*, 24 апреля 1983, 2.

³Katerina Clark, "New Trends in Literature," in *The Soviet Union Today. An Interpretive Guide*, ed. James Cracraft, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

analysis concentrates on the novel, which she considers "the dominant literary genre in the Soviet Union today," and the "desperate" search by Soviet writers for new directions that "has given rise [...] to some, largely unexciting, experiments with the novel form."¹

Foremost among the new "canonical" models of scope is Aitmatov's *Буранный полустанок*, with a "vast range in time and place" achieved "partly because it combines two plot lines."² Indeed, Aitmatov offers a veritable cornucopia of coordinates: spatial (from the Central Asian steppe to the international territory of outer space and joint super-power expeditions), temporal (from a science fiction future to a pseudo-mythological past) and literary (alternating between realism and the importation of stylized legend). This principle of overlaying can be seen as a mechanistic approach to expansion that opposes or at least resists synthesis; it certainly leaves the organic unity of the whole open to debate, as has been the case with both Aitmatov's work³ and the vastly superior *Sandro*

(Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), 264, 262. See also her "The Mutability of the Canon: Socialist Realism and Chingiz Aitmatov's *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*," *Slavic Review*, no. 43 (1984) 573-87. It should be noted that Clark's reading of the call for scope is primarily thematic: a covert rebellion against "the dominance [of] village prose and the Russian nationalist school in criticism" (576). Thus, the primary targets are the "remote, antiquated," uni-ethnic settings of village prose, together with the socially and politically marginal status of its protagonists (577).

¹Clark, "New Trends in Literature," 261.

²Ibid., 265.

³See Kovalenko for reference to and examples of "unanimous criticism" of *Плаха* on this score. Kovalenko defends the work on the grounds of the "distinctive synthesisism" of all Aitmatov's writing, as well as on the modern sensibility, which has lost all sense of the "organic unity of the world" (А. Г. Коваленко, "Циклизация в современной прозе: Проблема целостности," *Научные доклады высшей школы, Филологические науки*, no. 3 (1987): 8.)

Clark does not include *Sandro* in her unflattering picture, nor does she mention any genre other than the novel or, for that matter, elaborate on the structural, generic complications of the trend. But she has pinpointed a major preoccupation among Soviet critics, one that has spilled over into their discussion of the smaller forms of рассказ and повесть.

Baranov, from a conservative perspective inspired by Brezhnev's speech at the XXV Party Congress, applies the expansionist spirit first to the novel. This he sees as moving in the late 1960s and early 1970s towards the epic, either via "multi-level construction" (многоплановость) in a single work or multi-volume serialization. By 'multi-level construction' is meant the alternation of time and space coordinates demonstrated by Aitmatov. Baranov's examples are drawn from such writers as Fedin, Shaginian, Simonov, Abramov, Markov and Proscurin. He next turns to the smaller forms, as practised by Aitmatov, Bykov, Tendriakov, Rasputin, Likhonosov and others:

Не отрицая художественную суверенность жанров повести и рассказа, отметим все же обозначившуюся в последнее время показательную тенденцию: в рамках собственной структуры они стремятся ориентироваться на присущую роману полноту и глубину анализа жизни.¹

Beyond these generalizations, and several resounding tributes to the "renewal of our socialistic reality," Hegel's *Selbstbewegung* and the reader's tantalizingly undefined "идейно-эстетические запросы," Baranov can offer only the undeveloped insight that the trend is connected to the eternal "проблема героя." Nevertheless, his is the

¹В. Баранов, "Новые дали творчества," *Вопросы литературы* 1976: 6, с. 21.

most 'global' and at the same time the most compact analysis of this critical doctrine as applied to the full range of prose genres. All, in his reading, are caught up in a "тяготение к художественной масштабности эпоса."

Arukhtina dates the trend, as it affects the short story, back to the 1950s and the appearance of Sholokhov's "Fate of a Man." By the 1960s

Все более устойчиво и последовательно в рассказе проявлялось эпическое начало, утверждались эпические формы обобщения.¹

Her argument is as general as was Baranov's before her, and as typical in its choice of example--that Sokolov is a Soviet postwar Everyman in a Soviet postwar emblematic landscape has become a standard observation in criticism of both the work itself and its perceived influence on its literary times. But it is surely significant that these aspirations should have been enshrined under the label 'epic,'² that the term itself should have been applied, with all its implications of scope, to the shorter genre favoured in the period.

Expansionist, if not epic interests can be seen even in the Chudakovs' promulgation of the короткая повесть, the size-conditioned

¹В.А. Алухтина, "Русский советский рассказ в современном литературном процессе," *Вестник Московского университета, серия 10, Филология*, no. 3 (1981): 3.

²Leiderman discusses the tale as a "монументальный рассказ" on the strength of its universal scope and representation of the fate of an entire nation. Among the distinctive means to an end he singles out for mention is the maximum use made of the tale-within-the tale structure. This, in his opinion, makes of the work a "цель однокачественных повелл." Followers of Sholokhov's lead in this trend include, according to Leiderman, Bogomolov, Kazakevich and Zakrutin. The omission of Iskander from this list can be attributed to two factors: (1) the distinction commonly drawn between the collection of novellas and the more integrated повесть в повеллах; and (2) the specific type of text unity Leiderman discovers in Sholokhov's handling of the latter form, based on a strict parallelism of 'conflicts' presented in each well-defined segment. (Лейдерман, *Движение времени*, 36-48.).

term mentioned above. Their article concentrates on the opposition between the рассказ and this newer modification, which, indeed, is defined almost solely in terms of its moving *away* from the shopworn, constricting features of the shorter genre--the lyric landscapes punctuating a well-marked end, the more limited, immediately established "author's position." And while the Chudakovs do distinguish between the короткая повесть and the повесть proper of the 1950s-1960s in terms of a re-orientation away from the novel, the mediatory hybrid captured their attention precisely on the strength of the greater latitude it afforded for literary experiment, its greater scope for development.¹

El'iashevich's concept of "large-scale prose" scorns all "typological barriers" to enjoy total freedom on the "stylistic, generic and thematic planes."² It coins the new term "микроэпика" to handle "smaller-volume" (малоформатные) works from Trifonov's "Старик" to Bondarev's "Выбор" and Aitmatov's *Буранный полустанок*, which in his opinion manage squeeze in epic scope through a "symbolization of characters, situations, descriptive detail and often the entire aesthetic space [sic]."³

Equally eclectic in her genre focus, equally epic in her ambitions, Galina Belaia finds socialist literature "on the threshold of the birth of new types of the novel" (роман-миф, роман-притча, и роман-эссе--all represented, incidentally, in *Sandro*):

И эпические характеры, и эпическая проблематика -- все это предпосылки создания социально-эпического романа нового типа. Они существуют

¹Чудакова и Чудаков, "И тогда приходит повесть," 6.

²Арк. Эльяшевич, "В поисках нового эпического синтеза" (ст. 1-ая), 171.

³Указ. соч. (ст. 2-ая), 168.

рядом со скрытой *тоской по эпосу*: тут и «малоформатный эпос» В. Шукшина, и циклизация новелл в «Последнем поклоне» В. Астафьева, и увлечение исторической темой.¹

Klitko, writing in 1983, celebrates the return to literary prominence of the рассказ, ten years previously eulogized as hopelessly exhausted. Revealing the unspoken correlation so often assumed between volume and depth of content, he declares it is now clear that "рамки малоформатного рассказа отнюдь не помеха для постановки серьезных и актуальных проблем." The means towards this end? "Расширение указанного пространства, " perhaps a borrowing of two from the epic, and certainly a surface tactic of overlaying:

Трудно сказать, становится ли рассказ более эпичным или более «заземленным», но он активно заимствует у крупных прозаических жанров освоенные ими способы изображения жизни. Иногда это резкое, лишенное плавных переходов чередование временных и пространственных планов [...], дающее эффект, аналогичный эффекту киномонтажа, порой же -- своеобразная, типичная скорее для повести рассредоточенность действия при строгом единстве повествовательной интонации.²

Soviet prose, whatever its size-classification, was felt to be bursting at the seams. Significant in this discussion is the perceived direction of the evolution, from smaller to larger forms, and the tacit premise that 'bigger is better,' larger is more ambitious, if not more profound. Time and again, genre scope is assumed to be synonymous with depth of analysis, the more leisurely pace of plot development (or even its substitution by "lyric-philosophical" digressions) with the writer's and reader's increased allowance of time to digest, not only the events described in the work itself, but the reality that inspired them, the "большой

¹Белая, "Ценностный центр," 27, 31.

²А. Клитко, "Лицо, характер, судьба: Заметки о современном рассказе," *Литературное обозрение* 1983:2, с. 21-22.

мир" felt to be modelled by the "маленький мир" of the text.¹ Smaller forms should aspire to imitate their 'bigger brothers,' if only by evoking some 'larger significance' through allegory, metonymy, metaphor or any of the other rhetorical devices subsumed in this unidirectional effort to point beyond the thing itself to some axiomatically greater whole.

The assumption,--with all its unidirectional, expansionist and hierarchical underpinnings, like the entire concept of 'small' and 'large' forms and the intermediary aspirations of the cycle,--obviously derives from a tacit allegiance to the Formalist analysis of narrative structures and their evolution. Two levels, the synchronic and a peculiar two-way diachronic (retrospective interpretation projected forward for pattern prediction), combine to achieve an apparently overwhelming effect, or at any rate an influence powerful enough to continue to be felt, almost axiomatically, to this very day. Both levels seem to involve what might be called an aggressive morphologism that oversteps its bounds to affect, on the first, the Formalist-inspired view of narrative syntax, and on the second, their scheme of literary evolution. Thus, not only did the Formalists dissect each plane of analysis into irreducible units (the device < the work, the motif < thematics, the dominant < genre, etc.), they also sought to corroborate each unit by demonstrating the mechanics of its concatenation. "Конструктивный принцип," wrote Тупианов, "проводимый

¹Leiderman, for example, traces all genre structures to the aim of creating "some imagic world model" with its own inner order and purpose. (Леидерман, *Движение времени*, 18.)

на одной какой-либо области, стремится расшириться, распространиться на возможно более широкие области. Это можно назвать «империализмом» конструктивного принципа.¹ Agglutination becomes the model, in a sense that Eikhenbaum's principle of extended anecdote and tonal contrast in "Шинель" seems to lead inevitably to Tomashevskii's reading of the progression, adapting the Aristotlean gambits of introduction, exposition and denouement in the novella as the smallest unit of narrative development, to a syntactic strategy of framing in the novella-cycle and thence, through the destruction of these middle-level frames, to the novel.²

Shklovskii's even bolder formulation makes the chronological pathos clear:

Предшественником современного романа был сборник новелл: это можно сказать, хотя бы не утверждая между ними причинной связи, а просто устанавливая хронологический факт.

Сборники новелл обыкновенно делали так, чтобы отдельные части, в них входящие, были связаны, хотя бы формально. Это достигается тем, что отдельные новеллы вставлялись в одну обрамляющую, как ее части.

[...] В общем можно сказать, что как прием обрамления, так и прием нанизывания в истории романа развивается в сторону все более и более тесного вхождения вкрапленного материала в самое тело романа.³

¹Ю.Н. Тынянов, "Литературный факт," в его же кн. *Поэтика, история литературы, кино*, ред. Б.А. Каверин и А.С. Мясников (Москва-Ленинград: Наука, 1971), 267. It should be noted, though, that Tyanianov describes such imperialism in the context of the struggle against "automatization" and the constant re-alignments among dominant and peripheral genres. In other words, his was anything but a one-way hierarchy. Doležel's discussion of affiliations between Russian Formalism and German compositional analysis suggests that Schissel von Fleschenberg foreshadowed, if not inspired the cycle-to-novel argument. (Lubomir Doležel, "Narrative Composition: A Link Between German and Russian Poetics," in *Russian Formalism: A Collection of Articles and Texts in Translation*, ed. Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1977), 77.)

²Б. Томашевский, *Теория литературы*, 4ое изд. (Москва-Ленинград: 1928), с. 195-98.

³Виктор Шкловский, "Строение рассказа и романа," в его же кн. *О теории прозы* (Москва и Ленинград: Круг, 1925; repr., Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1962), 64, 69.

More soberly, Eikhenbaum maintains, in his study of *Герой нашего времени*, that

К середине 30-х годов [XIX в.] стало ясным, что главный путь к созданию нового русского романа лежит через циклизацию малых форм и жанров, поскольку в них отразились и высказывались основные «стихии» русской жизни.¹

Predecessors in this drive towards the novel include collections (*Вечера на хуторе близ Диканьки*, *Повести Белкина*, Odoevskii's *Пестрые сказки*), повести structured as novella-cycles (several by Bestuzhev-Marlinskii, Odoevskii's "Княжна Мими") and, reaching further back, *Евгений Онегин*, seen as a "выход" from the Byronic poem and the elegy, epistle and other forms of "chamber lyrics."²

This pattern is easily extended, to *Dead Souls*, which Eikhenbaum read as a "циклизация нравоописательных и бытовых очерков" linked by a central character and persistent authorial presence,³ to *Sportsman's Sketches*, and on up through any of a number of steadily more integral forms weaving more or less discontinuous, more or less compartmentalized plot, character or concept focuses into more or less unified wholes. The prospects seem temptingly endless. Reverse diachrony says that Tolstoi's *Sebastopol Stories* preceded and therefore prepared *War and Peace*; the same logic could be held to account for the fact that the latter work imported huge and, to some, easily detachable blocks of historical philosophy;

¹Б.М. Эйхенбаум, "Герой нашего времени," в его же кн. *О прозе. О поэзии: Сборник статей*, сост. О. Эйхенбаум (Ленинград: Художественная литература, 1986), 292. In his study of O'Henry and the patchwork pre-novel cycle, Eikhenbaum argues that the American master's stark tonal (satiric and sentimental) contrasts stem from a primary orientation on the comic novella and its generic base in the anecdote ("О'Генри и теория новеллы," в его же кн. *Литература* (Ленинград: Прибой, 1927), 182.) Below I will extend the notion of anecdote to both the lyric and satiric aspects of Iskander.

²Эйхенбаум, "Герой нашего времени," 291.

³Ibid., 292.

even *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection* have been seen as the product of intersplicing discrete plot segments--the Levin/Anna, and Nekhliudov/Maslova 'lines'.¹

Taken in terms of volume advancement, the model can even enter into the discussion of writers who, like Iskander, are perceived to be unable to handle the larger forms. Paradoxically, its influence is all the more strongly felt when the writer so diagnosed is defended against the stereotypical charge, as in Sobolevskaia's examination of Chekhov's attempt, in 1888-1889, to create a novel under the working title of "Рассказы моих друзей." Sobolevskaia describes the "logic of genre development" in his corpus as proceeding

от «осколочных мелочей» к социально-психологическому рассказу (первые образцы жанра 1885-1886 гг.), через циклизацию рассказов (сборники «В сумерки» 1887г., «Хмурые люди» 1889-1890г.), к идее романа 1887-1889г. и «концептуальной» повести нового типа («Стель» 1888г., «Огни» 1888г., «Скучная история» 1889г. и др.)

The choice of a story-cycle she explains as the product of Chekhov's "genre thinking," habit and, in a broader context, the greater latitude afforded at that time of novel ossification by cyclization, as practised by Saltykov-Shchedrin, Uspenskii and others, or the "free authorial story" of Leskov, with a "memoir-chronicle form" permitting digression, inserted episodes and the like. Chekhov's eventual abandonment of the project she attributes not to an inability to handle larger forms, but rather to his having resolved

¹Tomashevskii sees the "parallel construction" of *Anna Karenina* as a direct outgrowth of intertwining novellas (*Теория литературы*, 198).

the impulse to innovate (and expand?) through the breakthrough achieved in "Степь."¹

Compare similar perceptions of Iskander as a 'small-form-only' writer. Somewhat vaguely Lysenko maintains that

жанр искандеровской прозы всегда ясен: это либо рассказ, либо повесть - пусть своеобразный рассказ и своеобразная повесть, но жанровая определенность так или иначе присуща прозе Фазиля Искандера.²

According to Sidorov, Iskander's work is distinguished by a "thematic and stylistic parochiality" (локальность); "площадка его новелл [...] ограничена местом, временем, героем," and, the critic goes on to explain, an exclusively first-person autobiographical focus. No sooner does the writer depart from this manner (Sidorov cites "Goatibex" and *Sandro*), than his larger works exhibit a "compositional non-cohesion" Thus:

Что бы ни писал Искандер, каким бы жанром ни обозначал он свои прозаические книги, он пишет новеллы, истории, и только их.³

The verdict identifies Iskander with the quantitative restrictions discussed above for the рассказ (perspective, content and volume), and perhaps even places him in the context of the "deterioration of the novelistic mentality" Sidorov diagnosed for his age. Iverni insists that *Sandro* cannot be considered a novel proper because it lacks a unified plot line and plot development, because its component chapters are static moral statements. Her conclusion

¹Г.И. Соболевская, "О циклизации чеховской повествовательной прозы 1888-1895 гг.," *Проблемы метода и жанра* (Томск), вып. 5 (1977): 74, 77. The parallel with Iskander, if we accept the expansionist logic, is particularly tempting: chronologically, in terms of publishing dates at least, he proceeds from smaller to larger forms via collections, adopting even the conceptual повесть solution, and exhibiting a marked preference for the "free authorial story."

²Лысенко, "Читая жизнь мою," 34.

³Сидоров, "Закалять душу смехом" (1974), 11.

hints at the prestige value of the novel label: "Вероятно, Искандер назвал свое произведение романом, потому что хотел подчеркнуть значительность замысла."¹ Large-form significance and short-form innovation combine in Vysotskaia's assessment of "Чегемская Кармен" (1986), cited as testimony of this decade's return to prominence of the once maligned "small prose," and commended, with shades of the expansionist spirit, for packing "essentially a novel's content" into a "small printed space."²

Returning to the tacit allegiance to the Formalist-inspired pattern, its application to Soviet literature tends to highlight the chronological pathos, and often entails the perception of a one-way influence of extra-literary reality on literary lengths. When poetry is said to have eclipsed prose entirely in the first post-revolutionary years, the assumption is that prose--and by extension its longer forms--presupposes a longer incubation period for adapting to the ultimate "large form"--reality itself:

Poetry [...] did not demand the lengthy preparation of a work of prose, it offered a spontaneous emotional response to changing reality³

Similarly, the return to prose through first its shorter forms and then the interspliced novel, is seen to have been conditioned by a reality intuitively evoked by the literary historian and emotionally responded-to by the works analyzed:

¹Иверши, "По ту сторону смеха," 352.

²Наталья Высоцкая, "Обретение нового дыхания," *Литературная Россия*, 27 февраля 1987, 11.

³Marc Slonim, *Soviet Russian Literature: Writers and Problems 1917 - 1967* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 10.

young Soviet writers, bent on hurriedly recording their rich stock of experiences, cared little for long, elaborate, slow-moving novels in the old manner, or for large canvases. []

In the case of longer works, such as some of the 'novels' of Pilnyak, Nikitin and Vsevolod Ivanov, there was no unity of plot, the narrative being conducted simultaneously on several planes and constructed according to the laws of a musical theme with refrains and variations.¹

Fedin's *Cities and Years*, coming nicely close to mid-decade in 1924 and most commonly cited as the harbinger of the return to the novel proper, is based on a more sober interweaving of narrative planes. Other, more structurally obvious montages are to be found in Babel's *Red Cavalry* (1926) and Zoshchenko's *Рассказы Назара Ильича господина Синябрюхова* (1922), both of which pre-date first Soviet 'epic,' *Quiet Flows the Don* (1928-1933, 1940). Sholokhov's work ushered in three decades of dominance by mammoth forms responding to or taking advantage of imposed social stability, when the well-recorded Stalinist appetite for monumentalism spilt over into multivolume serializations, from Aleksei Tolstoi, Kataev, Fedin and the like. Reaction against this trend in the late 1950s launched the revival of the повесть and short story, once again interpreted as indicative of literature's ad hoc response to "times of accelerated social and cultural change," when

new human attitudes towards human relations, morals and social behavior are breaking forth but not yet predominant or universally recognized. The short story can pose questions, suggest dissatisfaction and doubts, and, in general, present problems without proposing solutions. Because it concentrates on isolated, limited--although often extremely evocative--themes and situations, the short story is ideally suited for use in periods in transition, when new social and cultural tendencies are discernible but not yet established.²

¹Gleb Struve, *Russian Literature Under Lenin and Stalin, 1917 - 1953* (Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 1971), 39

²Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin*, 146.

A contemporary (1974) commentator on this association between extra-literary pace and narrative length, lends to it the weight of classic authority, none other than Belinskii, in his well-known paean to the quick sensitivity and selective depth of the повесть ("О русской повести и повестях г. Гоголя," 1835).¹ Adapted to the contemporary literary process, the "shortage of epic quality" reflected in the "compact prose" and even the "micro-novel" of today is a product of the writers' two-fold obligation to make haste and provide, as "chroniclers [...] at least preliminary generalizations, at least rough cartoons towards some future epic canvas"--where the hierarchical aspiration from smaller to larger forms is quite specific.²

The cycle is seen to be ideally suited for ad hoc statements:

Жанровая свобода цикла -- это и отражение определенного уровня художественного осмысления проблемы: когда надо привлечь к ней внимание общества, стучать в рельсу или бить в колокол [..] Но анализ всех разнонаправленных факторов и тенденций автор не может еще дать.³

¹"Мы люди деловые, мы беспрепятственно суемтся, хлопчем, мы дорожим временем, нам некогда читать больших и длинных книг -- словом, нам нужна повесть. Жизнь наша, современная, слишком разнообразна, многосложна, дробна: мы хотим, чтобы она отражалась в поэзии, как в граненом, угловатом хрустале, [...] и требуем повести. [...] Краткая и быстрая, легкая и глубокая вместе, она перелетает с предмета на предмет, дробит жизнь по мелочи и вырывает листки из великой книги этой жизни." (В.Г. Белинский, "О русской повести и повестях г. Гоголя," в его же сб. *Собрание сочинений в трех томах*, ред. Ф.И. Головинченко, том 1, *Статьи и рецензии 1834 - 1841 гг.*, ред. М.Я. Поляков (Москва: ОГИЗ, 1948), 112. The notorious confusion between the terms *повесть* and *рассказ*, usually associated with nineteenth-century usage, as above, continues to this day, or so maintains Solov'ev, who even complains of the mis-application of both terms to Iskander. (Владимир Соловьев, "Жанр рассказа: каноны и движение," *Литературная газета*, 12 июня 1972, 4.)

²Марченко, "Для восполнения объема," 56-57. The article is wildly eclectic: citing Bakhtin on the novelization of all genres, seeking epic expansion through the infusion of philosophic-lyric content. It is precisely this eclecticism that makes the pseudo-syllogism of volume-to-significance so very explicit.

³Лейдерман, *Движение времени*, 125.

Bakhtin objected to the Formalists' negligence of the 'organicity' of the novel genre; he pleaded for a more "internal, thematic" concept of genre in general, and insisted that genre is a method or type of "completing the whole" and not some "random combination of random devices." The conclusion:

Если бы в кругозоре художника не появлялось такого жизненного единства, которое принципиально не вместились в рамки новеллы, то он ограничился бы новеллой или сборником новелл. Никакое внешнее соединение новелл не может заменить адекватному роману внутреннего единства действительности.¹

Ironically perhaps, Leiderman quotes this very passage, and then proceeds adapt it to something quite close to the Formalists' own chronology-to-construction reasoning. In his analysis of the succession from the short story of the early 1960s, through the story cycles of the latter half of the decade:

Появлению циклов предшествует расцвет рассказа и (или) очерка, но сами циклы уже представляют начальный опыт художественного синтеза современности. [...] В цикле синтез добивается «арифметическим» путем, путем сложения и координации малых форм в расчете на то, что количество перейдет в качество. Иногда переходит. [...] Там [...], где системная связь, охватывающая сложную диалектику отношения человека с миром, оформляется в структуре цикла -- цикла в собственном смысле уже нет. Он диалектически самоотрицается, трансформируется в роман, где спеление частей или глав, бывших некогда самостоятельными новеллами, настолько органично и ненарушимо, что о циклизации можно говорить лишь с точки зрения творческой истории произведения [...]

В ходе литературного процесса активизация новеллистических циклов обычно предшествует выходу романа. Циклы подготавливают роман и структурно и содержательно.²

Lermontov's *Hero of Our Time* succeeds in making the transition; such novella-cycles of the 1960s-1970s as Alekseev's *Хлеб -- имя существительное*, Belov's *Плотничьи рассказы*. Matevosian's *Оранжевый*

¹М. Бахтин, *Формальный метод в литературоведении* (Ленинград: Прибой, 1928; репринт, Серебряный век: New York, 1982), 175, 185.

²Н. Leiderman, *Движение времени*, 128, 131.

табун and Astaf'ev's "повествование в рассказах" *Царь-рыба* approach it, through aspiring to a unity of "the social universe" as manifest in the ties between generations, families, neighbours and compatriots, and particularly the image of the native village. Curiously enough, *Sandro*, which would seem to fit this analysis most neatly, is not mentioned.

Nor does it enter into the discussion, by Vocharov, of what he sees as the current (1970s-1980s) trend towards "фрагментарность, дискретность повествования." Instead, he cites, besides Aitmatov's *Буранный полустанок*, Evtushenko's "роман-мозаика" *Ягодные места* and several Estonian writers. Of note in Vocharov's argument is the attempt to distinguish between the unnamed fragmentary works of the modernist period--attributed to the irrational chaos of the era, the alienation of the individual from history and, above all, the "helplessness of the shattered consciousness"--and the "целенаправленная художественная дискретность" of today. Given Soviet literature's fundamental confidence in the scientific rationale, its fragments are actually "points which in their aggregate give indications of the whole." Plot continuity (consecutivity) is replaced by "associative linkage," whose aim, as explained by Kataev in *Алмазный мой венец*, and pursued by Trifonov's "dense style," is authenticity shorn of aesthetic adornment. Now the anti-literary orientation may well be of relevance to Iskander's method, a new twist on 'laying bare the device,' as it were, a casual flaunting of structural convention which aspires, in the teeth of Formalist logic, not to heighten the literary tangibility of the work, but rather to forefront a guileless, self-declared author-manipula-

tor. This avenue will be explored in more detail below. Bocharov is cited here as an example of the sophisticated logic which seeks to compromise between "integrality" (целостность) and disjointed narrative forms, as evidence of the widespread sense of the cycle's rise to prominence over the last decade and period of *Sandro's* composition, and finally, perhaps, as a link between that sense and the critical assumption that cyclization aims towards expansion in scope. For the fragmentary nature of contemporary Soviet literature, claims Bocharov, stems from its "признани[е] объемности мира и объемности сознания."¹

Further evidence to the critical perception of a cyclization trend, this time dated back to the 1960s, is to be found in its discussion by Sinenko. The article focuses on M. Alekseev's *Хлеб -- имя существительное*, O. Gonchar's *Тронка* and S. Krutilin's *Липяги*, and even mentions in this light, the scenario for Tarkovskii's "Андрей Рублев." Forerunners are identified as Paustovskii, Antonov, Gladilin and Aksenov, in that they often incorporated "autonomous segments" into an otherwise integrated "development of action." The trend itself features a "decentralization of the protagonist" reflecting the more democratized social consciousness of the day, each character standing at the centre of his or her own segment and yet fleshed out by additional details scattered throughout other sections. Historical precedent and Eikhenbaum's interpretation of cyclization in the 1830s are marshalled towards the familiar expansionist expectation of bigger and better novels to

¹А. Бочаров, "Глубинное бурение: О некоторых стилевых тенденциях в современной прозе," *Литературное обозрение* 1984:10, с. 26-30.

come. Yet Sinenko hedges somewhat, in voicing the fear that the trend "к новеллизму в большой прозе" might possibly indicate a general deterioration, however slight, in "compositional mastery."¹

One more supposition need be noted: that realism tends naturally towards and finds its most perfect expression in the novel form. Appropriately enough, this notion too can be seen to have its Formalist roots, or at least affiliations. It was Jakobson who formulated the well-known tenet of the metaphoric and metonymic poles of all verbal behaviour, and outlined their association with the romantic and realistic trends, respectively.² As Čiževskij applies the distinction specifically to the nineteenth-century Russian experience:

the romantic, metaphoric style is aware of various levels of being, above and below; but the realistic style is aware of only what is around it, on the same plane.³

Single-planed metonymy, particularly the examination of the relationships between a character and his or her environment, "explains the realists' preference for long forms,"⁴ in pursuit of a thorough investigation of the contingencies of personality, time and place. The importance ascribed to nature, nurture and social class, to their evocation through synecdoche and their own status as mere parts of a whole, demands, it seems, the larger canvas and

¹В. Синенко, "Обновленный жанр," *Урал* 1965:7, с. 156, 165.

²Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," chap. in *Language in Literature*, ed. Krystyna Pormorska and Stephen Rudy (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 111.

³Dmitrij Čiževskij, *History of Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature*, trans. Richard Noel Porter, vol. 2, *The Age of Realism* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1974), 5-6.

⁴*Ibid.*, 6.

synthetic resolutions only a novel can provide. Without venturing to imply that Cizevskij's history, written in emigration, is broadly known to contemporary Soviet criticism, it can be seen that his analysis encapsulates the double-barrelled appeal the Rise of the Realistic Novel would seem to wield today. For evidence of the unspoken tautology see the 1986-1987 debate in *Литературная газета*, cited above, specifically the rubric "Судьбы романа -- судьбы реализма?"¹

Now Iskander has been identified with the realist tradition. A typical, anthology-style assessment of his work reads:

Для Искандера характерна реалистически-правдоподобная, часто с конкретными и бытовыми деталями манера письма, при которой проявляется философский и аллегорический подтекст.²

His own concern for verisimilitude can be seen in the precision with which he repeatedly discloses his 'real-life' sources. That "Goatibex" was inspired by an actual newspaper article on a beast actually given that name, and actually praised for its "прыгучесть, мясистость, шерстистость," Iskander has explained at length on a surprisingly large number of occasions.³ Verisimilitude plays an important part in Briker and Dal'gor's reading of the novel, even its most explicitly fairy-tale-like segment (a recasting of the Abkhazian legend of Dzhamkhukh), as a work of "magic realism"⁴ On the grounds of verisimilitude, the critic Rassadin felt obliged to

¹ See p. 57, fn. 2.

² "Фазиль Искандер," в сб. *Избранные рассказы шестидесятых*, ред. Марк Альтшуллер и Елена Дрыжакова (Тенесси, NJ: Эрмитаж, 1984), 343.

³ The article, framed and complete with photograph, hangs in the hallway of his Moscow apartment. For its role in launching the story see Искандер, "Идеи и приемы," 75; он же, "Коротко, но не короче истины" (интервью), 40; он же, "О движении к добру," *Литературная газета*, 30 июля 1986, 11.

⁴ Брикер и Дальгор, "Сказки из Чегема и магический реализм," 112.

"repent" of his earlier assessment of "Goatibex" as a "lethal grotesque":

в "Козлотуре" Искандер гораздо больше, чем преувеличениями дорожит похожестью, жизнеподобием, сугубой реалистичностью изображения.
[...] там, где писатель, тянувшийся к откровенному гротеску, нарисовал бы карикатуру [...], Искандер дает почти бытовую зарисовку.¹

In his revised opinion, the author achieves a "non-grotesque grotesque" encompassing "wild absurdity without overstepping the bounds of external realism,"--which could be interpreted as a plea for realistic satire. An American commentator offers the term "lyric realism," based on the "stylistic and tonal pattern" of "Goatibex," its "correspondences to actual events as well as personages, and realistic detail provided for background and local color."² The much-quoted passage in "Начало," equating the comic with the just (ДД: 23), has been read as a prescription for "realistic humour and satire," with (shades of народность) its roots in folk humour.³ Sandro's portrait of Stalin, according to Nivat, belongs to the second, *realist* phase that is now supplanting the metaphoric or fantastic approach to the tyrant--where the focus is on the psychological aspects of realism."⁴

Loseff resurrects Zamiatin's term *neorealism* to apply it to a new standard of literary excellence set by Solzhenitsyn in *August 1914* and matched only by a select few of his contemporaries,

¹Станислав Рассадин, "Похвала здравому смыслу, или Пятнадцать лет спустя: О прозе Ф. Искандера," *Юность* 1978:2, с. 84.

²Packard, "Contemporary Serbian and Soviet Satire," 8-9.

³И. Эвештов, "Наказание смехом: О современном юморе," *Звезда* 1977:1, с. 203.

⁴Georges Nivat, "Les Stalines de la littérature russe," *Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto: Revue Européenne des sciences sociales* (Chênebourg, Switzerland) 19, no. 57 (1981): 116-17.

including Iskander on the "best pages" of *Sandro*.¹ Vail' and Genis place him among the realists of the 1970s who represent the culmination of the trend, with its "пафос позитивной веры в душу человека." Together with Vladimov, Voinovich, Solzhenitsyn and Maksimov, Iskander finds himself an "island in the stream of strange works" by writers in the Soviet baroque, which since the mid-1960s has rejected their civic-mindedness to reflect a more pessimistic life in more avant-garde literary forms. Whereas Aksenov, Erofeev, Popov, Bitov and Dovlatov experiment with *form* through modifications of *skaz*, through "laying bare the device" or plunging into the grotesque, Iskander and company are said to be straining at the limits of *genre*:

Войнович -- в явственную публицистику второй книги *Чонкина*; Владимов -- в явственную эпистолярность; Солженицын ушел в стенограммы думских съездов; Максимов пишет едкие фельетоны; Искандер открывает для себя аллегорию ("О кроликах и удавах" [sic]).²

From the arguments of historical precedent, the inherent thrust of the realist trend we have now returned to the presentiment that that trend itself is in decline, or has at least entered a period of stagnation. No wonder, then, that so many commentators on generic processes in contemporary Soviet prose should be so eagerly proclaiming the arrival of new literary forms, all posited, with the exception of Vail' and Genis' analysis, on the

¹Лев Лосев, "Великолепное будущее России: Заметки при чтении *Августа Четырнадцатого* А. Солженицына," *Континент*, no. 42 (1984): 293-294. Other writers included in this classification are Bitov for *Пушкинский дом*, Vladimov for *Верный Руслан* and "here and there in Trifonov." The trend is seen to be distinct from others, represented by Maksimov and Dovlatov, Aleshkovskii and Erofeev, Aksenov, and the rural-prose writers.

²Петр Вайль и Александр Генис, "Литературные мечтания," в их же кн. *Современная русская проза* (Ann Arbor: Ормитаж, 1982), 151-56.

expansion of existing genres. What is curious is that so relatively few have mentioned *Sandro from Chegem*, surely the expanding narrative par excellence, in that particular light.¹

True, Iskander's work has been seen to resist comparison with his contemporaries on any number of grounds. From the latter 1960s, it was often held up as evidence of a turning away from youth prose, either stylistically (in Chudakova's view, cited above) or thematically, on the strength of his older characters, particularly in the story "Дедушка."² Commenting on developments in the short-story mode of 1985, Latynina notes:

каждый раз, когда я читаю очередной рассказ про Сандро из Чегема или Чика, я невольно думаю, что если историк литературы будет размышлять о литературном процессе восьмидесятых годов, он обнаружит, что Искандер в нем вроде бы не участвует, хотя и работает продуктивно, и издается. Нет принципиальной разницы между рассказом о Чике, написанным сейчас или десять лет ранее. Писатель умножает число своих рассказов, но движение в них отсутствует.³

The exclusion, in her opinion, is most fortunate: the genre's return to literary fashion, while pointing as always to the intensification of

¹Even Ivanova, a devoted student of Iskander, omits the work from her discussion of the rising cyclization trend nudging the short story towards the novel in the 1980s. See her "О живом и о застывшем," 20-26. The general tendency is to state without analysis the incontrovertible fact that *Sandro* is a "чегемский цикл" (С. Чупришин, "Взгляд сквозь миражи: Рассказ, социальные и художественные возможности жанра," *Литературная газета*, 14 января 1987, 4); a "система новелл" (Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988а), 223); a "цикл повелл" (Вольфганг Казак, ред. *Энциклопедический словарь русской литературы с 1917 года*, пер. Елена Варгафтик и Игорь Бурикин (London: Overseas Publication Interchange, 1988), 328).

²See for example О. Гладышева, "Старики: Тема старости в современной прозе," *Волга* 1973:1. с. 159-66; Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988б), 4; В. Азанов, "Под гипнозом формулы," *Волга* 1967:4, с. 161. A loyalist view of 1976 pits Iskander and a host of his contemporaries (Aitmatov, Bondarev, Gonchar, Granin, Vladimov, Astaf'ev and others) against the "somewhat infantile protagonist and confessional style" of the popular movement. In the spirit of Gor'kii and Ostrovskii, this company concentrates on moral issues and didactic purpose. (Ан. Анасьев, "Писатель и молодой герой," *Октябрь* 1976:8, с. 184-89.

³А. Латынина, "Газошные цветы: Рассказ в зеркале одного номера," *Литературная газета*, 29 января 1986, 4.

social ferment, having as yet produced only an abundance of new clichés largely imitating Shukshin, his eccentric semi-urbanized former peasants and their vague spiritual malaise, as well as a trend towards plotlessness (бесфабульность) and the grafting on of pseudo-folkloric parables. On the latter two counts, in view of Iskander's remarkably lax narrative style, as well as his own increasingly pronounced preference for incorporating re-worked legends (cf. the Dzhamkhukh chapter of *Sandro*,¹ the mini folktales ascribed to Uncle Sandro, Abesalomon Nartovich and old Khasan, or indeed the experiment with Orwellian political allegory in *Rabbits and Boa Constrictors*), Latynina would seem to have been overly hasty. Still, her primary focus is not structural, but rather thematic, and her arguments are supported in a similar vein by Popov, who quite sweepingly berates unnamed writers who take up unspecified fashionable themes to gain mass audiences, and is "overjoyed" to single out Iskander and Shefner as principled individualists.²

The virtual omission of Iskander from the discussion of contemporary generic processes becomes all the more startling when it is considered that thematically his work, especially *Sandro*, would seem to be a veritable chapbook of the popular literary topics of his day. The thematic perspective prompted Chuprinin to conclude that Iskander in "Бармен Адгур" and "Чегемская Кармен," 1980s additions to the work, echo such contemporaries as Rasputin

¹Cited as evidence of the growing trend, "over the last ten to fifteen years" of the "литературная сказка" in Липовецкий, "В некотором царстве," 17.

²Валерия Попов, "Цена популярности," *Нева*, 1986:8, с. 164. For a discussion of the trend itself, see *Вопросы литературы* 1976:8; 1977:1, 6; 1978:3, 5, 11.

in "Пожар," Astafev in *Печальный детектив*, and Aitmatov in *Плаха*, who together with a number of other writers constitute a trend whereby

литература [...] сейчас чаще бичует, чем врачует общественное сознание, а если и врачует, то исключительно шоком, принижениями, скальпелем [...] ¹

In addition to reflecting this rising incidence of publicistic invasion of a literary text, Iskander fits into an earlier trend towards "fantastic realism." Now in Clark's view the latter phrase stood in the 1970s as a critical watchword for the attempt to rejuvenate the ailing socialist novel by grafting on a "relatively tame nonrepresentational" dimension. The frequent comparisons of *Sandro* to Faulkner and Marquez are all too often based if not restricted to the "mythic, imperishable life" Chegem acquires as the semi-real, semi-fantastic Abkhazian version of Yoknapatawpha County or Macondo.² Reduced to simplistic, topographic terms, the category becomes almost meaningless: Thomas Hardy's Wessex County--no less fictional, no less realistic, equally subject to erosion from without,--hardly begs comparison with Iskander's paradise lost. More importantly, nowhere do we find, as in Aitmatov's case,

¹Чупринин, "Взгляд сквозь миражи," 4.

²See Бенедикт Сарнов, "Мир Фазиля Искандера," вступ. статья в кн. *Фазиль Искандер: Библиографический указатель*, сост. З.Б. Михайлова (Ульяновск: Библиотека Профсоюзов, 1982), 27. The topographical factor plays a role in Briker and Dal'gor's analysis of magic realism in Faulkner, Marquez and Iskander: their tiny, semi-fictional villages represent all of mankind ("*Сандро* и магический реализм," 104, 106). To date, Iskander's own acknowledgment of the two writers' influence is cursory, mere name-dropping. See his "Удивительный мир" (интервью), 4; "Коротко, но не короче истины" (интервью), 36; "Души внезапная свобода" (интервью), 2. Scammell, while recognizing the common use of remote villages as "vantage point[s] from which to contemplate the follies of empire building," nonetheless considers the analogy between *Sandro* and *One Hundred Years* to be "far-fetched, to say the least" ("Dancing for the Dictator," 1215).

any discussion of the synthesisism or multi-level quality such grafting was perceived to impart.

Other more purely thematic concerns of the day abound: the sensitive issue of generational succession, both broken and unbroken (Sandro as the semi-wayward and Kiazym as the worthy sons of Khabug); the work ethic as manifest in Khabug and Kiazym; the theme of memory; the defense, as declarative as it is nostalgic, of tradition. From the once-popular urban/rural debate Iskander's name is conspicuous by its absence.

On the less official side of the coin, his work captures the underground move for greater freedom to indulge in the ribald ("Маленький гигант большого секса" appearing in *Метрополь*, with Aleshkovskii as one explicit extreme and Sokolov's *Полисандра* as its parodistic and paradoxically chaste opposite). Glasnost has liberated another once taboo aspect of Iskander's place in non-conformist literary fashion--the treatment of Stalinism.¹ His contribution to the still more loaded question of inter-ethnic relations will surely attract attention in the light of recent tensions.

In part, this astounding catholicity of theme is a privilege of the compilation mode. The obvious repercussions of its more unorthodox elements could be held to account for what amounts to a veritable silence on *Sandro's* role, specifically as a compilation, in

¹Veselaia, in a recent interview with Iskander, voices the concern that the tragic theme now risks cheapening through overexposure: "трагедия страны забалтывается." Iskander's reply reaffirms the importance of fully investigating all aspects, moral and philosophical, of Stalin's dark appeal, and moreover affords an insight into his concept of literature's response to society's current interests (a latter-day "литературный быт," as it were). "Существует объективный закон рынка, который касается и художественных произведений. Это, я бы даже сказал, мистика человеческого интереса, она определяется рынком." (Искандер, "Если остановимся" (интервью), 16.)

the great epic sweep. For whatever reasons, only one critic chose to deal with the work as a quantitative compromise between larger and smaller forms, as a harbinger of the novel's latest resurrection.

In 1974, replying to the Chudakovs' contention that the short story had exhausted its usefulness, Solov'ev pointed to the "cycle of stories and even the book of stories" as an up-and-coming formation, if not genre. In this context he discussed Belov (*Плотницкие рассказы, Бухтины вологодские*), Kazakov ("Северный дневник"), Olga Berggolts ("Дневные звезды"), citing such precedents as Babel', Hoffman and even Boccaccio. Central to his argument that such formations can lay claim to an integral unity all their own, that their component parts are structurally affected by incorporation into such larger units, is his citation of Iskander's 1973 collection *Время счастливых находок*, tied together by a single central character and the "aesthetic task" of showing that character's growing-up. From this work he singles out the cycle "Школьный вальс, или энергия стыда" as a prime example of the retroactive effect of new stories on old, an effect largely dependent on the simple mechanics of compilation under one title.¹ This development, "one of the most promising on the contemporary scene," is interpreted in the expansionist spirit as moving towards the "даль свободного романа," состоящего из рассказов и лирических авторских пассажей." Its next step, that of an undefined synthesis of stories into an undefined type of novel, is represented by "Сандро из Чегема" as it appeared in *Новый мир*.²

¹Владимир Соловьев, "Рассказ и его метаморфозы," *Нева* 1974:4, с. 185-86.

²Там же, 192.

In other articles from the same period, Solov'ev considered the narrator's role in ensuring unity in that work, but chose to discuss its generic innovation in terms of cross-breeding between the novel and folklore.¹ Tracing an evolution in Iskander's corpus from "closed" short stories through cycles to the novel, he ascribes to the individual tales of *Sandro* a "centripetal force" that makes each surmount its "plot completedness" to "strive for unification," and once again ascribes that unity to "the common notion of an unbroken [co-]extension of the [...] individual and the folk." Solov'ev--alone, it seems, among his colleagues, concludes: "Искандер самый яркий пример циклообразования."²

His argument would seem to betray, in addition to the expansionist preoccupation of the period, several gaps, or leaps of faith. First, mere amalgamation under a single title is assumed to bestow a de facto unity. The theoretical foundations for this notion can be traced to Tynianov's concept of "accidental results" and their entrenchment, either as collections begin to be perceived as large forms, or as large forms themselves begin to yield place to smaller through the automatization of a sense of incompleteness, of fragmentation raised to constructive method.³ In the case of *Sandro*, where text comparison of pre- and post-compilation publication reveals minimal adjustments (confined mostly to character name and kinship ties), where texts are incorporated holus-bolus to encompass many a cheerfully unapologetic

¹Соловьев, "С поправкой на время," 215-18.

²Он же, "Судьба человека в жанре рассказа," *Юность* 1974:10, с. 74, 73.

³Тынянов, "Литературный факт," 263.

reiteration of detail and even incident, Solov'ev may not be quite so wide of the mark after all.

More debatable is the compulsion to treat such post hoc unity in terms of its relationship to the more traditional view of the novel. In this aspect, Solov'ev recalls the controversy over *Sandro's* claim to that status (Briker/Dal'gor vs. Burlingame, Smelkov vs. Varlamova, cited pp. 31, 33 above). Thematic repetition could account for the 'centripetal force' he discovers at work in the novel. Nevertheless, there is a vast difference between the cycle and the novel, even the compendium novel, however loosely or liberally defined, and to gloss over this difference is to overlook the unique contribution Iskander makes in *Sandro* and the distinct forces, 'centripetal' or otherwise, that inform its structure. What has perhaps hindered a proper assessment of Iskander's challenge to the genre system is the persistent effort to view that system in one light, in one direction and one direction only. For the 'applied Formalism' of the period has tended to overlook the fact that literary evolution was viewed by the original theorists as an ever fluid dynamics, a two-edged alternation of larger and smaller forms, and not a build-up to extol or a break-down to bemoan.

Andrei Bitov, writing in 1969, mentioned Iskander's "Колчерукий" in the following context:

Интересный рассказ появляется сейчас, как мне кажется, лишь на стыке жанров, на границе перехода из жанра в жанр -- у писателя, который, может, не осилил ещё иной, более свободный, чем рассказ, прозаический жанр, но внутренне уже принадлежит ему и исповедует его -- уже покинул прежний рассказ-чертеж, рассказ-камеру. Края такого «нового» рассказа как бы размыты [...], -- это *неограниченность жизни*. Такой рассказ можно было бы представить себе скорее как отрывок или главу из прекрасной большой вещи, и в этом отрывке или главе непонятно как,

но угадываются примыкающие к ней неизвестные главы. Эти неведомые главы таинственно существуют в таком рассказе [...] Нет, это не опостылевший [...] подтекст... В таком рассказе чистый воздух, в нем легко дышится, в нем именно появляется настоящая деталь, придающая повествованию пространство и жизнь.¹

Here at last, it seems, is a viewpoint free of the accretionist, expansionist, bigger-and-better assumptions that have generally dominated the reception of Iskander's work. This "breathing space," this *qualitative* "enrichment" Bitov senses at play in Iskander, in Matevosian and Faulkner alike, all representative of what he calls "рассказы романиста." For the larger formation they coalesce into he offers the term "пунктирный роман."² Even Bitov's reading of the chronology of genre evolution in prose stands apart from today's norm:

Проза начиналась с писем, потом -- мемуары, записки, эссе, потом уже - профессиональные жанры повести, романа и рассказа (причем рассказа - в последнюю очередь, как самого оторванного, профессионального и искусственного жанра), а потом кольцо смыкается: снова заметки, дневники, письма и завешания.³

Moreover, this is a qualitative, not a quantitative evolution, one based on the writer's professional odyssey towards personal experience and direct speech, towards the true freedom of confessional prose. Thus genre turns beyond literary limits to life itself, and not the next rung up on a finite ladder of literary magnitudes. Instead of a teetering series of domino lengths, or

¹Битов, "Границы жанра," 74.

²Linked by Ivanova to the cyclization trend amalgamating the рассказ-эссе, via a loose fabula and "hidden author's presence." The genre hybrid includes "Широклобий." ("О живом и застывшем," 22-23). The issue has its paraliterary (censorship) complications. Bitov's short forms of the 1960s and 1970s, as Proffer puts it, often "turned out to be disguised sections of a large novel [.], *Pushkin House*" The Nabokovian "structural symmetries" Proffer discovers there are entirely alien to Iskander. (See "A Disabled Literature," 30-31)

³Битов, "Границы жанра," 75.

sibling rivalry among matrioshka dolls with their jostling claims to the artificial constructs of literary elbow room, Bitov offers a genuine re-orientation along the axis of literariness/non-literariness, the qualitative impulse Tynianov originally proposed for literary evolution.

-- Раз уж мы заговорили [...], -- начал дядя Сандро, отхлебывая кофе, -- я тоже кое-что расскажу. Если кто из вас уже слышал эту историю, ничего, еще раз послушает. Хороший рассказ, как песня, его можно много раз слушать.
 ["Пьяные на дороге," *Смена* 1988:7, с. 8]

CHAPTER THREE

COMPILATION IN ITS OWN RIGHT: RECURRENCE AND THE ORAL ILLUSION

Difficult as it is to separate the discussion of cyclization in Iskander from the period's preoccupation with magnitude, some consideration must be given that structure in its own right, particularly in view of its truly amazing extent in his corpus. Surely no other writer matches Iskander for sheer tenacity of adherence to the compilation mode. *Sandro* is by no means the sole instance of its use. In fact, rare is the story that has not at some point been incorporated into some larger structure.¹ These fall into four groups, each encompassing a formally announced повесть or novel, as well as what might be termed its peripheral works. The four compilations are *Sandro*, "The Sea Scorpion," "The School Waltz" (with its offshoot "Chik") and the just published "Стоянка человека" (see Appendices). *Sandro* and "Стоянка" feature individually titled

¹An estimated 18 out of 130 titles printed by December 1988. Burlingame, categorizing Iskander's stories by subject and theme, notes the low proportion of works with "no discernible connection with either the narrator's life or the lives of his relatives and friends" ("Prose of Iskander," 125). The problem is compounded by Iskander's predilection for title changes, as well as compilation shuffling. Testimony to the difficulty of sorting out which titles refer to which texts or text segments can be found in Briker and Dal'gor's perfectly understandable slip in correctly identifying "Дерево детства" as the novel's last chapter and incorrectly as a separate story (Брикер и Дальгор, "Сандро и магический реализм," 113). In point of fact the title was first applied to a collection (1970, 1974). Contrary to the usual practice, the collection did *not* contain the story that later entered *Sandro*

chapters, a stratagem absent from the other amalgamations. Each and every one of these composites followed the piecemeal publication pattern of *Sandro*.

Now a recent inquiry into cyclization, by Kovalenko, contrasts with the expansionist model the countervailing view, that cycles are "independent genre formations which at specific periods in literary development rival that of the novel."¹ Kovalenko's "specific periods," of course, seek to circumvent the polemically anti-historical bias of the young Formalists; and his analysis is duly restricted to the 1960s and 1970s, concurrent with the emergence of *Sandro*. He focuses on Nagibin, Shukshin, Bykov, Rasputin, and Trifonov; no mention is made of Iskander. Towards his aim of positing for the cycle a distinct type of "integrality" (целостность), he proposes to define that formation as

художественное единство произведений, совсем не обязательно связанных «сквозным» сюжетом или общими героями. Общность цикла более высокого порядка, она предполагает общий угол зрения на действительность или единую художественную идею.²

Thus far, the definition is a negative one, noting, in compositional terms, only the *absence* of features (plot and character continuity) associated with the novel. It applies only in a limited

¹А.Г. Коваленко, "Циклизация в современной прозе," 3. An overview of the concept of "cycle" is found in С.Е. Шаталов, "Записки охотника как художественное целое," в его же кн. *Художественный мир И.С. Тургенева* (Москва: Наука, 1979), 233-66. While noting that the formation ultimately "leans towards a novel-like reproduction of reality," Shatalov insists on a specific genre status. Compared to the novel, "cycles are freer in their transitions, less capable of insight into and active depiction of the psychology of their characters, more rigid in their treatment of fluctuating associations and inter-relationships" (264). The assessment applies quite neatly to Iskander, as will be seen below.

²Коваленко, "Циклизация в современной прозе," 4.

sense to *Sandro*, where several of the later chapters¹ are indeed sealed off in these terms from the rest of the novel.

Kovalenko then proceeds to contrast the cycle with the collection (сборник) as a "более тесное и органичное художественное единство" (though just what constitutes such compactness and organicity is left unspecified). Both are pitted against the "monolithic work" on the strength of their having abandoned a "hierarchy of main and secondary characters," to give each personage equal rights to "close-up portrayal."² Here at last is a positive factor: the pluralism of character focus.

It is immediately evident in *Sandro*. Noted by any number of critics, it has even been extolled as evidence of a democratic view promoting humbler characters to title roles.³ Thus Makhaz, Khabug and his mule, Tali, Kharlampo and Chunka are secondary figures in all but the chapters centred squarely on their various fates and squarely proclaimed as such in their headings: "Пастух Махаз," "Рассказ мула старого Хабуга," "Тали--чудо Чегема," "Харлампо и Деспина" and "Молния-мужчина" as a sobriquet for Chunka. The obverse side of the coin--character demotion--has by and large escaped critical

¹"Маленький гигант большого секса," "Утраты" and "Джамхух: Сын Оленя." With regard to the latter, Lebedev links its epilogue to "Tali" in his "Смешно сказать" (1987), 224.

²Коваленко, "Циклизация в современной прозе," 5, 6.

³To Ivanova, character promotion advocates, for one and all, the "individual's right to his or her own fate" ("Смех против страха," (1988a), 225). See also Вайль и Генис, "Сталин на чегемской дороге," 152. Smelkov considers *Sandro's* life story to be wrapped up with Tengiz's biographical toast; afterwards, he yields pride of place to Tali, whose chapter closed the first, 1973 version of the novel (Смелков, "Так возникают романы," 33). From the same version, Solov'ev concludes that *Sandro* is replaced by his daughter as a more contemporary central figure (Соловьев, "С поправкой на время," 218). Later versions, with their proliferating profusion of character focus make central or peripheral status an academic question at best.

attention. Its most outstanding example is Uncle Sandro.¹ Chapters One through Twelve all find him in the picaro's classic function as pivot, arguably sole pivot for a wonderfully wandering plot.² Totally absent in the thirteenth chapter, his brother's tale, he returns to prominence in the fourteenth, his marriage story; makes in the fifteenth a cameo appearance based on his picaresquely static qualities of aversion to good honest labour and ability to outdrink even the most devoted tippler (1981: 53-54, 75).³ By the seventeenth chapter his table prowess has condensed to the proportions of a talisman: something small and powerful enough to dispense with all need for his actual presence. The eighteenth, twenty-second and twenty-fifth chapters seat him after prolonged absences back at the table, but only as one of a number of story-tellers. The twenty-eighth puts him firmly in his place as

¹Noted by Ivanova, "Смех против страха" (1988a), 223.

²See Iskander's claims for Uncle Sandro as a mobile plot pivot, cited above p. 66. To them may be added: "горский тамада дядя Сандро [...] обладает талантом остроумно и весело «дирижировать» застольем. Благодаря своей общительной профессии оказывается в разных местах Абхазии, встречается с разными людьми. Его путешествия легли в основу романа в новеллах *Сандро из Чегема*." (Фазиль Искандер, "Путь к счастливым находкам: Беседа с писателем," зап. Э. Гусева, *Турист* 1977:9, с. 24.) The theoretical argument finds its most forcible expression in Shklovskii's "Как сделан *Дон Кихот*," в его же кн. *О теории прозы* (Москва-Ленинград: Круг, 1925; repr., Ann Arbor: University Microfilms), 70-96. When Bakhtin refuted this purely mechanical (in his terms, "external," "compositional") approach, he did so on the grounds of a higher thematic (elsewhere, "architectonic") unity: the single protagonist roaming through a maze of separate incidents embodies the unity of his era. (*Формальный метод в литературоведении*, 184-87). Conversely, in "Сольво в романе," he recognizes the picaro's place in disjointed compositions: "Плут, шут, дурак -- герои незавершимого ряда эпизодов-приключений и незавершимых же противостояний. Поэтому и возможна прозаическая циклизация вокруг этих образов." (*Вопросы литературы и эстетики*, 216). It is the compositional role that concerns us here.

³Similarly, Uncle Sandro's non-presence and decidedly non-Protestant (non-peasant?) work ethic is underscored in Chapter 31, when Kiazym, gathering nuts, is mistaken for his lazy brother and scoffs in reply: "Так Сандро и загопишь на дерево" (1979: 584)--an otherwise entirely gratuitous episode.

only one of a number of family members, from which position he emerges only towards the close of the thirty-first, when he and the narrator call down the final curtain on Chegem.

In broader terms, character promotion and demotion form part of a recurrence principle that covers even those figures who are kept permanently in the lowly ranks of spear-carriers.¹ The village idiot Kunta, for instance, enjoys the distinction of highest distribution: no other character wanders in and out of more chapters than he. It is therefore appropriate that he should remain as one of the few surviving residents of an abandoned Chegem. In *Sandro*, recurrence is the linchpin of structural cohesion on the syntagmatic plane.

It substitutes for plot-continuity--plot-recapitulation. Originally, perhaps, this was no more than a product of Iskander's publication method. He is by no means the first writer to import pre-published pieces into a larger work, but he must surely stand as the most forthright. Instead of editing to omit repetition or smooth over transitions between formerly independent segments, his work as a whole, and *Sandro* in particular, embraces many a cheerfully unapologetic reiteration of detail and incident.

What could be more overt, more meticulously overt, than the recapitulation, in the fifteenth chapter, of an unforgettable episode from the eleventh:

Читатель помнит, что Харлампю на следующий день после умыкания Тапи объелся и в состоянии орехового одурения погнался за ее любимой

¹The migration of episodic characters, according to Tomashevskii, is one of the means by which individual tales are tied together into larger cyclical forms approaching the novel. *Теория литературы*, 196.

козой, добежал до мельницы, где был перехвачен еще более, чем он, могучим Гераго, связан и погружен в ручей, в котором сутки пролежал с пятипудовым жерновом на животе для противоборства течению и окончательного заземления вонзившейся в него молнии безумия. [1981: 67]¹

It is, of course, a specific kind of text that requires and relishes such blatant repetition--one that can shuffle each 'card' in its stack of incidents to pick up, as in the present example, a story dropped four chapters earlier; one that can point even beyond itself to an on-going process of endless reshuffling and infinite reiteration. Even in its first telling, Kharlamp'o's bout with walnut intoxication is repeated, raised to the stuff of legend. A good legend trips off the tongue at the slightest opportunity, giving some hint of the quasi-oral basis for plot-recapitulation:

Впоследствии, когда кто-нибудь из чегемцев начал хвастаться силой мельника, [...] когда чегемцы рассказывали о его силе, они часто приводили в пример, как он залпосто вытащил из воды пятипудового пастуха и пятипудовый мельничный жернов одновременно [...]

[Слушатель] никак не мог взять в толк, какого черта мельничный жернов оказался лежащим на пастухе, а сам пастух при этом оказался лежащим в воде.

Рассказчику, конечно, только этого и надо было, и он всю эту историю рассказывал с самого начала, что мы в данном случае не собираемся делать, а просто подключаемся с того места, на котором остановились. [1979: 388]

Recurrence not only masquerades as plot-continuity, it totally disrupts what little there remains of more conventional linear development. By no stretch of the imagination can *Sandro* said to have a central, run-through or link plot. Chapter-to-chapter transitions often play fast and loose with chronology and character focus (the 1920s tale of Sandro's abducting a wife,--Chapter 14,

¹As evidence to the constancy of character recurrence in *Iskander*, it may be noted the the miller Gerago appeared in "Первое дело," his first ever published story (*Пионер* 1956:11, с. 41-46). There Gerago displays unchanged the same features--deafness, taciturnity and great physical strength--that distinguish him in *Sandro*.

"Умыкание"--sandwiched in between the 1940s conjugal tragedy of Makhaz and the courtship trials of Харлампo и Деспина, which encompasses both periods to take the reader into the post-war expulsion of Greeks from Abkhazia). As the last example illustrates, individual chapters themselves can be no less cavalier with time and person.¹ They often represent a stringing together of plot incidents. The first, "Сандро из Черема" as described above, jumps from exploits in the field of love to feats of arms and commercial chicanery, with the innocently casual transition:

Кроме этого случая в жизни Сандро было множество других, когда его могли убить или, по крайней мере, ранить. Его могли убить во время гражданской войны с меньшевиками, если бы он в ней принимал участие. Более того, его могли убить, даже если бы он в ней не принимал участия.

Кстати, перескажу одно его приключение, по-моему характерное для смутного времени меньшевиков. [1979:14]²

The telltale "кстати" will be examined below.

Recurrence also functions across chapter boundaries, in a vast network of internal cross-referencing. When a party boss tests his marksmanship against an egg perched on a curly-haired cook's head (1979: 214-16), the scene is recalled by a narrator who regrets the trouble his own re-telling of this, Uncle Sandro's tale

¹Burlingame complains: "Further contributing to the work's lack of coherence is the author's jumbling of chronology from one episode to the next, which seems to have no esthetic justification, at least in the novel's present form." ("Prose of Iskander," 155). The criticism pertains to the 1973 version, when perhaps the deliberately anecdotal, totally a-literary nature of *Sandro* was not yet clear.

²This is the first of a vast number of catalogues in *Sandro*. Others--lyric, satiric, even vituperative--abound. The present example is particularly interesting in that it exposes the declarative base of the technique: a forthright compilation of lists, here, the aggregate construction of a plot in which one thing leads--not entails or causes, but quite simply leads--to the next.

might cause him (1979: 548-49).¹ The binoculars presented to the wily old rogue by Prince Ol'denburgskii in Chapter Three, are predicted in the second (1979: 34), reappear at regular intervals motivated by plot needs--his spying on the Mensheviks in Chapter Five, on Tali's tobacco-threading rival in Chapter Eleven, on bathing beauties in Chapter Fourteen. His forcing a horse up a marble staircase and over the heads of passionate gamblers is first recounted in Chapter Four, alluded to again in Chapter Eight (1979: 191), and then promised twice as a tale yet unknown to the author in Chapter Twelve (1979: 401, 445).

In the latter instance can be seen the application of the recurrence strategy to relay-narration, which is, after all, a twice-told tale and as such often incorporates a brief preview in its frame.² Typically of Iskander, though, the frame itself is repeated. In fact, given Iskander's preference for a literary style, his tendency to tell his characters' tales for them in by and large his own voice, the frame assumes a primary importance. It is focused on the relay-situation,--the handing over of raw material by the original to the relay-narrator,--and highlighted by displacement (the frame chapter to *Sandro* as a whole numbers second).

¹The incident crops up again in the play "Кофейня в море," where Sandro's key role as eye witness is cited as evidence of its authenticity (*Театр* 1988:6, с. 140).

²Sidorov connects the preview technique to an illusory oral base in his discussion of Iskander's opening gambits. The titles and first lines of such short stories as "Петух," "Мученики сцены," "Англичанин с женой и ребенком" and "Время по часам," he writes, "как правило обещают историю," содержат зерно, экспозицию сюжета." They create the impression of a "conscientious and ostensibly somewhat naive story-teller" who "gets right down to business." ("Закалять душу смехом" (1983), 244).

A frame, in Uspenskii's definition, marks the transition from an external to an internal perspective, as the reader crosses from the 'real' to the 'depicted' world.¹ The reader does not come through this crossing unscarred; his new perspective is coloured by it to one extent or another. Recall Bakhtin's discussion of the "prosaic" perspective pre-set by the intermediary narration on the Romantic outlook of Belkin's tales.² Once set, the prosaic attitude works from within the tales themselves. For a frame, as frame, is meant to dissolve, however temporarily, however illusorily; it fades from the reader's immediate perception by the simple fact of its acceptance.³

Toying with any convention resurrects its perceptibility; toying with the convention by which a frame opens and establishes a relay-situation forefronts that same situation. Continual repeti-

¹Б.А. Успенский, *Поэтика композиции: Структура художественного текста и типология композиционной формы* (Москва: Искусство, 1970), 182.

²Бахтин, "Слово в романе," 126. Bakhtin does not deal with the frame per se. Rather his interest is in heteroglossia in the novel and, here, its compositional manifestations, among them, the "provisional narrator" and his "alien discourse."

³Uspenskii's discussion of frames in the graphic and verbal arts focuses on their structural isolation from the main body of the work. It highlights their artificiality--an artificiality defined not so much in opposition to the 'real world' outside the text (which is in any case epistemologically impossible) as by way of contrast with, or lack of motivation by the text itself. Hence his examples of the highly codified opening and closing gambits of folkloric texts, the sudden switch to first-person at the ends of more literary works, abrupt changes to panoramic perspectives, etc. The implication seems to be that literary artificiality concentrated on the borders of a text nudges the reader into a more ready submission to the artificiality of the text itself. Acceptance specifically on the scale of "semiotic significance," as a valid model of the world without, possessed of its own integrity. (See *Поэтика композиции*, 181-94.) Iskander's frame does not appear to set any boundary between either the text or the world at large. There are more than enough internal boundary mechanisms to compensate for the lack of a defined opening (see Ю.М. Лотман, *Структура художественного текста* (Москва: Искусство, 1970), 112) and even reinforce the illusion of unhindered traffic between the two.

tion of the original reversal perpetuates it, lending to the relay-situation a permanent immediacy. In Chapter One, the first relay exchange between Sandro and the author interrupts a tale already in progress (1979: 18). In Chapter Two, their first face-to-face encounter is preceded by a series of delays: the author has difficulty placing the old man's name and finding his house; once there, he first hears a disembodied voice from a darkened veranda, first glimpses a seated, then standing and finally mobile Uncle Sandro. What is more, Sandro tells no tale whatsoever at this first meeting—that too is delayed until much later in the Chapter. All of these delays are commented on by the author; all echo the opening reversal gambit of the Sandro stories; all are reflected in the basic discourse structure of these tales: the sub-clause of Sandro's indirect speech *precedes* the author's antecedent clause. In simple terms, a tale will first be recounted for him, and then towards its end incorporate some brief indication of the 'original' relay-situation.

Among the more complex examples of this strategy stands the chapter devoted to Sandro's first encounters with Stalin. "Пирь Балтаца" takes Sandro as what Booth variously terms an "undramatized" or "unacknowledged narrator," a "centre of consciousness" or "third-person reflector."¹ Most of the details and perceptions of "Пирь" can be easily traced to Uncle Sandro, and the tactic is shored up by a citation-epilogue appended to the whole:

¹Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 153.

Об этой пиршественной ночи для Сандро неоднократно рассказывал друзьям, а после двадцатого съезда и просто знакомым, добавляя к рассказу свои отороческие не то видения, не то воспоминания. [1979: 229]

From pointing out that this particular relay-situation is itself subject to repetition, the epilogue then has the source-narrator repeat in his own words a key detail (the gun slipping from bankrobber Dzhugashvili's sloping shoulder). Recurrence has come into its own.

Stalin's feast scene would make a fascinating study of non-concurrence on Uspenskii's various planes of point of view. That the evaluative plane is governed by the author is seen in his manipulation of Stalin's inner thoughts and such external details beyond Sandro's ken as the rivalry among the tyrant's henchmen. The author's dominance of the phraseological plane reveals itself in the Homeric catalogue of food and drink (1979: 200), in the lyric evocation of Abkhazian folksong (1979: 201-202), in the satiric pedantry of dubbing Stalin the "epicentre of love" (1979: 199) or noting the "democracy of food" and "despotism of drink" (1979: 200). But the spatio-temporal plane is unquestionably Sandro's. This is especially evident as Lakoba comes to display his marksmanship. It is Sandro who notices the details that make this episode so harrowing: the target squeezing his chef's hat, the marksman's face turning to stone as he takes aim, the "something yellow" that spatters over the cook's face when the egg is successfully hit (1979: 215-17). From the standpoint of the present discussion, it is the spatio-temporal plane that establishes Sandro internally as the original source, adding one more level of redun-

dancy or recurrence to the multiple relay-situation described above.¹

"Битва на Кодоре" follows precisely the same pattern. Once again, Uncle Sandro serves as the anchor on the spatio-temporal plane. Here the anchoring is marked by such means as turning the wily rogue into a narrative topographical centre: every person present at the Mensheviks' recruitment meeting, for instance, is physically placed with direct reference to his, observer's position. To his left sits a mounted peasant who, unmoved by the oratory, picks fruit; to his right stands another stranger; these, their only identifying features are constantly *repeated* as the two *repeatedly* interrupt the proceedings (1979: 92-99). The strategy is further highlighted as Uncle Sandro comes to spy on the Mensheviks' secret weapon; the author steps out of third-person scene painting when "он видел" suddenly veers off into "где виднеется" (1979: 101). The standard temporal shift to historical present is not, however, developed; instead it is dropped for a retrospective summary of Uncle Sandro's laying his plans, after which the author steps directly

¹Rassadin notes the divergence between Sandro's impressions of and the author's commentary on the banquet scene. Its ultimate effect, in his opinion, is to impart a "certain, most peculiar ... charm" to Stalin, as a viable aesthetic figure, an individual with at least the remnants of a common humanity, as "the incarnation of absolute power" with as yet thankfully untapped reserves of cruelty (Ст. Рассадина, "Последний чегемец," *Новый мир* 1989:9, с. 233, 232, 235). Iskander's own description of the origins of the episode makes the deliberate *segregation* of both components clear: he carefully questioned eye-witnesses and found that, in many cases, "когда человек восхищается деталью, а ты, занимая противоположную позицию, вносишь в понимание сказанного свои коррективы, появляется возможность воспроизвести событие довольно близко к тому, как оно происходило на самом деле. ("День жизни отделить от ночи: Беседа с писателем Фазилом Искандером," зап. Олег Долженко, в сб. *Хронограф: Ежегодник 89* (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1989), 49-50). One is reminded of Solzhenitsyn's "aesthetic investigation" for a truth, as he sees it, beyond the reach of the historian; specifically the scrupulous reproduction of documents and the undisguised authorial rhetoric that surrounds them.

forth to tease the reader with a rhetorical "Но что же он увидел?" and the immediate answer "Он увидел..." to expose the playing with form. The suspiciously high incidence of verbs of perception then moves into an outright excess of, to coin a phrase, 'verbs of conclusion': "Дядя Сандро сразу же догадался," "дядя Сандро пришел к выводу," "он тут же сообразил," "Тут дядя Сандро окончательно раскусил назначение" and thence into a redundant series of 'he thought,' 'he knew,' etc. (1979: 101-102). From this platform the text proceeds into an analogy, drawn by the original thinker, between his observing the weapon builders and God's observing him in the act (1979: 103), which prompts the relay-thinker to offer his own... observations on... observation (1979: 103-104)--a gallery-of-mirrors tactic made marvelously specific the better to underscore the original observer's function. When at long last Uncle Sandro is shown to be the oral source of the tale, the revelation once again insists on its multiple *repetition* :

Но потом, когда танк (или чудище? или броневик? или крепость? дядя Сандро его все время называет по-разному), так вот, когда он раскатился [...] [1979: 114; italics mine]

Reduced to its essence--portraying the relay-narrator as listener to his various sources--the relay-situation can be and is evoked ad infinitum. The author-narrator can and does insist at every opportunity that he is the best of listeners. Early in the novel, this prompts his first independent excursus into his own past (1979: 31-32); later it can be alluded to as his sole claim to attention from a highly-placed secret practitioner of the art of story-telling (1979: 475). Later still, in Chapter 24, his relation-

ship with the loquacious Marat is demonstratively based on the *infinite* capacity of both 'sender' and 'receiver':

В те времена я ему нравился как хороший слушатель его любовных приключений. Этим приключениям не было ни конца ни края, а моему терпению слушателя не было границ. [*Метрополь*: 381]¹

By the same token, especially in the case of Uncle Sandro, the source can on his or her own initiative, or in the estimation of other characters and the author-narrator, be said to be the best of tale-tellers.² Both aptitudes are declared, qualities not 'shown' but 'told,' and as such amenable to condensation for re-telling. Thus Uncle Sandro, reduced to the quintessential story-teller, can be conveniently evoked in a chapter he has played no direct role in as seated at some distant hypothetical campfire recounting "поучительные истории" from his life (1979: 521).³ Throughout the novel the actual proportion of the stories that can be traced, if only indirectly, to him decreases markedly, a many-faceted process that embraces the introduction of omniscient narration proper, the author's usurping more and more text space either to digress on

¹The reference is to Фазиль Искандер, "Маленький гигант большого секса," в кн. *Метрополь: Литературный альманах*, ред. В. Аксенов и др. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979).

²In his own estimation, to cite but one of countless examples: "[Дядя Сандро] решил, что детям будет полезно послушать рассказы о его подвигах, да и не каждый день к ним заворачивает такой гость, как Сандро из Чегема" (1979: 19). As appreciated by others, see the otherwise gratuitous passage detailing Uncle Sandro's services to "junior scholars" writing their candidate's dissertations on "the decay of the Abkhazian nobility"; he enters their bibliographies as "престарелый очевидец разложения" (1979: 34).

³The strategy of evocation is applied to Uncle Sandro regularly throughout the novel, allowing him to hover over its entire length as a static but powerful presence. Nowhere is he shown actually performing his prime function of tamada or master of table ceremonies (itself a ritualized emblem of story-telling, as will be seen below). The author points this out in an aside which argues that to do so would be as blasphemous as portraying God in the act of combing his beard (1979: 554).

literary, political and other matters, or to deal with his own affairs; and last but not least the rise of several other story-tellers, either proclaimed masters (Marat, Abesalomon Nartovich, to a lesser extent, the Old Khasan) or popular amateurs (Tendel, Bakhut).

This is external, cross-character recurrence. It produces a series of protagonists not sharing but reduplicating a core feature, -in this case, narrative talent. Such reduplication, a function of the aggregate mode in *Iskander*, is possible precisely because the recurring feature is a proclaimed one, nudging each of its bearers towards the pole of 'type' and away from that of 'character' on Bakhtin's scale of author-hero relationships.¹ Put another way, each of the many tale-telling protagonists of *Sandro* is in this function a variation on the primary theme of endless narrative activity.

To the extent that a particular protagonist approaches the inert but reproducible 'type,' his or her own traits are subject to reiteration.² Hence the network of internal character recurrences

¹In "Автор и герой," the distinction hinges on the author's attitude towards his hero. He relates to the *character* as a personalistic whole; an independent, vibrant, conscious and resilient whole launched on his own cognitive odyssey through an unfolding universe that he himself embraces. The *type* emerges from an authorial stance that is profoundly remote from an entirely different whole, that of an "evaluatively dead" depicted world. The type is only part of this inert whole; he is moreover defined, even thoroughly circumscribed by it. (151-52, 159). The categories partake in the larger opposition between *langue* and *parole*, the Saussurean dialogue to which Bakhtin devoted so much of his polemical energy. The former to him embodies the systemic features of a monolithic artifact; the latter is materially involved in the relativistic process of becoming. To expand: characters are unique, irreducible and dialogic; types are reducible, subject to repetition and monologic.

²The type corresponds to the actant only in so far as its semantic features can be detached from a given figure on the text surface. In the present instance, the many story-telling types share the actantial function of subjects of their various narrative predicates, senders of their various tales.

in Iskander, their leitmotifs. Of central importance to the relay frame of the novel, its declarative base and multiple re-incarnations, is the leitmotif of voice. 'Voice' in its simplest, physical sense, that is,--vocal power, the bigger the better. 'Stentorian' (звучный) is the epithet favoured by Iskander and applied regularly by him to not one but two characters, Uncle Sandro and the exuberant Tendel. It is decibel capacity that Uncle Sandro boasts of almost from the outset (second only after amorous prowess and a talent for hospitality). He claims he could knock a man off a horse with it in his younger days and bases the second tale of his life--the encounter with Menshevik marauders--on the claim (1979: 14-23). Once established, the trait is alluded to sporadically ("сдержанный, но сильный мужской голос" 1979: 26; "громовым голосом" 1979: 77, "звучным голосом" 1979: 372, etc.). Then, unaccountably, it fades. In fact, it is transferred to the ebullient huntsman Tendel, who is invariably loud, invariably ribald, and forces men to reel in their saddles right before our eyes (1981: 98-99).¹

But predication presupposes some form of transitivity (Greimas, *Sémantique structurelle*, 133), and transitivity is an active, teleological category: "That shared characteristic is related to the teleology of the fabula as a whole." (Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 26). As will be seen below, it is difficult to discover in *Sandro* any intention or activity related to any figure other than that of the author-narrator. Rather the type, to return to Bakhtin's definition, is a passive category; compositionally, it may function as a narrative subject; on the deeper level of "aesthetic" or "cognitive activity," it tends towards the status of an object (Бахтин, "Автор и герой," 159-60).

¹In the 1986 film "Чегемский детектив," a minor but unforgettable character from the novel, Tsurtsurmiia, makes the boast (see below, pp. 140-41). Here, however, Tsurtsurmiia is not an urban retail specialist (товаровед), but an old kolkhoz member. Sandro himself is entirely absent from the film: Prince Ol'denburgskii's binoculars, transformed into a "глазная труба," are said to be in the possession of "one of our boys"; Bakhut borrows the instrument to spy on bathing beauties, as did Sandro in Chapter 14; Sandro's daughter Tali's

Still the impression remains, and is supported throughout the many twists and turns of narrative mode, that the many stories of *Sandro* are, as the critic Eventov called them, "Рассказы великого тамады".¹ The same figure in the same function prompted Vail' and Genis to ignore the equally prominent role played by the relay-narrator:

Сандро из Чегема -- прозрачная книга. [...] ей больше бы подходила устная жизнь. Как Ходже Насреддину. Нет сопротивления материала, нет напряжения чтения, [...] за книгой не видно автора.

Впечатление такое, что *Сандро из Чегема* не написан, а записан.²

The tamada presides as master of ceremonies at the elaborate table rituals of the Caucasian peoples. There the toasts are justly famous for their eloquence, no less than their length. One toast, reproduced indirectly in *Sandro*, hints at the narrative potential of this pre-literary genre. Tengiz drinks to Uncle Sandro's health:

Тост его сначала с эпической медлительностью охватывал жизнь дяди Сандро в целом, а потом, как ствол дерева естественно растекается живой зеленью ветвей, был оживлен многими частными подробностями. [1979: 293]

This branching encomium captures both the wandering structure of *Sandro* and, as will be seen below, its static characterological base.

Victrola is transferred to Tsurtsumiia; his picaro's riposte "где спрятал, там и нашел" (1979: 445, where it caps his outwitting of a dog-lover whose prize hunter he has hidden for blackmail) is appropriated by Bakhut, who hides the new kolkhoz chairman's prize cow for similarly roguish purposes. His arrest and incarceration for the murder of an absconding bookkeeper, is excised from the episode involving the skeleton found in the prayer-tree. In a word, Uncle Sandro, as a 'type,' can parcel out his typical, detachable features to any number of equally typical protagonists. ("Чегемский детектив," produced by Mosfil'm/Gruziiia-fil'm, 1986. Director Aleksandr Svetlov, script by Fazil' Iskander. Reviewed by Андрей Зоркий, "Детектив, по чегемский," *Советский экран* 1986:17, с. 10-11.)

¹Эвентов, "Наказание смехом," 202.

²Вайль и Генис, "Стали на чегемской дороге," 167-68. As to Khodzhe Nasreddin, Mr. Iskander himself compared the Persian picaro to Uncle Sandro at our 19 March 1988 meeting in Moscow.

Moreover, it claims the attention of all present: to solve the "dualistic question" of whether or not a "late lamented" can appreciate the great tamada's efforts at his or her wake, to confirm minor details in the old slacker's work history, or simply to support with a chorus of nods and congenial murmurs. The choice of an indirect mode for its re-creation is motivated in part by the need to highlight and orchestrate this communal setting and its universal participation.

Now Uncle Sandro, proclaimed as "величайш[ий] тамад[а] всех времен и народов" (1979: 223), can be said to preside over the celebration of community that is the prime impulse behind the novel which bears his name. Communal breakings of the bread abound throughout the work. There are perverted instances: where ceremony becomes repressive ceremoniousness, as at the "End of the Goatibex Affair"; where corrupt officialdom threatens to poison the atmosphere, as in the tableside encounter between Kiazym and the thieving Timur ("Бригадир Кязым"); where Stalin spices the food and drink with fear ("Пирь Валтасара").¹ And there are genuine gatherings: to celebrate the return of Tendel's grandson (Chapter 16.b), to mark Uncle Sandro's recovery from a pratfall (Chapter 10), to salute Tali's victory and/or bemoan her abduction (Chapter 11), to pave the way to family reconciliation beneath the trees ever present in Iskander (Chapter 21), to signal the making of ethnic peace-

¹Vail' and Genis base their analysis of the opposition between true carnival and its ersatz Soviet substitute on the Belshazzar incident ("Сталин на чегемской дорожке," 154). For a major compositional role played by a perverted banquet outside *Sandro*, see the capitalized Table in "Кролики и удавы" and the insightful commentary of Vasiuchenko ("Дом над пропастью," 202).

-on the hood of a parked truck (Chapter 17), or for no apparent reason at all (Chapter 25). As Ivanova puts it:

За бесконечным застольем длиною в огромный роман Искандер усаживает и функционера, и крестьянина, и космонавта, и художника, и кофевара, и журналиста, и бездельника-балагура, и Сталина с Берией и Лакобой, и танцоров из абхазского ансамбля, и Ворошилова и дядюшку Сандро.¹

The family feast celebrates and consolidates kinship ties, one of the major paradigmatic links at work in the novel. What is more, it humanizes time itself, giving each member a place in the changing generations:

нам необходимо время от времени собираться на семейных торжествах, чтобы через одинаковый цвет нашего напитка вновь почувствовать наше кровное родство и вновь увидеть тех людей, от которых мы идем, и тех, что идут за нами, чтобы, прочно осознав свое место во времени, почувствовать себя звеном [...]²

The smaller counterpart of the banquet is the one-on-one tableside encounter at a café. The two are specifically contrasted in the second chapter, "Дядя Сандро у себя дома," as the great tamada is called away from a private conversation with the author to appear at a more populated function:

-- Извините, дорогой, но компания ждет, -- добавил молодой человек миролюбиво, но твердо обращаясь ко мне, как бы давая знать, что было бы безумным расточительством тратить драгоценные силы великого тамады на одного человека, когда его ждут жаждающие массы. [1979: 45]

Elsewhere, the boardwalk café, coffee and cognac stand as substitutes for the communal feast, the "легкий горячий материал наших бесед" (1979: 41).

Banquets and cafés can be symposia for storytelling by any and all present, and the twice-told tale is a joyous celebration of

¹Иванова, "Сон разума рождает чудовищ" (1988), 4.

²Фазиль Искандер, "Друг пороку, враг себе: О мерах по борьбе с пьянством. Высказывание," Труд 7 декабря 1969, 4.

communality, of shared knowledge and neighbourly ribbing, interruptions and even corrections. Kiazym's neighbour Bakhut fusses and fidgets throughout Tendel's story of how he won his bride, now his wife of many years, ever ready to interrupt with a defense of her family's honour in that long past episode. Other neighbours interrupt to debate just how far Tendel's horse, like Baron Münchhausen's, galloped after the stomach was ripped out of it. When Bakhut's discomfort is noticed, he is graciously granted permission to repeat a story familiar to every guest at the table, so much so that the host is able to supply its sequel ("Бригадир Кязым").¹ Tengiz supplies the first half of Sandro's tale of his fishing expedition with Stalin, intervening, when Sandro takes over the narration, to provide an insider's view on points of NKVD protocol, just as Sandro had interrupted him to jog his memory on other neglected details. Other members of the audience jump in to clarify Tengiz' exact connection with the NKVD and its successors, to protect--but only after the fact--the innocent ears of unmarried girls subjected to overly exuberant descriptions of underwear; an officious neighbour, known only but appropriately by his official title of "retail director" (завмар) manages after several thwarted

¹In a 1985 interview Iskander explained the oral source of this tale (1981: 111-115). At the bedside of a sick relative in the Abkhazian countryside, he sat through a "rather boring story" and was rewarded for his patience by "one perfectly epic phrase": "Ну, он мою кукурузу не стал взвешивать, поверил. И я взял его вино не попробуя." As to its literary re-working: "Все размоталось из одной этой фразы, она дала звук. А художнику дай только звук, все остальное -- дело техники и неплохого знания той жазни, которая входила в тебя с молоком матери." ("Коротко, но не короче истины," 36). Similarly, the character Kiazym, especially his commonsense opposition to Soviet bureaucratic tyranny, owes much to a "phrase" overheard in childhood: "Ведь каждая травинка -- это скот" (ibid., 37), reproduced verbatim in the novel (1979: 599).

attempts to slip in something of his own eternally reiterated account of the trial of Georgia's NKVD chief ("Дядя Сандро и его любимец"). When the author-narrator forgets a "subtle detail" in the somewhat less than subtle tale of a man's exploding from drink, he must forfeit his narrative turn to his erstwhile enemy, who is only too happy to step in (1979: 520). Here shared narration cements the new-found peace between them.

It is this recreation of on-going and hence interruptible storytelling, supported by an author's frame that never recedes so far as to prevent his frequent, timely reminders of a communal setting,--this 'oral,' immediate present that permits such rapid transition from incident to episode, and ultimately works to justify the prodigiously haphazard nature of the novel's structure as a whole.¹ The critic Eventov compared *Sandro* on this very oral basis, with Belov's "Вологодские бухтины," as a "многословн[ый] сказ с рассуждениями, отступлениями и обмолвками."² Thus, when Uncle Sandro chides his wife for failing to appreciate the higher significance of his lifestyle:

ТЫ ДО СИХ ПОР НЕ МОЖЕШЬ ПОНЯТЬ, КАК ЭТО ВАЖНО ДЛЯ ЛЮДЕЙ, ЧТОБЫ ОНИ ВЕСЕЛО, С УМОМ, НЕ СПЕША ЕЛИ, ПИЛИ, СЛУШАЛИ МОИ РАССКАЗЫ И ИНОГДА САМИ КОЕ-ЧТО ВСТАВЛЯЛИ, ЕСЛИ У НИХ ЕСТЬ ЧТО ВСТАВИТЬ... [1981: 27]

he points to the macrostructure of the work which bears his name: a core of interruptible tales by a garrulous old man.

¹ Ivanova discovers the principle in the story "Богатая Портной и хиромант," which she sees as "композиционно выстроенном как устный рассказ в рассказе, от которого ответвляются истории и байки других рассказчиков." ("Смех против страха," в ее же кн. *Точка зрения: О прозе последних лет* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1988), 143-44).

² Eventov, "Наказание смехом," 202.

Oral illusion, discussed above in the sphere of relay-narration as the product of simple declarative insistence, enters into every facet of *Sandro*. In the author's domain it centres on an informal tone of familiar contact with a reader counted among his peers. Ivanova extends the quality to all of Iskander's prose:

Установка на слово произнесенное принципиальная для Искандера. И рассказы о Чике, и новеллы о дяде Сандро сохраняют свежесть устного слова, ориентированного на доброжелательного читателя. [...] На равных с читателем, то бишь со слушателем. Позиция собеседника, рассказчика, не подавляющего своими знаниями, а спокойно делящегося своими наблюдениями и историями.¹

A later article hints at the compositional consequences of this relaxed orientation:

Автор как будто пишет свой роман на глазах у читателя [...], вступает с ним в терпеливые отношения [...]²

One of its most prevalent surface manifestations is the series of mechanical transitions linked only by a casual "кстати" (see above, p. 110), a mild assertion of his prerogative to present his material on the spur of a sudden recollection or even whim.³ This is Iskander adding an oral fillip to the Shandian digressions which were so specifically literary in Sterne. Where Sterne's playing with form culminates in blackened pages, asterisks, swirling schematics, doodles and other typographical dalliances with a supreme *bookish* sophistication,⁴ Iskander's congregates towards the

¹Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988а), 226.

²Она же, "Сон разума рождает чудовищ" (1988), 4.

³According to Klepikova: "в вольном обращении к читателю -- подлинная свобода автора внутри жанра, где только его воля и желание составляет сюжет" (Клепикова, "Правда смеха," 187). Chudakova rightly associates this authorial freedom with the calm authority that is the bedrock of "serious prose" (Чудакова, "Заметки о языке современной прозы," 239).

⁴Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 61-62, 453, 576.

opposite pole, towards the conversational, almost chatty flavour that is his mark in trade.¹

Significantly, Iskander contrasts oral and written narration via his mouthpiece, the writer Zenon, in the "Утраты" chapter of *Sandro*.² Zenon has tried and failed to persuade his brother-in-law, a born story-teller, to put his tales down on paper. What stands out in the passage is not the somewhat inept plea that the two talents are incompatible, but rather Zenon's labourious justification for the attempt:

чувство долга перед искусством толкало его на это. Он считал аморальным упускать хотя бы один шанс из ста, если этот рассказчик потенциально способен сам описать свои впечатления лучше него. [КиУ: 78-79]³

It is as though Zenon seeks to apologize for having taken on the task himself.

By Chapter 25 the casual digressions and equally casual extrications therefrom have reached their zenith. To quote only one example:

... Но я слишком далеко отошел от своего сюжета. Я никак не могу его сдвинуть с места... Мой сюжет буксует, как русская история. И, все-таки, мы его сдвинем и пойдем дальше, ибо единственный вид власти, которую мы приняли на земле, -- это власть над словом.

¹According to Burlingame, "all of Iskander's prose is characterized by a chatty, informal style that contributes to its Mediterranean [?] quality" ("Prose of Iskander," 162). Ryan-Hayes points to the satiric benefits vis à vis the censor: "Because the plot lines of his stories resemble yarns [], they may masquerade as harmless anecdotes. This is, obviously, a useful technique in the creation of satire, as is Iskander's seemingly straightforward narrative voice" ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 23-24)

²Equally specific is the passage which points out that Uncle Sandro "had never read any other book than the book of his own life" (БДБД: 195) and has him interrupt his cousin Navei, reading aloud from *Robinson Crusoe*, with a series of yarns.

³The reference is to the collection *Кролики и удавы: проза последних лет* (Москва: Книжная палата, 1988).

Итак, я отпустил свое такси (если читатель вспомнит, я приехал на такси), и мы с другом [...] [1979: 537]

To be sure, the passage retains its literary awareness of form; it even manages to encapsulate into it the literary terminology of "сюжет" (here: 'subject matter'). But it pulls as well against its own sophistication by immediately 'literalizing' on the topos to create the down-to-earth image of a tire-spinning, stalled *plot*, tosses in a passing shot at what would now be called эпоха застоя, literalizes again (the author with one hand on the wheel and both feet pushing against the roadside gravel beneath his recalcitrant car-cum-plot). Finally, it comes down hard by that now concrete roadside to return to another four-wheeled vehicle which is the subject-matter at hand. The dazzling counterplay (literary/abstract vs. literal/concrete) is grounded in and indeed precedes from a conversational orientation. In effect, this is our century's version of the Karamzinian 'middle style' of the early nineteenth, a compromise between overbearing bookishness and undermining folksiness. It takes as its base the educated medium of the salon (now the Moscow kitchen?).¹ And it addresses as a fellow native-speaker of that middle style a reader who will follow its meanderings to participate in the recreation of an apparently disorganized, ostensibly spontaneous exchange.² Spontaneity is a key component in the oral illusion of Iskander.

¹In Chudakova's estimation: "Главная задача этой прозы [...] продемонстрировать еще отнюдь не исчерпанные возможности «книжной речи» в такой форме литературного «рассказывания», где автор выступает как бы в роли непосредственного носителя того фильтрованного, но гибкого и богатого «интеллигентского языка» (Чудакова, "Заметки о языке современной прозы," 239).

²From a somewhat different perspective, fellow-poet Chukhontsev described the lyric-I of Iskander's early verse as a "веселый собеседник," который, как истый южанин, с большим, может быть, удовольствием рассказывает, чем слушает" (Олег Чухонцев, "Это мы!" *Юность* 1962:10, с. 80). Lench, in a felicitous turn of phrase, described

Hence the many 'by-the-bye' transitions. To insert apparently irrelevant information:

Кстати, по рассказу дяди Сандро, это самое должностное лицо, к которому он обращался со своим предложением, не встало с места при его появлении в кабинете, а также не встало с места, когда он уходил. Возможно, говорил дядя Сандро, он этим хотел показать, что очень прочно сидит на своем месте. [1979: 33; italics mine]

Кстати говоря, кроме часов в те годы, как знак власти, начинали входить в моду чесучевые кителя. Так что некоторые чегишцы, как и жители других сел, стали шить себе эти самые кителя, чтобы на свадьбах или похоронах в чужих селах для незнакомых людей сходить за незнакомого начальника. [...] [1979: 351; italics mine]

to stray into nonchalant ruminations:

... *Интересно, между прочим*, когда у нас на Кавказе о каком-то человеке что-то рассказывают, обязательно называют национальность. [гл. 22, "Дороги," ПОП: 435; italics mine]¹

to veer off into potent generalizations:

Интересно, что во все времена и во всех странах, где расстреливали приговоренных к смерти, их почему-то всегда старались расстрелять у стены. Казалось бы, какая разница, где расстрелять человека, неспособного к сопротивлению? [1979: 134; italics mine]

to wrench the reader from Civil War Abkhazia to Moscow and the present:

Кстати сказать, прямо напротив моего дома за высокой каменной стеной находится какое-то предприятие [...] [1979: 104; italics mine]

to recall someone else's tale:

Кстати, забавную вещь о кафедре рассказал мне один симпатичный архитектор. [1979: 472; italics mine]

Iskander's style as taking on the form of a "непринужденного монолога" (Леонид Ленч, "Сатира поэта," *Литературная Россия*, 14 октября 1966, 9). To Solov'ev, Iskander's famous digressions seek direct author/reader contact: "Дело [...] в авторском желании более тесного и прямого (а не только опосредствованного через сюжет и героев) контакта с читателем. [...] Отступая от фабулы, он сооружает внутри произведения кафедру для выступлений" (Соловьев, "Рассказ и его метаморфозы," 187).

¹The reference is to the collection *Праздник ожидания праздника: рассказы* (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1986). The passage actually pertains to a skaz section of *Sandro*, a tale recounted by "один из застольцев" who exchange narratives at a restaurant.

to introduce a new twist in his own:

А между прочим, если бы старый Хабуг послушался свою жену и вправду [...] поехал бы проведать сына, может, ему удалось бы сказать свое слово в самом начале большой дискуссии, которая развернулась на страницах «Красных Субтропиков» [1979: 181; italics mine]

to pull up short a rambling digression:

Впрочем, я зарпортовался [...] [1979: 289; italics mine]¹

The result is an impression of "free improvisation, extemporaneous oral recitation, spontaneous living speech"--the auralty of skaz² filtered through the 'middle style' and transferred to the author-narrator at the expense (as will be seen below) of his source-narrators.

On the grounds of such author-based skaz (an anomaly, if we accept the mode's principal orientation on 'other speech'), Deming Brown paired Aksënov and Iskander as students of Zoshchenko and Gogol' alike. The anomaly centres on the contrast he draws between the 1920s usage, with its deprecating separation of the "implied views of the author" from those of his "eccentric or negative characters," and that of the 1960s. In its more modern form skaz was resorted to

mainly as a *sympathetic* device, in which the narrator is not an alien individual implicitly disparaged by the author, but is rather a surrogate for the author, speaking, perhaps in an eccentric voice,

¹'By-the-bye' would seem to be recognized as Iskander's trademark. See Михаил Хлебников, "Козлик и дедушка, между прочим: Подражание Фазилу Искандеру (Клуб 12 стульев)," *Литературная газета*, 24 января 1973, 16.

²I.R. Titunik, discussing Eikhenbaum's Ohrenphilologie concept of skaz as "first defined in terms of the *compositional* role of the *personal tone* of the author" in "The Problem of Skaz (Critique and Theory)," in *In Honour of James Ferrell*, ed. Benjamin A. Stolz, Papers in Slavic Philology, no. 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977), 278; italics mine.

but expressing, nevertheless, subjective views that are very close to those of the author.¹

In fact, the author/narrator intimacy struck by such means strips skaz of all but its oral illusion, its stylistic effect. Stylized skaz is no more than a compositional substitute for authorial discourse,-- Bakhtin cites the single-voiced practice of Turgenev,² and in this sense, Iskander follows the Turgenevian model. In another, perhaps, as well: the more self-assured ambience of "serious prose," in Chudakova's understanding, derived in large part from its resurrection of the narrator as his author's "plenipotentiary" and impressed its discoverer as a welcome return to the solid roots of tradition.³

Iskander's is the self-assured chattiness of single-voiced, stylized skaz. When an interviewer remarked on his casual attitude to plot linkage, his response revealed a primary concern with striving towards his own "full inner freedom." If unmotivated authorial intervention results, it too aims towards unconstrained, direct author-to-reader contact,⁴ but contact of one specific kind and in one specific direction. Should the reader lose track of the subject at hand:

¹Deming Brown, "Intimacy and Irony," 68-69. Later, in his *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin*, Brown seems to reverse himself: "Unlike many of his contemporaries, Iskander does not write *skaz* or otherwise attempt to distort or disguise the author's voice. His manner is direct, assured and genially conversational [...]" There too he emphasizes Iskander's "informal style" (207).

²Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 325-26. See also Burlingame's comments on the implausible similarity of source- and relay-narrators in "Летним днем" ("Prose of Iskander," 153).

³Чудакова, "Заметки о языке современной прозе," 240.

⁴Искандер, "Потребность очищения" (интервью), 33.

Придется коротко напомнить. Вообще, с читателем лучше всего разговаривать коротко и громко, как с глуховатым. Громко-то у меня получается, вот коротко не всегда. [1979: 534]

Commenting on a fellow Abkhazian prose-writer, Iskander noted his "стихотворная легкость психологических переходов от одного мотива к другому."¹ All in good measure, though. Light transitions must not "flutter"; rather they should resemble the "soaring of a mightier and more farsighted bird."² Spontaneity, after all, is only an illusion. The reality is control.

Controlled spontaneity enters the fabula domain via the intricate meanderings of Iskander's plot-lines. These form the fabula-level counterparts of his famous authorial digressions. He seems to justify this tendency--explicitly as always, and on an oral basis--in the "Утраты" chapter. A secondary narrator is interrupted by his son:

-- Папа, что у тебя за привычка, [...] вечно ты начинаешь рассказывать про одно, а потом тебя заносит совсем в другую сторону?

An omniscient author supplies the justification:

Он был прирожденным рассказчиком, и ветвистость его рассказов только подчеркивала подлинность самого древа жизни, которое он описывал. [КиУ: 78]

In this light, oral illusion would seem to account as well for the 'stop-and-start' nature of *Sandro* as a compilation: the task of maintaining a continued and palpable 'presence' of a 'teller in the tale'--whether it be the source-narrator of a relay situation or the chatty author-narrator seen above,--can perhaps be seen to restrict the volume of the tale itself. By way of an extreme counter-exam-

¹Он же. "Об авторе," в кн. Дж. Ахубы *Белый огонь: Рассказы и повести* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1972), 222.

²Ibid., 223.

ple, we could point to the works of Iskander's contemporary, Yuz Aleshkovskii who, chronologically at least, echoes the expansionist impulse demonstrated in the author of *Sandro*. From such smaller works as "Николай Николаевич" and "Маскировка" (published by Ardis in 1980, after years of circulation in samizdat), Aleshkovskii progressed to the more ambitious efforts of *Кенгуру*, *Рука* (1981) and *Синенький скромный платочек* (1982). He adhered throughout to a well-defined skaz form, one oriented on an utterly 'alien voice' (чужое слово) distinct in social collocation, lexicon, syntax and even ribald choice of theme, from the literary norm traditionally associated with a more neutral, self-effacing author's 'word.' What is more, he limits himself exclusively to the skaz mode, eschewing all surface manifestation of the author's voice. *Кенгуру* and *Рука*, however, do not bode well for the possibility of sustaining such unadulterated skaz over the longer period of novel length: the narration frequently stalls into self-repetition (entirely distinct from Iskander's deliberate redundancies), overuse of skaz tag-words such as говорю, говорит, впрочем, вот тут-то and others enshrined, of course, by Zoshchenko before him. Analogous to Zoshchenko as well is the choppy syntax, use of the historic present and, to a lesser extent, malapropisms based on ill-digested Marxist rhetoric. *Книга последних слов* (1984) strikes a structural compromise between the length-limited skaz and the expansionist impulse behind larger forms. Like *Sandro*, it is a compendium of many reproduced tales.

That, however, is as far as the similarity goes. Curiously enough, Iskander's work, for all the universally recognized mastery of its relaxed conversational tone, makes only moderate use of pure

skaz¹. Only one, late chapter--"Бармен Адгур"--is based entirely on the more traditional use of the device. A segment of the chapter "Дороги," that published as "Пьяные на дороге"² is recounted entirely by Uncle Sandro, as are snippets of Chapter Two (the battle between the shepherd and the month of March, 1979: 36; the lesson in blood vendettas and modern justice, 1979: 38-39; God and river desecration, 1979: 43-44), of Chapter 28 (the Big Snow, БДБД: 174-75³; Kunta and his pipe, БДБД: 183-84; the Baron Münchhausen animal yarns on bees who cross bridges and cows who unwittingly suckle fish, БДБД: 188-89, 195-97). The style is unquestionably oral, in that such passages lack the play with bureaucratic, Marxist and pedantic jargon that frequently distinguishes Iskander's authorial narration whenever it enters into open conflict with a character's discourse.⁴ Nevertheless, these tales lack the lexical

¹In an interview, Iskander seems to explain his deliberate avoidance of dialect and self-confinement to the lexical literary norm:

"Конечно, бывает приятно тряхнуть возле уха гениальную копилку Даля и, может быть, незаметно из нее вытряхнуть золотое словцо. [...] Пока предпочитаю воздерживаться.

[...] отношения писателя к языку должно быть такое, как если бы внутри художественного произведения действовали две силы. Первая сила -- центростремительная; этическое сжатие, беспредельное упрощение словаря, где полноценны только такие слова, как небо, хлеб, любовь, труд. Вторая сила -- центробежная, которую условно можно назвать эстетической. Она -- в стремлении уточнить те или иные образы или явления, и, уточняя, писатель вынужден идти на расширение словаря. Расширение словаря -- это как бы необходимая уступка эстетике. Основной пафос -- центростремительный. [...] Это пафос целомудрия. (Искандер, "Коротко, но не короче истины" (интервью), 39.)

²*Смена* 1988:7, с. 8-11.

³The reference is to the collection *Большой день Большого дома: рассказы* (Сухуми: Алашара, 1986).

⁴Commenting on Uncle Sandro's observation that his mistress, the princess, could milk a buffalo: "Я думаю, что этот факт не противоречит историческому материализму, если учесть особенности развития общества в высокогорных условиях Кавказа, даже если при этом не учитывать великолепный воздух, которым дышали ее предки и она сама" [1979: 11-12].

markers of skaz. More importantly, each is well framed by some form of authorial commentary.¹

The vast majority of tales passed on from Uncle Sandro or his story-telling doubles are conveyed in an indirect mode. This, according to Bakhtin, is distinguished first and foremost by the author's analytical approach to his characters' speech, a primary

¹All concepts of skaz return to the key issue of deviation: Eikhbaum's oral orientation--from the dominance of Augenphilologie; Vinogradov's communicative monologue and dialectical differentiation--from a literary norm; even Bakhtin's "other discourse" requires some form of surface marking to underline its distinction as "depicted" or "objectified discourse" from the author's word. In Titunik's reassessment of all three approaches, dialectical features form one of six oppositions, the others being the grammatical, situational, expressive, allocutional and semantic features ("Problem of Skaz," 293-95). This criterion is adopted, for brevity's sake, as the most readily discernible. Thus, lexical skaz markers in "Бармен Адгур" are based almost exclusively on contemporary urban Russian slang (психануть, мандражить, even the lewd nominative plural пидарá). A second Abkhazian narrator, Marat, is equally Russified and similarly outfitted. His idiolect is peppered with such underground slang (блат) as красуля and красулька for красавица, физия for физиономия, водяра for водка, кумекать for понимать, закачаться for удивиться, очухаться for прийти в себя, перекантовываться for переходить, etc. The Marat chapter, however, contains a series of relay frames, as well as extended passages of indirect relay-narration, third-person summary and outright authorial commentary.

The only Abkhazian narrator quoted directly at length and supplied with a specifically exotic Abkhazian lexicon is Old Khasan of Chapter 26. There too the relay-frame and author's text mitigate against pure skaz, as does the occasional clumsy insertion of an in-text gloss: "Мы тогда [during World War I] даже слово «немец» не знали, как правильно сказать. Мы говорили «лемци.» (Октябрь 1987:4, с. 78). Similarly, Khasan explains икзикуция for экзекуция, the peasants' malapropism for the practice of billeting Cossacks in the homes of the very outlaws they were commissioned to capture (*ibid.*, 81).

The narrator of an early tale, "Неблагодарный преступник" (1966), is likened by Burlingame to Zoshchenko's classic figure on the grounds of his "semi-educated speech, [...] full of naive didacticism and attempts at self-justification." The critic classifies it as an "unsuccessful experiment with skaz--an experiment which Iskander has not yet tried to repeat" ("Prose of Iskander," 125).

In these (admittedly, vastly oversimplified) terms, Iskander eschews the Abkhazian accent one might expect of his sources. Their narrative speech is on the whole dialectically indistinguishable from that of the relay-narrator (excluding the latter's intermittent flight into tongue-in-cheek pedantry). The choice is only natural, given the stance assumed by his relay-narrator as a Russified son of his people and their spokesman vis à vis the larger, Russian-speaking world.

focus on content and corresponding neglect of manner.¹ Its first variant, the "content-" or "referent-analyzing modification" exhibits this preference most clearly, even "at the cost of a certain depersonalization" of the character's speech.² Its chief advantage lies in its "широкие возможности для реплицирующих и комментирующих тенденций автора."³ Towards this end, the referent-analyzing modification observes a sharp demarcation between the author's and character's perspective. The two are distinctly (and comically) separate in Uncle Sandro's indirect account of his affair with the Svanian princess:

Благодаря своим рыцарским достоинствам, он был в то время первым или даже единственным ее любовником. [1979: 11]

The author exerts full stylistic control; Uncle Sandro's voice survives only in a pale echo of its original attempt at false modesty (the pseudo-quibble "даже"). As Sandro comes to the subject of his jealous rival, the "knightly virtues" are turned against him to expose the ribald conceit of an eighty-year-old Lothario. They are accordingly, marked, as his own:

Но он [юный негодяй, соперник] по словам дяди Сандро, не обладал столь выдающимися рыцарскими достоинствами, как сам дядя Сандро. А может и обладал, но никак не мог найти случая применить их к делу. [ibid]

If the referent-analyzing variant offers a broad platform for injecting authorial commentary directly into a character's speech, Iskander is quick to leap from it into undisguised apostrophe.

¹В.Н. Волошинов, *Марксизм и философия языка: Основные проблемы социологического метода в науке о языке*, 2ое изд. (Ленинград: Прибой, 1930; репринт, The Hague: Mouton, 1972), 125.

²Ibid., 127.

³Ibid.

Uncle Sandro has told us, indirectly, that the princess could even milk a buffalo. The author steps in to pursue his own, satiric ends:

Я об этом говорю потому, что донить буйволицу трудно, для этого надо иметь очень крепкие палыцы. Так что вопрос об изнеженности, инфантильности или физическом вырождении сам по себе отпадает, несмотря на то, что она была чистокровным потомком сванских князей. [ibid]

If "knightly virtues" strikes the ear as a somewhat sophisticated phrase for an illiterate peasant, the expression "young reprobate" (юный негодяй) definitely originates with Uncle Sandro. The reader is told he never referred to his rival in any other way. Its constant repetition throughout the tale of their contest turns it into a marker for the second variant of indirect discourse, the "texture-analyzing modification." Here typical turns of phrase are selected from the character's original speech, but selected in such a way as to retain their alien flavour of 'typical-ness' and a manifest overlay of authorial irony.¹ "Юный негодяй"--from the mouth of a grey-haired braggart who forgets he is of the same generation as his vanquished rival--is a brilliant selection. And the selector is not slow to make its irony more than obvious. As the episode comes to a happy end:

Так что все остались довольны, разумеется, все, кроме юного негодяя. После своего неудачного выстрела он окончательно осиротел, потому что княгиня переехала в дом дяди Сандро, а он при всем своем нахальстве никак не мог там показаться. [1979: 13]²

¹Ibid., 128-29. Iverni calls the ironic paraphrasing of Sandro "метод исторического повествования," in that "все исторические события, происходившие в Абхазии за последние несколько десятилетий [...], даются нам либо в прямых рассказах Сандро, либо в авторском пересказе [...]" ("По ту сторону смеха," 355). In point of fact, historical events are given well nigh exclusively in paraphrase. The critic's overestimation of Sandro's direct voice stands as testimony to Iskander's masterful use of texture-analyzing indirect narration.

²A similar use of ironic repetition for authorial interference is seen in the phrases "по тем временам" and "тогда." They too expose an old man's touching arrogance: "именно таким молодым человеком и был в те времена дядя Сандро" [1979: 12];

Of more immediate interest here is the possible connection between oral illusion, length and the compilation technique. Aleshkovskii came to compile a longer skaz-narration distributed among several voices united by a common theme. Zoshchenko of the 1930s sought in his *Голубая книга* to compile groups of themes around a well-established skaz persona softening the literary/illiterate author/narrator tensions of his Sinebriukhov period with a chatty, almost avuncular but always professional literary tone. Iskander compiles on the basis of relay narration and the ever interruptible, on-again off-again tale.

The story "Табу," slated for inclusion as Chapter 21 of the most recent version of *Sandro*, represents the technique at its most diffuse, and thus structurally significant (in terms of the novel's overall composition) abandon. The setting is that of a rural reunion, as the author is welcomed back into a distant but well-loved branch of the family fold. His breach of kinship loyalties, failing to visit a distant relative in a Moscow hospital, is forgiven him, after an encounter with the injured party's wife at a family funeral. All of these details, together with background information on the precise degree of blood ties involved as well as family lore on various members of the gathering, are recounted in flashback

his rival's "легкомысленное даже по тем временам решение выстрелить в дядю Сандро" [1979: 12]; the doctor summoned to deal with his wound was "знаменитый по тем временам врач" [1979: 13]; his future prowess as master of ceremonies evident in his command of even the subtlest points of etiquette: "но в таких делах спорить с дядей Сандро уже тогда было бесполезно" [1979: 19].

sequences provided by the author and interwoven by him with the tabletalk.¹

Let us digress to examine these stop-action, background digressions. They play a prominent role in the autobiographical stories, where virtually every new character (and a good many old ones--on the recurrence principle) to enter a scene brings it to a halt as the narrator fills in some detail on his or her life. In Turgenev, particularly his *Fathers and Sons*, the technique has been described as scene-painting with lengthy biographical pauses.² As in *Iskander*, it unquestionably fragments the main narrative line. There, however, the analogy ends: Turgenev's digressions bear their own internal structure, plodding methodically through all the factors of nature and nurture which have brought a given character to the original point of departure for a given excursus. When the action resumes, it is no less orderly. What is more, it is seen to be materially dependent on the pre-histories thus supplied. Not so *Iskander*. His character digressions spawn sub-digressions of their own and are themselves generated, it seems, on a much less formal basis. They contribute to the oral illusion of an off-the-cuff author showering his reader with information both relevant and irrelevant to the main narrative line--or what little survives in such a welter of detail.

The seventeenth chapter of *Sandro*, "Хранитель гор," stands out for its self-conscious application of the technique. The scene is

¹Used here to translate the Russian "застольные разговоры,"--informal, unordered exchanges. See also p. 205 below.

²Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Russian Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 70, 83, 88.

deftly set, as the narrator and three friends prepare to descend from a hunting trip in the mountains. The narrator promises to introduce us to each "в самых сжатых чертах" (1979: 472), and then proceeds to frustrate that very expectation. Only two friends are introduced, and the introductions are anything but brief. In fact, the entire chapter is built on frustrated expectations: the narrator does not meet up with Uncle Sandro as originally intended; the game warden who waylays him does not get the hunting rifle he covets; the narrator reneges on his promise to procure him the services of a deepsea diver. What is more, the two characters described at such conscientious length play no role whatsoever in the action their descriptions so effectively delay.¹

The first, an academic, is said to struggle with the temptations of a careerist's self-importance, and then dropped for secondary digressions on other careerists and their trappings of power (1979: 472-73). The second, an artist, is described for us as morose and often volatile; he is quickly abandoned for a discussion of his controversial painting (1979: 473-76, 487-99). This is in turn interrupted by a largely irrelevant tale tracing various, largely unconnected scenes in the lives of black Abkhazians and their encounters with blacks from abroad (1979: 476-87). It resumes only

¹A similar tactic of plot-frustration based on "проходные персонажи" is noted by Eidel'man in the story "Ремзик," peripheral to *Sandro*. See М. Эйдельман, "Быть справедливым," *Наш современник* 1975:6, с. 185. From a different perspective, Burlingame accredits Iskander's often irrelevant background portraits to the "richness of [his] material" and suggests they "often lend his stories greater authenticity, as if the author felt obliged to tell us all he knows about a particular individual or event ("Prose of Iskander," 133). This would correspond to what I have discussed as Iskander's anti-literary stance--here manifest as a concern for verisimilitude at all costs, even that of narrative continuity.

to pause for a character sketch of an opportunist presented in "Goatibex"--hence its mini-recapitulation of events from that story. A second pause re-introduces Abesalomon Nartovich, presented in Chapter 12.¹ It ends with an informal, chatty exposé of the background-digression technique:

Вот какой у нас покровитель муз Абесаломон Нартович, [...] Теперь, когда вы его более или менее представляете, я продолжу свой рассказ об Андрее и его картине [...] [1979: 493]

And it seems to serve no other purpose, since Abesalomon Nartovich promptly cedes place to a series of minor bureaucrats involved in the painting controversy. One, Tsurtsumiia, is shown relaxing

на вранде своего особняка, *как обычно*, сунув ноги в холодильник для усиления умственной работы во время обдумывания коммерческих операций. [1979: 494; italics mine]

Why "as usual?" Since this is Tsurtsumiia's first appearance, the anaphora is false; it lacks an antecedent. Indeed, it aspires to the status of a deictic, to independence from reference established directly by the text, in favour of some illusory immediate context shared by the pseudo-oral narrator and his audience. The sleight-of-hand works, in large part, thanks to Islander's constant and almost always redundant character cross-referencing: since so many other figures reappear both continually and, more often than not, gratuitously, since there have been so many other 'as-usual's,' the

¹Abesalomon Nartovich is introduced a third time in Chapter 25. Aware of the redundancy, the narrator even draws our attention to it. As Uncle Sandro emerges from the taxi he has shared with the roguish party boss, he comments: "Представлять его [дядю Сандро], *кажется*, нет необходимости" (1979: 537; italics mine, self-irony--Iskander's). The stop-action technique is then applied as the narrator recalls several previous encounters illustrating the character of "Nartovich" (1979: 539-41).

reader is lulled into accepting this one more. Whereas the other 'as-usual's' were pointedly anaphoric, it can now be seen that their cumulative effect aims towards a kind of pseudo-deictics, a manufactured universe of discourse inhabited by the narrator, the reader and the many characters whose histories and traits become their common stock of knowledge.

Tsursumiia's refrigeration habits stand as a superfluous detail. The cool-headed (cool-footed?) bureaucrat takes no part in the libel suit that motivated his introduction. He in turn presents another extraneous figure who, like Gogol's homunculi, flits by on the sole excuse of word-play and non-sequitur.¹ Tsursumiia asks:

-- Сульфидин знаете?
 -- Смотри какой, -- удивились гости, -- сульфидин лекарство или сын заведующего бензоколонкой, которого тоже зовут Сульфидин?
 [1979: 496]

Such a long meandering digression merits particular justification. At length, therefore, the narrator notes the lapse from his promised brevity; cites his own civic allegiance to veracity; declares, in effect, that his material got the better of him. The excuse is commonplace, but it is conveyed in terms that serve to reinforce the oral illusion of a 'real' narrator recounting 'real' experiences to a 'real' reader:

Я все это говорю к тому, что не надо давать никаких обещаний, как рассказывается, так и рассказывай. [1979: 499; italics mine]

The digressions in "Табу" lack even the tokens of plot-frustration present in "Хранитель гор," which does eventually see the

¹See Nabokov on "the remarkable phenomenon [in Gogol'] of mere forms of speech directly giving rise to live creatures" (*Lectures on Russian Literature*, 19). It seems the pharmaceutical Sufil'din is the only example of a verbally-generated character in Iskander.

narrator and his superfluous friends through a conflict (evaded, i.e. frustrated) and safely down off the mountain.¹ "Taboo's" structure is more purely thematic; its sole pivot--that of tabletalk.

Thus, affectionate bickering between long-married spouses is carried on under the guise of the husband's recounting their betrothal to the assembled guests, whose attention is divided between enjoying the familiar story itself and observing the no less ritualistic duel of double-entendre and gesture between the old couple. This situation echoes similar extra-verbal tussles on similar occasions between the venerable Tendel and his wife ("Бригадир Кязым"), or Uncle Sandro and Aunt Katia ("Умыкание"). Tabletalk motivates a variety of other, apparently unrelated narrative 'blocks': the host's recollection of his bureaucratic battle with and picaresque outwitting of Endurian neighbours, his son's recalling the author as a little boy shouting at a thunderstorm, the author's digression on Gor'kii and the literary interpretation of storms as

¹To a certain extent, stop-action digressions must operate against some form of action, however superficial. In other words, there must be some action to stop. This opposition can be highlighted in a purely literary way, by isolating the precise moment at which the action freezes and then resumes. One recalls Chichikov and Manilov left jostling in a doorway for an uncomfortably long stretch to accommodate a particularly long digression. Actually, one recalls it not because the digression itself was unusual, but because the digresser chose to emphasize its artificial nature, to turn his characters into puppets for his own authorial convenience. There are relatively few such purely literary plays in *Sandro*. In Chapter 6, the author intervenes to supply background information on the outlaw Shchashchiko (1979: 123-28); he marks his intervention clearly by sending his characters scattering to prepare for a meeting, and then rejoining them at the meeting place. In Chapter 19, he breaks away from a pair of characters walking down the mountain to describe one (Chunka) at considerable length (*Аэропа* 1983:8, с. 45-46), and then rushes his reader to "catch up" with the retreating couple. In each case the departure is motivated in relaxed, *conversational* terms addressed to the reader: 'now that you know all you need to know about x, we can return to our story.'

well as a brief, mildly self-disparaging sortie into the Russian folklore of Ivanushka the fool, minor interruptions by the host's sons, and finally the hostess' introduction of the title theme, when she raises the possibility of re-admitting another erring relative into the flock, banished for striking an older man.

The story then takes advantage of this freewheeling medley of narrative focuses to abandon it entirely, picking up on the flashback principle other guests present at the reunion have been described under to focus on the outcast. The transition is as unpretentious, as 'un-literary' or conversational as those which preceded it and indeed established, in this chapter, the pattern itself.

Дело было вот в чем. У этого Нури отец умер шесть лет назад. Когда справляли годовщину его смерти, оказывается, Нури подошел к старику-односельчанину [...] [КиУ: 21; italics mine]

It is as if the author has turned to a reader seated beside him at the same table to reinforce the immediate present of the tabletalk setting, while retaining the right to edit, to sum up this part of the story, as signalled by the quasi-indirect *verbum dicendi*, "оказывается."¹ Editing presupposes a temporal remove on the

¹In relay-narration, "оказывается" can often signal major authorial intrusion. Such is the case, to cite but one of the countless examples in *Sandro*, with Uncle Sandro's "небольш[ая] новелл[а]," introduced by this very gambit at the impromptu gathering which forms the relay-pivot of the "Кутеж" chapter (1979: 543-46). Entrusted by Lakoba to pry from Logidze the recipe for his "famous cooling beverages," Uncle Sandro attempts to startle the secret out of him. From the standpoint of its original narrator, the affair is of all-Union importance, reaching as high as Beria and Stalin. The relay-narrator's choice of an indirect mode for its conveyance allows him to impose a second perspective: after all, soft-drink intrigues pale before the full scope of Stalin and Beria's activities in the 1930s. Logidze does not succumb to this miniature version of the Terror, winning the respect of both the source- and the relay-narrators. Their combined voices present Logidze's true secret--dedication to one's chosen vocation; over-arching them both is a paean to the small victories of personal integrity. It is in the latter spirit that Rassadin interprets the scene ("Последний чегемец," 243-44).

simple grounds that it can only be done after the story has been told, but the verb is given in the present tense, and thus eases in the addition of a dual narrative perspective now made to encompass both the concurrent and the editorial retrospective. Note as well the grounding of the deictics *вот* and *этого* in a narrative present concurrent with that same tabletalk setting.¹ On this basis the author can now turn to his neighbour, the reader, to continue:

В тот же год Нури вынужден был вместе с семьей покинуть деревню. Он поселился в Нижних Эшерах. Пока обсуждали подробности этого дела, я вспомнил, что два года тому назад видел его. Дело было так.

The change to past tense, thanks to such temporal 'manoeuvring,' does not obliterate the tabletalk present, but rather complements it. It can now usher in the longest and most developed of the flashback sequences, as the author accidentally runs into and is inveigled by the outcast to visit him at his home. Thematically, the digression is linked to the whole by providing a glimpse into the outcast's suffering. By the time the narrative returns to its original setting, the theme is nicely rounded off by a plea by the hostess to forgive Nuri, and the host's indirect indica-

¹Properly speaking, deixis includes the grammatical category of tense and the lexical markers supplied by demonstratives. Their reference is "to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of one speaker and at least one addressee." (John Lyons, *Semantics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 2: 637.) In Iskander's literary handling, they draw an implicit reader into an ongoing utterance much more directly than the historical present. For the historical present invites the reader to observe a scene first-hand, perhaps, but from the vantage point of a remote, even ghostly presence. Iskander's deixis tenders an invitation not so much to watch, as to listen at a second-hand remove from the scene described, but made all the more immediate by the actual process of describing. Put another way, in Benveniste's terms, *histoire* is totally subordinate to a *discours* heightened by such overt means. It is perhaps the most pervasive brace or support mechanism in Iskander's oral illusion.

tion that he will in time be welcomed back into the family fold. Here, abruptly, the narrative switches to an idyllic, descriptive plane, as we observe, without any authorial intervention now, the feeding of the hens and turkeys and their gathering up by the male patriarchs of each feathered clan into their respective huts for the night. The animal/human parallel is reinforced, on a particularly Iskanderian principle of repetition, by one final idyllic portrait, of the host's daughter-in-law washing his jubilant grandchildren by the family well. Cows returning from the field for their evening milking complete the theme of re-convergence, when the author realizes it is now time for him and his reader to leave. Here the story ends.

It now becomes clear that "Ta6y" uses the tabletalk setting to "motivate," in Formalist terms, the many and diverse plot digressions. Their 'higher' thematic unity emerges from this setting, as a system of parallels is set up: the celebration of the family in gatherings of the clan, its establishment in betrothal, its breakdown in expulsion and re-establishment in forgiveness. The jumbled, 'fits and starts' method of surface plot structure (the tabletalk setting) is now revealed to have a second, deeper structural anchor in an echoing technique: each individual segment is sufficient unto itself in that it neither advances nor resolves a thoroughly static, and indeed eternal central theme--that of 'the ties that bind.' Each incident illustrates a particular aspect of family feeling, several overlap, others contrast.¹ Even the host's struggle with the Endurians

¹J. van der Eng delineates four opposition types (parallelism, antithesis, analogy and variation) in his analysis of the "Semantic Dynamics in

revolves around their wanting to break off from the local kolkhoz to form their own, separate entity. Finally, the original motif of a communal breaking of the bread is given a shadow, or negative repetition, in the official banquet the author must force himself to attend upon leaving Nuri. This he confides to his reader-neighbour in a digression replete with references to his own 'real-life' literary affairs, involving the sub-motif of betrayal by an erstwhile friend and caustic reviewer of the author's work. Friendship imposing obligations no less binding in Iskander's view than the claims of kinship, this digression too takes its place in the motley mosaic of "Табу" and indeed of *Sandro* as a whole.¹

Adapting Tomashevskii's anatomy of narrative structures²: "Taboo's" static theme (family feeling) is composed of static motifs (reunion, exile, etc.); the latter coalesce through transparent linking

Narrative Texts" (in *Russian Poetics: Readings of the International Colloquium at UCLA, September 22-26, 1975*, ed. Thomas Eckman and Dean S. Worth, UCLA Slavic Studies, no. 4 (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1983), 444). His system purports to expand on Tomashevskii's fixed motifs by recognizing their dynamic potential in propelling a narrative causally and temporally forward, and then adding to them "data belonging to the characterization and the setting" (439-40). The latter correspond to Tomashevskii's free motifs and thus blur if not negate the original free/fixed distinction. Nevertheless, by taking as its main aim "[semantic] dynamics as they are actualized during the process of reading," van der Eng breaks new ground in seeking the syntagmatic processes involved in the paradigmatic retrieval of meaning. Applied to the present argument, Iskander's amalgamation of all opposition types posited by van der Eng creates a vertical, stacking dynamics.

¹For an oxymoronic statement of the theme, compare the author's comment on his "друг-предатель (через четверть века с трудом соединяю эти два слова" (1979: 534). See also Adgur's paean to male bonding: "в этом мире, где все куплено еще до нашего рождения, [...] я видел одно прекрасное в этом зачухавшем мире -- это мужское товарищество, и за это мы выпьем" (КиУ: 67). Critics who have commented on isolated aspects of the betrayal theme include Васюченко, "Дом над пропастью," 200; В. Вигилянскій, "Герои Фазиля Искандера," в сб. *Литература и ты*, вып. 6 (Москва, 1977): 37; Б. Сарнов, "Чем глубже зачерпнуть," *Вопросы литературы* 1978:7, с. 46.

²Б.В. Томашевский, "Сюжетное построение," в кн. *Хрестоматия по теоретическому литературоведению*, сост. И. Чернов (Тарту: Тартуский гос. ун-т, 1976), 154-82.

motifs ('this reminds me...') into a thoroughly inert fabula (we never once actually leave the dinner table; Nuri's ultimate fate remains unknown, a side issue at best for most of the guests).¹ Thus, the chapter as a whole has a minimal fabula; 'the author revisits a family where he recalls an outcast' does not by any means convey the sequential, causal whole of the story. We must add 'and listens and watches...' Hereafter synopsis only heightens the rambling nature of a non-story. What would normally be cast aside in reconstructing a more standard fabulaic whole, such free motifs as digression, detail and the like, cannot be discarded; they form the stuff, substance and structural proof of this strictly *sujet* construction. As for the "sujet reshaping of fabula material" (*сюжетное оформление фабулярного материала*), it too is minimal, even top-heavy,--exposition yielding to an interpolated series of *Vorgeschichte* that entirely supplant, culmination and denouement. Two conclusions suggest themselves: first, if it is recalled that *sujet* represents the literary re-working of pre-literary fabula material, then the sheer haphazardness of its application in "Taboo" would seem to indicate an a-literary orientation. This retreat from literary quality does not, however, point in the direction of modernism.² Rather it sits

¹Greimas adapts Tomashevskii's distinction between free and bound motifs to postulate a "classemantic" opposition between "staticity" and "dynamism." On this scheme, static narrative predicates supply information about the states their actants are involved in; they are adjectival in function. Dynamic narrative predicates deal with processes and correspond to verbal functions (*Sémantique structurelle*, 122) The static narrative predicate of "Taboo," in these terms, is primarily descriptive.

²Scammell complains: "Iskander writes not only as if in ignorance of the entire modern movement in fiction since James Joyce, but also, which is worse, as if Bely, Babel, Zamyatin, Bulgakov and Platonov had never existed. His leisurely, anecdotal narrative, with its clumsy asides to the reader, its plethora of 'incidentally's' and 'by-the-way's' seem as if it had been written

more comfortably with its more venerable partners in the class of "non-fabula, descriptive works (descriptive and didactic poetry, the lyric, travelogue, etc.)."¹ What seems to emerge is a turning away from the literariness identified in the Soviet critical context of the more structured nineteenth-century novel. Secondly, but conversely, the reversion rejects even the literary sophistication of its literary grandfathers, that of archaism or anything that would in the slightest impede the illusion of an utterly unconstrained, never-to-be-reworked unfolding of fabula.

The structure of "Taboo," such as it is, is anecdotal--taking the term in its most pedestrian, pre-literary sense.² By pre-literary convention, the anecdote is short and self-contained: the punch-line may be arbitrarily determined by the teller, but it nonetheless conveys his sense that the effect he pursued (comic, here--reflective) has been achieved. The definition is offered with a view to capturing something of the pre-literary morphology of surface plot organization in *Sandro*: if "Taboo" represents in miniature certain

in Abkhazia rather than in Moscow." Scammell has missed the deliberately anti-literary bent in Iskander. ("Dancing for the Dictator," 1215).

¹Томашевский, "Сюжетное построение," 158.

²See Eikhenbaum's treatment of the "канцелярский анекдот" which in his opinion formed the "первоначальный композиционный слой" of Gogol's "Шинель" (Б.М. Эйхенбаум, "Как сделан "Шинель" Гоголя," в его же кн. *Литература* (Ленинград: Прибой, 1927), 159, 160, 149). Similarly, Reformatzkii's "functional investigations" seek "the discovery of a kernel that is developed into a plot," an entity that can "usually be traced to an anecdote" (A. Reformatzkii, "An Essay on the Analysis of the Composition of the Novella," in *Russian Formalism: A Collection of Articles and Texts in Translation*, ed Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 94). From a different perspective, a more recent study touches upon the structural similarities between written and "natural narratives"; the latter term covers oral speech situations that include anecdotes and is said to follow a development through to a "result or resolution" (Richard J. Watts, *The Pragmalinguistic Analysis of Narrative Texts* (Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 1981), 60-61).

aspects of the structure of the novel as a whole, its component anecdotes stand as 'phonemes' to the 'morphemes' of the novel's individual chapters, or short stories. The analogy, though perhaps tenuous, does seem to suggest something of the combinatorial or aggregation/segregation method. To pursue it: segregation captures the detachability or self-completeness of each part (its semantic validity on its given level of analysis), while aggregation takes us into the murkier waters of their multiplication and linkage, their syntax, so to speak. In "Taboo," as we have seen, each anecdotal incident naturally leads, if not into the next, then into its parallel or counterpart, for each is an illustration, a variation on an otherwise static theme. The procedure is not so much linear or chronological, in the sense of tracing the progress from cause to effect or even earlier to later, as spiral. Several instances of spiralling thematics in the larger context of *Sandro* as a whole have been cited in the course of this discussion: suffice it to recall here the achronological marriage-family pattern of the central chapters, eleven through fifteen, on Tali, Makhaz, the author's concern with courtship that rescues him from the goatibex fiasco, Uncle Sandro's abduction of the young Katia and the Biblical trial of the shepherd-suitor Kharlampo.

Anecdote presented as the spontaneous product of give-and-take talk illustrates yet another aspect of the aggregation/segregation technique underlying *Sandro*. On the one hand, each anecdotal recital is ostensibly limited to the perspective of its reciter, which restriction returns us to the criterion, proposed by Leiderman as the hallmark of the *pacckaz* genre, of a single perspec-

tive of an identifiable narrator. On the other hand, the reciters themselves are linked by both setting and the communal/kinship theme. Thus, the recounting of a single episode can be shared by a number of characters (the interruption technique discussed above), though to be sure, all accounts are subordinate to the author, as the explicit or implicit orchestrator of the whole.

"Табу," then, epitomizes the tabletalk model of *Sandro*. From the tabletalk setting the novel derives its casual tone and zigzag structure. From the communality of tabletalk, it derives its interest in bloodties: indeed, the concern for determining and respecting the precise degree of kinship, is what coordinates its vast proliferation of characters in the novel,¹ and the shifting democracy of focus applied to the members of Uncle Sandro's inner circle. Moreover, "Табу" illustrates the curious use of discrete narrative units, whose boundaries are clearly marked by transitions squarely situated in the author's domain: it is his voice that introduces and justifies each new episode, his voice that pulls the rambling narrative up short to return to the main incident, his consciousness that perceives and transmits the figurative significance of passages imitating more generalized descriptions of nature. Segments in and of themselves can be flat, thin or sparse, as befits their role, in "Табу"

¹Е. Shklovskii comments: "густота населенности прозы Фазиля Искандера, обилие в ней родственников, да и не только их, но и соседей, друзей, знакомых, как бы получивших статус родственности, -- момент глубоко содержательный.

Патриархальный мир -- мир родовой сплоченности, и какие бы противоречия ни возникали в этом мире, в столь плотной обжатости со всех сторон *родными* людьми, в родственном *тепле* этого окружения человек чувствует себя, как дома." (Е. Шкловский, "Дерево детства Фазиля Искандера," *Детская литература* 1986:9, с. 21).

In Vigilianski's view, the "dense population" of Iskander's world, its "small, crowded community of kinship, neighbourliness, friendship and enmity" lends it the force of a viable model of the "big world" of common humanity ("Герои Фазиля Искандера," 36).

at least, of unembellished embellishments to a central theme. In effect, embellishment replaces fabula development. Herein lies one of the impulses behind aggregation: the substitution of multiplication for dynamics.

A section from the chapter "Дерево детства" will illustrate another aspect of this interconnection between authorial prerogative (the orchestration of disparate parts), choppy narrative syntax (their detachability, 're-capping' and relation to the exposition of the central theme) and the interfunctioning of both in the compilation mode. The chapter itself is grounded in the author's consciousness: in terms of its fabula, the preponderant majority of incidents are directly recalled from his own experience, while others are 'footnoted,' ascribed to sources immediately accessible to him. In a sense, it represents the reverse of the order followed in "Табы," where first-person reminiscences were presented after, and indeed triggered by the third-person tabletalk setting. The result is a more overt form of authorial control; without well-framed relay narration, of course, there is no surface polyphony of narrative voice; thus, even the illusion of a deeper polyphony of perspective is totally forsworn, and the information accredited to other 'voices' is reduced, semantically, to the role of illustrative material confirming the author's view. Nevertheless that even such minimal appeal is made to account for narrative privilege maintains the fundamental syntagmatic illusion operating in Iskander--that of unconstrained oral transmission,¹ functioning

¹Watts contrasts oral or "natural narratives" with written narratives on the grounds that the former tends to exclude real omniscience. This he

elsewhere in this author-oriented chapter on the structural license of first-person free association.

The chapter's central thematic division is the nostalgic contrast of two eras: the Chegem of his wartime youth and its ruins revisited one last time some thirty years later. From an idyllic pastiche of childhood memories--fruit picking, fighting off malaria,--centred on the author figure, Uncle Kiazym gradually emerges as the pathetic focus of an elegiac sujet; otherwise unconnected episodes raise him from absent master of a house besieged by the distant death cries of a cow under attack from a wild bear, to a present and laconically stern judge of wartime petty treachery observed from a surely significant post (perched high on a sacred tree), to the protagonist of a moral detective story, before dwindling off through a series of rapid-fire thumbnail sketches of his death and imperturbable countryman's dignity and thence to the author's final farewell. Fabula composition on the chapter level is so extremely disjointed as to be virtually non-existent, or at any rate ultimately subordinate to a strictly author-dominated sujet.

The only segment built around an immediately recognizable, traditionally linear fabula, complete with the propelling force of suspense, is that featuring Kiazym as the ethical sleuth. Designed as a graphic, or should we say 'incident-al' illustration of that character's moral weight, the segment is inserted without preamble or

attributes in part to the "first-person perspective of the natural narrator," who recounts his own experiences. The "more fundamental reason" lies in the natural narrative's restricted degree of fictionality; its truth values are by and large dependent on the immediate speech situation itself or the shared knowledge of its participants (*Pragmalinguistic Analysis*, 72-74)

epilogue and indeed, appeared on its own as a separate, pre-novel publication in 1975.¹

Kunta the village idiot has stolen a bale of tobacco leaves, which must be returned if he is to be saved from the urban "investigative agencies." Matrioshka-like, the segment echoes the larger structure of the chapter as a whole, which has reiterated as background material information familiar to the reader from other parts of *Sandro*. Thus, Chapter 7, "История молеельного дерева," is shrunk to two paragraphs reprising the highpoints of the prayer-tree's history (1979: 567-68; picking up on a flashforward predicting this re-appearance 1979:186; repeating yet another recapitulation in Chapter 8, 1979: 205). Isa's family is reintroduced in a few short lines (1979: 572), restating its decimation by tuberculosis, dwelt on at some length in Chapter Eleven. Within the segment itself, Kunta is re-established as a fool, even, in its opening lines as "пастух Кунта" (1979: 588); his father's slightly ludicrous, definitely ignoble death is recalled from Chapter Seven (1979: 179-80); his hunchback, watery eyes and ineffectual pipe-sucking are re-described as though they hadn't stood throughout *Sandro* (1979: 91, 168, 181, 374, 394, 592; БДБД: 183; *Аврора* 1983:8, p. 45; *Знамя*

¹Фазиль Искандер, "Для Сандро и пастух Кунта: рассказ," *Труд*, 12 апреля 1975, с. 4. In the original version of this segment, as the title proclaims, it is Uncle Sandro who outsmarts the thick-witted thief (see also app. 2, no. 31). A second detective role (involvement in the mystery of the skeleton in the prayer-tree) is transferred from Sandro to his brother Kiazym, not in the novel, but in the film "Чегемский детектив." Above, p. 118, it was suggested that 'types,' as opposed to 'characters' can bear repeatable and therefore detachable traits. The detachable detective function supports this hypothesis, and perhaps even points to a splintering of the picaro, as a hybrid of good and evil.

1986:12, p. 30) as recurrent features no less persistent than Buonaparte's puffy white hands or H el ene's seductive shoulders.

Iskander interprets Tolstoi's recurrent features as tokens of that writer's attachment to his characters:

Мне кажется, настойчивый повтор одной и той же детали у Льва Толстого вызван обостренной *чувственной* силой его восприятия и воображения. Глаза Анны маячили в его воображении, и ему доставляло *наслаждение* вновь и вновь писать о них. Где-то в первых вещах это могло быть чисто интуитивным возвращением к описанной детали. Вероятно, позже оно было замечено художником и сознательно закреплено им.¹

He justifies the constant resurfacing of his own characters in terms no less personal: "я писатель долгих *привязанностей* к своим героям."² And he is certainly attached to their quirks. Uncle Sandro is characterized by his supple waist and a tendency to stroke his moustaches; Kiazym by an ascetic's sunken chest; Tendel by hawklike eyes that bore into the narrator, who doggedly reproduces them, even twice within the space of as many paragraphs (e.g. 1979: 288). All of these details are entirely redundant; it might even be suggested that they serve, like the attributes of oral tradition (Hercules and his inevitable lion skin, Hera's invariably white arms formalized into epithet, heroic exploits recalled in sub-claused asides in any of a number of saga cycles), not so much to jog the reader-listener's memory over long stretches of text, as to evoke a sense of participation in a communal recalling of what has come before.³ In this respect, 're-capping'

¹Фазиль Искандер, "О новаторстве, базальных истинах и цитатах," *Литературная газета*, 7 июля 1966, 3; italics mine.

²"Коротко, но не короче истины" (штервью), 35; italics mine.

³On communality, oral narration and participatory recall in Iskander, see the comment: "The story-teller [in *Sandro*] often seems to treat the reader almost as a fellow countryman, someone who has sat through the epic

might be said to represent the counterbalance to digression, the one compressing where the other expands.

Where the technique reaches its crowning point is in the use of synecdoche--the detachable feature par excellence--in Iskander, the *recurrent* synecdoche, operating across vast stretches of text. Beria's "energetic profile" is a case in point. First glimpsed in Chapter 8, where the formidable chief of secret police is said to "энергично посверкива[ть] стеклами пенсне" (1979:200), it blazes forth some sixteen chapters later, in "Маленький гигант большого секса." There Marat's amorous encounter with a mysterious lady is interrupted by the appearance of an "энергичный, гораздо более энергичный, чем у него [Марата], профиль человека в пенсне" (*Метрополь*: 393). All thoughts of love vanish as "энергичный профиль так и всплывал перед его глазами" (*Метрополь*: 393). Not only on that particular occasion, but continually, for over two years of impotent awe. Before it vanishes entirely, it spawns an entire sub-plot, the story of Marat's involvement with a lady tamer of boa constrictors, his antidote:

Марат потянулся к укротительнице, чтобы зримым видом живого удава вытеснить из сознания профиль метафорического удава. [*Метрополь*: 395]

A similar play, though on a lesser scale, expands on the raised eyebrows of minor party officials present at Stalin's feast. They are first introduced with reference to the seating arrangements:

Все остальное пространство заполняли секретари райкомов западной Грузии с бровями, так и застывшими в удивленной приподнятности.

evenings of story-telling and is therefore familiar with at least the more colourful events and famous people. ("Fazil Iskander" in *Contemporary Russian Prose*, ed. Carl R. Proffer and Ellendea Proffer (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1982), xix.) My contention is to extend this effect to the fictional characters, major and minor.

Между ними кое-где были рассыпаны товарищи из охраны. Дядя Сандро их сразу узнал, потому что они, в отличие от секретарей райкомов, ничему не удивлялись и тем более не подымали бровей. [1979: 201]

Their frequent returns punctuate (and puncture!) the many transparent double-entendres of political oratory: as Stalin names Lakoba his best friend and they ponder the consequences for his Georgian rivals, their superiors (1979: 208); as Stalin prepares to lambast Bukharin by innuendo (*ibid.*); wearily, as Stalin goads Voroshilov into animosity for Lakoba (1979: 217). Finally, the eyebrows lift just high enough for Stalin, lulled by folksong, to see true, simple-folk faces seep through their "pathetic masks" (1979: 220).

Like the recurrent motifs of more traditionally structured novels, Iskander's re-statements perform the surface function of linkage. Certain of their thematic functions also coincide: those of contrast, juxtaposition, paralleling and the timely re-emphasis. Unique, it seems, to Iskander is the declarative foundation which permits the two-way process of alternate compression and expansion, as well as their continual re-shuffling. For the basic thrust is 'characterological': incident, gesture and physiological detail alike are turned to the single aim of capturing and re-capturing essentially static personalities from an equally static author's point of view. Character development is replaced by an unending refinement of the most apt illustration, the *bon mot* that will best sum up Kunta the quintessential fool, Kiazym the constant standard.¹

¹Ivanova applies to Iskander's characters the term "ideological" in that they "act and proceed" according to a pre-conceived "picture of the world" carried by each within. She goes on to speak of the "high ethical pathos" of his "authorial stance," denying any moralizing or authoritarian overtones ("Смех против страха" (1988c), 136-37). I would argue that both character and

Fabula development, subordinate to the same aim, is equally aphoristic.

Thus, the encounter between Kunta and Kiazym illustrates the integrity of the sleuth and the moral and intellectual obtuseness of the thief. As Kiazym is on his way to confront the village idiot, the author steps in to relay a number of incidents, variations all on this central theme. His first source is Kiazym himself:

Над глупыми и смешными чудачествами Кунты дядя Кязым любил посмеяться за хорошим застольем и иногда трудно было определить, где фантазия Кязыма, а где истинная правда. Во всяком случае Кунта давал столько реальной пиши для фантазии, что разобраться, где правда, а где выдумка, было совершенно невозможно.

Так дядя Кязым утверждал, что однажды, когда он уезжал в город и спросил у Кунты, не надо ли ему чего-нибудь привезти, тот попросил дядю Кязыма привезти ему его, Кунты, фотокарточку. Ну, разве такое можно придумать? [1979: 589]

There follows in quick succession the author's relaying of another anecdote, ascribed to Kiazym, re-affirming the shepherd's stupidity (his losing his way in a snowstorm, taking shelter in a neighbour's barn but a few steps from home and failing to recognize his whereabouts even upon the appearance of the neighbour himself), and an account of his naively petitioning the authorities for a pension for his son, slain in the Civil War while fighting on the side of the Mensheviks. The author is careful to note that Kiazym is not the source of the latter tale, which concern for verisimilitude (the illiterate peasant Kiazym's not being likely to be involved in, much less sympathetic to such red-tape machinations) serves to heighten his, the author's credibility and by extension his authorial control. This

author embody pre-set traits, that this pre-determination, together with the author's constant mediation is what blocks the dynamics of the more modern novel.

dominance has already been established by the Kiazym/Kunta contrast to begin with, and reinforced by his explicit role in selecting from Kiazym's many tales about his luckless neighbour. The petition incident (which incidentally condenses an episode from Chapter 5, describing the battle that brought about Kunta junior's death, 1979: 114-17) does not advance the plot, it is as self-contained as the narrative snippets which surround it; as such it can be and was omitted, presumably for censorship considerations, from the original publication of the fragment, without detriment to the portrayal of either protagonist. Cut as well from this version was a longer 'fabula digression,' to coin a phrase, concerning Kunta's attempt to have a curse put on an errant foster son.¹ Thanks to the principle of redundancy, the loss does not impede plot progression, though some poignancy would have been forfeited, without its restoration, in the chapter's closing segment, when the author figure comes across the doltish shepherd, now 103 years of age, with yet another foster child.

If "Табы" represents free-ranging variation on a static theme, our discussion of the stolen tobacco affair in "Дерево детства" has attempted to show the same principle operating in the fields of character portraiture and its ancillary plot-stringing. In both cases, multiplication has been made to stand in for extended development.

With regard to the opposition between character focus and plot development, recall Proffer's comment on the period 1961-

¹ Kunta's bargaining for a cheaper, less powerful curse is transferred to Tsurtsumiia in the film "Чегемский детектив."

1984: "Particularly among the dominant realist writers, the short story often tends towards the character sketch, rather than O'Henry-style plot construction."¹ In a similar vein, Sarnov cites Tolstoi's contention that "in Russian literature more than any other the concern for emotional details overshadows interest in the event itself," and maintains that Iskander has outstripped all his contemporaries in the consistency and extent of this pursuit.² From a totally different angle, Nikolaev lists Iskander (together with Shukshin, Astaf'ev, Belov, Ninov and others) as a practitioner of the "рассказ-событие," one of the most popular of four sub-types in his highly idiosyncratic taxonomy of the contemporary Soviet short story.³ The event-story, as he defines it, builds its plot around one central incident in the life of an individual or small group; all plot-development is subordinate to a single culmination, followed by a "more or less substantial denouement."⁴ It is difficult to agree with this assessment of the intricately discursive Iskander, apart from the observation that this sub-type of all the "small epic forms" stands closest to the sketch (очерк) in its frequent reliance on the "personal experience of the author himself."

¹Carl R. Proffer, "Russian Prose 1961-1984," introduction to *The Barsukov Triangle, The Two-Toned Blonde and Other Stories*, ed. Carl R. Proffer and Ellendea Proffer (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1984), xi.

²Сарнов, "Мир Фазиля Искандера," 15.

³Б.И. Николаев, "О жанрах современного русского советского рассказа," *Вопросы русской литературы* 1977:2[30], с. 107. Nikolaev's other sub-types are the новелла (redefined as turning on a "pointe" aimed at revealing character, and practised by Aksénov, Antonov, Bitov and others), the lyric story (sacrificing plot to mood and reflection, as in Astaf'ev and Kazakov) and the рассказ-судьба (covering the whole of a character's life, encompassing features of all the other sub-types and, while yet rare, possessing the greatest potential for development).

⁴Ibid.

Does narrative length have anything to do with character focus? The short story has been contrasted with the novel on the grounds that its character delineations bear the stamp of "inevitability":

There are no Emma Bovarys or Elizabeth Bennets in short fiction: to establish a community in which such characters can be conceived to exist requires the time and space, and the uncertainty of a novel.¹

The stolid re-iteration of unchanging traits would seem to eliminate the complexity and certainly the unpredictability associated with the protagonists of the larger forms. Even in Bakhtin's metageneric terms, the characters of a true novel reserve the right never to "coincide with themselves," to break, that is, out of any mold established by any of their fellow protagonists or even their author.² Whereas Uncle Sandro, facing a passport check on his way to perform for Stalin

замирал, не давая чужим чертам проявиться и стараясь сохранить на лице выражение непринужденного *сходства с собой* [...] [1979: 195; italics mine]

In its own context, this determined 'self-coincidence' aims, of course, at satirizing the infamously serious protocol of Soviet identity papers. But it does reveal as well something of what might be called the 'recognizability factor' behind Iskander's recurrent features. If character and event are interdependent in the short story,³ recurring character and recurring event form a symbiosis of their own in the compilation, one which invites the reader to join

¹Marvin Mudrick, "Character and event in fiction," *Yale Review* 50 (1960): 215. Cited in L.M. O'Toole, *Structure, Style and Interpretation in the Russian Short Story* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 146.

²Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 99.

³O'Toole, *Structure, Style and Interpretation*, 143-44.

in their perpetual re-confirmation--much like the Western viewer of a long-running television series.¹ From a different historical perspective, the effect is similar to that achieved in folkloric cycles, specifically those that coalesce over long periods around popular characters, thereby imparting to them a "semi-real existence": the reader is lead to think of them as "old acquaintances even if a given episode is encountered for the first time."²

Over the many years of *Sandro's* scattered printings, its readers could always rely on familiar characters to perform in familiar ways.³ Over the jumbled chronology, the riot of tales dropped and picked up again, stood familiar figures (eyes, moustaches, waists, backs, etc.). Over the astonishing range of genre intonations--comic, lyric, elegiac--unchanging characters revealed, not new facets, but the same facets in a different light: taciturn Makhaz and his frowsy wife, the shepherd Kharlampo are figures of fun in the "Tali" chapter, the stuff of tragedy in their own.

Even more startling is the non-transformation, the change of context that affects Omar, the stable petty villain of the piece. Throughout the novel, his every appearance without exception is accompanied by a condensed curriculum vitae: he fought in World

¹The familiarity effect as noted in the "Chik" cycle: "Ф. Искандеру достаточно намек, чтобы увлечь воображение читателя в проложешое русло, где так органично и непосредственно скрещивается новое с уже знакомым, что мы, сами того не замечая, растворяемся в мире, с которым давно сроднились." (И. Подольская, Рецензия на рассказ Фазиль Искандера "Чаепитие и любовь к морю," *Детская литература* 1976:5, с. 52.)

²Валентина Дышник, "Цикл," в кн. *Литературная энциклопедия: Словарь литературоведческих терминов* (Москва-Ленинград, 1925), 2: 1085.

³"Читатель прозы Искандера постепенно «обрастает» этими героями, как бы сживается с ними, они от рассказа к рассказу уже становятся как бы его, читателя, соседями и родственниками, хорошими знакомыми." (Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988c), 158-59.)

War I in the "wild division"¹; he became game warden; he cuckolds and bullies his brother Kunta (1979: 129, 240, 592, 602; 1981: 68). He is thoroughly and invariably nasty, as we are invariably informed. Yet this is precisely what lends such potency to the author-narrator's catholic acceptance of all aspects of Chegem, Omar specifically included, in the poignancy of its final loss (1979: 604).

We have examined the many levels of recurrence in the frame, character-types and traits, and plot-recapitulations of *Sandro*. Below, other kinds of deliberate redundancy will be observed: from aphoristic and allegorical over-extension to verbs of speech and thought, to excessive source citation, to the recasting of an entire cycle, the autobiographical tales, into putative omniscient narration. Within Iskander's masterwork, the recurrences discussed to date form a network of internal cross-referencing that is its surface linkage. It remains to note the even larger network of external cross-referencing which arguably tacks together the whole of his corpus into one vast mega-cycle.

Below is Burlingame's assessment of character, plot and place-name recurrence in Iskander's corpus as a whole. It pinpoints the active participation sought from the reader:

All of these overlapping strands help to create a sense of unity and continuity, and one can, in fact, speak of Iskander's work as being all of one piece, or rather of many separate pieces which, taken together, add up to a coherent whole [...] The actual pattern of the mosaic must be constructed by the reader, however, since Iskander's stories do not appear in any particular order, even within a single volume.²

¹"World War I Russian army unit drawn from warlike southern tribesmen." ("Glossary," in *Sandro of Chegem*, 368.)

²Burlingame, "Prose of Iskander," 124.

Lebedev focuses on the tonal qualities and the authenticity woven by the patchwork "world" of a composite:

[Искандер] сам ныне объединяет в своих новых сборниках давние «детские» свои рассказы и последние публикации, [...] иллюзию и прозрение, сатиру и романтику, юмор и гнев, утраты, надежды и приобретения. Единство всех этих нерасторжимо контрастирующих, а порой и необходимо диссонирующих начал и составляет некий «мир Фазиля Искандера» сегодня.¹

The village of Chegem is its capital. It appears in all of the cyclical compositions to have coalesced to date: in "Sea Scorpion," as catalyst to the protagonist's moral awakening (ПСГО:2 248, 337); in "Стоянка человека" as a boat, the author's refuge in the "дымчатая эйфория бездомности";³ in "Chik" as the boy's standard and bulwark against a bewildering adult world. It crosses into other stories as yet unattached to any larger structure, notably "Начало," as the author's starting point in his journey into life (ДД: 15). Like a magnet, it draws into *Sandro* works that have yet to be formally admitted: the child-hero of "Ремзик," grandson of Kolcherukii and friend of Chik, recalls it as another grandfather's home, runs away from Mukhus to find his integrity and death in the cold waters of a neighbouring village, yet plays beneath its all-embracing shade in the film "Чегемский детектив"⁴; the adult-narrator of "Goatibex" looks

¹ Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1984), 54.

² The reference is to the collection *Под сенью грецкого ореха* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1979).

³ "Мы с Виктором Максимовичем рыбачили на моей лодке, которой я дал название «Чегем», еще сам того не ведая, что во мне уже зреет тема моей будущей книги." (*Знамя* 1989:7, с. 43). See also app 8.

⁴ The short story was first printed in *Юность* 1974:9, с. 21-39. Also in СиЧ: 162-212; БДБД: 17-66; *Избранное*: 211-57; ПиР: 349-95. The film Remzik might, on the other hand, be Kiazum's son (1979: 572-75; 1981: 92). When Andreeva maintains that the story takes its natural place in Iskander's "childhood mosaic," she bases her claim on character-recurrence (Андреева, "Владелец счастья," 12). The implication is that a character grid extends throughout his corpus, a slot-and-filler system, as it were, that easily accommodates ever

up at its distant slopes to a grandfather's house described again in "Дедушка."¹ It is the site of Kiazym's encounter with the humiliation of war behind the front lines in "Лошадь дяди Кязыма."² In "Бедный демагог," it is the home and ultimate destination of a story-telling old man, who recalls its familiar landmark, Sabid's Ravine and its familiar resident, the huntsman Tendel.³ By its share of the fragments of the Great Abkhazian Wall, the young Sofichka awaits a lovers' tryst.⁴ As the "homeland" of the narrator of *Дерево детства*, it has been seen to link the *whole* of that motley collection to *Sandro*.⁵ If the courtyard is the run-through protagonist of the Chik cycle, then the structural status applies all the more readily to

new arrivals. See also Lebedev's likening Iskander's corpus to a growing "tree": "Крона продолжает формироваться на наших глазах, и новые сильные ветви вырастают там, где для них словно бы сразу же было оставлено свободное место и где их не хватало" (А.А. Лебедев, "И смех, и слезы, и любовь," предисловие к сб. Фазиль Искандера *Избранное: Рассказы и повесть* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1988), 7.)

¹First printed in *Новый мир* 1968:7, с. 62-79. Also in ПД: 92-121; ДД: 78-107; *Избранное*: 41-86. Here and below see Appendix Four: Stories Peripheral to *Sandro*.

²First printed in *Юность* 1966:3, с. 46-63. Also in ЗП: 24-49; ПД:78-91; ПОП: 143-55. The incident is recalled in the "бригадир Кязым" chapter of *Sandro*, and enters as well the film "Чегемский детектив."

³As "Бедный демагог" in СиЧ: 110-125; БДБД: 67-81; *Избранное*: 67-81; as "Под сенью эвкалиптов: Отрывок из нового рассказа," *Смена*, 11 сентября 1969, 14-15; as "Под эвкалиптом: рассказ," *Пелем* 1974:49 (2-9 декабря), с. 6, 7.

⁴Фазиль Искандер, "Похищение: рассказ," *Сельская молодежь* 1977:9, с. 16-21. Sofichka makes a fleeting appearance in the lyric epilogue to "Джамхух" (1981, 235). At one point, like Tali, she was to have become the central figure of her own, separate повесть--according to the author's announcement in *Комсомольская правда*, 10 апреля 1977, 2. The published story focuses on her preparations, both practical and emotional, for elopement. In this sense, it provides the inside perspective that was lacking from Tali's abduction. The wedding banquet held some time after the fact is attended by Tali and her husband Bagrat. Significantly, Uncle Sandro presides as tamada. Perhaps this factor (given the author's decision never to show the master actually engaged in his art), or that of possible lyric competition with Tali, has to date blocked the incorporation of this tale into *Sandro*.

⁵Эветгов, "Наказание смехом," 203.

its mountain counterpart in what Ivanova has dubbed a "своеобразный чегемский эпос."¹

Iskander has been called a writer not so much of one, childhood theme, as of one place.² Cribbing from Faulkner, a map has been drawn for him and affixed with his signature as its "sole owner and proprietor."³ This limitation of theme has been seen to stand behind, to permit the wide variety of genre embraced by the protean *Sandro* and, in other works, startling a number of critics.⁴

With regard to cross-cycle character migration, Iverni remarks:

Роман как магнит стянул в себя множество героев [...], а главное -- самого автора-героя, неизменно появляющегося на сцене среди любимых героев. [] многие из более ранних его рассказов были как бы эскизами, подмалевками к *Сандро*.⁵

It is one thing to state that Iskander's works share a number of dramatis personae, that character recurrence across various levels of text boundaries (segment, chapter; story, cycle) is a classic means to their linkage. It is quite another to comprehend the truly mind-boggling extent to which this occurs in his corpus, let alone

¹For the courtyard as a "сквозной герой" see Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988a), 221; for the "Chegem epos" see the revised version of the same article (1988c) in her *Точка зрения*, 144.

²Among the critics to comment on its excessive use is Андреева, "Владелец счастья," 13. Iskander, it seems, felt obliged to defend the practice in "И чувство собственной судьбы," интервью с Фазилем Искандером зап. Н. Некрасова, *Смена*, 17 октября 1982, 4. To Lebedev, Chegem is Iskander's "место постоянной литературной прописки," even his "малая родина" (Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1984), 53, 55).

³Suggested by Б.М. Сарнов, "Чем глубже зачерпнуть," в его же кн. *Время таланта: Портреты и памфлеты* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1987), 34. Alluded to by Лебедев, "И смех, и слезы, и любовь," 10. Acted upon by Вайль и Генис, "Сталин на чегемской дороге," 155.

⁴Solov'ev speaks of his "способность менять литературную «вывеску» при удивительной органичности и цикличности его литературных поисков" in Вл. Соловьев, "Сломать стереотип," *Литературная газета*, 24 ноября 1976, 5.

⁵Iverni, "По ту сторону смеха," 353.

the audacity with which he overtly applies the technique. Time and again, unchanging characters, unchanging traits, unchanging illustrative episodes are re-introduced and re-explained.

Above, we have seen several instances of its application within *Sandro*. Cycle-to-cycle transference *en masse* is readily evident between the "School Waltz" and "Chik" compendia, in that the latter simply re-casts the former into the third-person.¹ Another mass migration splices "Goatibex" into *Sandro*, via the simple mechanics of a sequel (Chapter 12). What stands out is the sheer bravado of repetition, whereby so many members of an unforgettable cast are outfitted with superfluous 'recap'-digressions.² One character, Vakhtang Bochua, even manages to slip with mandatory reference to his eternal white suit and on-going goatibex shenanigans into an entirely unrelated tale (1979: 488).

Kolcherukii strides into the autobiographical cycles, in the film version, scripted by Iskander and released as "Время счастливых находок" (1970); there the lead character is named, not Chik, but Sandrik.³ Two episodic characters--the coffee brewer Akop-aga and the artist Andrei Tarkilov--stray from *Sandro* (Chapters 18

¹Testimony to the bewildering extent of the transference is found in Ivanova's confusion of the two cycles: she states that "Старый дом под кипарисом," an interim version of "School Waltz," grew out of the Chik cycle ("Смех против страха" (1988a), 224). Actually, the reverse is true. No less confused, it seems, is the critic Kile, who places "Бригадир Кязим" in the Chik cycle apparently on the sole grounds of its inclusion in the *Защита Чика* collection (П. Киле, "Эпос детства," *Лева* 1984:2, с. 160). Burlingame consciously treats the two cycles as of a single piece ("Prose of Iskander," 126, 128)

²See p. 28, fn. 2 above.

³Produced by Mosfil'm, script by Fazil' Iskander and G. Gabai. Reviewed in *Советская культура*, 23 мая 1970, 4; И. Ганелица, "Время счастливых находок: отзыв," *Московский комсомолец*, 19 мая 1970, 3; И. Овчишникова, "Искатель Сандрик," *Известия*, 22 января 1970, 4; Д. Орлов, "Недетские заботы детского кино," *Искусство кино* 1979:5, с. 24-41; М. Кузнецов, "Простодушию приятно всерьез," *Советский экран* 1970:10, с. 4.

and 17, respectively) to the solemn "Sea Scorpion" (ПСГО: 150, 331), as does the ubiquitous grandfather. With the childhood cycles *Sandro* exchanges the figures of Prince Ol'denburgskii (recalled by the boy's aunt in "Чаепитие и любовь к морю," СиЧ¹: 14-15), the Rich Tailor (who struts from his own sub-cycle into Chapter 18 of the novel), the repressed Abkhazian dance star Pata Pataraiia (Sandro's colleague and sorely missed father of the boy's friend Nina in "Ночь и день Чика" and "Подвиг Чика"; he also performs in "Goatibex," ДД: 363), Alikhan and his languidly voluptuous wife Dasha (who move from the gambler's house of Chapter 4 to the boy's courtyard in both the first- and the third-person cycles).² The boy's paternal Uncle Samada, the drunken lawyer sunk to a café 'practice,' crosses with all these identifying labels intact from "School Waltz" to an off-hand aside in "Дудка старого Хасана," now Chapter 26 of the novel.³

The Chegemer who outstrips all others for constancy of recurrence is, of course, the author-narrator. One who deliberately ex-

¹The reference is to the collection *Сандро из Чегема: рассказы, роман* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1973).

²Where Kunta takes first place for chapter-to-chapter recurrence in *Sandro*, the humble Alikhan, former "коммерсант" reduced to sidewalk salesman, earns the same distinction on the cycle-to-cycle level. The sole cycle to have escaped his participation is "Sea Scorpion." His salient feature is his calloused--not hands, as in the Soviet canon, but feet; his most recognizable pose--soaking those work-wearied trophies to the tune of condescending lectures from the Rich Tailor. On the basis of Kunta and Alikhan, a case could be made for the role of the "humiliated" (Kunta the cuckold, Alikhan the victim of the street bully in "Возмездие" of the "Chik" cycle), the "малые мира серо" as the structural cement of Iskander's corpus as a whole, both syntagmatically (in view of their high-frequency) and paradigmatically (given the potent reverberations of the underdog status itself and its place in the authority-ranking scheme of a corpus that abounds in patriarchs, tyrants and their challengers, the picaros).

³*Октябрь* 1987:4, с. 77. See also *Сандро из Чегема: роман* (1989), кн. 3: 124.

poses his professional interests as a writer, one who moreover regularly depicts himself in the very act of writing:

Каждый день, за исключением тех дней, когда меня не бывает дома, я закрываюсь у себя в комнате, закладывая бумагу в свою маленькую прожорливую «Колибри» и пишу.

Обычно машинка, несколько раз вяло потявкав, надолго замолкает. [...] На самом деле в это время я что-нибудь изобретаю или, склонившись над машинкой, прислушиваюсь к телефону в другой комнате. Так деревенские свиньи в наших краях, склонив голову, стоят под плодовыми деревьями, прислушиваясь, где стукнет упавший плод, чтобы вовремя к нему подбежать. [ДД: 22]

The eighteenth-century Shandy and his inkpot has been updated to a typewriter-tapping Iskander,--a standard enough anchoring of Shandian digressions in the prosaic details of the 'author's' study. It pits its own "meta-text"¹ priority (as the producer's locale) against the lower-level 'reality' of "our parts" (the product's locale). It draws an ethical contrast between the two: the haughty pretensions of the writers' craft, with all its traditional prestige, are deflated by comparison with pigs. The latter then take on the moral purity of naturalness to which the originator of that comparison aspires in his work.

The originality of this twentieth-century use lies in its pushing such concretization to an even bolder extreme, one unparalleled, it seems in world literature. This is Iskander's dalliance with cross-referencing from work to work, from cycle to cycle. It differs from the more traditional use of literary allusion, even self-allu-

¹Наличие персонифицированного автора, естественно, означает наличие в произведении текста, относящегося к автору. Такой текст по отношению к сюжетному плану является мета-текстом, т.е. текстом о тексте. По месту нахождения мета-тексты можно разбить на внутренние, находящиеся в сюжетной части текста, и внешние, вынесенные за пределы сюжетного повествования, -- разного рода предисловия, послесловия, сноски и примечания." (К.Н. Атарова и Г.А. Лескис, "Семастика и структура повествования от третьего лица в художественной прозе," *Известия АН СССР: Серия литературы и языка* 39, no. 1 (1980): 37). In these terms, Iskander's meta-texts are internally positioned, and thereby 'punch holes' directly into the fabric of his narratives.

sion, in the sheer bravado of its absolute candour, its utter artlessness. Whereas literary allusion refers its reader to a closed world of other literary constructs, Iskander's a-literary cross-referencing opens each individual work explicitly to others from the same pen (or rather, typewriter!), and implicitly to the illusion of the larger world of 'real-life.' And the illusion finds its prop in the rickety, Swiss-cheese construction of Iskander's interlocking open cycles.¹

Sandro alludes candidly to "Goatibex," quite naturally in the sequel chapter (twelve), much more arbitrarily, even gratuitously, it seems, in Aunt Katia's dental adventure (1979: 309). The broad outlines of the tale of cross-breeding mayhem are recapitulated in the play "Кофейня в море."² "Goatibex" (1966) discusses itself as a literary product with social and political repercussions for its author in a segment towards its end that *predated* (in 1965) publication of the original story.³ It incorporates yet another pre-published piece, that released under the title "Вечерняя дорога" in 1963.⁴ "Колчерикий" (1966) cites and recapitulates what could only

¹According to Solov'ev, Iskander's self-quotations turn the "wholes" of previously published pieces into "mere parts" of larger, cyclical structures. ("Судьба человека в жанре рассказа," 73). By appending cycle subtitles to the publication of excerpted tales Iskander подчеркивает реальную необозримость и внутреннюю связность того, о чем он пишет вообще, и одновременно отрывочность данного рассказа, который словно бы окружен отточиями и многоточиями, обозначающими связь литературы с реальностью ("Жанр рассказа," 4).

²See *Театр* 1988:6, с. 139.

³Фазиль Искандер, "Под небом Колхиды: рассказ," *Неделя*, 5-11 декабря 1965, 10-11. Compare the first printing of "Созвездие Козлотура" in *Новый мир* 1966:8, 3-75. Corresponds to pages 343-53 in the version published in the *Дерево детства* collection.

⁴Он же, "Вечерняя дорога: рассказ," *Костер* 1963:12, с. 24-32. Corresponds to pages 277-92 in the version published in *Дерево детства*. Some minor stylistic adjustments are evident, as well as a certain reduction of the horrors of war as they impinge directly upon the boy. Most interesting of all is the change of locale: in "Goatibex"--an unnamed grandfather's house in an unnamed mountain village (which facilitates its identification with Chegem: ДД: 277:

be "Вечерняя дорога" in its opening lines (ДД: 24) and is itself specifically indicated in *Sandro*:

Интересно, что через множество лет, во время войны, когда Колчерукого привлекли (*читай рассказ "Колчерукий," где, впрочем, об этом ничего не говорится*) к ответственности за то, что он пересадил тунговое дерево с колхозного поля на свою фиктивную могилу, ему напомнили об этом случае [his helping the arrested Sandro], но Колчерукий сделал вид, что ничего не помнит. [1979: 174; italics mine]

where the false cross-reference underscores the illusion of extra-literary reality.

A different kind of false cross-reference is seen in the promise to tell at some more convenient date the story of one Uncle Fedia (1981: 63). It seems safe to assume that this colourful but upright figure--a peasant turned Civil War hero turned alcoholic--will one day re-appear. The promise has not yet been fulfilled, or at any rate published. In the meantime, it opens a breach in the chapter it otherwise gratuitously interrupts,--heightening once again the illusion of a vast 'real world,' teeming with 'real characters' and pushing hard against the artificial boundaries of a finite literary text.

External cross-references are no less abundant. Many address the problem of para-literary response. From the reader, in the story "Начало," which describes the encounter between a mystified writer and would-be interpreter of his piece "Детский сад" (ДД:

ВСН: 336; Изб.: 493); in "Вечерняя дорога"--Uncle Meksut's house in the village Napskal (*Костер* 1963:12, с. 24; ЗП: 80). When reprinted in the collection *Первое дело* (1972, 1978): 60-77, the village acquired the name Chegem. "Созвездие Козлотура," then, stands as Iskander's first effort in amalgamating older and newer pieces. On these grounds, Lebedev believes the work marked a turning point in his evolution; the incorporated fragments found a "creative completion": "они наконец словно бы попали в искомый, почти подразумевавшийся контекст," one based on the lyric/ironic juxtaposition (Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 188-89.

19-22).¹ From the critic, descending on "Goatibex" in the fifteenth (1979: 530-31),² and on an unnamed story in the twenty-first chapter (КиУ: 23-24) of *Sandro*. From an unnamed fellow-writer in "Море обаяния," which tackles the issues of his single theme ("всё горы, всё детство, всё Чегем"), its supposed advantages vis à vis the censors ("редакторы к тебе снисходительней... Мол, всё это там, где-то на далекой окраине происходит, ладно, пусть пишет. [...] Это ко мне снисходительней?!"), the misinterpretation of his Endurians, the persistence of goatibexes ("я [...] с некоторой тревогой подумал, что тема козлотура, видимо, будет следовать меня всю жизнь")--the last with regard to a scheme to produce shell-less eggs in the interests of Gorbachëv's ускорение.

Yet another reference to goatibexes translates instantly from its real-life inspiration (a televised proposal to mass produce pheasants as a panacea to the infamous Colorado beetle) to a tongue-in-cheek outline for a future story. It extends self-allusion across genre boundaries right the way to the essay, or rather, essaistic miscellany, in a piece that managed to incorporate fragments pre-dating their inclusion in "Стоянка человека."³ Among them--the

¹Cited by Lesskis in his discussion of syntagmatic (explicitly text-conditioned) and paradigmatic (extra-text) associations, as an example of the often arbitrary nature of the latter (reading between the lines). See Г.А. Лесскис, "Синтагматика и парадигматика художественного текста," *Известия АН СССР: Серия литературы и языка* 41, no. 5 (1982): 434. What stands out is Iskander's attempt to exert maximum authorial control over even this, the most ephemeral aspect of a literary text.

²The reference is to Лев Гольдинов, "Вопреки правде жизни: О повести Ф. Искандера «Созвездие Козлотура»," *Советская Абхазия*, 18 ноября 1966, 2.

³Фазиль Искандер, "О движении к добру и о технологии глупости," *Литературная газета*, 30 июня 1986, II. The tenth fragment, on a fishing expedition, corresponds to pp. 42-43 of the "Тайга и море" chapter of "Стоянка человека" in *Знамя* 1989:7; the eleventh describes the encounter between shoddy workmen and a disinterested lover of a job well done for its own sake, stands in this respect as a situation rhyme to a similar episode in *Sandro* involving Khabug (1979: 74-275), and corresponds to pp. 52-53 in the *Знамя* version cited above.

I reflection on Chegem as his marine refuge and future novel, cited above (p. 163), which brings our discussion of cross-referencing in Iskander full circle. For his is indeed a circular poetics of repetition, of continual and intrepid return to characters, incidents and themes. His twice- and thrice-told tales rejoice in their redundancy, no less than his many yarn-spinners and their equally loquacious spokesman. The oral illusion is expansive. Its counterbalance is the eloquence of aphorism and studious reflection, their role in compilation--the subject of the next section.

Fragments 3-6, 12-16 set forth aphorisms attributed to the central character of "Стоянка," *Знамя* 1989:9, с. 49-56. The only other pre-published excerpt appeared as the short story "Сердце" in *Литературная газета*, 7 января 1981, 7, reprinted in the *Защита Чика* collection (1983): 248-60. See also app. 8.

До конца понять замысел *Сандро из Чезема* сейчас трудно, потому что вещь не закончена. Написано, примерно, две трети. Не хватает некоторых глав, которые должны быть вставлены между написанными. [1979: Предисловие, 7]

CHAPTER 4

"THE SEA SCORPION"¹: APHORISTIC CUT AND PASTE

Of Iskander's astonishing complexity of cyclization, "The Sea Scorpion" ("Морской скорпион") can be considered the most easily analyzable in terms of the explicit motivations provided for and surface linkages detectable in the incorporation of its component segments. The novella spans a publication period of twelve years: from 1964, which saw the printing of "Двое в море," a lyric first-person account of first love, to 1976, when it came out in full form in the journal *Наш современник*, as an extended third-person reflection on the true nature of love, mere adolescent attraction, and fidelity. The central protagonist, Sergei Bashkapsarov is vacationing with his wife in Mukhus (Sukhumi) on the Black Sea. The boarding house is run by an old friend, Volodia Palba, whom he helped several years previously exonerate from a charge of first degree murder. The two friends set out to sea, and some time is spent in establishing their fishing expedition as the frame plot-line. Volodia forms the kernel of the first major digression, on their first encounters, the brawl which led to his incarceration, Sergei's writing and

¹See Appendix Five, "Sea Scorpion" Compilation History. Where possible, citations will refer to the version found in the collection *Под сенью грецкого ореха* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1979), 117-344 as ПСГО: page number.

pushing through to publication the feuilleton which prompted his eventual release.

The fictional feuilleton has a real-life counterpart: two 1970 publications by Iskander in *Литературная газета* defending one Chichiko Dopua against virtually identical charges. Moreover, it receives no less than two literary reprises in *Sandro*, in the chapter "Кутеж трех князей." The first of these ends with a mixture of Iskanderian self-disparaging sincerity and a suspiciously ingenuous defiance of syntactic economy (manifest in the casual repetition of key syntagmas where paraphrase or pronoun replacement would suffice):

Сейчас, отстукивая на машинке эти строки, я вспомнил, что и эту встречу и всю предыдущую горестную историю моего друга я уже описал в одной повести, где *собственный мой добрый поступок* я приписал своему герою. И вот я снова к *этому поступку* возвратился. В чем же дело? Или меня тянет к *собственному доброму поступку*, как преступника к месту преступления? Или мне жалко, что я приписал его своему герою? [1979: 527; italics mine]

Abruptly, in this spirit and on the slimmest of chronological links ("В тот же день..."), "The Sea Scorpion" proceeds to its next digression:

В тот же день Сергей, роясь у себя дома в ящике со старыми письмами, наткнулся на свой дневник того времени. Местами морщась, как от зубной боли, на молодую романтическую самоуверенность стиля, он прочел вот эти страницы... [ПСГО: 133]

Note how the hallowed device of the "discovered manuscript" is adapted, on the one hand, to justify a change in intonation and yet, on the other, to highlight the difference by means of this selfsame justification. In effect, the transition entails the very opposite to a "laying bare of the device": by stressing the almost pre-literary helplessness of the compiler, and not some précieux playing with

form to revive its tangibility as a purely literary construct. Where the Formalist term envisages self-conscious literariness, Iskander presents a literary self-consciousness turned against itself to deny, it seems, any distance whatsoever between literature and expression. The more awkward the transition, the more sincere the humble confessional motive behind it. The result is not one device laid bare, but literary effort in general.

Smooth transitions are, in any case, conspicuously absent throughout Iskander's corpus, particularly in *Sandro*. The author's cavalier attitude towards compositional coupling was noted by Smelkov; Iverni believed the "missing links" (мостики) for a more "organic" passage from one chapter to the next would be supplied by the chapters Iskander promised, in his 1979 Preface, to insert at various points throughout the novel.¹ It now seems safer to assume a deliberately 'naif,' 'cut-and-paste' principle behind all of Iskander's writings.

The naif artist in this sense lays all his cards on the table, exposes his own groping towards the sincerest possible expression:

эксперимент чужд литературе. Мучительный поиск формы, свойственный художникам всех времен, то, что раньше называлось муками слова, есть всегда процесс прояснения художественной мысли.²

He must diligently free himself of all constraints, including the verbal, lest he not see the forest for the trees, lest the trees stifle an uncluttered search for the essence of the forest itself:

искусство не должно быть слишком искусным. Метафорический лес Татьяны Толстой иногда кажется чересчур обильным и заключенным. Не хватает лужаек, полянок, просветов. И это говорю я, можно сказать,

¹Смелков, "Так возникает роман," 32; Иверни, "По ту сторону смеха," 352.

²Искандер, "О новаторстве, банальных истинах и цитатах," 3. Italics mine.

выросший в кавказских джунглях. Читая ее рассказы порой хочется взять топор, и прорубить окно [...] в небо.¹

The 'discovered manuscript' introduces, practically verbatim, a story published by a much younger Iskander, "Двое в море" (1964). By awkwardly apologizing for and then blandly reproducing the naive romanticism of youth, the text achieves a highlighted composite of tonalities. No less striking a tonal aggregate, though on a much larger scale, is evident in *Sandro*: tragic, farcical, lyric, satiric, elegiac--all find their separate and distinctive voice in Iskander's masterwork, as the wide variety of critical opinion cited in the first section of this thesis testifies. Within *Sandro* itself, the story "Бармен Адгур," analyzed as "treading the thin line between the grotesque-fabulistic and the real-publicistic," has been called a "рассказ-плакат" and a "рассказ-коллаж,"² which well captures its compilative nature but misses the essence entirely: the line is thick, not thin; it is thickly laid on to produce a graphic overlay; nor is it trod, but deliberately flaunted. What the small fragment from "Scorpion" does, in a nutshell, is point to the deliberate consistency of method in Iskander, to aggregation/segregation and its unruffled exposure. In this sense the cycle is both the pinnacle of his art and its most perfect manifestation.

In "Scorpion," an overt intertwining of perspectives is achieved: an ingenuous first-person more or less concurrent with

¹Он же, "Поэзия грусти: О книге Татьяны Толстой *На золотом крыльце сидели*," *Литературная газета*, 26 августа 1987, 5.

²Высоцкая, "Обретение нового дыхания," II. Azanov seems to confirm the role of tonal overlay in maintaining the disjointed nature of compilation. He believes that the lyric digressions in "Goatibex" tend at times to overwhelm its satiric base, and thereby "fragment the composition." (Azanov, "Под гипнозом формулы," 161).

the past events described, and a third-person mature re-examination of that past, as well as its on-going repercussions in the present. Subsequent interpolations of the past and present drop this surface embodiment of first- and third-person, substituting the intermediary of a fairly obvious manipulation of stream of consciousness. Rather than internal monologue, what Iskander offers is a dramatized internal dialogue, as it were, using rhetorical questions and equally flat answers. The flatness stems from an authorial control that is never relaxed:

Ну нет, подумал Сергей, вспоминая дневник, этого мы так не оставим. Мы сейчас же, не сходя с места, разоблачим этого липового чемпиона.

Так что же случилось потом? Да, да, что случилось потом, что помешало вам продолжить на суше ваш роман, столь трогательно начатый на море? Короче говоря, почему вы не вместе?

Сергей затруднился на это ответить. Тут была загадка, которую он мог разрешить, но не хватило духу перешагнуть через собственный стыд. В сущности, вот что он знал. [ПСГО: 150-151]

G.A. Lesskis has described this three-tiered awareness (a character does one thing, thinks another, whereas the author knows what he really thinks, knows and does on the innermost, sincerest level of being) as stemming from Sterne via Tolstoi.¹ Lidiia Ginzburg discusses Tolstoi's psychological method in terms of his investigations of the "*mechanisms* of spiritual life." She traces this orientation to the "rationalism and didacticism of the eighteenth century." From Rousseau Tolstoi inherited and developed an awareness of the "synchronous multi-layeredness of spiritual experience." A passage cited by Ginzburg to illustrate the Tolstoyan character's multilayered, mutually contradictory levels of self-

¹Consultation in Moscow USSR, March-April 1988.

awareness corresponds to the Iskanderian technique under discussion. It concerns Karenin's reluctance to face the reality of his wife's infidelity, methodically sets forth his prosaic thoughts, unspoken fears and unacknowledged motivations.¹ Anna's own welter of conflicting emotions receive similar treatment:

Она чувствовала, что в эту минуту не могла выразить словами того чувства стыда, радости и ужаса пред этим вступлением в новую жизнь и не хотела говорить об этом, оплошивать это чувство неточными словами. Но и после, и на другой и на третий день, она не только не нашла слов, которыми бы она могла выразить всю сложность этих чувств, но не находила и мыслей, которыми бы она сама с собой могла обдумать все, что было в ее душе.

[...]

Зато в сне, когда она не имела власти над своими мыслями, ее положение представлялось ей во всей безобразной наготе своей. [...] Но это сновидение, как кошмар, давило ее, и она просыпалась с ужасом.²

She is pursued by an author wielding an endless chain of 'but-s' and 'then- again's'--mechanical devices all to force into blunt speech the thoughts she herself cannot face. In general, however, it is difficult to find Tolstoi telescoping a character's inner debate quite so neatly and compactly as Iskander. This most likely stems from the nineteenth-century master's prime discovery, according to Ginzburg, of the *fluidity* of consciousness. By contrast, Iskander's technique is a montage of well argued and therefore thoroughly compartmentalized moments.

Compare Bakhtin's assessment of the monologic work typified by Tolstoi:

¹Лидия Гинзбург, *О психологической прозе* (Ленинград: Художественная литература, 1977), 434, 319. The passage from *Anna Karenina* is cited on p. 321 and corresponds to Л.Н. Толстой, *Собрание сочинений в двадцати томах* (Москва: Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1963), 8: 237-39.

²Толстой, указ. соч., 8: 178-79. Italics mine.

слово героя заключено в твердую оправу авторских слов о нем. [...] Самосознание героя -- только момент его твердого образа и, в сущности, предопределено этим образом даже там, где тематически сознание переживает кризис и радикальнейший внутренний переворот.¹

This is the monologic author's "judgment in absentia" (заочная оценка) of his character: "Свою точку зрения на героя он не доводит, да и принципиально не может довести до сознания героя, и герой не может на нее ответить."² So entrenched is this orientation in Iskander that the lack of an overt voice for its expression has even been cited as a flaw in the short story "Ремзик," peripheral to *Sandro*.³

In the final analysis,--for this is the *analytical* dissection of thought,--it is the author who orchestrates and controls the inner argument. Iskander's author reports and even re-words his character's internal monologue no less effectively than his relay narrator was seen to manipulate the well delineated accounts of his many source narrators. The common factor in both these types of 'other-text' treatment is the deliberately forthright, wholly undisguised, even rigorously emphasized role played by the author.

Varlamova objects to what she considers the excessively obvious application of the tactic in "Scorpion":

Фазиль Искандер, словно и время играя роль божества в трех лицах, способен оказаться одновременно всюду: и в шкуре описываемого героя, и того, с кем этот герой конфликтует, и вдруг обернуться неким провидцем, который еще и прокручивает в уме все мотивы их поведения, а потом, вознесясь уже чуть не в стратосферы духа, отвергнуть предположенные варианты один за другим, чтобы с лукавой усмешкой выдвинуть самый последний -- неоспоримый.⁴

¹Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 94-95.

²Там же, 121.

³Я. Эльсберг, "Диапазоны творчества," *Литературное обозрение* 1975:9, с. 29.

⁴Ирина Варламова, "Ценой добытой истины," *Литературное обозрение* 1977:2, с. 32.

She has pinpointed its role in reinforcing the author's role as orchestrator of all three tiers, and ultimate source of the transcendent, supra-individual omniscience it seeks. And she describes this role as "spinning out the variations" (прокручивание вариантов), which captures its deliberately composite, no-seams-concealed modus operandi.

The passage below, describing Sergei's laughing as his wife stumbles during a game of volleyball with a fellow vacationer, offers an example of manifestly tripartite consciousness in an expository, author-dominated context.

Под ее взглядом он, словно эхо, услышал свой смех и только сейчас осознал неуместность и жестокость его звучания. Он смутился под ее взглядом, но смутился главным образом от понимания жестокости своего смеха и непонимания, чем он был вызван, тем более что за мгновение до этого он почувствовал к ней острую нежность [...]

На самом деле смех его вызван был глубоко затаившимся, неосознанным чувством ревности к этому геологу, к их дружеской игре. Ее падение как бы прерывало, как бы означало невозможность наметившейся между ними гармонии, и смех его выражал радость по этому поводу.

Не понимая этого, но думая о случившемся, он греб в открытое море [...]

[ПСГО:120]

Compare in *Sandro* the author's superior awareness of Tali's innermost motives. Tali has secretly visited her tubercular cousin, ostracized for fear of fatal infection:

Она не могла бы сказать почему, она только знала, что нельзя человека с таким горем оставлять одного, и это было сильнее всяких доводов, и тут она сама ничего не могла бы объяснить. Она смутно почувствовала, что то доверие к миру и к людям, та счастливая способность извлекать постоянную легкость и радость из самого воздуха жизни как-то связано с тем, что у нее за душой не было ни одного движения, запахивающего, прячущего свою выгоду, свою добычу. И так как в этой распахнутости, открытости, доброжелательности ко всему был залог ее окрыленного счастливого состояния, она заранее бессознательно знала, что ей никак нельзя запахиваться, даже если распахнутость ее когда-нибудь станет смертельно опасной. [1979: 340]

Where the secret knowledge of Sergei concentrates entirely on his spiritual malaise to the exclusion of fabula development, the insight sought in Tali is directly connected to her ultimate fate, to the ominous preview in her chapter's opening pages (1979: 321) of an as yet unpublished but tragically predicted tale.¹ Moreover, Tali is a lyrically coloured character entirely distinct from the author by feminine appeal, by non-reflective wholeness and as the constant object of his poetic admiration. Lyric, nostalgic, didactic and above all, explicit--such is the handling of yet another female character's commendable thoughts:

Она еще не понимала, что в мире нет ничего вместительней крыльев любви. Но и не понимая, она и сейчас при виде наседки, на ее глазах укрывшей под крыльями всех цыплят, ощутила восторг, как бы предчувствие праздника жизни. [БДБД: 178]

Sergei--male, literate and introspective--represents an attempt to transpose self-irony into other-disparagement.²

In "Sea Scorpion," the transition exposing and justifying the insertion of enthusiastic adolescent outpourings personalizes such split-level consciousness by setting it somewhat precariously in the character's domain. Somewhat precariously, because Sergei's wince is described externally, by the author and for his compositional convenience. In any event, the diary excerpt leads into a third-person account of the affair's end as the girl is wooed away from

¹At our 19 March 1988 meeting, Mr. Iskander indicated that work is still in progress on the second Tali chapter, where apparently she follows in the tragic, heroic footsteps of the Decembrist wives. The author's preface to the most recent, three-volume edition (*Московский рабочий*, 1989) repeats his intention to "дописать судьбу Тали" (1989/1: 5).

²See the disagreement on this point, for and against the treatment of Sergei as an ill-disguised stand-in for the lyrical I, between М. Гетьман, "Милая суета бессознательности?" and М.О. Чудакова, "Цена самопознания" printed under the rubric "Два мнения" in *Литературная газета*, 8 декабря 1976, 5.

him by a traitorous friend. Thus, compilation operates, in this novella, on two levels: on the simple mechanics of piece-to-piece insertion, importing and motivating their opposing tonalities, and the equally overt manipulation of the opposition thus established in an equally composite, no less choppy frame. For in Iskander no segment is entirely free of some form of digressive, discursive or overlaying compilation.

The retrospective account of Sergei's betrayal is punctuated by a return to the split-personality internal dialogue that launched it. At this point, that device is pushed to its extreme, as Sergei defends himself at length from an externalized voice of consciousness. The exchange, a veritable grilling session, is too long to quote in full. Suffice it to note that the dialogue represents compilation on the level of point of view in its simplest, grammatical aspect of verb person.

A return to the fishing expedition of the 'peg-plot' (previously published as the story "Прикосновение," 1975) takes Sergei into his first encounter with a scorpion. The narrow escape prompts a second reflection, as Sergei lights a cigarette and wonders why he feels so trapped in life. Does the trouble lie in his relationship with his wife or with his work? The question is presumably his own; in any other writer, it would signal a shift into stream of consciousness.

Вот только узнать: в чем она виновата? И еще другое, тайное и стыдное: неужели на этом все кончилось? "Какая я дура, как я могу думать о смерти, когда у меня дочь."

[..] Мысли о смерти были гораздо легче памяти. Та доставала боль, а *эти* ничего, кроме мимолетной залумчивости. *Вот оно, начинается:* он приходил [..][*Italics mine*]¹

Step by step, the passage methodically prepares its slippage into full-bodied internal monologue, sandwiching direct speech in between the author-mediated rhetorical question it opens with and the deictics-loaded second introduction to stream of consciousness proper.

The contrast was deliberately chosen from Trifonov's "Другая жизнь,"² a work which parallels not only "Scorpion's" stratagem of having an intellectual search through his past for some explanation of his present malaise, but identifies the object of that soul-searching as a historian, and moreover one whose overly refined sense of honesty is responsible for at least the external circumstances of his dissatisfaction. Where Trifonov's career-stalled historian is presented through the internal monologue of his widow, however, Iskander takes this distancing one step further, by turning not to internal monologue, but directly to straightforward third-person omniscient narration. The very starkness of this transition encourages its identification as yet another facet of compilation. Trifonov above knits complementary perspectives gradually and systematically together. Compare his skilful 'easing-in' to Bakhtin's analysis of "prepared direct speech" (*подготовленная прямая речь*), the use of quasi-direct to anticipate direct speech, to

¹Юрия Трифонсов, *Повести* (Москва: Советская Россия, 1978), 225.

²"Scorpion" has been compared with Trifonov's work in general, though not specifically this particular tale. See Гетьман, "Милая суета бессознательности?" 5. Iskander himself has made only passing reference to his contemporary, in Фазиль Искандер, "Человек и судьба: Беседа с писателем Фазилем Искандером," зап. И. Мазилкина, *Московский комсомолец*, 21 мая 1987, 4; and "Удивительный мир" (интервью), 6.

attenuate the barriers between author's and character's discourse and thereby contribute to their ultimate interpenetration. Bakhtin emphasizes their *mutual* exchange of intonational and ideological values; this potential interaction, he believes, invariably contributes to the "diminishment of the author's objectivity."¹

In this, the Voloshinov variant of Bakhtin's system, the watershed for all types of reported discourse (direct, indirect, quasi-direct) falls between the linear and pictorial styles, the one preserving where the other erodes the contours of the author's and the character's domains.² It is the linear style that governs Iskander, here in the handling of pseudo- or objectified inner monologue, as well as in his re-casting of character's tales in relay-narration.

Indeed Iskander's effect is quite the opposite to that achieved by Trifonov or described by Bakhtin. His is a tacking together with garish thread and all the ends left happily showing. Such utter disregard for concealment might well mimic the pre-literary helplessness noted in his naif 'laying-bare' of the device; here too, the rejection of literary sophistication must in a literary context be read as a post- or even supra-literary sophistication.

Even where the narration more closely resembles internal monologue, the text is peppered with verbs of thought, surface signals for the more deeply embedded process whereby a superior awareness can intervene with parenthetical comment, or prod the

¹Волошин, *Марксизм и философия языка*, 131-32.

²Там же, 118-19.

'thinker' with questions of its own. Here is Sergei fretting over his forever-postponed thesis defense:

Само пребывание его в институте, вся его научная жизнь (*он не хотел думать: карьера*) на этом могли закончиться. В конце концов, он мог бы и не защищаться. Его вполне устраивало его теперешнее положение. *Вполне?* Да, вполне. Ведь если он овладел какой-то истиной, неужели ему при помощи диссертации нужно ее демонстрировать людям?

Дело не в людях, *подумал он*, а в чем-то другом. *Но в чем?* Тут какой-то инстинкт, *думал он*, инстинкт передачи информации... А может быть, другое, *подумал он*. []

Или он в самом деле боится рискнуть головой? Ну что ж (*вспышка самолюбия*), есть чем рисковать. [ПСГО: 164-65, italics mine]

Where the text shifts immediately from such barely-sketched, ill-knit preliminaries to omniscient narration proper, all pretense of mimesis (minimal authorial intrusion) is dropped in favour of unadulterated diegesis (maximal intrusion),¹ heavily overlain with Tolstoyan superior awareness:

В институте, от директора до уборщицы, все к нему относились хорошо, а некоторые даже любили его. Во всяком случае, он так думал. Природа наградила его огромной доброжелательностью, и это волей-неволей вырывалось наружу и чувствовалось людьми. [ПСГО: 163]

After Sergei's job troubles have been outlined, the narration returns ever so briefly to the fishing boat, the cigarette is extinguished, tossed overboard, "as though [Sergei] had cast away some unpleasant thoughts" (ПСГО: 167). This, in all its pristine simplicity, is the yoke between "Прикосновение" and its interruption by an earlier tale, published under the title "Кино" (1974). 'Sergei had some thoughts/Thoughts about...'-the method is all but appositional. If apposition is taken as ranking below subordination on a scale of compound structures, then its usage here must surely approach minimal complexity. Apposition in this sense has no syn-

¹ See L.M. O'Toole, *Structure, Style and Interpretation in the Russian Short Story*, 38, 65.

tactic effect on its environment; it is therefore both detachable and expandable. Compare:

- (1) Iskander follows the compilation method
Iskander, the writer, author of *Sandro*, member of the Writer's Union, native of Sukhumi, resident of Moscow ... follows the compilation method.
- (2) The compilation method is interesting
Iskander's compilation method is interesting
The compilation method followed by Iskander is interesting.

Very real differences emerge, both morpho-syntactically (genitive vs. noun-phrase attribution) and semantically (restrictive modification) in (2); whereas the chaining method followed in (1) bears, in theory at least, infinite potential. As an analogical model for Iskander's compilation method, it is in any event governed by the author's ascriptive impulse: 'let me explain.' And so he does.

The overlaying is at once temporal (Sergei recalls, or rather the author recalls for him, his first encounter with his future wife), and, latently if somewhat lamely, thematic: Lara, it has been hinted before and will be demonstrated again and again, is not exceptionally attuned to her husband's needs. Minimal textual adjustments are evident: in the independent tale the girl is nameless and the encounter dates back only one, as opposed to seven years. Even the earlier publication has its composite moments: a tale-within-a-tale, as the author relays Sergei's account to the girl of a trip to Leningrad's Hermitage. The link is a tenuous one at best, an explicit situation rhyme: a power failure during the girl's first visit to Sergei's room prompts him to (1) light a cigarette (!) and (2) assuage her virginal fears with an amusing episode in a similarly darkened museum. The account itself contains a fairly lengthy di-

gression on the infectious aura of Rembrandt's "Return of the Prodigal Son"--one of many points of contact with Tolstoi, both in the doctrine of art's immediate appeal and in the work chosen to illustrate it.¹ Composite as well is the passage, in both pre- and post-compilation publications, describing the film watched by the soon-to-be-courting couple (ПСГО: 168). Such miniature synopses, of other authors' works, of Iskander's own outside *Sandro*, and of previously recounted episodes within, are a constant feature of the novel. Here the recapitulation of the scenario underscores the sexual tension of the main theme; it will return in yet another discrete segment, omitted from the journal version, to haunt Sergei's dreams that same night.

The text then returns to the fishing boat of "Прикосновение," a second scorpion is caught and killed, and once again Sergei lapses into reflection. This time the surface link is provided by Volodia's pubescent daughter, who confesses she finds the creatures both frightening and disgusting. Sergei waxes philosophical:

Сила чувственного влечения и сила отвращения, подумал Сергей, наверное, развиваются одновременно. Так и должно быть, подумал он, ведь это то же самое, что ощущение гармонии и дисгармонии. Кто сильно чувствует первое, тот с такой же силой должен чувствовать и второе. Кто может наслаждаться красотой правды, тот неизбежно должен с такой же силой ощущать отвращение ко лжи. [ПСГО: 195]

¹The same painting and the same Tolstoyan credo reappear in the "Время по часам" segment of "Школьный вальс." Whereas Viubel's "Demon" attracts the author's attention only sporadically, depending on a coincidence of his mood and that conveyed by the work, Rembrandt's picture invariably rivets him to the spot "потому что картина смыкает мое личное настроение и погружает меня в ровный и могучий поток своего настроения" (cited from the version in *Кролики и улавы*, 242). Of note in this adaptation of the infection doctrine is Iskander's exclusive reliance on the graphic arts, as opposed to the broader spectrum outlined by Tolstoi's examples, from drama (Shakespeare) to programme music (Wagner).

This extended aphorism, with its suspiciously redundant insistence that these are indeed Sergei's own thoughts, leads directly into a guileless transition: "По какой-то смутной связи с этими своими мыслями он вдруг вспомнил далекий случай из своей юности." The incident recalled is the fifteen-year-old Sergei's first physical contact with a girl, whose knee brushes his as the two are bent over a book. Compilation in this instance follows first a simple technique of parallelism: the scorpion's sting (for the moment averted), and the adolescent knee. The strategy was, after all, forefronted in "The Touch," the title of the shorter piece. In the larger scheme of the novella, which will eventually consider the pitfalls of purely physical attraction between the sexes, it will acquire a broader, more ominous significance. Perhaps this, like the "degenerate chin" repeatedly insisted on in the previous insert ("Кино"), could be compared to what Bitov described as the detail that hints beyond itself to its eventual realization in a larger whole. Certainly within "The Touch" itself the parallelism generates a diagonal, semi-detached offshoot, when Sergei compares the ugly legs of an old woman scurrying to avoid a passing car with the limbs of the young girl that had so excited him.

One conclusion can be immediately drawn: "The Touch," as a compilation within a compilation, illustrates spiralling parallelism, overtly declared, and overtly punctuated by aphorisms. The older Sergei "now understands" that the shame he felt when teased for these first stirrings of puppy love was his punishment for feeling "aesthetic disgust" instead of pity for an unfortunate old woman (ПСГО: 199). Thus is realized the disgust motif proclaimed in the

aphoristic exposition which preceded the segment. There follows Sergei's own explanation of why he should have unexpectedly recalled this long past incident: "the hot touch of the sun reminded him of that first, unforgettable touch [of the knee]" (ПСГО: 200). The piece fairly bristles with obligingly glossed symbolism. It ends with the third appearance of the scorpion. This final "touch" is definitely painful: Sergei is at long last stung.

Several pages, first publications all, take the boat back to shore, outline some cause for jealousy aroused by other guests at the boarding house, and send the suffering Sergei to bed. Here he lapses once more into recollection, thus introducing the next flashback, the next semi-independent tale, "Зайра" (1976). Its theme is conjugal suspicion, its setting -- another Crimean resort. Interspersed is a second flashback, launched by the counter theme of unadulterated loyalty, to a country girl in an Abkhazian mountain village.¹ This too is a montage, furnished with several epilogues, the last of which links up with the original flashback, as Sergei, wife, child and object of his holiday-resort bout with jealousy, go back to the village to visit the girl, now married herself. The intensive symbolic parallelism of "The Touch" becomes in this piece

¹Zaira, the impetuous mountain girl, heroine of the piece, shares several significant features with Tali. Among them: a tender profile and light step, a special relationship with her grandfather, a special joyous brand of hospitality. Sergei's reflections on her "упоенности жизнью, о нескончаемой свежести ее жизни" and the poverty of his own life by comparison (ПСГО: 258) echo the author's lyric awe of Tali. Both girls escort guests who have overindulged to bed with heavily stressed innocence; both faces shine on these occasions with a light that rivals the lamps they carry; both these parallel scenes are treasured by the men who recall them (ПСГО: 239, 1979:331).

an extensive, though no less obvious situational parallelism.¹ The result is a series of variations on the theme of conjugal fidelity. The family returns to Moscow.

Without any transition whatsoever, a third flashback returns us to Sergei's student days, in the piece "Боль и нежность" (1976). The theme, quite unabashedly, is girl-watching. The construction is a straightforward stringing of various girls who capture Sergei's attention on a mobile plot-pivot, with Sergei taking advantage of a balmy spring day in Moscow to indulge in a spot of what can only be called 'cruising' to, on and around Red Square. Into this just barely continuous structure is inserted a flashback to memories of a failed romance begun on a similar occasion. An aphorism marks the break: "Так развиваются мускулы иронии" (ПСГО: 266), said of the young man's disappointment when a promising candidate in the holiday crowd turns out to have an escort. The transition back to the original flashback is equally "extra-territorial" to Sergei:

Вот что приключилось с Сергеем в прошлом году, когда он, как и теперь, посвящал свободное время неустанным поискам своей избранницы. Надо сказать, что любовное увлечение Сергея лжецахоточной очаровашкой через неделю улетучилось, и он полностью возвратил себе право, и это чувство возвращенного права было написано у него на лице, хотя следует отметить, что на право это никто не претендовал, тем не менее он чувствовал себя человеком, получившим полное право заново искать исполнительницу Главной роли своей мечты. [ПСГО: 270]

Here we see the author performing a number of operations simultaneously: first, rather clumsily, supplying the 'then-and-now' link; second, rather briskly, disposing of the epilogue to the affair; and

¹Varlamova treats the work as a composite with parallel episodes all focused on the central "psychological problem" of betrayal ("Ценой добытой истины," 32-33).

third, somewhat confusedly, combining the unrealized irony of "на право это никто не претендовал" with the thematic justification for both the flashback-within-the-flashback and the original flashback itself.

The surabundance of flashbacks is defended by Chudakova as appropriate to the holiday resort setting: Sergei on vacation is able to relax, recall and reflect. This 'lazy hazy summer' atmosphere (заторможенность) is mirrored in a total disregard for fabula:

Смутительной оказалась, быть может, скупость событийной канвы. [...] Минимум текущих событий, зато разматывающийся клубок воспоминаний: нетрудно, наверно, представить себе читателя, который воспринимает это как некое сюжетное неудобство.¹

The story then jumps back to the boarding house, Sergei tussles with the watchdog and once again, plunges into recollection. Again the theme is thwarted courtship; the undergraduate Sergei fails to defend a working-class girl from her jealous lover. The author supplies the moral:

Он не осознавал, что сила раскаяния по поводу того вечера сама по себе была нравственным светом, предохранявшим его от возможных падений во многих других случаях жизни. [ПСГО: 313]

We return to the boarding house, to a montage of character-focuses as the various provokers of Sergei's jealousy and discontent are dealt with one after the other, a jumble of sub-recollections and sub-episodes. As the day ends, Sergei at long last "suddenly" realizes he spent his youth falling in love with pretty faces, only to marry without ever wondering about the spiritual side of the fairer sex. The extended internal monologue is liberally sprinkled with timely reminders that these are indeed Sergei's thoughts: "Видно,

¹Чудакова, "Цена самопознания," 5.

душа его, думал Сергей, подавала [...] сигналы [...]"; "И подобно тому, думал он[...]"; "А ты, подумал он о себе [...]" (ПСГО: 338); "В сущности, стремление к красоте, подумал он [...]"; "Да, подумал он [...]" (ПСГО: 339).

Now the monologue itself is an attempt, ostensibly Sergei's, to generalize on the basis of the motley collection of experiences the novella has presented. Hence the philosophic first-person plural: "когда нам нравится внешность женщины и мы влюбляемся [...]" (ПСГО: 338); "наше восхищение красотой и стремление ею владеть заложено в нас природой" (ПСГО: 339). In terms of continuity, and for that matter, style, it corresponds to the morals almost regularly supplied in Iskander's stories of the 1960s.

The basis for this analogy becomes clearer as as Sergei drifts into the entirely abstract third-person mode of aphorism proper:

Сознание и счастье несовместимы, подумал он. [...]

Счастье -- это попытка уйти от сознания. Это попытка целиком окунуться в милую суету бессознательности. Все суета, все случайно, подумал он. [...]

Дар жизни, подумал он, не может быть связан с такими преходящими вещами, как любовь женщины, научная карьера, гармония семейной жизни. [ПСГО: 343]

Compare the closing words of "Запретный плод" (1963), which sum up a single-incident, first-person story:

Я на всю жизнь понял, что никакой высокий принцип не может оправдать подлости и предательства, да и всякое предательство -- это волосатая гусеница маленькой зависти, какими бы принципами оно ни прикрывалось. [ПД: 46]¹

There too the aphorist is specifically identified. From another early story, "Тринадцатый подвиг Геракла" (1964), also first-person, also single-incident:

¹The reference is to the collection *Первое дело: рассказы и повесть* (Москва: Детская литература, 1972).

я заметил, что все люди боятся показаться смешными. Особенно боятся показаться смешными женщины и поэты. Пожалуй, они слишком боятся и поэтому иногда выглядят смешными. Зато никто не может так ловко выставить человека смешным, как хороший поэт или женщина. [ПД: 36]

The same technique appears in the "Утраты" chapter of *Sandro*. There too the central protagonist can be seen as a stand-in for the author. Zenon is an Abkhazian writer, born in a mountain village, raised in a coastal town, uprooted to the "valley of valleys" in Moscow, known for the satiric bent of his work. His aphoristic reflections revolve around the issues of family, folk and, for lack of a better word, solidarity. Each one is assiduously supplied with a verb of thought. To quote only one of many, like all its counterparts redundant in a chapter that never once abandons this particular thinker's perspective:

Народ -- это вечно живой храм личности, думал *Зенон*, это единственное море, куда мы можем бросить бутылку с запиской о нашей жизни [...] [КиУ: 81; italics mine]

Thus, both stand-in characters are furnished with traits that "biographically and psychologically align" them with the 'real-life' author. Their texts hover on the border-line, as "transitional forms" between first- and third-person narration proper.¹ What makes Iskander's handling of this widespread "subjective third-person" unique is the paradoxical use to which he puts his 'verbs of thought.' Usually, it is their *absence*, together with that of direct speech, which encourages the identification, the "diffusion" of author's and character's perceptions.² Here the effect is quite different, ingenuous, 'methinks the author doth protest too much': the

¹Атарова и Лескис, "Семантика и структура повествования от третьего лица," 45.

²Там же, 42.

aphorisms he so meticulously attributes to others all too obviously carry an authority that can only stem from an author's voice.

On the other hand, such 'source identification' bespeaks a certain modesty, or at any rate a self-limitation of the sort which associates Iskander with the general retreat from 'epic omniscience' discussed in the second section of this thesis. This is the spirit in which Iskander's "insistent 'I-understood-s'" have been read, as an attempt "to make sense of one's own self in one's own time," an attempt common to "Evtushenko, Rozhdestvenskii and many others," a reaction against the "ready-made truths" of their Soviet education.¹ In *Sandro* source-identification takes on a fascinating role in the delineation of author's and characters' discourse, as well as the masterful play on narrative privilege and authorial 'reliability.' In "Scorpion," however, the effect is old-fashioned, overweening Tolstoyanism: the author's awareness, already overburdened as the prime bearer of thematic unity in a supremely disjointed work, collapses without the saving grace of self-directed irony. What was so aptly described as "сплав исповеди с проповедью" in Iskander's earlier work,² where homilies lose their didactic sting in qualified self-effacement, becomes unqualified preachifying shunted onto the shoulders of a most unconvincing protagonist. And the protagonist is unconvincing precisely because he has not been allowed to stand on his own. In a sense, the dual perspective of irony was, in "Scorpion," externalized, bifurcated into the dual focus of Sergei and his author/commentator. Though

¹Ковальджи, "Сквозные картинки" 283.

²Красухин, "Частица жизни твоей," 11.

"Scorpion" did not survive the experiment, it exposes all the more graphically for it the structural limitations of aphorism and the first-person confessional mode masquerading as third-person Tolstoyan didacticism.

How does aphorism affect narrative continuity? The answer, on the mechanical level at least, must be sought in its positioning. As an end-game, the function suggested by the mounting incidence of aphorism towards the close of "Scorpion," its traditional role is to sum up, to point out the moral, motto or lesson to be learned from the tale, to cast a retrospective import and connotational unity on what has come before. Unity thus achieved is author-directed, in this piece, author-dominated. Coupled with the author-manipulated Tolstoyan perspective, the author-justified mixing of tonalities, time frames and symbolic links, the authoritarian base of aphorism tips the balance of the piece entirely. Sergei's Russo-Georgian surname, his historical, non-literary studies, his constant subjection to external interrogation by an external voice of consciousness--all these devices ring hollow; Sergei becomes a transparent mouthpiece for the aphorisms so lamely attributed to his name.¹

Moreover, end-positioned aphorism signals a full-stop; in the face of its generic inertia anything that comes after a punch-line

¹Sarnov's verdict: "Морской скорпион" [...] неудача. [...] писатель изменил себе, своей художественной природе: механически поставил себя на место другого человека, -- другой профессии, другой биографии [...], и механически наделил его самыми сокровенными особенностями своей психики." ("Чем глубже зачерпнуть" (1978), 151.) Among those who second Sarnov's opinion in considering the work a departure from Iskander's usual manner, see Вл. Воронов, "С миром устанавливая связь," *Москва* 1977:7, с. 205. Conversely, Vinogradov links "Scorpion" to "Дерево детства" (И. Виноградов, "Уходить и возвращаться," *Дружба народов* 1977:8, с. 275-76).

sounds anti-climactic at best, drag-foot and limping at worst. It ties a knot, cuts the narrative flow by the sheer force of its semantic density, its intrinsic pithiness. "Верные мысли не выражаются," wrote Bakhtin, "а утверждаются. Утверждение находит себе объективное выражение в особом акценте [...] Утвержденная идея в контексте звучит всегда иначе, чем мысль неутвержденная."¹ The summary role was noted in the analysis of Iskander's earlier "school stories," described as proceeding on the compositional "principle of the fable, from a memoir sujet to a moral summation"²--where we note once again the grounding of ethical conclusions in personal experience, destroyed in "Scorpion" by its recasting into an ill-disguised third-person facade.³

Vestiges of the aphoristic ending 'tie off' certain chapters in *Sandro*. The most obvious instance occurs in "Хранитель гор," a

¹Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 133

²Соловьев, "Рассказ и его метаморфозы," 187.

³Ivanova overlooks the surfeit of aphorism in "Scorpion" when she attributes its failure to Iskander's "attempt to depart from his [usual] style in the direction of standard belles-lettres," towards "бытовая проза" with its "psychological descriptiveness." "Dzhamkhukh," she maintains, represents an attempted departure in a totally different direction, towards the greater conventionality of fable and adage. Its failure stems, in her opinion, from both the oversaturation of aphoristic sayings attributed to the legendary hero and the "bombastic pathos" that surrounds them. ("Смех против страха" (1988a), 227.)

Now the aphoristic bent of all Iskander's work is evident from his earliest verse to his most recent feuilletons. The 1964 poem, "Дорога жизни" is built entirely on this device, which spawns even mixed metaphors:

Дорога жизни жизнью тянется,
Не автострадой, а страдой.

[...]

Дорога жизни не поветрие,
Не сказочные терема.
Она строга, как геометрия,
Кратчайшая, когда пряма.

[об. *Молодость моря* (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1964), 5]

At issue then, is not the use or even over-reliance on aphorism but, as Ivanova quite rightly points out, its intonational context.

chapter sprinkled throughout with epigrammatic statements on the mountain vs. valley theme. Its closing lines read:

Вообще, внизу у моря все это выглядит несколько фантастичным, точно так же, как и наша долинная жизнь, когда о ней вспоминаешь где-нибудь в горах, на уровне альпийских лугов. [1979: 521]

As the critic Koval'dzhi notes, Iskander's aphorisms can be scattered throughout a text. This even reconciles the modern reader to their use:

Искандер шедр, он нашпиговывает свежо и крупно выраженными мыслями весь текст, а не только концовки. Острые наблюдения, иронические повороты, попутные обобщения придают емкость и глубину его самому заметному качеству -- живописности. Если в конце была единственная, одинокая мысль, тогда, конечно, дурно. Тогда рационализм, схематизм и прочие грехи.¹

Again, these examples pertain to single-incident tales, though to be sure, a good number of them were later amalgamated into the cycle "School Waltz." In "Scorpion" their universal occurrence in all positions disrupts an already disjointed text. Bocharov associates the contemporary trend towards fragmentation in Soviet prose with a "poetics of summation." He borrows the term from S. Vaisman ("Бальзаковский парадокс"), who distinguishes between "intensive" and "extensive" realism. The former leaves it "to life itself" to knit fragments into "some latent system"; the latter sprinkles a disjointed text with "synopses, overviews, succinct fabula summarization,--in a word, 'gathering operations.'" It is extensive realism which apparently governs the fragmented works of Aitmatov, Evtushenko, Voznesenskii and their Estonian colleagues.²

¹Ковальджи, "Сквозные картишки," 282.

²Бочаров, "Глубинное бурение," 28.

One further structural influence of aphorism, this one deriving from its innate semantic democracy. All aphorisms are equal in semantic density, all lay equal claim to our attention; consequently, aphorisms can only be chained but never ordered, extended but never developed. An extreme example of their chaining is to be found in the compendium piece "Стоянка человека," where an entire section, "Беседы с Виктором Максимовичем," is devoted entirely to the genre. As in "Scorpion," the maxims are accredited to a third-person, 'other' hero, who, like Uncle Sandro imparts his wisdom to an author-listener. The introduction to "Беседы" reads:

Сейчас я хочу привести некоторые мысли и выражения Виктора Максимовича. Хотелось бы, чтобы люди почувствовали его юмор по-русски меткий, а по-испански едкий. Впрочем, не будем ставить народам отметки. Привожу его мысли и замечания *вразброс, так, как они мне сейчас встываются.* [Italics mine]¹

Even more revealingly, the first of Viktor Maksimovich's adages declares:

Не из раздумья рождается мысль, но мы погружаемся в раздумья, потому что мысль в нас уже зародилась.²

If pure thought attains its perfect expression in aphorism, it also exists prior to reflection; reflection and expression merely grope towards an inherently inert, eternally apt because eternally fixed statement. It might be suggested that the text which, like "Стоянка человека," "Scorpion" and so many other works by Iskander, makes copious use of aphorism commits itself to disjointed narrative.

¹ *Знамя* 1989: 8, с. 49. For piecemeal publication, genre mixing and detachability, compare the fragments included in the earlier article, "О движении к добру," mentioned above, p. 171. See also app. 8.

² *Ibid.*

Aphorism can be extended, but the extension merely underscores its stubborn resistance to narrative development, the cause-and-effect or chronological progression of fabula. A conversation between Sergei and the artist Andrei Tarkilov (who incidentally appears in the "Кутеж" chapter of *Sandro*) lends perhaps a moral underpinning to the democratic disorder of aphorism:

Таркилов объяснил ему [Сергею] особые достоинства этой картины. К числу особых достоинств он отнес то, что картина вся подчинена единой идее и в то же время каждая ее часть, каждый ее кусок живописно ценен сам по себе, и оттого, что он ценен сам по себе, он еще глубже (*бескорыстно, ввиду собственной ценности*) служит выражению определенной идеи. [ПСГО: 331; italics mine]

Imported into a narrative text, extended aphorism tends to inject a declarative symbolism that nudges the tale towards exemplum--the afterthought, the illustration. This is especially true of forefronted aphorism.¹ For example, a section of the Marat chapter, the twenty-fourth of *Sandro*, is introduced:

Пока рок не занес над человеком свою карающую руку, человек может выйти невредимым из самых опасных приключений. [*Метрополь*: 388]

which proceeds directly into an unabashed statement of its narrative application:

Вот несколько случаев из жизни Марата, подтверждающих эту древнюю аксиому. [*Метрополь*: 389]

Consider, in *Sandro* as well, the opening of "Дерево детства":

¹The strategy also has its pre-literary associations. Labov's analysis of "natural narratives," for example, includes an optional opening gambit he calls the "abstract,"--a preview of what is to come. Watts incorporates the notion in his discussion of behavioural conventions in asymmetric communicative situations: the abstract represents the justification behind a "request to take the floor for an unlimited turn." See Watts, *Pragmalinguistic Analysis*, 61, 51.

Я люблю деревья. Мне кажется, дерево -- одно из самых благородных созданий природы. Иногда я думаю, что дерево не просто благородный замысел природы, но замысел, призванный намекнуть нам на желательную форму нашей души, то есть такую форму, которая позволяет, крепко держась за землю, смело подыматься к небесам.

Миролюбивая мощь дерева учит нас доброте и бескорыстию. [1979: 567]¹

From here the chapter proceeds to a series of vignettes, first on the declared theme of 'trees I have known,' then through the tree loved most in childhood to scattered episodes centred literally on or beneath its branches, all illustrating the "goodness and selflessness" announced in the opening statement. The aphorism lends symbolic justification to a very loose *tabula* structure; its extension foreshadows both the proliferation of incidents and their disregard for more traditional *fabula* ordering.² Each bears equal semantic weight; each is equidistant from the stable centre of aphorism it is intended to exemplify.

"Дерево детства" demonstrates aphoristic montage on a lyric/nostalgic pivot. It can also function in a discursive declarative mode, even one coloured by irony, as in the eighteenth chapter, "Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат." The main structural division in this extremely discontinuous tale falls between story telling and its frame setting. The latter launches the opening aphorism, which takes several pages to crystallize. It is first suggested by a description of yachts offshore "с цветными парусами, набитыми ветром до плодово-телесной выпуклости и в наклонном полете (якобы мечта Пизанской

¹ E. Shklovskii cites this passage as indicative of Iskander's tendency to "transpose narration from the symbolic to the ratiocinational plane." E. Шкловский, "Дерево детства Искандера," 19.

² The many moralizing digressions in this chapter have been described, punning on its title, as turning it into a work of "branching prose." See E. Шкловский, "Дерево детства Искандера," 24.

башни)" (1981: 131). This leads to an "incidental" digression, as the author explains why the Leaning Tower annoys him, even haunts his dreams, where he manages to squeeze in a passing shot at Eurocommunism in the person of Luigi Longo,¹ and Polish reformists whose "тоска по выпрямлению" inspired one of their countrymen to put forward a project for its rectification. Finally, the aphorism takes shape, albeit playfully, even tentatively:

Сейчас мне вдруг пришло в голову: а что если наклон Пизанской башни был знаком, показывающим некий градус отклонения всей земной жизни от божьего замысла, и теперь мы лишены даже этого призрачного ориентира? Или так: а что, если бедняга Пизанская Башня, в сущности, правильно стояла, а это наша земля со всеми нашими земными делами под ней скособочилась? [1981:132]

By the chapter's end, this will have flowered into:

Теперь, кажется, я добрался до источника моего отвращения ко всякой непрочности, ко всякому проявлению пизанства. Я думаю, не стремиться к прочности уже грех.

От одной прочности к другой более высокой прочности, как по ступенькам, человек подымается к высшей прочности. Но это же есть, я только сейчас это понял, то, что люди издавна называли твердью. Хорошее, крепкое слово!

Только в той мере мы по-человечески свободны от внутреннего и внешнего рабства, в какой сами с наслаждением связали себя с несокрушимой Прочностью, с вечной Твердью. [1981:167-168]

In this humble first-person, with its conjectural cast, Iskander has returned to the "confessional ironic didactic" that is his forté. Once again, chaining is evident: bondage is to fixedness as the chapter's centrepiece--Uncle Sandro's tale of the slave Khazarat--is to the chapter as a whole. The tale-within-a-tale spawns secondary aphorisms of its own. First, Uncle Sandro concludes:

И тогда я понял одно -- раб не хочет свободы, как думают люди, раб хочет одно -- отомстить, затоптать того, кто его топтал. Вот так, мои дорогие, раб хочет только отомстить, а некоторые глупые люди

¹Longo (1900-1980), president of the Italian Communist Party from 1972. [Glossary to *The Gospel According to Chegem*, 404.]

думают, что он хочет свободу, и через эту ошибку многое получалось, - закончил дядя Сандро свою сентенцию и разгладил усы с далеко идущим намеком. [1981: 148]

Uncle Sandro's "I understood," together with the telltale stroking of his moustache (almost invariably a signal of character-targeted irony) represents a more intricate splitting of the dual perspective than was seen in "Scorpion." Author, character, and especially the reader (via the teasingly blatant "far-reaching hint")--all are infected with ironic ambivalence.

Not that this prevents further chaining. As the assembled company debates the old man's sententium, one of their number, Kemal, ventures to disagree. Khazarat foreswore his chance to escape slavery not out of a thirst for revenge but because

за двадцать лет настолько привык к своему сараю [where he was imprisoned], что просто боялся открытого пространства [...] Вообще природа страха бывает удивительна и необъяснима. [1981: 151]

He then proceeds without further ado to offer his own exemplum on the curious "nature of fear," a wartime story from his days on the East Prussian front. A Russian comrade in arms, dauntless in battle, trembles before officers superior in rank, but inferior in front-line experience and moral rectitude. Fear of exposure prompts him to abandon the love of his life, a German girl on Soviet-occupied territory. The tale even comes equipped with an epilogue to underscore its motto: thirty years later, at a veterans' reunion, the Russian reaffirms his great love for Gretchen but passes up a chance for intimate reminiscence lest he miss the general's opening speech at a stuffy formal banquet.

During the minor bickering that follows, Uncle Sandro offers to explain to Kemal the true meaning of his, Kemal's own, tale; vari-

ous characters interject their own interpretations. At this point the author, as the junior member of the company, is sent to purchase some watermelon from a boardwalk vendor. His reflections forge the final link in the aphoristic chain:

С детства мне почему-то всегда чудилось, что в арбузе заключена идея моря. Может, волнообразные полосы на его поверхности напоминали море? Может, совпадение времен -- праздник купания в море с праздником поедания арбузов, часто на берегу, на виду у моря? Или огромность моря и щедрость арбуза? Или и там, и там много воды?
[1981: 161]

The freedom of the sea sparks memories of a childhood friend who excelled at high diving and *joie de vivre* in general. As if to confirm the tenuous or at least detachable nature of aphoristic linking, this segment appeared on its own as a separate publication under the title "На нашей улице" (*Аврора* 1981:9, с. 58-68). It manages by overtly declarative means to incorporate both the sea and the watermelon aspects of its opening proposition: Vakhtang, the high-diving friend comes of a rich family and rich people are defined, after some lyric description of their partaking of the fruit, as "те, которые могут есть арбуз вяло" (1981: 166).¹ Vakhtang's early death in a hunting accident destroys his family's local status as worthy repository for all earthly blessings. It also triggers the mini-series

¹Iskander's first published verse, indeed his first ever appearance in print--the poem "Первый арбуз" (1953)--seems to foreshadow the lyric/aphoristic blend of the later story. A string of mixed similes tries somewhat strenuously to capture the mood of a quiet celebration of life: a comparison between the seeds and black fish, between slices of the fruit and honeycombs, between mouthfuls and snow. The tactic echoes that of the many variants proposed above for the connection between watermelons and the sea. Finally, the closing line appends the maxim to which the poem has been building all along: "Первый арбуз -- благодарность земле." (First published in *Молодая гвардия: Альманах*, вып. 8 (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1953), 242-43. Most recent reprinting in Фазиль Искандер, *Путь: стихи* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1987), 17-18.)

of preliminary aphorisms, reflections all on the whims of fate, leading back to the Tower of Pisa and stability themes. Quoting only in part:

С годами я понял, что такая хрупкая вещь, как человеческая жизнь, может иметь достойный смысл только связавшись с чем-то безусловно прочным, не зависящим ни от каких случайностей. Только сделав ее частью этой прочности, пусть самой малой, можно жить без оглядки и спать спокойно в самые тревожные ночи. С годами эта жажда любовной связи с чем-то прочным усилилась, уточнялось само представление о веществе прочности и это, я думаю, избавляло меня от многих форм суety, хотя не от всех, конечно. [1981:167]

Thus the frame-setting was made to generate an extended aphorism on which are hung all the tales within the tale. The truly extraordinary nature of aphoristic extension in this chapter, however, is revealed by its penetration into the very frame which launched it. Ostensibly the Leaning Tower of Pisa emerged, we recall, from an "accidental," even parenthetical description of the view from the upper deck of the boardwalk restaurant Amra. Here the guests have assembled to celebrate Kemal's escape from overly officious justice: his license has been reinstated after a charge of drunken driving. The author playfully admits he has overused this setting (yet another of Iskander's many latent cross-references to other pieces),¹ and just as playfully parodies a 'laying bare of the device' as he forces himself to come to the point. Playbill lists of *dramatis personae*, police reports are invoked to present flashback information on the guests and their cause for celebration. The reader is given "a few words on the phlegmatic nature of Kemal,

¹Within *Sandro* see 1979: 427, 440. Outside the novel, see the short stories "Преображение," *Неделя* 1975:22 (26 мая--1 июля), с. 10-11; and "Сердце," в сб. *Защита Чика* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1983), 248 incorporated into "Стоянка человека," *Знамя* 1989:7, 22.

because I might forget about it later" (1981: 134). Similarly, the author confesses to a "vague feeling" that Kemal will eventually relax enough to tell a story of his own, advising us to "stock up on patience" in the meantime (*ibid.*). In this way he courts the illusion that "real life," the spontaneity of well-watered tabletalk,¹ has overwhelmed the supremely ratiocinational control of aphoristic linkage. What he has actually done, however, is balance the innate resistance of aphorism to fabula ordering against a masterful recreation of circuitous conversation. The balance works to their mutual reinforcement.

Each digression is pulled up short by a Shandian return to the upper deck of the Amra; each is invaded by aphoristic knotting. When the author feels obliged to explain why Kemal, though chief celebrator, is not paying for the feast, he must digress on the engaging charm of this individual and seek the secret of his charisma in the now familiar Tower of Pisa. Note the avowed disingenuousness, which succeeds in conveying its very antithesis:

Такова особенность его обаяния. В чем его секрет? Я думаю, придется возвратиться к Пизанской башне. В отличие от этой башни, которую мы вспомнили действительно случайно, а теперь якобы случайно к ней возвращаемся, сама фигура Кемала, мощная, низкорослая, вместе с его спокойным, ровным голосом, раскатистым смехом, обнажающим два ряда крепких зубов, производит впечатление исключительной устойчивости, прочности, хорошо налаженной центровки. [1981: 134-35]

¹Above, p. 138, 'tabletalk' was applied to Iskander in the Russian sense of *застольные разговоры*, or informal unordered exchanges. It can also be used in its narrower, terminological meaning, as a collection of "sayings, opinions, *obiter dicta*, *aperçus*, etc." [J.A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Revised Edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980). 679]. Even the latter sense retains the lack of order indicated in the first: collections and miscellany, after all, do not lend themselves to the ordered recapitulation of fabula.

The Tower aphorism then crosses from Sterne into its pseudo-Freudian stage, launching a digression-within-a-digression on The Pisa Complex, the malady of the century, whereby a suffering humanity both fears and anticipates a universal collapse. Thus restored to its generalizing momentum, aphorism is not cancelled out by parody. As in the tonal overlay discussed with respect to "The Scorpion," the component tonalities remain segregate, so that each complements without infecting the other.

In a similar vein, aphorism surrounds if not motivates the character sketch of Prince Emukhvari, nobly above mundane money matters in the teeth of Soviet indigence ("Простота есть безусловное следствие внутренней полноценности," 1981: 137). Somewhat more diffusely, the Armenian coffee brewer Akop-aga (who plays a supernumerary role in "Scorpion") is established as a walking aphorism for the kind of patriotism that targets fellow countrymen for lovingly severe criticism.¹ The motif (ethnic stability?) supplies the surface link for Uncle Sandro's tale (essentially, 'I too criticize my own people out of love,' 1981: 138), for Akop-aga's own skaz-rendition of the Fall of Tigankert, for his many comments interjected into the others' tales. It reaches its final flowering in the closing toasts to Uncle Sandro and the Armenian as the bastions of their respective peoples (1981: 169).

¹Akop-Aga's latest re-appearance is in the play "Кофейня в море." There his Armenian accent and patriotic fervour flesh out an otherwise 'walk-on' role (*Temp* 1988:6, с. 138-39).

I Applying the non-development of aphorism to *Sandro* as a whole, we may note its analysis as a cycle and only a cycle on this very basis:

Строго говоря, *Сандро из Чезма* назвать роман нельзя -- и по отсутствию единой сюжетной линии, и по отсутствию единого развитого действия. Каждая глава его -- не дальнейшая ступенька в системе действия или сюжета, а констатация того или иного факта или положения, которая служит поддержкой нравственно-этической формуле.¹

Recall the critic's conjecture that Iskander would flesh out the choppy plot construction of *Sandro* by supplying "bridges" for its disjointed parts in chapters to come (see above, p. 175). Aphorism perhaps replaces those missing links with connotational unity--the higher associations of philosophical speculation--that seals off each detachable, unorderable unit and at the same time promotes its infinite chaining. To take a trite example: "Life is a bowl of cherries" is at once a finite and an infinitely extendable statement. Such extension is allegorical in nature. Thus, we can expand upon the qualities of that fruit (ripe, red, rotten, sweet, sour, etc.), add to its number, substitute larger and larger containers (the short story cup, the novella vase, the cycle bowl?), without ever encroaching upon the integrity of any of its individual berries. Such is the way of compilation. The more traditional type of integrality--the well-made novel--affects an irreversible change in each of its component parts: once cooked, the cherries may form a more homogeneous mass (jam? a pie? a novel?), but they cannot be cooked ad infinitum or, worse yet, uncooked.

¹Иверии, "По ту сторону смеха," 352.

Aphoristic density and chaining percolates down from the levels of fabula and theme to lower and lower syntagmatic planes. On the level of the phrase, that Chegemers cultivate word-craft is pointed out time and again in *Sandro*. To a certain extent, such 'pointing-out' stems from the author's role as ethnographer, as mediator between the Russian and Abkhazian cultures,--simplistically, as supplier of the exotic flavour he regularly calls attention to. Expansive compilation manifests itself as the latent juxtaposition between the Abkhazian object and the Russian target of commentary. From an inside account of Abkhazian style:

Одной из наиболее характерных особенностей живой речи абхазов, особенно представителей старшего поколения мужчин, является ее необычайная насыщенность подходящими к моменту народными поговорками, пословицами, изречениями, афоризмами, короткими бытовыми и другими рассказами, нравоучительными сентенциями [...]¹

Tracing the oral-epic roots of Abkhazian literary narration, Dzhopua speaks of an "oratorical tradition" that replaced the need for professional сказители with "веками воспитанное в народе искусство красноречия."² He also indicates the persuasive aim of this universally practised art, in a sense that links to it the present discussion of aphoristic eloquence (Bakhtin's убежденное и убедительное слово):

Необдуманно сказанное слово могло повлечь за собой самые неприятные последствия. Поэтому весьма важно было само умение говорить, убедительность и эмоциональная сила слова. Этому учили с детства.³

Eloquence is universal in *Sandro*. In the voice-over narration that introduces the film "Чегемский детектив," Iskander makes the universality explicit. "All Chegemers," states the narrator,

¹Ш.Д. Инал-ипа, *Очерки об абхазском этикете* (Сухуми: Алашара, 1984), 168.

²Джопуа, "Формы повествования в современной абхазской прозе," 4.

³Там же, 6.

possess "clear vision" thanks to the purity of Chegem waters (see Chapters 3 and 31 of the novel), and are "sharp-tongued" thanks to their "moderate use" of a locally grown pepper. In the novel, the village idiot Kunta is allotted an epigrammatic statement, much appreciated by Uncle Sandro, on the true workings of socialist emulation and not-so socialist fudging: "соревнование, вроде кровной мести... Выигрывает тот, у кого больше родственников" (1979: 375). Tendel, who usually delights in ribald, even scatological commentary, impresses his neighbours:

И Тендел сказал. Да, в этот час он, вздорный старый охотник произнес слова, исполненные достоинством даже по мнению придирчивых чегемских краснобаев. [1979: 385]

Iskander's recreation of folk cursing has been defended as authentic:

Невольно улыбнется каждый абхазец, когда услышит [...] «чтобы я его (Козлотура) съел на поминках того, кто это (козлотуризацию) придумал.»¹

Cursing, the art of calling woe on an adversary's head, is particularly fertile field for the exercise of eloquence and its compilative expansion. In the example below, the author does not so much join in the general appreciation as pointedly orchestrate it for the reader's benefit:

-- Чтоб я вынула твое лживое сердце из груди, -- рыдала Тали, -- чтоб я его поджарила на табочной игле, как на вертеле ...

Женщины из сарая замолкли, прислушиваясь и удивляясь свежим подробностям ее заклятий, чтоб запомнить и при случае применить к делу [...]

-- ... И чтоб я! -- между тем продолжала Тали, закончив могучий аккорд рыдания, -- скормила его нашим собакам! И чтоб они! -- тут она поднялась на еще одну совершенно неожиданную ноту, -- чавкая! Чавкая! Поедали его!

¹М.М. Шамба, "О повести Фазиля Искандера," *Новый мир* 1966:12, с. 269.

Тут сидевшие в сарае лучшие умельцы народных заклятий переглянулись. Неожиданный глагол, употребленный Тали, с плакатной смелостью вырывал крупным планом морду собаки, мстительно чавкающую лживым сердцем соперницы. [1979:372]

Similarly, his interpolating commentary uses Chegemian oratory as a springboard for the well-delineated contrast of urban and rural cultures. The narrator has fallen into a mystical brown-study on woolly-headed, woolly-worded bureaucratic zeal:

-- Чтоб тебя сколько раз имели чегемские ослы, -- бормотал он [дядя Сандро], -- сколько ты мне поможешь своими телефонами.

Слова его, как всегда, возвратили меня к здоровому чувству действительности. При всей странности предложенного им уравнения, при всей сложности равновесия между активностью чегемских ослов и качеством предлагаемой помощи, в его словах не было ни малейшего оттенка мистики. [1979:444]

Sandro himself is not unaware of his enlightening eloquence. His claim to such an effect is staked in terms both earthy and epigrammatic:

[ты] признаешься перед всеми моими друзьями, что ты был слепой теленок, которого дядя Сандро всю жизнь тыкал в сосцы правды. [1981: 30]

Even Kiazym, a man of few words, can occasionally rise to mordant repartee:

-- Да чтоб я отрыла кости своих покойников, если во всем Чегеме найдутся такие деньги! -- воскликнула жена.

-- Оставь в покое кости своих покойников, -- сказал он [Кязым], -- и займись своей мамалыгой. [1981:92]

where the principle of expanding by contrast appears as a simple reversal, returning to the 'dead metaphor' its literal if far-fetched sense.¹ When Kiazym's friend in drunken rhetorical excess tries to trip him up, the rebuttal is incisive:

-- Ты сушенная змея, -- сказал Бахут, -- ты ни разу в жизни не посадил на колени своих детей.

-- Для сушеной змеи я слишком много выпил, -- сказал Кязым.

¹ See also Ryan-Hayes on "reverse comparison" and Iskander's "predominantly mild, bantering use," as opposed to its "wry, bitter tone" in Solzhenitsyn ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 51).

-- Ты лошадей больше любил, чем своих детей, -- сказал Бахут. [...]
 -- Да, -- сказал Кязым, -- я лошадей сажал к себе на колени.
 [1981:127]

It is Kiazym's verbal dexterity, his man-of-the-soil's return to common sense (itself a rhetorical device of aphoristic significance), that defeats the embezzler Timur. He holds the key, he tells his victim, utterly unnerving the man by the multiplicity of meanings implied: the key to the safe that will prove Timur's guilt by entrapment, the key to the crime, to justice, to the power of true moral authority as opposed to its bureaucratic counterfeit (1981:108-19 *passim*). Kiazym's unravelling of the crime is a reversal of Porfirii Petrovich's ambivalent entrapment of Raskolnikov, for in fact the ambivalence itself is ephemeral, rhetorical window-dressing to heighten the sleuth's ideological victory. This is the directed polysemanticism of allegory, like aphorism infinitely extendable and yet, like aphorism again, inherently static in that it can only ring variations on a single unilinear theme. After all, even the most sophisticated exegesis of allegory--Aquinas' famous four levels of meaning, for example,--operates on a principle of recurrence: each connotation revolves around a pre-set, unidirectional transfer from signifier to signified, the relationship between each level of signification repeating the one-way ordering of fixed hierarchy. In aphorism and allegory alike, the ideological end dominates the rhetorical means.¹

¹'Ideology' and 'rhetoric' are used here in the sense outlined by I.P. Il'in: ideology pertains to the secondary signifieds of connotation, whose secondary signifiers constitute rhetoric. See "Словарь терминов французского структурализма," в кн. *Структурализм: За и против: Сборник статей*, сост. Е.Я. Басин и М.Я. Поляков (Москва: Прогресс, 1975), 456-57.

The apt turn of phrase moves down to the apt denomination. The publishing histories of Iskander's compilations show a particular concern with finding just the right, often allegorically significant title,--either for individual tales ("Тяжкий путь познания" replaced by the no less general "Долги и страсти" in the autobiographical cycle; the emblematic "Прикосновение" for a section of "Sea Scorpion," discussed above, pp.188-89) or in collections (*Праздник ожидания праздника, Время счастливых находок* allegorically embracing their many tales of childhood). Double-barelled titles make the stratagem clearer still: "Школьный вальс, или Энергия стыда" for the autobiographical cycle; in *Sandro*: "Три формы мужества, или Чегемская Кармен," "Умыкание, или загадка эндурцев."¹

Within the text itself, characters and entire classes of characters can be summed up by a well-chosen name. God is "наш бог, Великий Весовщик Нашей Совести" (1981:175, 198, 227, 238). The old man known as "Колчерукий" is virtually contained in the qualities of his poisonous tongue and powerful voice, which is presumably why the author chose (and specifically stressed the choice) to translate his Abkhazian nickname ("dry-arm," "withered-arm") as "prickly-arm" in keeping with the spirit, if not the letter of the original (ДД: 25). Certainly, verbal traits play an important integrating role in the loosely structured tale devoted to his description (now Chapter 16a of *Sandro*). To name but a few: his constant, high-volume

¹Titles that migrate from one cycle to another stand as further testimony to the allegorical/aphoristic interlocking of Iskander's works. The soliloquy in *Sandro* on the "божественн[ая] энерги[я] стыда" (1979: 535) either lends to or borrows from the subtitle of "School Waltz." From *Sandro* again, the girl Kama is said to experience a "предчувствие праздника жизни" (БДБД: 178) that is 'tidied up' to *Праздник ожидания праздника* for the collection title.

bickering with his wife; his widely appreciated cockcrows; a 'bark worse than his bite' (offering food on the sly to evacuees he loudly and regularly calls "parasites"); a talent for killing, even posthumous repartee (the famous tripping-up of his lifelong rival in horsemanship); the linguistic antics of his character reference; etc. Other secondary appearances in the novel focus exclusively on this eponymic aspect: in Chapter 7, his sharp-tongued reaction to the prayer tree's endorsement of collectivization is said to carry decisive impact (1979:153-55); in Chapter 9, the mule's tale is interrupted by his own pithy account of Stalin's attempt to hoodwink the "Chinese tsar" (1979:251-54)¹; his cameo appearance in Chapter 11 serves no other purpose but that of ribald comment (1979:354).

From the opposite end of the ethical scale, Stalin becomes "Большеусый," a familiar enough synecdoche from the reversed rhetoric of non-conformist literature,² yet subject in *Sandro* to substantial development. Thus, when Khabug defends his shepherd, accused of bestiality, he can expand on a static, pre-set association:

-- Так до каких же нам пор терпеть твоего козлоблуда? [...]
 --Вы бы собственные зады поберегли от усатого козла, чем заниматься моими козлами... [1981:72]

¹It would appear the prickly old gentleman was chosen, from all his articulate compatriots, to narrate this particular anecdote precisely on the merit of his pungent wit. Its stylistic organization drew the attention of Ryan-Hayes: "*Gradatio* [...], progressive repetition dramatically heightens the narrator's and the satirist's rising indignation." ("Soviet Satire after the Thaw," 7).

²See Clark, "The Mutability of the Canon," 574.

Lenin is transformed into "Тот, что Хотел Хорошего, но не Успел," though precisely what good was intended, the author remarks with blithe innuendo, is a detail not specified by the Chegemers who created the code name (1981: 60-61). The ingenuous use of capitals reappears in a transparently Aesopian context (a dissident Winnie-the-Rooch?): "Присматривающие," the narrator explains early in the novel, is the Abkhazian term for those in any position of authority (1979:25). Later, this is expanded upon:

Присматривающие свергли Большеусого, а на каком расстоянии тот или иной из Присматривающих или, как они еще говорят, Допущенных к Столу, от тех, кто его в самом деле сбросил, это и вправду не имеет никакого значения. [...] Присматривающие сверзили Присматривавшего за всеми Присматривавшими. [1979:288]

"Those Admitted to the Table" form an enviable elite in the "philosophical fairy-tale" "Кролики и удавы," which unleashes a truly Byzantine hierarchy of the upper case: Допущенные к Столу, Стремящиеся Быть Допущенными к Столу, Младодопущенные, Сверхдопущенные к Столику. There too the appellation of individual characters pushes the convention of speaking-names to a bald-faced extreme: the treacherous Находчивый, the dissident Задумавшийся, his convert Возжаждавший Знать Истину, etc.¹

¹From a 1989 interview we learn that "Кролики и удавы," Iskander's most sustained exercise in allegory, itself emerged from the aphoristic formulation "их гипноз--ваш страх, их страх--ваш гипноз" ("День жизни отличать от ночи" (интервью), 48). There too the author identifies the source of the aphorism as "some article"--further evidence of aphorism's role in knitting together Iskander's corpus across genre boundaries, here--across the fine line separating his belles-lettres and discursive writing proper; elsewhere--one suspects his verse to be a rich source of epigrammatic statements. Within the prose-fiction domain, Iskander's aphorisms wander at will: the mesmerizing power of fear above, for example, reappears in "School Waltz" (КиУ: 270).

Similarly, in the re-worked folk-tale that appears as Chapter 30 of *Sandro*, Dzhamkhukh's companions all bear speaking names: Обьедало, Оливаго, Скороход, Остроглаз, Слухач and Ловкач. Comparison with a more 'authentic' version (i.e. one lacking the contemporary, satiric epilogue added by Iskander), reveals the same cast of characters with only one minor adjustment: there Ловкач figures as Искусник.¹

Still, the code-names in *Sandro* do not qualify as Aesopian devices proper. These, in Loseff's definition must rigorously eschew all "autological devices," all "straightforward" as opposed to "underhanded" expression.² Easy decoding prompts Loseff's treatment of a passage from *Sandro* (the raising of pigs by Muslims) as a "rare example of a potent allegory to decipher which neither a command of the esoteric nor initiation into any group jargon is necessary."³ The episode in question is indeed a rare example--of decoding *not* incorporated directly into the text. True, Loseff deals as well with Iskander's use of the covert Aesopianism of parodied officialese,⁴ but even on this stylistic level the satirist makes himself more than clear through pointed repetition. A typical example, from a discussion of ministerial office furnishings reduces bureaucratic terminology to gibberish:

помощник [...] стал объяснять, как переоборудовать форточки в кабинете министра легкой промышленности с тем, чтобы они по красоте не уступали форточкам в кабинете другого министра, несколько более тяжелой, хотя и не самой тяжелой индустрии.

¹See "Джамхух--сын олеца," в кн. *Абхазские сказки*, сост. Х.С. Бражба (Сухуми: Алашара, 1979), 152-58.

²Loseff, *On the Beneficence of Censorship*, 61, 62.

³*Ibid.*, 90-91.

⁴*Ibid.*, 100-101.

[...] По его словам получалось, что он уже сорок лет делает эти самые форточки и как-нибудь больше в этом понимает, чем оба министра обеих весовых категорий. [197: 473]

Similarly, the satirical application of 'polyptoton,' or repetition with morpho-syntactic modification, has been discussed by Ryan-Hayes, who deems it a "trademark" of Iskander's style.¹ Adding to her examples: "Казалось, сам *закон* осуществлял свое *законное* право на отдых" (1979: 512. italics mine), said of an official who has grown momentarily weary of the duties he so pointlessly and pompously performs. Unadulterated repetition plays a prominent role in "Goatibex," where the officiously condescending mouthful "интересное начинание, между прочим," is bandied about so often as to have entered the vernacular, in Moscow at least.

Now Loseff divides the two-pronged signifiers of Aesopian barbs into 'screens' and 'markers.'² Following this system, it might be said that Iskander minimizes the role of screens virtually out of existence; as for the markers, where he does not inflate them almost beyond the limits of modesty incumbent upon the device, he simply, cheerfully annuls them in the next breath. Consider, for example, the way in which Kolcherukii disentangles himself from the insinuation that his use of the word 'fleas' might be Aesopian, or, from the standpoint of a visiting official, subversive. The author-narrator's re-wording pushes insinuation to an extreme that attacks the very notion of subtlety:

Тогда, говорят, приезжий спросил, что он подразумевает под блохами. Колчерукий ответил, что под блохами он подразумевает именно собачных блох, которых не следует путать с куриными вшами, которые его, Колчерукого, нисколько не беспокоят, так же как и

¹Ryan-Hayes, "Soviet Saire After the Thaw," 68.

²Loseff, *On the Beneficence of Censorship*, 50 -51.

буйволиные клеши. А если его что беспокоит, так это лошадиные мухи [...] Приезжий понял, что его с этой стороны не подкусишь. [ДД: 40]

Inflation decoding is responsible for the play on political pyrotechnics, as Prince OI'denburgskii opens his morning mail:

В письмо была вложена подпольная газета с вызывающим, *огнеопасным* названием, *не то „Пламя,” не то „Костер.”* [...]

Александр Петрович, получив письмо с этой *поджигательской* газеткой, [...] [1979: 52-52; italics mine]

In case the reference to Lenin's *Искра* is not obvious enough, the spate of synonyms is followed by direct quotation of that journal's attack on the Prince.¹ "Кролики и удавы" represents such pseudo-Aesopianism pushed to the extreme. Troll' comments: "книга [...] несмотря на иносказательность, совершенно лишена камуфляжа."² In this spirit, the Poet is described in terms that all but cite verbatim Viacheslav Khodasevich's portrait of Maxim Gor'kii.³

Even more covert Aesopianism is ultimately exposed. The passage depicting Stalin ripping a chicken apart with greasy hands (1979:216) is a case in point. On the one hand, its emphasis on the "primitive physicality" of the man is as politically cathartic as befits true Aesopianism.⁴ It easily lends itself to the model's ordered pairing, as in Ryan-Hayes' reading, whereby "the chicken represents Russia and the flowing grease suggests the blood during the

¹"Коронованный вор и царское приданое," cited as such by Iskander, original printed in *Искра* 1903:46 (15 августа). Iskander's quotation matches word for word those found in such popular histories as Винаор Пачулиа, *В краю золотого руна: Исторические места и памятники Абхазии* (Москва: Наука, 1964), 105; or more specialized studies such as Ш.Д. Инал-ипа, *Абхазы: историко-этнографические очерки*, 2ое изд. (Сухуми: Алашара, 1965), 158.

²Юлия Троль, "Кролики и удавы Фазила Искандера," *Новый журнал* 151 (июль 1983): 301

³Ibid., 305 Troll' also contrasts Iskander's "Кролики и удавы" and Evgenii Shvarts' "Дракон" in that the latter admits of alternative readings (anti-Stalinist, pacifist or anti-fascist). With Iskander's work this is well nigh impossible since "направленность не в подтексте, а заложена в самом тексте" (304)

⁴See Loseff, *On the Beneficence of Censorship*, 230.

Purges."¹ On the other hand, decoding is ensured by a number of factors: the mechanics of simple reversal, which turns on the pomp of the Stalinist cult; the anti-Stalinist topos of greasy fingers that have migrated from Dem'ian Bednyi to Mandel'shtam to Solzhenitsyn's *First Circle*.² Beyond the chapter, decoding follows the aggregate method of repetition: a second sharing of the bread shows a jocular tyrant urging his bodyguards to eat *chicken*, actually 'baby chicks'-- "Кушайте цыплят, а то они вырастут" (1979: 303). This time the commentary--in Loseff's terms, the 'marker,'--is expanded to an extreme, as Tengiz explains:

-- Но как они могли вырасти, когда они были жаренные?
 Подчеркнув абсурдность замечания вождя относительно цыплят, Тенгиз, как бы во избежание кривотолков, дал знать слушателям, что реплика эта представляла из себя только шутку, хотя и довольно затейливую, но все-таки только шутку. Вождь шутил, чтобы приободрить ребят из охраны, и никакого другого значения не надо придавать его словам. [1979: 303]

"Absurdity," "misinterpretation" and "meaning" form one semantic chain, the threefold repetition of "joke" another. And of course the "as though" is transparently disingenuous.³

Aggregate decoding generates the larger theme of the banquet in its two--perverted and genuine--variations (see above, pp. 121-22). It is the contrast drawn between the two that lends to

¹Ryan-Hayes, "Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 57.

²See Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope: A Memoir*, trans. Max Hayward (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 26, 160, 199; idem, *Hope Abandoned*, trans. Max Hayward (New York: Atheneum, 1974), 163; Александр Солженицын, *Собрание сочинений*, том I (Paris: YMCA Press, 1978), 116.

³Stalin's "joke," Iskander has revealed, was passed on to him by an eye-witness, a naively appreciative eye-witness. This innocent also served as the source of the first exegesis upon which the author based the inflated decoding cited above. Iskander's task, as he saw it, was to "insert his own *corrections*" (italics mine) into the account. (See "День жизни отличать от ночи" (интервью), 50).

the former its element of pseudo-Aesopianism, a contrast heavily emphasized by all manner of negative parallels. Most notable among them is the deliberately exposed juxtaposition of Uncle Sandro and Stalin, in the *allegorical* extension of "тамада."¹ First presented in the provocative combination "величайш[ий] тамад[а] всех времен и народов" (1979: 223, cited above), it is then reinforced by still more obvious means. Stalin catches Poskrebyshev trying to drink less than his share of champagne:

По словам дяди Сандро это было тонким и справедливым наблюдением, доказывающим, что он [Сталин] тоже мог бы стать неплохим тамадой, если бы так много не занимался политикой. Тут дядя Сандро остановился и лукаво оглядел всех [...], словно стараясь понять, дошел ли до слушателей его далеко идущий намек.

Трудно сказать, дошел ли он до слушателей, потому что Тенгиз [...] спросил:

-- Выходит, если бы ты так много не занимался застольными делами, мог бы стать вождем? [1979: 303-4]

Similarly, Stalin figures in a no less overt 'banquet contrast'--between true and perverted hosts--below. As the guests are leaving:

Он старался всем раздавать поровну, приглядываясь к кускам мяса, к жареным курам [...] Так деревенский патриарх, Старший в Доме, после большого пиршества раздает гостям дорожные и соседские пайи. [1979: 225]

where the chicken/victim analogy finds yet another echo.²

¹An early version of a tale incorporated into "Scorpion" makes the allegorical association between the tamada and political authority still more explicit. The I-narrator muses: "Видно, власть -- это такой стол, из-за которого никто добровольно не встает. *Если тамада окочурится, всегда найдется заместитель, только из-за этого же стола.*" The passage in italics was omitted from the compilation. Compare "Двое в море: рассказ," *Сельская молодежь* 1964:11, с. 11 and ПСГО: 14. From the opposite standpoint, a peasant-pensioner in "Кофейня в море" declares Stalin knew as little about wine as he did about working the land (*Театр* 1988:6, с. 150-51). He is, after all, a perverted tamada.

²Food allegories in Iskander deserve closer study. Sumptuous banquet descriptions are his stock in trade, as he himself points out (1979: 553). They are often tinged with ominous overtones appropriate to the 'perverted banquet' motif. There is an obvious temptation to read into such descriptions a carnivalesque symbolism of 'feasting death.' It is to a certain extent offset by what might be called the 'moral vs. political authority series': the morally

In a word, Iskander's circumlocutions leave almost nothing unsaid, either by inflation (aggregation) or via 'instant decoding' (segregation). If, as Frye maintains, "the naive ironist calls attention to the fact that he is being ironic, whereas sophisticated irony merely states, and lets the reader add the ironic tone himself,"¹-- then Iskander is most definitely and most deliberately naive. In terms of the Aesopian tradition, it is as though he has adopted quite seriously the trappings of that circumlocutory style in part to parody it, but primarily to incorporate its "consistent and systematic"² overlay of *segregated* fields (surface and implied meaning) into his own 'uncooked' brand of compilation. The parody itself is truncated, incomplete. It comes closer to Bakhtin's concept of stylization.

It will be recalled that both parody and stylization are, in Bakhtin's system, "two-voiced utterances." Nevertheless, they differ on the crucial issue of "directionality." Stylization is unidirectional, in that the "author's intention" directs it towards the ends

ambivalent Tengiz picks at marrow throughout a long discussion of Stalin which culminates in the bone's "sudden" resemblance to the "drumsticks of fate" in the skull and crossbones of a pirate's flag (1979:304). Positive characters, most notably Kiazym, are repeatedly shown to be indifferent to food (Chapter 16.b). The sexual associations of food and drink are prominent in the "Marat" Chapter (24). Of the three sets of associations, death and sex stand closest to the physiological reversals delineated by Bakhtin; while authority embraces the frozen hierarchies such iconoclastic activity is supposed to attack. For carnivalesque readings of Iskander's banquet scenes see Валь и Генис, "Сталин на чегемском карнавале," 154-59; Иванова, "Сон разума" (1988), 4; and Nivat. "Les Stalines de la littérature russe," 119-20.

¹Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 41.

²Loseff, *On the Beneficence of Censorship*, 6. On these very grounds, Loseff notes the "complete parallelism between [the events described in "Goatibex"] and every facet, without exception of bureaucratic excesses during the Khrushchev era" (76).

pursued by the very style it adopts.¹ Parody on the other hand is varidirectional: the second, quoted voice is allowed to retain its own directionality, though even this is ultimately subordinated to the author's larger purpose. The "varidirectionality" of parody is passive; only in "latent polemics" do two voices *and* two intentions actively confront each other.² Iskander's pseudo-Aesopianisms, then, are two-voiced but unidirectional: they toy with the duality of meaning (the subtext to be read between the lines), not to deny Aesopianism outright, but to poke fun at the very need for circumlocution. Just as in Aesopianism proper there is no true conflict between the subtext and the surface text (which exists only to be peeled away by the astute reader),³ Iskander's pseudo-Aesopianism flirts with and discards the surface text. The message, the subtext dictates the direction and is itself dictated entirely by an author who aims, aphoristically, at its most convincing expression.

Thus, while Loseff may maintain that ambivalence is "the requisite property of the Aesopian text,"⁴ Iskander's unabashedly expansive commentary reveals an *ordered, segregated ambivalence* to be a contradiction in terms. It simply, openly compiles on the

¹"Авторская мысль, проникнув в чужое слово и поселившись в нем, не приходит в столкновение с чужой мыслью; она следует за ней в ее же направлении, делая лишь это направление условным." Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 330.

²Там же, 340-41.

³See also the distinction drawn by Bakhtin in "Слово в романе," between "parodic stylization" and "rhetorical parody." The former seeks a "revelatory destruction" of its vehicle, the latter an "unadorned and superficial destruction." Only parodic stylization qualifies as "productive and essential parody" in that it is supposed to "recreate the language it parodies as an essential whole possessed of its own logic, revealing a distinct world indissolubly linked with that parodied language" (175).

⁴Loseff, *On the Beneficence of Censorship*, 34.

covert compilation that lies behind both Aesopianism and allegory in general. Thus, when it inevitably confronts the issue of ambivalence, it pushes it to a pseudo-Aesopian extreme. Below is the explanation offered by a minister's assistant for the incongruously liberal decor of his superior's office:

жена министра решила в связи с общей либерализацией утеплить казенную атмосферу в кабинете. И вот, сказал он (помощник), двусмысленно вздохнув, либерализация кончилась, а вышивки остались.

Тогда мой знакомый архитектор очень осторожно решил выяснить у помощника, какой из двух смыслов в его двусмысленном вздохе он лично поддерживает. Тут к унылому удивлению моего архитектора оказалось, что помощник министра поддерживает оба смысла, потому и тот и другой носят осуждающий характер. [1979:472]¹

(The moral ambiguity centred on Uncle Sandro is an entirely separate question. Generically it stems from his proclaimed status as picaro--the ethic man-in-the-middle between an immoral authority and its long-suffering victims.² Even this ambiguity, however, is objectified and ultimately frozen by a narrator who loses no opportunity to expound both its facets. After all, what is an oxymoron but a two-part aphorism freezing both sides of an issue into one single (monologic) figure of eloquence. Below, Uncle

¹Possibly a play on Stalin's opinion of left- and right-wing deviationists. That dictum itself is spoofed overtly elsewhere in the novel: *Одни историографы верны бытописательской правде, другие -- исторической. Если вы спросите у меня, какие из них лучше, я отвечу словами товарища Сталина: "И те и другие хуже."* (1979:446)

²From Ulrich Wicks "modal-structural approach" to the picaresque: "The fictional world posited by the picaresque mode is that of an unheroic protagonist, worse than we, caught up in a chaotic world, worse than ours, in which he is on an eternal journey of encounters that allow him to be alternately both victim of that world and its exploiter" (Ulrich Wicks, "The Nature of Picaresque Narrative: A Modal Approach," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 89, no. 1 (January 1974): 242). In Bakhtin's system, the picaro stands at the headwaters of the novel's evolution on the strength of the "extraordinarily external distinctness" with which his "merry deceit" attacks lofty, authoritarian languages ("Слово в романе," 216-17).

Sandro regretfully informs the author-narrator of the fate of a marble walkway:

-- Бывшее руководство растащило, -- ответил дядя Сандро, как-то сложно скорбя своими большими глазами: не то скорбит по мраморным клеткам, не то по бывшему руководству, жалея, что его алчность, кстати, сказавшаяся и на судьбе этих плит, довела его до того, что оно стало бывшим. [1979: 401]

Another picaresque figure, eccentric party boss Abesalomon Nartovich, prompts the narrator to expound at monologic length his theory of literary "pre-morality" (1979: 540)--proving that ambiguity, in this aphorist's hands, is not to be left altogether alone.)

One last facet of aphorism and allegory in *Sandro*: its penetration to the level of metaphor, where it, like so much else in Iskander, substitutes expansion for development. His arresting comparisons have been likened to those of Olesha--with the significant difference that Iskander's carry on where Olesha's leave off. Their extension has been said to pursue "not only aesthetic or cognitive ends, but an intonational purpose as well."¹ Ryan-Hayes speaks of the satiric advantages of "extended comparison"; Atarov argues that the majority of Iskander's metaphors involve the "humorous debasement or aggrandizement of concrete detail."² As always, the signified prevails over the signifier. The movement is from the concrete to the abstract in the metaphors themselves; their analysis turns this discussion of aphoristic linkage in *Sandro* from the syntagmatic plane of fabula construction to the paradigmatic axis of thematics proper. It is here that aphorism invades

¹Соловьев, "С поправкой на время," 216.

²Ryan-Hayes, "Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 52. И. Атаров, "Корни талапта: О прозе Фазиля Искандера," *Новый мир* 1969:1, с. 207-8.

even a more conventionally recognizable fabula, in segments incorporating at least tokens of complication, crisis and denouement. For description pertains to elements outside that progression, to paradigmatic indices, and not syntagmatic functions.¹ Such elements are secondary, character and setting 'modifiers' to the primary members of plot 'subject and predicate.' They lack transitivity, the dynamic propulsion of plot predication.² And so, in Chapter Eleven, the momentum built by the tobacco-threading contest and Tali's impending elopement is put on temporary hold for an allegorical portrait of a vicious dogmatist, kolkhoz chairman Timur Zhvanba:

И без того обездоленная слухами о своем классовом происхождении, совесть его окончательно замолкла и в распрях его страстей уже не принимала никакого участия, как бедная родственница, лишний рот, незаметно устраивалась в уголке, чтобы не слишком попадаться на глаза, не раздражать своей сексуальной никчемностью главу марксисткой духовной семьи, волосатого самца по имени Ненависть. [1979:346]³

In Chapter Twelve, the plot hinges on and wanders continually away from the narrator's pressing need to extricate himself from the ideological aftermath of the Goatibex Affair. Its opening aims towards something like the traditional mounting of suspense, as Uncle Sandro and the narrator approach an imposing govern-

¹O'Toole compiles the systems of Barthes, Propp and Fillmore in his *Structure, Style and Interpretation*, 116.

²Ibid.

³Ryan-Hayes analyses the passage for its use of the "personification of inanimate objects [sic]" as a satiric device. In her interpretation, besides the obvious political implications, it "also mounts a secondary satirical attack against the vagueness and abstraction of political rhetoric." ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 57.) A haunting series on male body hair runs throughout the novel: from Uncle Sandro's self-satisfied stroking of his moustaches, to Stalin's sinister variation on the gesture, to the discussion, in "Маленький гигант," of Lenin's baldness and the propriety of toupees.

ment office building. Then it stops for an entirely extraneous, leisurely developed comparison. The vehicle is a red Soviet flag; its tenor--the essence of Iskander's lazy (elsewhere 'gentle') attack on Soviet officialdom:

Сейчас, в жару, он, как бы слегка разомлев, едва трепыхался и его можно было сравнить с идеологическим опахалом, лениво отмахивающим миазмы враждебных идей, как рой мошкар, не слишком опасной, но достаточно назойливо вьющейся над увенчанной чешуйчатым шлемом и, бдящей дремля, головой сказочного витязя. [1979: 400]¹

In the same way, the tension of criss-cross conflicts at the Goatibex banquet pauses for a poetic prose catalogue of the fare:

Черная икра лоснилась в большой тарелке,
как сексуальная смазка тяжелой индустрии.
Так и представлялось, что едят ее,
обсасывая и выплевывая подщипники,
как косточки маслин. [...]
Алтечная желтизна коньячных бутылок,
заросли которых, густея в голове стола,
переходили в смешанный винно-водочно-шампанский лес
с совершенно одиноким экземпляром коньячной бутылки
на противоположном конце стола,
как бы в знак того,
что это породистое красное дерево
в принципе может расти и там, на засушливых,
удаленных от начальства землях. [1979:419]

Such inert but extended metaphors could potentially be strung together ad infinitum. Each bead of the string (caviar/factory; forest/liquor bottles) simply repeats a core opposition between the natural and the manufactured. Compare the core opposition of Stalinist literature posited by Katerina Clark--that between spontaneity and consciousness. Allegorical corollaries

¹Comparisons drawing on the romantic aura of past eras (Gracco-Roman antiquity, medieval chivalry, the grandeur of the fin du siècle) form a paradigmatic series of their own in *Sandro*. They are usually associated with negative figures who would aspire to perverted authority. Thus, their satiric function is that of false aggrandizement.

include the garden/factory complex¹ (particularly relevant to the metaphoric string in question). Clark discusses the various means of extracting a dynamic development from the oppositions. Thus, the conflict between spontaneity and consciousness yields the "master plot" of 1930s socialist realism; that between the garden and the factory sets off the "struggle with nature" heroics of the Five-Year Plan period and the elemental confrontations of works produced in its aftermath. In each variation of the theme there is some attempt, however formulaic, to generate movement towards an eventual reconciliation or synthesis. Thematic movement, no less than fabula progression, can be seen to impose order and limit on a text. Iskander's metaphoric string (and by analogy, the allegorical structure of *Sandro* as a whole) seeks no such development; it substitutes for it the endless reproduction and re-statement of a pre-set theme. What occurs between the garden and the factory in the food catalogue above, is not a conflict but a stand-off.

What occurs between the mountain and the valley, or the village and the town in Sandro's world is almost as static, and no less productive. Chegemers are lower than Svans (Chapter 17), higher than the residents of Mukhus, with Uncle Sandro perched between them (1979: 26), and worlds apart from the "valley of valleys" in Moscow ("Утраты," КИУ: 74). Other paradigmatic series in *Sandro* include those of authority (patriarch/picaro/tyrant), underdog (scapegoat/weakling/fool) and women (home-maker/home-trapper/heart-breaker). They spawn a multitude of

¹Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 99.

characters and character-revealing situations on the same schematic pattern of reduplication.¹ Their various confrontations are rhetorical, and the rhetoric itself--that of the impasse.

In sum, *Sandro* is an allegory of impasse, a vast chain of interlocking aphorisms and allegories. This kind of linking does indeed replace fabula-ordering, sidestep the more conventional need for smooth transitions, create its own compilation of static, reproductive themes. For all the many generic labels that have been applied to this unique creation, none fits better than the simplest: "просто книга."² From this standpoint, Iskander is not a short-story writer struggling to become a novelist, but a master compiler of extended pithy statements.

¹The authority (moral and immoral) series would seem to be the most extensive. It is engendered by the thematic splintering of Uncle Sandro's moral ambivalence,--a thematic counterpart, as it were, to the picaro's function as a peg for the stringing together of fabula incidents. Among the patriarchs we find Khabug, founder of Chegem, his sons Kiazym and, if only by default, Makhaz, as well as the fatherly, imperious Prince Ol'denburgskii. Picaros include Uncle Sandro himself, Marat, Abesalomon Nartovich and Tengiz; tyrants--Stalin, Beria, Timur Zhvanba and Omar. The underdog series covers Makhaz, the participant-narrator and Kunta, inheritor of Chegem. A cluster of female characters is defined by the various degrees to which they support the claims of hearth and kin. It ranges from the hospitable Tali, a potential Earth Mother, to the treacherous Carmen of Chegem.

²Offered by Mr. Iskander himself when we discussed this issue, 19 March 1988, Moscow.

Ах, как бывало в детских играх --
 Зарылся с головой в кустах!
 [...]

 Поглубже в лес, кусты погуше,
 Чтоб интереснее игра!
 И вдруг тревогою сосушей:
 -- Меня найти уже пора!¹

CHAPTER 5

THE FIRST-PERSON CHILDHOOD CYCLES: REMOTE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

From a broad chronological perspective, Iskander's work falls into three intertwined periods dated from the first appearances of component pieces: the first-person childhood tales of "School Waltz" ("Запретный плод," 1963), the shared narration of *Sandro* (the short story of 1966) and the putative third-person of the Chik cycle ("День Чика," 1971). This has even been interpreted as indicating a general evolution in his corpus from the first-person to third-person mode, a narratological version, if you will, of the great march towards epic omniscience, which unfortunately overlooks the mediation of *Sandro*.²

¹Фазиль Искандер, *Путь: стихи* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1987), 175.

²See for example Burlingame, "Prose of Iskander"; А. Андреев, "Время счастливых находок," *Книжное обозрение*, 30 сентября 1966, 11; Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988a), 225; В. Соловьев, "День был, день будет," *Дружба народов* 1973:5, с. 266. Sidorov first diagnoses Iskander as limited entirely to the first-person and therefore to small forms. He then notes a move through the Chik cycle towards third-person, and finally cites *Sandro* as the author's first unquestionably successful attempt to create character- as opposed to author-oriented narration. The diagnosis overlooks the first/third-person interplay in the novel; it also implies that the novel represents the culmination of Iskander's work, and not its centre. See Сидоров, "Закалять душу смехом" (1974), 11.

Internal evidence of a wish to transcend the limits of first-person is most commonly sought in a confession made by Iskander in a story of 1966:

Вообще я мечтаю писать вещи без всяких там лирических героев, чтобы сами участники описываемых событий делали, что им заблагорассудится, а я бы сидел в сторонке и только поглядывал на них.

Но чувствую, что пока не могу этого сделать: нет полного доверия. Ведь когда мы говорим человеку, делай все, что тебе заблагорассудится, мы имеем в виду, что ему заблагорассудится делать что-нибудь приятное для нас и окружающих. [...]

Но [...] ему может заблагорассудится делать неприятные глупости или, что еще хуже, вообще ничего не делать, то есть пребывать в унылом бездействии.

Вот и приходится ходить по собственному сюжету, приглядывать за героями, стараясь заразить примером собственной бодрости:

-- Веселее, ребята! [ДД: 19]¹

It would seem more appropriate, however, to approach the first/third interplay in Iskander as a continuous development whose seeds are evident almost from the outset of his career, whose tensions can be felt in even his most recent works, and whose compromise can be seen to account for the singular achievement of *Sandro*.

"School Waltz," then, forms the starting-point and home-base in the uniquely cyclical evolution of narrative person in Iskander. It takes pride of place among his compilations for longevity: a publication period spanning twenty-five years and counting (the latest,

¹Lebedev expands on this very passage to argue for a shift from exclusively self-directed irony to character-directed irony. From this emerged the figure of Uncle Sandro as a "Тарарен из Черема," (a reference to Alphonse Daudet's *Tartarin de Tarascon* trilogy of 1872-1890), someone capable of sharing a joke at his own expense, a debatable conclusion. See Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 198-99. Sidorov chooses the same quotation to confirm his hypothesis that "Дом в переулке" and "Ночь и день Чика" feature "the first steps towards the more objective manner of third-person" narration ("Закалять душу смехом" (1974), 11).

1988 version promising more to come),¹ the first of his повести to enter the subtitle stage of 'cycle'² and the most consistently 'personal' of his works in terms of point of view, privilege and subjectivity.

Between the two "structural and semantic invariants" of narrative prose--the first and third persons--the fundamental correlation is that of "author-actualization." The first-person as the marked member of the pair must explicitly manifest an author or narrator figure; the third-person is unmarked and therefore free to comply with or disregard this restriction as it chooses.³ Iskander, it seems, always strikes at the basics. Explicitness, even highlighted explicitness, is the operative word in his handling of the first-person mode. It overrides all other factors in the discussion of his use of the paradigm: its division into specific vs. transitional values based on the narrator's participation or non-participation in the events described; in the former case his central or peripheral role therein; in the latter--his status as witness or relay narrator.⁴ For the first-person narrator of "School Waltz" functions in all of

¹See Appendix Six: "School Waltz" Compilation History." Where possible, citations will refer to the version found in the collection *Кролики и удавы* (Москва: Книжная палата, 1988), 191-286 as КиУ: page number.

²At our 21 May 1988 meeting Mr. Iskander indicated that "School Waltz" had been conceived as a whole from the outset. The subtitle "Отрывок из цикла[...]," appended to many of the individually published pieces, was chosen by cautious editors in lieu of "повесть" so as to skirt the issue of what had become of the missing fragments. Even the latest version, he explained, is incomplete; segments as yet "too piquant" have been omitted for the time being.

The point here is the susceptibility of all Iskander's writings to both exscerption and convergence, whatever the subtitle used.

³К.Н. Атарова и Г.А. Лесскис, "Семантика и структура повествования от первого лица в художественной прозе," *Известия Академии Наук СССР: Серия литературы и языка* 35, no. 4 (1976): 344.

⁴*Ibid.*, 345.

these modes; it is his role in their explicit linking and anchoring that simultaneously fragments and ties together this archetypically Iskanderian mosaic.

Typical as well for Iskander is the stark overlaying of perspectives, the 'then-and-now' of all autobiographical first-person strained almost to the breaking point as he exposes, highlights and blithely ploughs his way through what for most practitioners of the genre stands as its most sensitive presupposition:

Позиция повествователя, рассказывающего о своем детстве или юности, внутренне антиномична: сам он и принадлежит и не принадлежит к миру своих героев, к изображаемому им. Речь идет одновременно и об одном сознании, и о двух. [...] Действующий герой (мальчик) включен в ситуацию, зависит от нее, рассказчик же смотрит на собственную завершённую жизнь отстраненно, безучастно.¹

"The School Waltz," like all of Iskander's first-person childhood tales, is in the author's own words "an *adult's* recollection" (italics mine).² By isolating and ultimately outweighing the childhood perspective,³--yet another corollary of Iskander's segregation technique,--the emphasis on the adult element forfeits the inner, ideological dynamism of literary autobiography. Bakhtin describes the latter as embracing

¹Казакрин, "Проблема автора в поэтике современного лирического рассказа," 201.

²Искандер, "Живите интересно" (интервью), 4.

³Confirmation of this assessment is to be found in a different branch of the childhood cycle, the stories and story fragments re-assembled in the film "Время счастливых находок" (Мосфильм 1970). Quite obviously, any screen version of Iskander's 'chatty' works must entail considerable re-working of the original tales. Voice-over narration inevitably plays a much more dominant role than in films based on less pervasively verbal literary texts. This particular film, together with its screenwriter (Iskander himself) was criticized by reviewer Kuznetsov for having sacrificed (through reduction of the adult-narrator's hegemony?) its "subtext and second [adult, ironic] dimension." See М. Кузнецов, "Простодушие принято всерьез," *Советский экран* 1970:10, с. 4. Orlov simply wonders why the film was ever categorized as targeted towards children; its appeal, in his opinion, is entirely adult. See Д. Орлов, "Недетские заботы детского кино," *Искусство кино* 1971:5, с. 39.

не только мир своего прошлого [...] в свете настоящего зрелого осознания и понимания, обогащенного временной перспективой, но и свое прошлое осознание и понимание этого мира [...] Это прошлое осознание -- такой же предмет изображения, как и объективный мир прошлого. Оба эти сознания, разделенные десятилетиями, глядящие на один и тот же мир, не расчленены грубо и не отделены от объективного предмета изображения, они оживляют этот предмет, вносят в него своеобразную динамику, временное движение [...] ¹

Sarnov points to an *analytical* dynamism based on the ratiocinational dissection of every act:

лирический герой Искандера в один и тот же момент предстает перед нами [...] еще таким, каким он был секунду назад, и уже таким, каким он лишь станет мгновение спустя. ²

I disagree. The analytical method freezes each action or thought it touches; the result is not a "slow-motion film," as Sarnov maintains, but something closer to a slide-show projection, one filled with long pauses for adult commentary.

To pursue the analogy: a film, whatever its running speed, possesses dynamic capacity; it can show a process in its actual unfolding. A slide show isolates a series of more or less static states or conditions. Childhood viewed as a state or condition produces nostalgia, for nostalgia aims to preserve in perpetuity not so much the substance as the emotional aura of memory. Iskander's nostalgia, as pointedly candid as any other aspect of his work, is static. The sudden intrusion of childhood memories into the mayhem of "Goatibex" brings the action to an immediate halt--an innovation that, as we have seen, jarred its readers of 1966 and continues to fuel commentary to this day. Lyric nostalgia is indeed an effective plot-stopper, but that is its external role in Iskander's

¹М.М. Бахтин, *Эстетика словесного творчества*, сост. С.Г. Бочаров (Москва: Искусство, 1979), 397-98.

²Б.М. Сарнов, "Чем глубже зачерпнуть," в его же кн. *Время таланта: Портреты и памфлеты* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1987), 30.

now famous lyric/satiric montage technique. What has been largely overlooked is the internal structure of the autobiographical material applied to this end. It is a specific type of childhood reminiscence that lends itself to such usage.

Szymak-Reiferowa notes Iskander's divergence from the "autobiographical tradition [established] by Tolstoi and Gor'kii". There are, she maintains, no "stages" in Iskander's autobiographical prose, for the simple reason that the author "is not concerned with the actual *process* of maturation." To this orientation Szymak-Reiferowa attributes the cycle's lack of chronological order, as well as its predominant, at times even pedantic insistence on the timeless moral values acquired in childhood and appreciated by the adult narrator.¹ Once again the outstanding qualities are analytic, static and to a considerable extent aphoristic. In this respect, the autobiographical cycle exhibits the same resistance to fabula ordering and development, the same capacity for endless extension and continual re-shuffling as were noted above in the discussion of Iskander's more obviously aphoristic constructions. Consider the poetic refrain that supports a simply but highly evocative list of lyric reminiscences in "Goatibex":

Мне не хватает дедушкиного дома, с его Большим зеленым двором,
со старой яблоней [...]

Мне не хватает просторной кухни в дедушкином доме с ее земляным
полом, с большим жарким очагом [...]

Мне не хватает вечерней переключки женщин [...]

Мне не хватает теплых летних простынь [...]

Мне не хватает самих стен дедушкиного дома [...] [ДД: 272-77]

¹Jadwiga Szymak-Reiferowa, "Proza autobiograficzna Fazila Iskandera," *Rusycystyczne Studia Literaturoznawcze* 7, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Slaskiego, no. 626 (Katowice, 1983): 70-71. Italics mine.

These in turn are liberally interspersed with such aphoristic statements as the well-known treatise on childhood's faith in reason (ДД: 276), or the following:

Когда человек ощущает свое начало и свое продолжение, он щедрей и правильной располагает своей жизнью и его труднее ограбить, потому что он не все свои богатства держит при себе. [ДД: 272]

The common factor in all this lyric-aphoristic activity is remoteness. Neither nostalgia nor philosophizing has anything to do with the perceptions or growing pains of a child. More to the point, their extended development, their aggregation, drives deeper still the wedge segregating the child-protagonist from the adult-narrator. In fact, as Szymak-Reiferowa points out, Iskander's autobiographical prose is based on the "immanent" principle of "contrast and confrontation," from those affecting the author and his protagonist, the adult and the child, public and private values, to the constant interweaving of different "layers of time."¹

Iskander's reminiscing narrator is wholly outside the world he recalls. Sometimes this extra-territoriality can carry with it the charge of precocity. In Iskander adult self-evaluation intrudes on the child's every step and is entirely incontrovertible. Such overburdening was identified, in Filiushkina's recent discussion of Soviet childhood memoirs, with the outmoded tradition of Defoe, Swift, Scott and Dickens. It was rejected, according to Filiushkina, for want of verisimilitude, and specifically the verisimilitude of first person. Out of the mouths of such wise babes comes forth an

¹Ibid., 79. Szymak-Reiferowa categorizes this as "intensely dialogicized prose," whereas I would argue against any interaction between the antipodes she indicates so precisely.

authoritarianism which could all too easily be recast into an adult third person with no change in sense. Tolstoi compensates for the occasional lapse into precocity by a truly childlike attention to meaningful detail and a child's clearly defined moral judgment. His best Soviet followers (Rybakov, Aleksin, Alekseev, Matveeva and others) combine with this Tolstoyan perception a "twentieth-century orientation on the self-expression of the narrator."¹

By contrast, Iskander freely indulges in such authoritative intrusion.² Yet he is careful, as always, to 'cite his sources,' to indicate in no uncertain terms exactly when the adult consciousness has taken over. Autobiographical prose often makes use of "remembrance signals," usually verbs or verb-phrases such as 'I remember' or 'as I see now.'³ This is its specific modification of 'credibility' as one of the definitive features of the first-person form.⁴ The high incidence of 'I remember' in "School Waltz" corresponds to the scrupulous overindulgence in 'he thought,' discussed above with regard to "Scorpion." Here too the effect is an overt exaggeration of what was, after all, embedded in the most basic premise of the narrative mode itself. Credibility edges towards authoritarianism or at least adult superiority when 'I remember' shifts into 'little did I realize then.' In "School Waltz" this often

¹С. Филюшкина, "От первого лица: О форме повествования в детской и юношеской литературе," *Детская литература* 1987:8, с. 8, 9.

²As Sarnov points out, this is a distinguishing feature of Iskander's style "едва ли не каждая подробность и деталь становится у него поводом для развернутого авторского рассуждения" (Сарнов, "Мир Фазила Искандера," 16).

³Сигналы припоминания. The term is used in И.А. Николина, "Структура повествования в автобиографической прозе," *Русский язык в школе* 1986:4, с. 57.

⁴Достоверность. Nikolina bases herself on Атарова и Лесскис, "Семантика и структура повествования от первого лица."

takes the form of teasing through latter-day Romantic irony. The narrator anticipates and then overrides the objection that no child could possibly have had such thoughts:

Разумеется, все это представлялось тогда совершенно смутно, но я уверен, что сейчас проращиваю зерна именно тех опущений, а не каких-нибудь других. [КиУ: 213]

Similarly, the unimpeachable 'I remember' can also be achieved through paradox, by admitting to certain lapses. This is analogous to what Culler describes as "limited play with generic conventions." He cites Empson's "pseudo-parody to disarm criticism" and paraphrases:

the text shows its awareness of its own artificiality and conventionality, not so as to shift into a new mode devoid of conventionality, but so as to convince the reader that it is aware of other ways of looking at the matter in hand and therefore can be trusted not to distort things while taking its own course.¹

To be sure, Culler and Empson base their discussions on highly conventionalized usage (the tropes of love poetry), while Iskander's play strikes deeper, into genre expectations. Documentary prose, writes Lidiia Ginzburg, is based on the "premise of authenticity", which enters in the literary work into an explicit correlation with "factual credibility." In literary memoirs "некий фермент недостоверности заложен в самом существе жанра," which fermentation includes both the impossibility of total recall and the memoirist's natural impulse to edit.² Added to these tensions is the special claim to credibility staked by first-person narration in general and autobiography in particular. Altogether, it is a formidable array of genre expecta-

¹Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 150.

²Гинзбург, *О психологической прозе*, 9-10.

tions that Iskander takes to task. This is how he recalls his first classroom expulsion for misbehaviour when, instead of waiting in the hallway he packed up his satchel to leave the school entirely:

Точно объяснить причину, почему я старался взять с собой портфель, не могу, потому что не помню, что двигало этим моим желанием. Возможно, я понимал приказ выйти из класса как некий толный провал своего школьного существования и тут уж бери портфель и уходи домой. Чувство полного провала могло быть в первое время сильнее поверхностного знания, что быть выгнанным с урока -- это еще не так страшно. А возможно, это было то детское чувство собственности, которое заставляет детей, выходя из игры, непременно забирать с собой свои игрушки. Впрочем, одно другому не мешает. ["Реванш," *Семья и школа* 1973:1, с. 33; omitted from later versions]

The point is not that other autobiographical authors avoid such self-justifying manoeuvres or even that the disingenuous confession of faulty memory has never before been used to enhance authorial reliability. What stands out is Iskander's extraordinary heightening of such devices, either via allegory as in the seeds metaphor above, or by supplying not one but several retrospective alternatives, as in the satchel incident.

Second-guessing the past can be enhanced by spoofing both the manoeuvre and its target, his younger self. Here the narrator explains his mental paralysis when he failed to wriggle out of a request to present a poor report card for his aunt's inspection:

Смутно помню, что какая-то надежда была, но на что я надеялся, никак не могу вспомнить. [...]
На что я надеялся? Трезвый анализ воспоминаний не оставляет никаких признаков надежды, кроме надежды на чудо. [КиУ: 224]

Conjecture, hindsight and a man of letter's *profession de foi* combine in an entirely different--declarative--vein, when the narrator explains why his tipsy uncle's slurred speech sometimes annoyed him:

Может, именно в те годы я неосознанно полюбил ясность и четкость образа мыслей, то дополнительное удовольствие, которое они доставляют сами по себе, независимо от своего содержания, более того, придает ей, мысли, какую-то аппетитность, [...] облагораживают ее отсветом божественной гармонии и в конце концов делают ее частью всеобщего стремления человечества к ясности, как единственной в конечном итоге задаче разума. [КиУ: 193]

Mature reconsideration of the past can also lead directly into philosophical generalization at length. The young author has chosen to stay with his uncle while the rest of the family has rushed out to avert his wife's histrionic threat of suicide:

Теперь-то я понимаю, что он очень волновался и только из гордости не сдвинулся с места. Моя детская рациональность правильно мне подсказывала, что человек не может покончить самоубийством из-за всякой ерунды. Но *взрослый опыт* сильно расшатывает чистоту *детских представлений* о логических соответствиях. *Взрослый человек* понимает, что хотя все это и так, а все-таки человек может сделать роковой шаг помимо всякого смысла, а может быть, и назло всякому смыслу, особенно если этот человек женщина [...] [КиУ: 219; italics mine]

Comparable passages abound. Most frequently cited among them is:

Может быть, самая трогательная и самая глубокая черта детства -- бессознательная вера в необходимость здравого смысла. Следовательно, раз в чем-то нет здравого смысла, надо искать, что исказило его или куда он затерялся... Детство верит, что мир разумен, а все неразумное -- это помехи, которые можно устранить, стоит повернуть нужный рычаг... [ДД: 276]

The excerpt, with its essayistic, homiletic flavour, comes from "Goatibex," where it effectively reveals the moral purpose behind that piece's famous lyric reminiscences. Andreeva, Grekova and several other critics consider it the "key" to Iskander's work.¹

In *Sandro*, where actual childhood reminiscence plays a strangely restricted role (to be considered below), it nonetheless invariably stresses the benefits of childhood insight and adult hindsight:

¹Андреева, "Владелец счастья," 13; И. Грекова, "Под знаком Козлотура," 3.

По детской чуткости тогда я много терзался подлостью своего страха и ясным, унижительным сознанием своей неспособности вести себя так, как вел Харлампю. Я тогда не понимал, что только великая мечта может породить великое мужество [...]
[1981: 72]

From *Sandro* again:

И сейчас, вспоминая эту картину и вспоминая то изумительное, сладостно растекающееся в крови чувство благодарности чему-то непонятному, может быть, самой жизни, которое я тогда испытывал, [...] я думаю, у человека есть еще одна возможность быть счастливым -- это умение радоваться чужому счастью. Но взрослые редко сохраняют это умение.
[1981: 76]

These are adult exploitations of childhood purity. Any one of them might well have come from the pen of an Enlightenment writer such as, in the Russian tradition, Radishchev (minus the archaic syntax) or even Tolstoi in his more Rousseauan moments. Though its straightforward self-assurance of tone may well strike contemporary readers as archaically innovative (Chudakova praises him on these grounds as a conservative ahead of his time),¹ Iskander's originality is once again a matter of degree and context: the unabashed extent of one, the compilative abandon of the other (philosophical reflection amid ironically tinged eccentrics), and the pointedly explicit contrast of both.

The first lines of a story segment can present with all the maturity of laconic wit the condensed fabula predictions that mirror his aphoristic conclusions. From the beginning of the compilation itself:

Я пошел в школу на год раньше, чем это было положено мне по возрасту, и дней на десять позже, чем это было положено по учебному календарю. [КиУ: 192]

¹Чудакова, "Заметки о языке современной прозы," 239.

This elegant turn of phrase will carry the reader through a labyrinth of digressions and flashbacks for almost one-third of an astonishingly jumbled narration, that based on the fragment first published as "Первый раз в первый класс" (1973).

In Smelkov's opinion, such forefronting contributes to a balanced child/adult duality. Among Iskander's first-person childhood tales he finds "elegant and often funny parables" following a simple pattern: "a psychological problem is set forth and then illustrated by an incident from the life of the lyric hero." In this way, both child and adult are shown to have "essentially the same mechanisms of conduct"; these mechanisms are analyzed on both age levels; and the two are seen to share a common "spiritual life."¹ Similarly, Ivanova accredits to Iskander the "genuine discovery" of a dual vision.² Deming Brown's more sober interpretation of this duality--"writing of serious, fundamental, adult matters as they are seen from the perspective of an intelligent child"--places it squarely in "the Russian tradition of Tolstoy, Chekov and Gorky." It delineates "the progress of a developing awareness, as stimulated by small, ordinary events and the emotional lessons they teach."³ From the standpoint of the present argument it must be noted that Iskander's duality is a static one, a juxtaposition of two finite entities,--their contrast and not their interaction. Segregation, as always in Iskander, staunchly resists synthesis.

¹Смелков, "Плоды дерева детства," 49.

²Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988с), 135, 153.

³Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin*, 207.

A more or less straightforward account of an incident from the past can suddenly be sidetracked into a lengthy and distinctly allegorical digression on present character traits.

Сейчас я думаю, что в этом маленьком эпизоде сказалось некое коренное свойство моей натуры, которое заключается в склонности, уходя, уходить целиком.

To this tendency the author attributes his deceptive tolerance of boorishness, as aphorism flowers into extended horticultural metaphor:

Но в один прекрасный день, когда вкрадчивое хамство уже успело вырастить на подпорках моей терпимости неплохой урожай баклажанов, помидоров и других не менее полезных огородных культур, я неожиданно для хамства, привыкшего к оседлости (от слова оседлать) возле моих подпорок, я, значит, неожиданно для хамства трогаюсь с места, забирая с собой все свои подпорки, и устраиваюсь в безопасной для этого хамства местности. [...]

Во всяком случае, я, мысленно наслаждаясь сиротскими стенаниями покинутого хамства, иногда, очнувшись, обнаруживаю, что по посоху моей терпимости уже выются робкие плети нового растения с нежными антенками усиков с мохнатыми листиками, в сущности, так непохожими на позднейшие плоды хамства, как желтенькие звездочки весенней завязи непохожи на осенние, тяжелозадые тыквы. [...] [КиУ: 215-16]¹

Scuffling as a boy with a sadistic neighbour can be interrupted by a treatise chockful of maxims on, among other things, feminine caprice: "Каприз -- хромой призрак власти" (КиУ: 251) and so on, at no little length. In a miniature incidental version of this same tactic, the adult narrator pokes fun at his childhood self and his family's soon to be quashed hopes for a brilliant academic career:

я был выведен в нашем вечно взбурдаженном, но, в сущности, неопасном семейном рое, как пчелка, готовая приносить в дом чернильный мед школьных премудростей. [КиУ: 198]

¹For an aphoristic re-casting of the same theme see "Кофейня в море" (*Темп* 1988:6, с. 144), where tolerance forms part of a Pavlovian experiment to test the decency of the writer's friends.

Enlarged into a major digression, ironic aphorism holds up the young boy as an example of humankind's tendency to 'play up' to the expectations of others. The illustrative incident from his past is described in terms so overtly borrowed from the stage as to dramatize the split perspective of autobiography. The neighbours have gathered to watch a drunk running amuck; the boy merges into a first-person plural 'we' of spectators to a scene played out in elaborately interpreted gestures, glances and *posture*: the men's frozen stance expressing "крайнюю степень истощенности своего миролюбия" (КиУ: 206), a "sufficiently clear idea" that takes several paragraphs of circumlocutions and sophisticated irony to put across (КиУ: 207), a Machiavellian example of diplomatic intricacy:

Они как бы говорили своими позами: вот мы остались стоять так, как стояли, мы ничего не делаем, чтобы укрыться от камня, а также ничего не делаем, чтобы камень в нас попал. Как видишь, у нас все честно. Но если уж теперь камень, брошенный тобой, попадет в кого-нибудь из нас, тогда не сердчай, тогда мы с тобой расправимся. [КиУ: 206]

And it is unquestionably the adult consciousness that supplies the political moral for the crowd's "ambiguous role" of condemning and encouraging the rampage:

Теперь, вспоминая этот случай, я думаю, что он с некоторой комической точностью повторил положение Европы тех времен, когда все пытались ублажить Гитлера, одновременно разжигая его своим политическим любопытством к его кровавым делишкам. [КиУ: 207]

To this political-temporal subtext--innocent childhood in the ominous 1930s--Ivanova attributes the tragic ambience and victory of laughter in both the Chik and the "School Waltz" cycles.¹ From a

¹Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988a), 221, where she finds a direct confrontation between the false world of "real circumstances" and the "stable," true world as seen through a child's eyes. Similarly, Vasiuchenko discovers a contrast between a "shaky world" on the verge of collapse and the "moral equilibrium of a youth" (Васюченко, "Дом над пропастью," 200).

somewhat different perspective Szymak-Reiferowa reads in the first-person childhood tales the effect of Iskander's "boundless optimism" and the impression that those years of innocence knew neither tragedy nor even drama. She too discovers a duality, one poised on the balance between the details supplied by the child's perception and the "light anecdotal tone" of the author.¹ Both readings reaffirm the maximal use Iskander wrings out of the then-and-now duality of memoir prose. The segregation as in every aspect of his work is meticulous.

A corollary of this enhanced dual perspective is Iskander's wholly undisguised use of 'making strange.' He does not, like Tolstoi in the much-quoted opera and communion scenes, pretend to hide behind the renewed vision wrenched by the device itself. His message is not to be read 'between the lines,' in the semantic shift forced by a strangeness, a "quality of divergence"² left to speak for itself. He does not simply describe operatic pageantry as flailing limbs and move on. Nor, according to Bakhtin's lights, does Tolstoi, for that matter, indulge in a totally disinterested use of creative deformation for its own sake:

остраняемая вещь остраивается не ради нее самой, не для того, чтобы почувствовать ее [...], а ради другой «вещи», ради моральной ценности, которая тем резче и ярче выступает на этом фоне, именно как идеологическая значимость.³

¹Szymak-Reiferowa, "Proza autobiograficzna Fazila Iskandera," 76-77.

²Ehrlich traces Shklovskii's understanding of this key concept to B. Christiansen's *Differenzqualität*. See Victor Ehrlich, *Russian Formalism History and Doctrine*, 4th ed. (The Hague: Mouton, 1980), 178, 200.

³Бахтин, *Формальный метод*, 86.

Iskander compounds the difference, makes the 'quality of divergence' entirely explicit,¹ and continues calmly to expound the point he has just made in straightforward, 'unstrange' terms. The result is a kind of instant translation from the child's strange to the adult's familiar, a compilation of two opposing planes of perception. The schoolboy mulls over Stalin's dictum "Семья не без урда":

Из разговоров взрослых по поводу этих мудрых слов я понял, что, оказывается, у великого отца есть сын Вася, который очень плохо учится. И вот, исчерпав все доступные средства, а ему, разумеется, были доступны все существующие в мире средства, и, убедившись, что сын Вася продолжает плохо учиться, он пришел к неотвратимому выводу, что, оказывается, тут ничего нельзя поделаться, что, оказывается, -- это такой закон природы: в каждой семье должен быть урод.

Then the adult steps in to drive the point home:

Интересно, что, узнав про сына Васю, который, несмотря на все старания великого отца, плохо учится, я почувствовал к вождю какое-то теплое чувство. Должен со всей определенностью сказать, что этого теплового чувства у меня к нему никогда не было. [...] Несколько позже, уже будучи подростком, я узнал, что и у некоторых моих сверстников тоже не было этого теплового чувства... [КиУ: 222]

The same tactic can be condensed into a single sentence, as in the description of the boy's reaction to Stalin's pausing for a glass of water during a speech, seen in a newsreel:

Так как я тогда был слишком мал, чтобы оценить величавость его движений, я их воспринимал как странную замедленность. [ibid]²

¹Babenko offers a different (and to my mind, confusing) contrast between Tolstoi's and Iskander's use of defamiliarization. She equates both with the child's freshness of vision, and then insists that "Iskander achieves more, in that he simultaneously lampoons his subject" ("Fazil Iskander: An Examination," 139). Surely she cannot mean Tolstoi's use to be disinterested? The argument trails off into yet another paean to Iskander's "gentle satire."

²It would appear that the same speech (Stalin's report to the All-Union Congress, 25 November 1936) or at any rate, the same pause, the same chink of the water glass, appears in *Sandro* (1979: 346-47). There the estrangement is based on an opposition between Chegem and the Soviet order. the villagers listening to Tali's prize records notice marginal sound-effects. They are particularly amused that Russians clap "for no reason"-- i.e. not in preparation for a dance. Foreign political oratory, its misinterpretation by the Chegemers, pregnant pauses that fall flat on their ears

Even when applied in the more restricted context of re-invigorating dead figures of speech,¹ 'making strange' quickly returns to the familiar as it launches a fairly straightforward fabula digression:

В школе брат мой считался одним из самых буйных лоботрясов. Способность оценивать свои поступки, как сказал его учитель, у него резко отставала от темперамента. Я представил себе его темперамент в виде маленького хулиганистого чертика, который все время бежит впереди, а брат никак не может его догнать. Вероятно, чтобы догнать его, он с четвертого класса мечтал стать шофером. [КиУ: 237]

This leads directly into a brief flashforward on his brother's adult career, cut short after the always hasty taxi driver broke the speed limits once too often.

Compare, from *Sandro*, the same literalizing tactic in the same context (the overt contrast of two opposing views). A simple Abkhazian girl has fallen, temporarily, for a local prince:

она не понимала, что по законам Маркса теперь, после революции, она должна считаться высокородной, а он, наоборот, должен считаться выброшенным на свалку истории.

Правда, трудно себе представить, что этот молодой человек породистой внешности *вылез из свалки истории*, отряхнулся, и даже не оставив пятнышка на своей белоснежной черкеске, стал ухаживать за милливидной крестьянской девушкой. [1981: 13; italics mine]

For the young scion, the dust-heap of history "было бы таким же бессмысленным понятием, как уборная бога" (*ibid.*).

Even closer to "School Waltz" is the narrator's recollection, in *Sandro*, of his literal interpretation, as a child, of an ominous Soviet cliché:

and, once again, the clink of a water glass figure as well in Chapter Five, "Битва на Кодоре" (1979: 73). Stalin drinks water with much berated pomp in a newsreel once again in the "Мальчики и первая любовь" segment of "Стоянка человека" (*Знамя* 1989:8, с. 37).

¹Discussed by Ryan-Hayes as a satiric device popular in the 1960s and 1970s Iskander, in her opinion, "employs the realization of the metaphor purely for fun or perhaps to mock his own pretensions as a writer" ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 53, 54)

я довольно картинно представлял себе этих самых ученых, *попавших в плен к буржуам*. Я их почему-то представлял боролатыми дядьками, с завязанными назад руками, уныло бредущих под конвоем в буржуазную сторону. Я только не понимал тогда, почему вместо того, чтобы только ругать попавших в плен наших людей, не постараться неожиданным партизанским налетом отбить их от конвоиров и пустить их в нашу сторону. [1979: 183; italics mine]

where childhood innocence is milked for all its didactic worth.

In "School Waltz", therefore, *остранение* is made to reinforce the deliberate segregation of the adult's retrospective and the child's fabula present. As if to broaden the gap still further, the adult then openly identifies himself as a professional writer--a tactic frequently employed throughout Iskander's corpus. Rassadin calls the author-narrator of *Sandro* "герой-повествователь романа, полуреальный, полуусловный двойник Искандера";¹ certainly his frequent intrusion in this very role opens many a possibility for the 'gallery of mirrors' effect, as he both interacts with and records or comments upon the antics of his characters. To perform the latter task, he must remove himself, must segregate himself in this function from the immediate domain of his characters and their world. In this sense, defamiliarization can be seen as a corollary of the distancing, one might even say the professional distancing that is essential to all art.

In the autobiographical cycles this professionalism assails a fundamental genre supposition. Any narrative use of the first-person that does not resort to sublexical skaz must contend with the tension between the natural and the literary. In other words, it must either conceal or justify the literary remodelling that inevitably attends any recasting of personal experience and/or

¹Рассадин, "Последний чегемец," 246.

I reflection in literary form. Unlike third-person narration, it does not enjoy a "презумпци[я] письменного творчества автора."¹ There is nothing unusual in the narrator's revealing his professional qualifications per se; what stands out is the ironic aplomb with which Iskander 'tips his hand.' For autobiographical memoirists who openly admit to literary careers often do so in the context of depicting the lyrical awakening of talent, artistic sensitivity or a sense of vocation. Among such 'portraits of myself-the-artist as a young man' the outstanding example in Soviet literature is Gor'kii's well-known trilogy. His was an outgrowth of the Romantic fascination with the coming of age of an artist, recast into the turn-of-the-century romanticism of moral and social commitment. Not so, or not quite so Iskander. His concern is rather a more generally human moral awakening.² There is no specific passage along the lines of 'this is when I first realized I should devote myself to writing' or, as in Gor'kii, 'it was this visit with grandmother to the forest that sparked my love for nature.' Appropriately enough, Gor'kii is mentioned in "School Waltz" in an entirely different, almost parodic context.

The boy's aunt continues to boast of his excellent school standing long after it has begun to waver. She even backs her claim by a hypocritical fear that the diligent student might strain his eyes:

Тут рассказывался случай, и в самом деле имевший место один раз в жизни, но поданный с таким видом, как будто это обычная картина. Я и

¹Атарова и Лессюис, "Семантика и структура повествования от первого лица," 350.

²This is in keeping with his overall anti-literary bias, discussed above (p. 174) with respect to his reverse 'laying bare of the device.'

в самом деле однажды читал книгу, а именно «Детство» Горького, и вдруг погас свет, что было в те годы обычным явлением. [...]

Пока все ожидали, не зажжется ли свет, или готовили керосиновую лампу, я прилег на пол тетушкиной кухни и стал читать при свете, льющемся из крана керосинки.

Свет, конечно, слабый, но по-своему уютный и приятный. Читал я так, наверное, с полчаса, не подозревая, что вокруг меня и этой закоптелой керосинки уже слегка миражирует контур легенды о маленьком мученике ученья. К сожалению, в последующие годы, да и до сих пор горячка чтения сменяется долгими промежутками равнодушия к книге. [КиУ: 217]

The allusion is to Gor'kii's work-wearied lad reading into the wee hours by faggot-light. The child's immediate embarrassment at his aunt's hyperbole is transmuted into the narrator's remote, implicit parody on Romantic inflation. Iskander's characteristic self-irony pits himself against and punctures the Romantic myth of the artist.¹

The enjoyment of literary works in "School Waltz" is shown to be a reader's, not a future writer's experience. His father's reading *Taras Bulba* to him as a boy is invoked as a shared moment of emotional response (КиУ: 286-87). It becomes all the more poignant in retrospect--after their forcible separation by Stalin's exile of the Persians from the Caucasus. Thus it is shown to be recalled only decades later, upon receiving news of the exile's death. Predominant is the thematic association with Gogol', of filial love sacrificed in the impersonal march of history. Recalling the 'real-life' incident on which the scene is based, Iskander maintains: "Здесь важно и то, что отец, и то, что вслух, и то, что про отца и сыновей..."²

¹ Babenko, interpreting the self-portrait of a writer playing his trade (cited above, p. 168), claims it "ridicul[es] the importance the Soviet State ascribes to the writer's profession" ("Fazil Iskander: An Examination," 135). See also "Кофейня в море," where Gor'kii's "Человек -- это звучит гордо" is updated to "Человек -- это жулик по преимуществу" (*Театр* 1988:6, с. 144).

² Фазиль Искандер, "Об очаге и о доме: Беседа с писателем," зап. Т. Мамаладзе, *Камсольская правда*, 8 января 1977, 2.

This is not the father passing a purely aesthetic love of literature on to the aspiring writer, or the promotion of an aesthetics divorced from extra-literary reality. This is literature seen as a moral symbol of intensely moral preoccupation.

Pushkin appears in a similar context. First published as an essay written in honour of the 175th anniversary of the poet's birth, the fragment "О Пушкине" (1974)¹ begins with a lyric evocation of a communal response to great art. The child's favourite teacher enthralled a roomful of schoolchildren with *The Captain's Daughter*. Then the adult-narrator intervenes with his own reader's response to Tsvetaeva's poet's response to Pushkin. From her intensely personal, ecstatically poetic encounter with a legendary figure, he selects and rebuts a moral issue: Savelich as a lackey and a slave. The faithful servant is held up as a model of fidelity--at once an abstract and a human value, one universal in its claims, not reserved for the budding artist.

Although Iskander cites "My Pushkin" (1936-1937) (КиУ: 256), it seems the work he had in mind is "Pushkin and Pugachev" (1937). There Tsvetaeva makes only passing reference to the servant: as "the fool Savelich" who might have prevented Grinev from giving the insurrectionist his coat; as "the loyal hound Savelich" in contrast to "the wild wolf Pugachev"; and finally as a stereotypical servant.² It is Pugachev who rivets her attention; to her he is the sole figure in a work that should be re-titled in his honour. The

¹See app. 6. Similarly, the essay "Победил Пушкин" (*Пионер* 1974:1, с. 46-47) was re-worked into the Chik cycle as part of the story "Чик и Пушкин" (app. 7)

²Марина Цветаева, *Мой Пушкин*, сост. А.С. Эфрон и А.А. Саакянц, 3-е изд. (Москва: Советский писатель, 1981), 78, 94

earlier piece, "My Pushkin," encompasses mythologization both of Pushkin's martyrdom (the Romantic poet vs. the mob) and of her own biography as poetic epiphany, together with unreserved identification with that same myth. The stance is diametrically opposed to that taken by Iskander. Similarly, the larger-than-life potential of "Mozart and Salieri" is cut down to scale in Iskander's treatment of the play, which he turns into a treatise on the anything but elitist qualities of envy, generosity and "the essence of every man, [which] lies in the tenor of his pathos." Amid a plethora of aphorisms stands the key phrase: "Для меня Моцарт не столько идеал солнечного таланта, сколько идеал солнечного бескорыстия."¹

Universal human qualities are invariably favoured over aesthetic values; set against the literary contexts the choice is made in, the selection amounts to an a-literary orientation, a turning away from the prestige values associated with the Romantic or post-Romantic myth of the artist, in favour of more modest claims to mere common humanity. Still more curious is the exchange of tonalities, for here, in the Savelich, Mozart and Salieri, and Taras Bulba discussions, in their varying essayistic intrusions on texts ostensibly identified as belles-lettres, Iskander plays fast and loose with genre boundaries, mingles an admittedly free-form narrative with straightforward discursive writing.² This too can serve as

¹Фазиль Искандер, "Моцарт и Сальери," *Знамя* 1987:1, с. 127. For a blistering rebuttal from the opposite court see Мария Кузнецова, "Сальери и Раскольников?," *Наш современник* 1987:7, с. 185-89.

²For yet another example of importing non-fiction into fiction, see the incorporation of the feuilleton "О мудрости застолья" (*Комсомольская правда*, 1 января 1967, 4) in the short story "Путь из варяг в греки" (first printed in *Сельская молодежь* 1971:19, с. 50-53; later in БДБД: 3-16; СиЧ: 95-109).

springboard to expansion: within "School Waltz" the theme of loyalty introduced by the digression on Savelich leads into a series of tales that carry the family through the harsh blows of the Stalinism (Uncle Riza's arrest, the father's deportation, the Rich Tailor's threat to chop down the family's majestic tree).

When Iskander's narrator does show himself to be a writer, he is entirely separate from his younger self. It is almost as if the man of letters emerged, full-grown and fully equipped, Athena-like, with no evidence of any birth trauma or the growing pains of literary adolescence. Granted, Iskander's autobiographical cycle takes him barely into his teens. It is the adult story "Начало" that portrays the bureaucratic tribulations of a literary neophyte in Moscow; even here the reflections on his literary craft are couched in ironic terms and attributed to the narrative present of an established writer.¹ Similarly, the narrator who reveals his profes-

¹The title would seem to proclaim a debt to Babel', whose own "Начало" was apparently based on an interview granted *Комсомольская правда* in July 1936 (James E. Falen, *Isaac Babel: Russian Master of the Short Story* (Knoxville University of Tennessee Press, 1974), 247). Iskander does indicate that it was the Odessan native who first inspired him to turn from poetry to prose, who first convinced him that prose could embrace the poetry of verbal economy ("Потребность очищения" (интервью), 34.) Babel's confession that Gor'kii advised him to "study life," to turn from the self to an other-focus, might be of relevance to the unexpectedly high profile of the other-perspective in the autobiographical tales that launched Iskander's prose career. Nevertheless, there is little of the lyric ambience or strict poetic regimentation of Babel's "Beginning" in Iskander's discursive, tongue-in-cheek, highly original exposé of literary woes. Lebedev maintains that the piece was originally intended as an author's preface to a collection of short stories (Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1984), 55). The author's Preface to the English translation of "Goatibex" seems to indicate the collection concerned was a Persian edition, possibly (allowing for publisher's delays) *Время счастливых находок* (Москва: Прогресс, 1970). An analogy between Babel's *Odessa Tales* and Iskander is discovered by Briker and Dal'gor. This concerns the combination in one figure of relay- and participatory-narration (Брикер и Дальгор, "Сандро из Чегема и магический реализм," 107-108).

sional interests in "School Waltz" does so as a mature practitioner and in a decidedly parodic vein.

The passage belongs to the piece originally printed under the title "Время по часам." A straightforward recollection (a neighbour's invariable response to the sound of a steamship whistle) suddenly veers off into something suspiciously close to a spoof on structuralist semiotics:

-- Этот пароход тоже так гудит, как будто мне золото привез, -- говорил он с усмешкой. [...] Что значит "тоже"? Частица эта казалась особенно бессмысленной и потому смешной.

The child may have noticed the word, but it is the erudite adult who supplies the grammatical term and the lecture style it ushers in:¹

В сущности говоря, сейчас анализ этой частицы мог бы раскрыть бесконечное богатство ее содержания; [...] эта частица своей уместной неуместностью отсылает нас к более отдаленному смыслу. И мы его поймем, если снова прислушаемся к фразе в целом.

Whereupon the phrase is conscientiously reproduced in toto. Then:

Охватывая фразу в целом, мы нащупываем ее главную тему, а именно: «Я и пароход.» Оказывается, эта тема внутри этой фразы в сжатом виде заключает в себе целый сюжет. [...] [КиУ: 239]

The death blow is dealt when pompous erudition leads to marble-mouthed officialese:

Другие его восклицания по поводу пароходного гудка были, можно сказать, дочерними предприятиями той же темы. [КиУ: 240; italics mine]

¹It is of course deliciously ironic that this passage should find itself discussed in the same pedantic vein it so effectively parodies. In and of itself, the 'lecture' constitutes one of the "asymmetric oral situations" discussed by Watts in his treatment of the similarities between oral and written narration. Despite its parody on pedantry, this essay digression, like all others in Iskander and indeed, like his separately published essays proper, is marked by a relaxed, discursive tone. (See Watts, *Pragmalinguistic Analysis*, 55).

This is more than an ingenious updating of Rabelaisian or Sternian 'learned wit.' It bears directly on the portrait of the self-satisfied nouveau riche neighbour, launches a digression on his humble counterfoil, and forms part and parcel of the Shandian tenor that sets this segment off from a cycle that is itself replete with self-conscious narration.

Reminiscing on the childhood vision of pictures in the rust on the eavestrough prompts a long digression on the art of understatement that begins: "Здесь два главных момента следует отметить, -- скажем мы голосом лектора." But the lecture that follows defies its sardonic introduction to stand as a perfectly serious treatise on the art of understatement, a plea for its judicious use, and a defense of quite simply saying what you mean:

Кстати, что может быть пошлее басни, которая вместе морали в конце предлагает подумать и сделать якобы собственный вывод, то есть предлагает прыжок там, где можно спокойно перешагнуть. [КиУ: 242]

No less negative a character than Stalin himself, in *Sandro*, prefers not to dot his i's:

Он любил такого рода смутные намеки. Фантазия слушателей неизменно придавала им расширительный смысл неясными очертаниями границ зараженной местности. В таких случаях каждый отшатывался с запасом, а отшатнувшись с запасом можно было потом для политической акции обвинить в шараханьи. [1979. 209]

Juxtaposed with the ironic, the serious is not cancelled out; instead, its total lack of ambiguity reveals that, in *Iskander*, the ironic itself is unambiguous, two-voiced perhaps, but single-purposed. The aim is the freedom of sincerity:

Выходя к читателю со своими размышлениями, я как бы говорю ему: я не скрываю ничего от вас. Вот как я думаю об этом, а вы можете

думать иначе. Юмор, самоирония, мне кажется, являются элементами свободы.¹

The freedom is Socratic in the sense that it aims to instruct:

Я верю, что чем больше в произведении произвольности, непосредственности, тем больший вклад вносит вещь в *воспитание* внутренней свободы читателя.²

In sum, the child is not father to the man; the dual perspective of autobiography is a composite which maintains the staunch independence of each element through the rigorously segregated and deliberately emphasized dualities of temporal overlay, making strange, ironic distance and ironically instructive sincerity.

This is indeed a peculiar first person, one that minimizes the "revelation-from-within" conventionally assumed to be the prerogative, the "primary purpose" of this mode.³ Part of the paradox stems from the Shandian moments liberally sprinkled throughout the text. Self-conscious narration can impede self-revelation; confidential professional chatter can be used to steer the narration away from the ostensible target of confession. The prime example is Sterne's prototype, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, of which it has been said: "In spite of the title, the book gives us very little of the life, and nothing of the opinions of the nominal hero."⁴

When not subjected to the remote, dispassionate scrutiny of the adult-narrator (or even his humour, yet another distancing

¹Искандер, "Потребность очищения" (интервью), 33.

²Ibid.; italics mine. This is not the Socratic dialogue hailed by Bakhtin as a forerunner to the polyphonic novel. It comes closer to the "pedagogical dialogue" of Idealism, a quintessentially pedagogic system. See *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 134-35.

³Атарова и Лескис, "Семантика и структура повествования от первого лица," 345.

⁴*Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 334.

device),¹ the child-protagonist of "School Waltz" is more often than not engaged in observing others, his family and courtyard neighbours. He almost merits classification, according to the schema outlined above, as a peripheral rather than central narrator. And yet in a survey of some 500 first-person works, a mere twenty-six per cent were found to feature peripheral narrators, an imbalance explained precisely by the insight factor² circumvented by Iskander. Moreover, this twenty-six per cent is said to have been conditioned by the genre requirements of such overtly object-oriented forms as the Utopia, travelogue, очерк and detective novel. Here lies the temptation to classify the other-focus of "School Waltz," like that of *Sandro*, as a nostalgic Utopia--remote and all the more beloved for it.

In any event, the child hero of "School Waltz" remains at best a semi-participant narrator. Burlingame, noting "the growing trend towards third-person narration" in Iskander's stories of the 1970s, points to the seeds planted in the autobiographical cycle when she states:

Even in those of Iskander's recent stories which are narrated in the first-person, there is an increasing shift of emphasis away from the narrator and his concerns to some other character or characters.³

The tendency might date back earlier still, to verse which prompted the comment:

¹See Szymak-Reiferowa, "Proza autobiograficzna Fazila Iskandera," 78.

²The authors state the works were chosen from European and American literature to represent "all genres and all the major trends of each literary era from late antiquity to the present" (Атарова и Лесскис, "Семантика и структура повествования от первого лица," 343).

³Burlingame, "Prose of Iskander," 143.

Поэт Фазиль Искандер редко рассказывает прямо о себе самом [...] [Он] как будто рад раствориться в родном ему мире, затеряться среди любимых своих героев.¹

This preference for an 'other-focus' is all the more clearly seen in a secondary cycle affiliated with *School Waltz*. Based on the same Mukhus courtyard and peopled by the same characters (the Rich Tailor, the boy's flamboyant aunt, his "crazy uncle Kolia" and company), it bears the unmistakably 'other-focused' title "Богатый Портной и другие."² Conversely, "Kolcherukii," now a part of *Sandro* and possessed of a marvellously unforgettable 'other' adult hero, was once classified together with the autobiographical cycle, apparently on the basis of the narrator's purely marginal participation, as a child, in the events described.³

As if to confirm the child's virtual banishment to the fabula periphery, Lebedev considers "Goatibex" (1966) to have marked a turning-point in Iskander's literary evolution in that it represents his first use of a narrator-agent, as opposed to narrator-witness.⁴ Yet "Forbidden Fruit," which predates "Goatibex" by three years and forms an integral part of "School Waltz", deals with the boy's betrayal of his sister--a central, if none too flattering role. And there are more than enough recognizably personal experiences (the first day at school, the poor report card, the struggle to master clock time, etc.) to serve as a loose chronological thread running through a great deal of this rambling narrative. It is perhaps on these grounds that Smelkov, in apparent contradiction to Lebedev,

¹Ст. Рассадин, "Среди людей," *Новый мир* 1964:12, с. 233.

²See Appendix Six(a): The Rich Tailor Sub-Cycle.

³Szymak-Reiferowa, "Proza autobiograficzna Fazila Iskander," 77.

⁴Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 189.

interpreted all of Iskander's childhood stories as unified by a "lyric hero and the theme" of a moral and intellectual coming of age, the acquisition of "an understanding of life."¹ The two views can perhaps be reconciled when it is pointed out that the target of this young philosopher's inquiry is not his own psyche, but a human being's, an aphoristic Everyman's place in the world around him.

Nonetheless, Iskander's first-person Everyman is intensely personal. His observations of life and himself as one of the liver's in it may be object-oriented, but they are grounded in a personal experience humbly and assiduously identified as such. Other sources are conscientiously noted; their capsules of information are carefully marked off from and thereby fragment the narration. The boy's mother's confrontation with the school principal is related "по словам матери"--diligently redundant as always in Iskander,--and punctuated by long comment on her delivery of the tale (КиУ: 198-99). Hers too is the "parable of the cartload of hay," conveying her viewpoint on the school, debts of honour and even the boy's father (КиУ: 208), where the boundaries are set by the author's ironic commentary and development. His father's tale of a Civil War escapade is footnoted as a piece of family lore shared often by the samovar (КиУ: 273). The boy overhears a tale by his uncle's shop assistant (КиУ: 218); he condenses the "endless story" of the marital woes of his aunt's friend (КиУ: 220-21); he reproduces and comments at length on a teenage neighbour's written romance (КиУ:

¹Смелков, "Плоды дерева детства," 48.

248-49); he relays a "legend similar to the truth" to account for his aunt's first marriage (КиУ: 229).

The strategy occurs no less often in *Sandro*, where it covers the full range of text-sizes. An entire chapter, the ninth, is accredited to Khabug's mule; what is more, the means by which a dumb animal can convey his views are scrupulously explained:

Поясняю для недалеких людей, как это происходит. Дело в том, что все, что я говорю, я мысленно рассказываю ангелам, а они все это заставят увидеть и услышать во сне одного из наших парней. А он уже в свою очередь расскажет об этом остальным людям. Ничего, ничего, не беспокойтесь, он это сделает, как надо. [1979: 232]

It is hard to imagine the authors of "Холстомер," *Верный Руслан* and the like taking such pains to establish their relay-credibility. And that is precisely the issue here: not skaz (given Iskander's lexical and stylistic preferences), not point of view (when all perspectives eventually converge upon the author's), but the clear, even insistent indication of all sources.

A major digression in the seventeenth chapter of *Sandro* is ushered in by the author's cheerful announcement that he will now take "тайм-аут" for a separately titled "Рассказ моего земляка" (1979: 476-87). This fellow countryman is only slightly more colloquial than the author who introduces him; otherwise, his tale of black Abkhazians wanders no less randomly, plays no less satirically on bureaucratic absurdities than the chapter it pretends to interrupt.

More prevalent in *Sandro* is the use of paraphrase. Written sources, particularly journalese, offer particularly rich grounds for such manipulation; one suspects, because they are so very codified,

so very inert. A large portion of "Goatibex" exploits the technique.¹ In *Sandro* the debate on ancient Abkhazian burial customs--up in trees or down in the ground, with a side issue of gender discrimination for good measure--is followed from a series of newspaper articles, one more pompously absurd than the next (1979: 181-84). Reviews of two paintings--one avant-garde, the other opportunistically conformist--are given in loose quotation (1979: 490, 494); excerpts from a visitors' book at a local gallery (1979: 474-75) enter the same long spoof on mangled interpretation by a mangled officialese. Thus the function of source citation in this and similar instances is to turn the source inside out, to let it condemn itself out of its own mouth both stylistically and ideologically.

"School Waltz" manipulates another, equally codified text system: a myopic young girl's inept attempts at what, for lack of a better term, must be described as the Soviet equivalent of the Harlequin romance. The second, author's perspective is made obvious by overt commentary on her use of literary cliché:

Кстати, во всех сценах этого рассказа он неизменно появлялся в своем белоснежном костюме, и так как явно нескольких белоснежных костюмов у него быть не могло, я представлял, что этот Аветик каждую ночь стирал свой костюм, а утром гладил его и выходил на улицу. [КиУ: 249]

Here the shift, from literary frills and furbelows to mundane reality, follows the same pattern as that seen above in the extension of

¹Discussed by Ryan-Hayes, "Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 213-14; Burlingame, "Prose of Iskander," 148; Packard, "Contemporary Soviet Satire," 49-58. Deming Brown notes the work's continual resorting to "parodies of Soviet polemical jargon, hollow sloganeering and journalese, sometimes in the form of newspaper headlines [.], but usually through the narrator's sly insertion of wooden official language into his own speech" (*Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin*, 209).

didactic defamiliarization. Iskander's is an aggregate decoding technique, one based on the explicit rejection of literary artificiality.

It is in this spirit that source citation clearly makes the boundaries between an alien source and its handling by an author whose own sincerity, whose 'trustworthiness,' can only gain by the contrast. Where the source is not a faceless bureaucratic abstraction but a human being, the treatment is not so rigidly satiric. But this is a matter of degree. Irony, however gentle, still casts an objective shadow on its target. Uncle Sandro, re-worded, exposes his own vanity in wanting 'to have his cake and eat it too,' to retain the love of both his mistress and the husband he has cuckolded:

Возможно, ему [мужу] нужно было, чтобы во время длительных охотнических отлучек в доме оставался расторопный и храбрый молодой человек, который мог бы развлекать княгиню, принимать гостей, а если надо, и защитить честь дома. Именно таким молодым человеком тогда был в те времена дядя Сандро. Так что муж княгини, *по словам дяди Сандро*, любил его не меньше самой княгини. [1979: 12; italics mine]

"According to the words of Uncle Sandro"--such is the source-citation. It seems important to retain the full literal translation, its tone of precise, almost academic quotation. They claim to reproduce Sandro's exact words, the better to buttress and support the obvious paraphrase that came before. For the "go-getter, brave young man" sounds very much like his own self-description; the mentality that places hospitality skills on par with the art of love and proposes to defend the honour of a home while dishonouring its hostess is surely Uncle Sandro's. As noted above, the bulk of Sandro's tales from Chegem's past are given in paraphrase; here the

focus is on the role and high frequency of, for the most part, entirely superfluous *verba dicendi* and their substitutes.

Sometimes the information referenced in this way plays a purely secondary, support role. Such are the extra details on the horse which saved a gambler from ruin (1979: 80); the added touch in pinpointing the exact size of Prince Ol'denburgskii's swan (1979: 60); the opportunistic dig at Endurians and their battle tactics (1979: 114); the practical flavour in Uncle Sandro's version of the difference between pre- and post-revolutionary authorities:

Раньше, по его словам, между гневом властей и хватанием за пистолет гораздо больше времени проходило и всегда можно было что-нибудь сообразить. [1979: 112; italics mine]

Sometimes they bear broader implications, portraying him in his self-assumed role as teacher and philosopher of life:

Подобно тому, как на скотном дворе стоит делать неосторожный шаг, как тут же угодить в коровью лепешку, так и в те времена, говорил дядя Сандро, носа не высунешь, чтобы не шмякнуть в какую-нибудь историю. [1979: 86; italics mine]¹

The dictum on riding crops as a measure of self-worth carries his rustic self-important imprint, but it is conveyed in the author's repetitive style of tongue-in-cheek pedantry. Note the excessive use of verbs of speech and feeling which pull the passage below in the opposite direction, away from the author, belabouring the point, as was seen in "Sea Scorpion," that this is indeed the charac-

¹See Uspenskii on the "narrative imperfective," its "synchronization of the points of view of author and character." Because it conveys the "present in the past," the narrative imperfective "places the reader directly in the centre of the scene described." (*Поэтика композиции*, 98-99). In terms of the present discussion, it re-creates the original relay-situation, it adds to the tone of authenticity sought by Iskander's source-citation technique.

ter's own philosophy. Here, of course, the emphatic redundancy strives for an ironic effect:

Дядя Сандро любил, спешившись, ходить вот так с камчой. Он чувствовал, что человек с камчой всегда производит благоприятное впечатление. Держа в руках камчу, прохаживаясь и постукивая ею по голенищу, дядя Сандро чувствовал, как в нем крепнет хозяйская готовность оседлать ближнего, тогда как та же камча нередко на глазах у дяди Сандро вызвала и укрепляла в ближнем способность быть оседланным. А у иных, замечал дядя Сандро, при взмахе камчи в глазах появлялась даже как бы робкая тоска по оседланности. [1979: 90]¹

Given the preponderance of indirect narration in the novel, source-citation offsets an editing process which would otherwise shunt the prime-narrators into the background, and shatter the oral illusion. Source-citation, particularly its insistently high frequency, partakes of the larger strategy of frame repetition, discussed above in the third chapter of this dissertation. Here it complements the editorial control of a relay-narrator who may colour his sources' tales with his own tones, but is nonetheless focused, in this role at least, on the *others* he reports. The relay-strategy,--specifically, the first-person relay-narrator,--of *Sandro* is closely connected with that seen in embryonic form in the earlier autobiographical cycles. Observation, authenticity and irony are applied to the reported others and the reporting self alike.² Their voices do not interpenetrate to form true polyphony. Overriding them all is an author who subjects them all, first-person

¹My interpretation runs directly counter that offered by Ryan-Hayes. She cites this passage as evidence of Iskander's preference for "neutral omniscience" and the "frequently unmotivated" excursions into Uncle Sandro's private thoughts ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 182).

²Lebedev notes the ironic distancing applied to character and author-narrator alike ("Смешно сказать" (1987), 198).

narrator included, to these distancing operations. He is the subject of narration; they are his objects.

To define the terms. Several recent Soviet studies of narration have come to favour "субъект повествования" and "субъект сознания" over Vinogradov's "образ автора." The latter is deduced from a work's components of style, its composition and the nature of its sujet; the new term focuses more strictly on the figure's inability to enter the text without the mediation of subjective or extra-subjective forms. Works incorporating the intermediary figure of a narrator raise the cardinal issue of establishing the degree of his or her proximity to the 'author.'¹ Self-conscious narration actively courts the illusion of a minimal distance between the two. In terms of its surface manifestation, this is the cumulative effect of the Shandian moments, the emphasis on disingenuousness, the rigid discretion of adult and child sensitivities in "School Waltz." It produces a well-defined 'subject of narration' who tends to overwhelm his 'object' (taken as the target or thematic material of the subject's

¹Казаркин, "Проблема автора в поэтике современного лирического рассказа," 198-199; Б.О. Корман, "Итоги и перспективы изучения проблемы автора," в кн. *Страницы истории русской литературы*, ред. Д.Ф. Марков (Москва: Наука, 1971), 200. A later article by Korman defines the 'author' as the "субъект сознания" responsible for the work as a whole and mediated by its subjective organization. In the case of multiple narration various degrees of proximity relate various subjects of consciousness, primary and secondary "субъекты речи." The more marked the surface actualization, the further it stands from the master subject ("Целостность литературного произведения и экспериментальный словарь литературоведческих терминов," в кн. *Проблемы истории критики и поэтики реализма* (Куйбышев: Куйбышевский гос. ун-т, 1981), 41-42). Particularly appealing in this terminological system is the notion of active (transitive) responsibility suggested by its analogy with conventional syntax. See also Korman's analysis of "автор" as used by Bakhtin: "Активность [...] есть неотделимое свойство автора как последней смысловой инстанции," which quality is discovered in the author's active handling of other's discourse. "Из наблюдений над терминологией М.М. Бахтина," в кн. *Проблема автора в русской литературе 19-20 вв.* (Ижевск: Межвузовский сборник, 1978), 186.

evaluation). The 'object of narration' in the autobiographical tales is divided into the child-protagonist, the world around him and the balance achieved between the distancing brought to bear on both. In *Sandro*, it breaks down into the Chegemian sources and a humble narrator.

This latter figure, specifically as a participant, suffers defeat whenever he deals with the Chegemers in any capacity other than that of their reporter and editor.¹ It is this facet of the narrator which reproduces Uncle Sandro's definition of himself as "глуповатый, но правительство любит" in an attempt to ward off the suspicions of the KGB (1979: 551). The defeat theme centres on Tengiz; it is expounded by Uncle Sandro:

ему [Тенгизу] доверили пистолет, значит, ему доверили стрелять в нужное время, а тебе (тут он неожиданно ткнул пальцем по колпачку авторучки, торчавшей из кармана моего пиджака) доверили этот пугач, и то ты боишься пугануть инженерчика из горсовета. [1979: 37]

The reference is to the narrator's failure to put his literary skills, as Uncle Sandro understands them, to practical use, to solve the old man's litigation problems with a well-worded attack. Tengiz comes to the rescue; Uncle Sandro exults in his victory, in the contrast between the two. As does the narrator himself. He returns to it, subjecting both himself and his rival to objective irony, devoting virtually an entire chapter, the tenth, to the purpose.² There a sec-

¹ Lesskis distinguishes between the "surface" and "deep-structure" narrators of Iskander's "Летним днем": the first participates directly in the events described and is bested by his German opponent in their debate; the second in re-creating that debate for the reader emerges as the ultimate victor ("Плюс козлотуризация всей страны").

² "Дядя Сандро и его любимец" is best known for the story of Stalin's fishing expedition. Even this segment can be seen to contribute to the conflict between Tengiz and the narrator. A contrast is drawn between the verdicts on Stalin pronounced by the former NKVD employee on the one hand and,

ond situational confrontation occurs, a second trial in which once again the man of letters loses to the man of force. The task set them by Uncle Sandro involves wresting justice from the dishonest director of a dental clinic--the piece was originally published separately under the title "Дядя Сандро и зубной врач" (*Труд*, 23 сентября 1973, с. 4). The only element of self-disparagement here lies in the narrator's reproducing, as before, a less than flattering comparison drawn by Uncle Sandro:

что бы ты сделал на месте Тенго? Ты бы, как нищий пенсионер, стоял в дверях, и ждал бы, пока директор не вернулся. Что сделал Тенгиз? Тенгиз вошел в кабинет и сел на директорское место. [1979: 374]

from which position he proceeds to blackmail the director into submission.

Where self-disparagement comes into its own is in the next segment, also published separately as "Случай на дороге" (*Труд*, 15 ноября 1973, с. 4). The narrator tries on Tengiz's "gladiatorial gloves" (1979: 313), mixing metaphoric eras in the process:

Они были тяжелые, и я почувствовал себя по локоть погруженным в средневековье. Я почувствовал, что центр тяжести моей сущности переместился в сторону моихотяжеленных рук. Я почувствовал легкое желание сжать в этих турнирных перчатках рыцарское копьё или меч.

Через мгновение, по-видимому, отсутствие остальных рыцарских доспехов вернуло меня в обычное миролюбивное состояние, и я задремал [...] [1979: 314]

There follows an equally eclectic string of other romantic, elevating comparisons attributing to his rival a Mephistophelean sense of self-worth (1979: 314), a dancer's physique (1979: 315), the indignation of a righteous man who has resisted temptation (1979: 317),

on the other, the narrator who in a different chapter supplies an epilogue with Stalin subpoenaed to the court of God (1979: 229). At several points during the fishing tale the two pause to challenge each other directly (1979: 296, 299, 304), always on the issue of their differing opinions of Stalin.

the stoic resignation of an emigré monarchist (1979: 318).¹ Against this array stands the one lone simile applied to himself as Tengiz mounts his motorcycle. It is hardly complimentary:

Я, сам не понимая как, мгновенно вывалился из коляски. Кажется, он вытряхнул меня из нее, как фасолину из перезрелого стручка. [1979: 315]

In short, what the Tengiz theme does is furnish an external, fabula-based platform for the realization of Iskander's famous self-irony. There are many other less than flattering self-portraits in the novel. Among them: that of the dissident sycophant angling for a restaurant invitation from a highly placed official (1979: 489-93); of the student who attends underground literary readings in part for the food and drink served at their end (1979: 31-32); the nervous junior reporter who feels "предательские волны теплоты" to-

¹Iskander's use of remote romantic metaphors for character delineation deserve separate study. The general pattern would seem to be one of hyperbole for deflation, as in the various descriptions of Tengiz, above. These combine into a mock-encomium; they are belied by the petty dealings of this minor traffic policeman on a backwater road. A similar treatment of the sexually vainglorious Marat builds towards true burlesque, bursting at the seams with classical and medieval allusions (Chapter 24). More important is the eclectic abandon of such similes: they are stacked one upon the other in true aggregate/segregate fashion. Instead of Dostoevskii's polyphonic avoidance of "external portraits [for a] stable, pre-determined image" (Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 81), Iskander offers a surfeit of allusions to pre-set value systems. This is the spirit in which Chapter Two explodes into an exuberant mass of comparisons for Uncle Sandro: his profile belongs on a [Roman] coin; his face breathes an aura of Byzantine perversion; his expression is that of a venerable lion; he does not wash his feet, but performs [Biblical] ablutions with "fragrant oils" (1979: 27). He surveys the beach with the imperious air of an admiral incognito; though semi-literate he reads the newspaper with the assurance of a pre-revolutionary professor (1979: 37); he winds his way through café tables like a dandified prophet complete with staff (1979: 54). The element of travesty was forefronted in an interim title for the chapter briefly known as "Труды и дни дяди Сандро" (see app. 2, no. 2). The author-narrator's role in all this hyperbolic activity is that of *iron* to each *alazon*. Significantly, Stalin is not accorded even these spurious trappings of grandeur. For comment on the use of Graeco-Roman imagery and effective mixed metaphor, see Burlingame, "Prose of Iskander," 135, 142.

wards his petty tyrant of a boss (1979: 417); the jilted lover who misses even the most blatant evidence of his betrayal (1979: 527-30, 534-35). These are the confessions of a writer who admits he carved a career out of a device which lets him lull the reader into a false sense of superiority (1979: 522).

The last admission points to a double purpose: on the one hand, self-deprecation promotes what Deming Brown has diagnosed as an "intimately self-disparaging attitude [which] serves to disarm and ingratiate the reader."¹ On the other, it reveals the higher manipulation sought by that same sly ingratiation. Substitute 'writer' for 'Endurian' in Uncle Sandro's maxim below, and the entire strategy is laid bare:

-- Эндурец, признающий коварство эндурцев, [...] это и есть самый коварный эндурец. Признавая коварство эндурцев, он делает нас добродушными, а потом уже через наше добродушие еще легче добивается своих эндурских целей. [1981: 33]

In order to pursue his own deep-laid ends, the author is prepared to subject his mouthpiece, the textual 'actualization' of his own voice, to all manner of deliberate debasement. What was mechanically distinct in the autobiographical tales--the child-protagonist and his ironic treatment by an adult narrator--is now somewhat less obviously, but just as rigidly separate in *Sandro*. The author as subject takes advantage of the narrator as object. He may use every possible means to cover his tracks, to encourage his

¹Deming Brown, "Narrative Devices in the Contemporary Soviet Short Story," 60. Ryan-Hayes discusses the ploy under the heading of "the intaglio method" and stresses its satiric advantages: "[Iskander's] self mockery functions to stimulate the reader's sympathy and to nudge him into a frame of mind in which he will more readily accept sharp satiric thrusts" ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 127, 129).

identification with the 'real-life' Iskander--the authenticity of all autobiographical details, the unprecedented scope of internal and external cross-referencing, even the unquestionably genuine confession. Ultimately, however, his is the objective autobiography of an objectified first-person.

A writer is an "observer of life"--the definition is found in *Sandro* (1979: 527). The dispassionate observer's eye was applied first to his childhood self in "School Waltz" and its adjunct tales. There, as Burlingame points out, Iskander uses concrete detail "more often than not [...] to illuminate the narrator's or someone else's state of mind." She cites the shoelaces described at length to convey the narrator's self-pity in "Рассказ о море," his spite-ridden portrayal of a sister nibbling at pork fat in "Запретный плод."¹ The meticulous accumulation of detail is designed to project these inner states outward, to objectify them and their bearers, the child-narrator no less than his neighbours, friends and family. This is a democratic equality of self and other; irony--self and other targeted--is merely its most obvious surface manifestation.² It was the delicately balanced objective autobiography discovered in the childhood cycle that paved the way to the unique symbiosis of first- and third-person, of self and other focuses in his masterwork, *Sandro*.

Objective autobiography is a fluid medium, and has been so from the outset of Iskander's career. Even the lyric evocation of

¹Burlingame, "Prose of Iskander," 131.

²See Ivanova's assertion: "Смех Искандера не направлен «сверху вниз» от автора или лирического повествователя -- к герою. Он работает на всех уровнях: направлен даже на авторского «я» ("Смех против страха" (1988а), 225).

one's own past is subject to--not ironic, but specifically *lyric* distancing. For all its tradition-hallowed association with subjectivity, lyricism can, after all, reduce the immediacy of the inner state described often by simply elevating it. Compare Iskander's commendation of an autobiographical childhood collection by a younger contemporary as

тот чистый случай, когда взрослый хорошо помнит свое детство и все время возвращается туда, чтобы *говорить от имени того мира, где все чувствуется радостно, выпукло, сильно.*¹

This is how Kazarkin analyzes the dynamic author-narrator relationship in Iskander's own childhood tales:

Позиция автора двойна: то приближается к сказовому ироническому отношению автора к рассказчику, то к искреннему доверию к нему. Иронический зачин сменяется вдумчивым, серьезным самоанализом, но элегические мотивы уступают место иронической концовке. [...] Остается ощущение неполной тождественности автора и рассказчика, рассказчика и героя. Иронические рассказы о собственном детстве могли появиться только на фоне «исповедальной» прозы -- как реакция на однолинейность выработанной манеры лирического повествования. Автоирония прежде не касалась области воспоминаний о детстве и детских впечатлениях.²

There the confessional lyric short story courted minimal author/narrator distance not on the surface level, but on the deeper stratum of "trust" and value systems. This is the 'serious' side of Iskander.

'Seriousness' can go so far as to disrupt the narrative by means of what Leiderman calls "lyrico-publicistic digressions."³

¹Фазиль Искандер, предисловие к кн. Н.Я. Булгакова *Я иду гулять: Повесть и рассказы* (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1976), 5. Italics mine

²Казаркин, "Проблема автора в поэтике современного русского рассказа," 202.

³Лейдерман, *Движение времени*, 74, 234. See also Chudakova's arguments for maximum author/narrator proximity in "serious prose," its forerunner Dombrovskii, its most promising adept Iskander, and the stylistic consequences of alignment in both--an unabashedly literary style (Чудакова, "Заметки о языке современной прозе," 240). It is perhaps appropriate, in light of Chudakova's comments, that Iskander should have written the introductory

Though the term may at first glance seem to contain a self-contradiction--the disinterestedness of one, the persuasive aim of the other--they join forces in their common opposition to ambivalence. In both cases the 'author,' the 'subject of narration'--call the central ideological factor what you will,--vouchsafes for and commits the full powers of persuasion towards the object. Among the many passages in "School Waltz" importing this tone of unambiguous commitment stand the essay-digressions on rationality, understatement and fidelity, cited above. Their lesser number in *Sandro* reflects the original conception of the work as a parody on the picaresque,¹ as well as a considerable transference of these intonations to the third-person (for example, in Zenon, the transparent mouthpiece of "Утраты"). Yet there too the author-narrator occasionally holds forth in his own voice: the stern pathos of the exile scenes of Chapters Seven and Fifteen; the debate on morality in fiction of Chapter Twenty-Five (1979: 540-43); the philippic on civilization and culture that begins "О хроническая нечистоплотность человеческого племени!" (1979: 535-36); the academic comparison between Turgenevian women and Tolstoi's perennially pregnant heroines which manages to encompass Shakespeare, Flaubert, Dostoevskii and reminiscences of Iskander's student days at the Literary Institute ("Черемская Кармен," *Знамя* 1986:12, с. 11-13); the theosophical digressions of Chapters Five and Eleven, et cetera. An all-too sincere urgency invades the well-known foray into Stalin's

remarks to the most recent Soviet publication of *Факультет ненужных вещей*.
 See *Новый мир* 1988:8, с. 5.

¹See the Author's Preface to the novel (1979: 7).

soul (1979: 217-20), lending it the force of invective.¹ For the author who delves so deeply into a character's murderous thoughts conveys his own condemnation first by means of the twisted eloquence he lavishes on them, and then, for good measure, by referring their perpetrator to the "highest punishment" of God (1979: 229).

Still less ambiguous, in "School Waltz," is the episode dealing with ideological doublethink and political about-faces. The boy's favourite teacher has been forced to tell the class to avoid the word 'fascist' after the signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939:

Все ждали, что Александра Ивановна как-то пояснит свои слова, но она ничего не говорила. Помню, хорошо помню красные пятна, которые пошли по морщинистым щекам нашей учительницы.

To qualify the accuracy of the memory would be entirely out of place here. It would drive a wedge between the child recalled and the recalling narrator, when the shame is meant to be shared by both, the better to be passed on to the reader:

Тот стыд, который я тогда испытал и который в какой-то мере охватил весь класс, я никогда не забуду.

После этого много раз в жизни мы видели эти повороты на сто восемьдесят градусов, которые никто не пытался нам как-то объяснить. Казалось, самым отсутствием какого-либо правдоподобного объяснения зигзагов политики тот, кто вершил ее, проверял полноту своей власти над нами. [КиУ: 261]

When his beloved Uncle Riza falls victim to the arrests of the 1930s, the terror is recalled in totally straightforward terms that

¹Ryan-Hayes compares Stalin's interior monologue in *Sandro* to that offered by Solzhenitsyn in *The First Circle*. Both bear the imprint of maximum authorial intrusion, Iskander's "crosses the line between satire and pathos" ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 179). Nivat compares Iskander's application of the interior monologue to Stalin with those by Maksimov, Dumbrovskii and Simonov. All strive to find a "key to the coherency" of the man--in my terms, to reach a definitive, author-directed judgment ("Les Stalines de la littérature russe," 118).

branch off into a philosophical reflection on the hypnotic nature of fear and its nemesis--laughter (КНУ: 270).¹

All types of proximity (Shandian, confessional and publicistic) are manifest, together with their opposite (the originality of injecting irony into confessional reminiscences). They are not blended, but compiled. This both fragments the narrative and yet creates a dynamism centred on the first-person. Specifically, it is a dynamism of static moments strung together on that first-person's lyric free-association, which forefronts the 'subject of narration' even as its narrative intermediary reveals a strange reticence with regard to and rigorous isolation from his ostensible object, his childhood self. This is the principle, developed in the autobiographical cycles, that stands behind the unique mosaic of *Sandro*.²

¹Iskander's most ambitious effort in wholly serious "lyrico-publicism" is his "Кролики и удавы," aptly sub-titled "Философская сказка." It has been compared to Orwell's political allegory in Richard L. Chapple, "Fazil Iskander's *Rabbits and Boa Constrictors*: A Soviet Version of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*," *Germano-Slavica* 5, no. 11 (1987): 33-47. The "Широколобий" chapter of *Sandro* bears comparison, on the basis of its animal protagonist no less than the total absence of any second, ironic perspective.

²Compare a similar assessment by Andreeva: "Критики много спорили о романе *Сандро из Чезема*, считая его новым, поворотным в творчестве писателя. Но ведь он построен по тому принципу, который был найден автором в рассказах о детстве: каждый фрагмент, каждый эпизод получал самостоятельную ценность, и в то же время они свободно, произвольно были соединены между собой образом или, точнее, интонацией рассказчика." (Андреева, "Владелец счастья," 12-13.)

Удивительное дело: чем дальше географически я нахожусь от Чегема, тем больше я о нем думаю, и тем отчетливее я его вижу перед своим мысленным взором.¹

CHAPTER 6

RETICENCE AND EXEGIS: COY COMMENTARY

What aspects of Iskander's first-person enter *Sandro*? Foremost--the forefronting of the narrator as a major cementing factor; the remarkable ease of intonation when the author-narrator chooses to play with form or take advantage of the Sternian method to digress. The discursive freedom was considered above, in the analyses of oral illusion and the chapter "Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат." Of particular interest is its rising frequency in the macrostructure of the novel towards its end.² And this is perhaps related to other, deeper carry-overs from the pattern established in Iskander's early autobiographical tales: the restricted insight into and emotional isolation from the child; the rigid segregation of the past and present; in terms of narrative participation the preference for a humbler peripheral, at most semi-participatory status; the dominant present perspective; and the narrator's ability to conduct straightforward reflections on his craft in a 'gently ironic' environment.

All would seem to hinge on the matter of reticence. One of the most striking anomalies to have emerged from Iskander's ap-

¹Voice-over introduction to "Чегемский детектив," 1986.

²См. Брикер и Дальгор, "Сандро и магический реализм," 108; Вайль и Генис, "Сталин на чегемском карнавале," 168.

parent lack of concern with editing or adjusting pre-published pieces when incorporating them into a larger structure has to do with the relationship between Uncle Sandro and the narrator.¹ In Chapter One, the narrator simply listens, records and offers limited if trenchant comment on the old man's tales. He rises from the modest rank of relay- to participant-narrator only in the second chapter, which is devoted to their first encounter, only to recede to his original relay-comment status for the bulk of the tales from Chegem's past. In Chapter Two, at the end of a visit to some unidentified relatives in Chegem, he is accosted by a nameless old man who asks him to take a pot of honey back to town with him and give it to his, the old man's brother. The narrator is reluctant:

Дело было не из приятных. Тащить с ним [с жбаном меда] километров десять до автобуса, а там еще искать в городе *какого-то Сандро* [...]

[...] что за охота тащить к *этому Сандро*. [...]

На следующий день я не без труда нашел участок *дяди Сандро*, как я его потом называл. Впрочем, так его называл чуть ли не весь город. [1979:25-26; italics mine]

The epithet "дядя" in this chapter at least is apparently to be understood in its broadest sense of friendly respect for an elder. There is no kinship between the two. The old man is not quite a stranger though:

Кстати они [родственники рассказчика] мне напомнили, что речь идет о *том самом Сандро*, который до войны жил недалеко от дедушкиного дома. Потом уже после наших первых встреч в городе я, как это бывает, вспомнил многое, связанное с его жизнью в деревне, но тогда напоминание о нем мне почти ничего не сказало. [1979:25; italics mine]

¹To date the only critic to have commented on the discrepancy is Ryan-Hayes, in her consideration and qualified rejection of the novel's claim to polyphony ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 207).

Significantly, this admission is missing from the earliest publication of the piece (*Сельская молодежь* 1969:2, с. 28)); its entry dates only to the first compilation in *Новый мир* (1973:8, с. 162). It would be possible to interpret the addition as no more than a quibbling manoeuvre, were it not for a second addition symbolically emphasizing the out-of-kilter intersection of the narrator's and the old man's worlds:

слава его [дяди Сандро]. как одного из лучших украшателей стола, веселого и мудрого тамады, продолжала расти и ко времени моего с ним знакомства достигла внушительных размеров, хотя я тогда ничего об этом не знал. Я как бы жил в другом измерении и, раз выйдя из него, стал встречать дядю Сандро или слышать его имя гораздо чаще. [1979:33]¹

On the face of it, Uncle Sandro's upgrading from imposing old gentleman to Abkhazia-wide celebrity has simply prompted a more intricate justification. The procedure resembles that of Iskander's slapdash transitions: it does more to point out than smooth over any incongruities. And like those same transitions it demonstrates aggregation/segregation at its best: the passage foreshadows the novel's overlaying of two authorial positions--within and without the narrated world.²

Elsewhere throughout the novel, the honorific "дядя"³ is consistently used whenever Uncle Sandro is mentioned by the narrator.

¹The passage is present in the first publication of this excerpt, which however dates a full three years after the first release of the chapter's original kernel (see "Труды и дни дяди Сандро," *Крокодил* 1972:32, с. 6).

²Classic examples of this tactic, cited by Atarova and Lesskis, are *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and *Brothers Karamazov* ("Семантика и структура повествования от третьего лица," 46). Once again, Iskander does not innovate, but rather pushes to an extreme latent generic characteristics, in this case, the ambivalent possibilities of transitional narrative forms.

³Unlike critics or periodical editors of the novel, Iskander resorts to the more saccharine "дядюшка Сандро" only once, though not in the work itself, but in an interview ("Живите интересно!" (интервью), 4). For examples of

Such consistency seems almost exclusively his prerogative. Denomination was shown, in the discussion of aphorism and allegory, to play a considerable role in Iskander's declarative system.¹ Other characters may occasionally vary into 'Sandro Chegemskii' (1979: 191), 'Sandro Chegemba' (applying the Abkhazian surname suffix *-ba* ; 1979:195-96), 'Sandro Khabugovich,' (1979: 443) 'Comrade Sandro' (1979: 300, 310, 511) and simply 'Sandro' (used by Khabug's mule throughout that worthy animal's tale, as well as in the chapter centred on Sandro's sister Кама, "Большой день Большого Дома"). The author-narrator, however, retains 'Uncle Sandro' even at the risk of redundancy, which risk is once again blithely encountered. A mountaineer Svan asks: "это правда, что знаменитый тамада Бичико лопнул, когда хотел перепить Сандро Чегемского?" His friend chimes in: "А сам Сандро что говорит?" The author-narrator replies:

-- Дядя Сандро говорит, -- начал я, чувствуя неожиданное воодушевление и не понимая, что хмелею [...] [1979:519]

commentators not as sensitive to the fixed quality of his naming principles, see *Сельская молодежь* 1970:10, с. 22; Клепикова, [Примечание], 29; Эвентов, "Наказание смехом," 203.

¹ Compare the changing surnames of the somewhat less than politically steadfast journalist Levan Gol'ba-Gol'bidze-Gol'bia (1979:183-84). His Abkhazian (*-ba*), Georgian and (*-idze*) and Mingrelian (*-ia*) variants are chosen to suit the prevailing political winds. Much is made of the fact that all are pseudonyms; some fun is poked at the Byzantine habit of reading too much significance into such political trivia. The name is suspiciously close to that of Lev Gol'dinov, author of the vitriolic article against "Goatibex" ("Вопреки правде жизни," 2) and target of the author's indignation in *Sandro* (1979: 530). In this context, the Russian or Russifying suffix *-ov* sounds suspect. More recent publications of "Кутеж" bear out this hypothesis, as the author-narrator protests: "Зачем тебе, Гольба, защищать честь абхазцев от меня, абхаца (*Нева* 1989:3, 46; 1989 кн. 3: 277), where the substitution of *Гольба* (1989) for *Гольдинов* (1979) would seem to represent the sole revision over a ten-year hiatus.

In that particular chapter ("Хранитель гор") the name has not only intoxicating but also talismanic powers: revealing his friendship with Uncle Sandro saves the narrator from a ticklish situation. It can be no less obviously redundant in the author's text. Quoting only in part:

-- А ты Ной Жордания, что ли? -- ответил тот, что был у лошади, роясь, как теперь догадался дядя Сандро, в его дорожной сумке. И хотя сумка была пустая, дяде Сандро такое дело совсем не понравилось. [...]
 -- Я -- Сандро из Чегема! -- гордо крикнул дядя Сандро [...]
 [1979:17]

As the inveterate rogue wriggles out from under Stalin's suspicious gaze:

Ну и ну, думал дядя Сандро, как это я вспомнил, что нас снимали в кино? Ай-да Сандро, думал дядя Сандро, хмелея от радости и гордясь собой. [...] Не хотел я быть на месте того, с кем он меня спутал, думал дядя Сандро, радуясь, что он Сандро Чегемский, а не тот человек, с кем его спутал вождь. [1979: 207]

Uspenskii's discussion of viewpoint on the "phraseological plane" notes the alternating of various appellations for a single character, their frequent "collision" in a single phrase or adjacent text segments.¹ He is primarily interested, however, in variations directly within the author's text. These in his opinion can point to a "functional alternation of the author's position," the standpoint adopted on a particular fictitious individual.² When the author's text is invaded by character-names bestowed by other characters, it has opened itself to "elements of another's text."³ In other words, such variation can point to a plurality of opinion. Conversely, Iskander's strict compartmentalization, together with

¹Успенский, *Поэтика композиции*, 43.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 46.

the fixed nature of his own author's standpoint on 'Uncle Sandro' echoes on this rudimentary level the larger strategy of segregation.

To underscore the distance between them, the narrator addresses his 'new' acquaintance by means of the formal "вы," and does so throughout the novel. This despite the fact that the polite use of the plural is still felt to be an innovation in Abkhazian:

Абхазы говорят между собой на «ты» [...], но при этом обычно добавляют «оправдательную фразу», смысл которой состоит в том, что обращение на «ты» вполне в нормах абхазской вежливости.¹

Perhaps the author-narrator's use of "вы" in what after all purports to be a translation condenses such circumlocutory formalities. The sole exception occurs in the twenty-fifth chapter, "Кутеж," where he slips into the more intimate form twice, first in reporting his own inner thoughts and then, as though emboldened by such preliminaries, in direct address (1979: 537, 548). On both these occasions, he complains of the consequences of having written about the old rascal. This internal cross-referencing, with its Romantic-ironic roots,² emphasizes the narrator's role as author of a work in progress. The result is a two-edged *compilative* relationship between the two: as Watson to Uncle Sandro's Holmes, the participant-narrator prefers вы; as Conan Doyle, superior to the eccentric protagonist at his editorial mercy, he may venture into ты. In any event, the predominant use of вы stands in sharp contrast for the more familiar thou-form when addressing no less senior characters, such as, for example, Kiazym (1979:582) or Kunta (1979:602).

¹Инал-ипа, *Очерки об абхазском этикете*, 161, 167.

²An analogous passage is to be found in the chapter "Табу," КИУ: 13. See app. 7.

The narrator's use of "дядя" is even more complex an issue. There are two Abkhazian equivalents: *абшья* and *аншья*, for 'father's brother' and 'mother's brother,' respectively. The literal translation, 'blood of' each respective parent, eloquently conveys the profound seriousness with which kinship ties are, to this day, taken. Standing throughout the three millennia of this proud people's history in the absence of any effective centralized authority as "the institution which integrated Abkhazia into a nation,"¹ the breadth, intricacy and ongoing social significance of Abkhazian clan structure is overwhelming. Paternal ties coalesce into the *ажыла* or 'family, lineage,' traced to a common ancestor-eponym; this is subdivided into the *абипара* or 'generation, sons of one father,' closer to the European concept of the extended family.² The increasing popularity of clan gatherings has been seen as an antidote to today's greater social mobility: while young people may scatter to various urban centres, they are encouraged to reassemble regularly so as to ensure *аубабара* or 'kinship contact.'³

Maternal ties embrace the greater emotional weight, as well as a more elaborate code of obligations and taboos. The relationship between a maternal uncle and his sister's offspring is considered the "closest, the most respected,"⁴ even "the most intimate and sacred tie."⁵ So much so that all maternal relatives, however dis-

¹Sula Bennet, *Abkhazians: The Long-Living People of the Caucasus* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1974), 49.

²Ю.Г. Аргун, А.П. Павленко, Н.Х. Слишца, "Фамильно-родовая система и брачные ареалы," в сб. *Абхазское долгожителство*, ред. В.И. Козлов (Москва: Наука, 1987), 67, 68.

³*Ibid.*, 70.

⁴Ишал-ипа, *Абхазы: историко-этнографические очерки*, 379.

⁵Bennet, *Abkhazians*, 52.

tant, whatever the actual age relationship, are addressed as *аншъа*.¹ When, following the losses incurred by the Turkish exile and Russian annexation, the Abkhazian social structure shifted from exclusively kinship to mixed kinship/territorial parameters, the honorific *аншъа* was extended to any inhabitant of one's mother's native village.² The author-narrator, having told us in Chapter Two that he was visiting his maternal grandfather's house in Chegem, could therefore have called his 'new' acquaintance *uncle* on traditional Abkhazian grounds. Instead of waiting for the more Russified sanction of the urban population of Mukhus. Compare, from the same chapter in all versions, Sandro's remark to the narrator: "Мы, земляки, должны друг другу помогать" (1979: 31, italics mine).

The extended obligations imposed by the extended family receive humorous comment in *Sandro*. Beside them, the Bolshevik-Menshevik divisions of the Civil War are a temporary encumbrance:

Как только меньшевики объявили село Закрытым Городом и стали ограничивать впуск и выпуск людей из села, жители его с особенной остротой стали переживать вынужденную разлуку с близкими [..]

¹The custom, noted by virtually every writer on the subject, is even explained by Bagrat Shinkuba, who shares with Iskander the perspective of writing in a semi-fictitious mode about Abkhazians, primarily for a Russian audience. Shinkuba lays special emphasis on the connotations of seniority and respect carried by the epithet *дядя*: his main protagonist, aged one hundred years, applies it to the relay-narrator, a thirty-year-old Russified Abkhazian. Shinkuba's novel echoes the central frame of *Sandro*, that of relay-narration, and more importantly, the elegiac impulse of recording the first-hand evidence of a disappearing generation. Of note too is the particular veneration required of a son of an exogamous marriage, dwelt on at length by Shinkuba (*Последний из ушедших*, 20, примечание). Iskander's mother was Abkhazian, his father Persian, Chegem and Mukhus the fictional representations of their respective worlds.

²Аргун, Павленко, и Спицына, "Фамильно-родовая система," 67, 70-71.

А как быть с освященной древними традициями необходимостью побывать на свадьбе и других родовых торжествах? А дежурство у посетителя больного родственника? А годовщина смерти, а сорокодневье? Я уж не говорю о свежих похоронах. [1979: 87]

Similarly, Soviet political considerations take second place to the respect due the remains of a relative. The authorities are hindered in their investigation of a non-existent murder by the kinfolk of the supposed victim. Under no circumstances must the bones be defiled--which makes their (the bones') identification, transportation and possible use as material evidence in court the subject of intricate, not to say hilarious negotiations (1979:163-70).¹

Politics confronts kinship throughout the novel--thematic instances of a compilative method that must continually reproduce but can never resolve inert oppositions. As his infant daughter lies deathly ill, Uncle Sandro manipulates lip-service to fatherly concern for the more modern interests of a political career. He begs leave of absence from a command performance for Stalin in order to relish the flattery of being himself begged to reconsider. Present at the sick bed are several distant relatives visiting Mukhus to sell

¹Other bones-and-burial episodes occur in the "Чегемские сплетни" chapter, and the mythoid digression on Lenin, in which all the ills of the Soviet regime are traced to Stalin's deliberately blasphemous treatment of Lenin under the guise of--to give it its Abkhazian pronunciation--the "Амаволей" (1981: 64-66; considerably softened in the not-quite гласный version of *Юность* 1988:2, с. 13). In the "Запа" chapter of "Стоянка человека" village elders apply "патриархальную хитрость" to prevent Russian anthropologists from disturbing the mouldering remains of unknown ancestors (*Знамя* 1989:7, с. 13-16). At the end of *Sandro*, when Chegem lies in ruins, the author offers a hypothetical vision of children playing in some distant future with the bones of its villagers (1979: 600). The scene was interpreted by Briker and Dal'gor as embodying the circular time of magic realism, where all things return to their beginnings (Брикер и Дальгор, "Сандро и магический реализм," 104, 111). Though ironically treated, the concern is specifically emphasized as a traditional one. Compare Dzhankhukh's all-inclusive respect for tradition, even its minutest aspects in the homily: "Народ не может жить без святынь, [...] вера в главную святыню порождает множество малых святынь, необходимых для повседневной жизни [...]" (1981: 210). In this context, the critics' conclusion seems open to debate.

their mountain produce. Not for the world would they insult their host's family feeling by taking lodging in a state-run hostel:

Нельзя сказать, что такая верность родственным узам взволновала дядю Сандро. Пожалуй, он ничуть не обиделся бы. [1979:193]

When the summons to rejoin his dance troupe finally arrives, he swears "by Nestor" (by Lakoba,--essentially, the Abkhazian head of state)¹ that the girl will recover. His rural relatives are impressed: "Именем Нестора не всякому разрешают клясться" (1979:194). Indeed, the traditional practice is to swear by a beloved member of one's family; as the author duly informs us, Sandro's claiming political kin is a sop to his conscience for neglecting blood ties. The headstone of this multiple overlay construction is the hearth, or rather its conspicuous absence in the scene, suffered stoically by the patriarchal visitors from Chegem: "Без живого огня дом казался чегемцу нежилым, вроде канцелярии" (1979:193). Thus the homologation 'family/politics,' 'country/town,' 'tradition/intrigue,' 'home/office,' yields by way of aggregation the member 'true/false.'²

In this spiralling series, the hearth is a recurrent feature, site of many an idyllic family gathering (as in "Бригадир Кязым," "Большой

¹Lakoba, Nestor Apollonovich (1893-1936). Active in the early Bolshevik movement in the Caucasus; president of the Abkhazian Council of People's Commissars from 1922, president of the Abkhazian Central Committee 1930-1936" (Glossary to *Sandro of Chegem*, 366). Lakoba himself is portrayed in relatively human, unofficial terms: for example, the illegal use of his car is punished by his kin as an "offence against the clan" (1979: 181)

²Kiazym contrasts people who work in offices with those who toil in the fields, specifically, their reaction to the Terror of the 1930s: "Тех, кто зарабатывает свой хлеб под казенной крышей, все время точит страх, что их выгонят из-под этой крыши. А когда их на самом деле выгоняют, у них уже нет запаса сил, чтобы сохранить свое достоинство." Peasants are not so encumbered and therefore more dignified (1981: 97). Ivanova contrasts bureaucratic agoraphobia with Khabug's insistence that the Big House never shut its door: ("Сои разума рождает чудовищ" (1988), 4).

день," and "Тали"), prompting one critic to hypothesize that the word 'Chegem' derives from 'очар.'¹ "The hearth," notes a contemporary ethnographer,

symbolizes the family unity. [...] Both the hearth and the chain above it are considered sacred to the Abkhazians. In the past, a man took an oath by placing his right hand on the family chain.²

House and home are no less important members: Khabug's 'Big House' stands as the concrete symbol of his extended family and patriarchal benevolence; all of world literature according to Iskander falls into the categories of home and homelessness ("литература достигнутой гармонии и литература тоски по гармонии," respectively);³ his own effort seeks to recall the human family to that all-embracing shelter:

То, что пишу я, скорее, представляет «литературный дом», хотя подчас эти стенки разрушаются, и повествование выходит за его пределы, но и тогда я стараюсь преодолеть «бездомье», замкнуть его в «литературный дом».⁴

With regard to the negative wing of the politics/family opposition, consider the comment made by Katerina Clark:

the core rhetoric of the Stalin years sought to legitimize the state and its leadership by using kinship analogies to give them a spurious organicity by invoking metaphors from the epic tribal state of society.⁵

¹ Андреева, "Владелец счастья," 13.

² Веннет, *Abkhazians*, 54.

³ Искандер, "Судьбы романа," 3.

⁴ Он же, "Человек и судьба" (интервью), 4. Iskander's curious complex of bounded/unbounded space motifs awaits untangling. It ranges from literary shelter to the moral claustrophobia of government offices and includes the justly famous passage on walls as the site universally favoured by firing squads,--brick and mortar salves to the conscience of hangmen (1979: 134).

⁵ Katerina Clark, "Utopian Anthropology as a Context for Stalinist Literature," in *Stalinism Essays in Historical Interpretation*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1977), 180-81.

On allegiance to the state:

The rationalization for this attachment was found in the analogy between the entire Soviet state and a 'family' or 'tribe.' Soviet Russians were urged to jettison their sense of family based on real blood relationships and to replace it with a higher one based on political kinship.¹

When Stalin, dining with his henchmen, complains that Caucasian blood ties are too strong, the context is one of inverse confirmation: they are to be manipulated for political gain, as he suggests a loose-tongued Old Bolshevik be kept in check by imprisoning his innocent brother (1979: 222).² Tali, Sandro's daughter, is a reverse Pavlik Morozov. The most popular song in her repertoire is "Гибель челюскинцев" (1979:369, 371, bowdlerized to "Марш челюскинцев" in Soviet publications of her chapter)³--reference to the Cheliuskin Arctic Expedition of 1934, a prominent target of the 'political family' rhetoric of the decade.⁴ When she runs off with her lover, she abandons her prize from the tobacco-threading context, a set of records featuring Stalin's speeches. From her mother's keening at her loss:

в поминальный речитатив стал с некоторой блудливой настойчивостью вкрадываться [...] мотив бедного, безвременно осиротевшего вождя, который от чистого сердца прислал ей свой голос, а она его бросила, как бросила свою бедную мать. [1979:391]

Stalin, the false "father of his peoples" ("отец всех народов, кроме высланных в Сибирь и Казахстан," 1979: 184), has been rejected so that Tali may found a new, true family: the birth of her twin sons starts the

¹Ibid.

²The most recent version of the chapter identifies the erring brother as one Tsulukidzhe, a personal enemy of Beria (1989/1: 259-60).

³*Новый мир* 1973:10, с. 104, 105; *СнЧ* (1977): 446, 447.

⁴See Clark, "Utopian Anthropology as a Context for Stalinist Literature," 189-191.

process of reconciliation with the old true clan it but temporarily eclipsed.

Family ties bear structural as well as thematic significance; segregated from state or ideological values in the potentially infinite series of contrasts sketched above, they also contribute to the novel's ongoing expansion through the simplest of aggregation techniques--mere addition and identification. Throughout the three decades of the novel's ongoing growth, genealogy has served as a major surface link, providing guidelines to the bewildering proliferation of characters that flit through its pages with many an abrupt shift in status from spear-carrier to central figure of a digression, mini-tale or full-scale chapter. To a man, woman or child every character, even the non-fictional celebrities among them, is outfitted with some form of family status: Stalin dreams torturously of his mother (1979: 219), Beria squabbles with his wife (1979: 210-11, 223), Voroshilov all but dances the twist with his granddaughter (1979: 427-29). Khabug as the novel's *pater familias* produces a confusingly (and, one suspects, deliberately imprecise) number of children.¹ As founder of Chegem, having turned its first sod upon his return from the Turkish exile (1979: 248, 600), Khabug becomes the saga's first cause and repository of its historical pathos; his "Big House," in Abkhazian *a-indu*, for the parental

¹At one point, Khabug is said to have five sons (1979: 141), whereas the later chapter "Большой день Большого Дома" implies six: Sandro, Navei, Makhaz, Isa, Kiazum and possibly Aziz. In "Бригадир Кязым," the title character mentions yet another "brother," one Nuri, residing in "town" (1981: 91). The issue is further confused by the liberality of Russian kinship terms (e.g. the habit of referring to cousins, *двоюродные братья*, as simply *братья* or 'brothers'), not to mention the generous breadth of Abkhazian terminology (see Bennet, *Abkhazians*, 49-66).

home surrounded by the cabins of grown-up sons,¹ emerges as the concrete symbol of the extended family, a concept which in that culture can embrace mere neighbours or even an entire village.²

Within this double-barrelled play of contrast and expansion, Uncle Sandro true to picaresque type stands as moral man-in-the-middle. His allegiance to the call of his own flesh varies. He can claim his own mother inherited her sense of humour from him (БДБД: 199). When it comes to a choice between defending his daughter's honour and presiding as tamada over a promising feast, duty is followed only with a noticeable wrench (1979: 378). When convenient, he is not loathe to exaggerate his connection with the famous Abkhazian outlaw Shchashchiko:

-- Если меня убьете, за меня отомстит Щашико! -- гордо крикнул дядя Сандро. [...]

-- Он мой двоюродный брат, -- ответил дядя Сандро, хотя Щашико был ему *только земляком*. [1979:17; italics mine]

where earlier versions read "в очень далеком родстве" (*Новый мир* 1973:8, с. 157; СиЧ 1977:245). When times change, Uncle Sandro can just as conveniently distance himself and, more importantly, justify the about-face on the grounds of clarifying true kinship ties:

Он вспомнил, что в сущности Щашико ему даже не двоюродный брат, а гораздо более далекий родственник. Раньше, когда Щашико гремел по всей Абхазии как великий абрек, он свылся с мыслью, что Щашико его двоюродный брат. И хотя он продолжал уважать память великого абрека, он теперь с необыкновенной ясностью вспомнил, что в сущности родство с Щашико у него очень далекое и очень сомнительное. [1979:137]

¹Ibid., 54.

²Аргун, Павленко и Спицына, "Фамильно-родовая система и брачные ареалы," 60, 70-71.

This semi-dutiful family member can reproach the author-narrator for neglecting the most trivial tokens of kinship respect, failing to visit the husband of his grandfather's brother's daughter:

Увидев меня в кофейне с друзьями, дядя Сандро с траурной важностью отвел меня в сторону. Он начал издали. Раз уж так получилось, сказал он, что этот длинноносый исхитрился жениться на нашей Таточке, чего уж теперь хорохориться, когда все позади. Надо было этого горемыку навестить в больнице, нельзя было уезжать, не проведая его.

Обилие прошедшего времени в его словах заставило меня заподозрить самое худшее.

-- Он что, умер? -- спросил я.

-- Нет, -- с достаточным ехидством заметил дядя Сандро, -- видно, спасая твою честь, пока держится. [КиУ: 13]

The author-narrator in turn and in a totally different key eulogizes the sanctity of the extended family. Recalling his mother:

... В этом мире, забывшем о долге, о чести, о совести, она неуклонно вела свою великую, маленькую войну с хаосом эгоизма, отчуждения [...] Она не только стремилась всех нас, детей своих, поставить на ноги, но и старалась всеми средствами весь род наш удержать в теплой роевой связи. [БДБД:203]

There follows a host of relatives and their claims to attention, energetically promoted by his mother.

Traditional family loyalties can be twisted for modern ulterior motives. Their debasement stands as negative testimony to the force of political corruption they should otherwise oppose. Recall the famous oath sworn to convince a sceptical narrator that the goatibex is being cultivated for nuclear purposes. At stake is a beloved three-year old daughter:

-- Чтоб я этого невинного ребенка сварил в котле для мамалыги ...

-- Не надо! -- воскликнул я.

-- Сварил в котле для мамалыги, -- продолжал он, -- и съел ее детское мясо своими руками, если ты мне не скажешь, для чего козлотуры, хотя я и сам знаю! -- произнес он с ужасающей страстью долго молчавшего правдоискателя.

-- Как для чего? Мясо, шерсть, -- пролепетал я.

-- Сказки! Атом добывают из рогов, -- уверенно произнес Валико. [ДД: 313]

In a similar vein, brave barmen Adgur swears continually by his mother that he was indeed shot through the heart, that rumours to the effect he survived thanks to a duplicate organ are the product of envy and corruption, that every word of his rambling fantastic tale is the gospel truth. Riddled with bullets, his chief concern is that other family members should by no means miss the funeral of "моя двоюродная бабушка, то есть материнной матери сестра, так считаются по нашим обычаям" (КиУ: 52), an explanation totally redundant from the point of view of listeners explicitly identified as "товарищи моего земляка, [...] наши отцы дружили" (ibid.).

In a lighter spirit, Sandro forces his friend to swear by the ashes of his father, to kiss the hindquarters of the horse--Sandro's--that saved him from bankruptcy and disgrace (1979:81). Similarly, when a Svan forest ranger swears by his children that he adores a certain type of gun you just happen to have with you, you ignore such an unimpeachable testimonial at your peril (1979:605).

Ivanova believes that the concept and the oaths cited in its support have, in the tales of the 1980s, become devalued tokens of an empty ritual; in Chuprinin's opinion, the cult of comradeship lauded in Adgur's story is reduced to an unconsciously hypocritical screen for the 'us/them' syndrome that fuels corruption in the first place.¹ Iskander's indignant compatriot Gol'dinov objected that the

¹Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988a), 228; Чупринин, "Взгляд сквозь миражи," 4. Novikov argues for the eventual victory of "truth" over false "mafia-like" alliances (Новиков, "Думать поступками," 198-99). Iskander defends Adgur and company on the grounds of the original purity of their friendship ideals ("Человек и судьба" (интервью), 4).

oaths themselves (in "Goatibex") reflect nothing of local mores; another fellow Abkhazian, Shamba, defended their verisimilitude¹--polemical evidence that Iskander's caricature struck home. Appropriately enough, the attacks on "Goatibex" are recalled, in the "Утраты" chapter of *Sandro*, in a kinship context. Zenon, below, serves as an obvious stand-in for Iskander:

Много лет тому назад, во времена молодости Зенона, этот его земляк был большим человеком в масштабах Абхазии. Он тогда знал Зенона как начинающего писателя и недолюбливал его за некоторую сатирическую направленность его творчества, каковую считал плачевным результатом отсутствия в авторе *сынолюбия* по отрошению к *отчему* краю. [КиУ: 69; italics mine]

The spirit of family solidarity has long been a central impulse in his work. Even in the 1960s, when youth prose set the fashion for rebellious sons yearning to 'flee the nest,' he clung to nostalgic memories of his grandfather's home in the hills.²

Outside the novel, Iskander has taken up his mother's mission of maintaining the Abkhazian cult of the extended family, even passing it on to his more modern Russian readers:

Мне хотелось бы показать чувство цельности, свойственное абхазскому народу, и заразить этим чувством русского читателя. Ведь сознание современного человека отличается большой «разорванностью» [...] ³

That his author-narrator should have forgotten, even temporarily, a relative or even village neighbour of his mother's, is difficult to imagine, though the plea of faulty memory, as in "School Waltz" is a convenient excuse. It comes into its own with a vengeance in Chapter 25, "Кутеж трех князей," where it launches, in-

¹Гольдинов, "Вопреки правде жизни," 2; Шамба, "О повести Фазиля Искандера," 269.

²The contrast is drawn by Ivanova in her "Смех против страха" (1988a), 220.

³Искандер, "И чувство собственной судьбы" (интервью), 4.

ter alia, an exposé of the literary benefits of admitting to any and all personal weaknesses; several humorous examples of the inconveniences of selective amnesia in the author's daily life; a theory of cranial structure (divided into storage and thinking space); a defense of his own brain as the last bastion against civilization, the last standing ground of the few surviving Chegemers. Because his storage mechanisms have been so thoroughly crowded out by his thinking apparatus, the author can quite simply think better than the rest of a less absent-minded humanity. This encourages him to offer his own political theory of humour, as well as a programme for saving the country through laughter (1979:522-26).

The cardinal distinction between this unprecedented (in terms of volume and scope) use of the familiar ploy and its various appearances in the autobiographical cycles lies in its position vis à vis the past/present dichotomy. In "School Waltz" and its peripheral works, amnesia is cited with direct reference to the past, specifically the child's past. There, as we have seen, it reinforced the adult dominance of a supremely self-assured narrator. The teasing confession of forgetfulness in *Sandro* however, applies to a contemporary adult situation: a drinking party set in a narrative present (the 1970s) more or less coincident with the 'actual' present or time of writing. Selective amnesia is no longer made to highlight the isolation between adult and child; no longer is it to be highlighted in a past context at all.¹ Instead, the strategy is one of

¹A childhood memory of the 1949 exile of the Greeks to Kazakhstan intrudes in Chapter 7, "История молеального дерева" (1979: 155-56). The tone is purely declarative, pathetic, in a concentrated effort to elicit the reader's

careful manipulation. No comment can fall wider of the mark than Frank's bald assertion that *Sandro* is a series of anecdotes "loosely held together by a narrator who presents them as childhood reminiscences."¹ Throughout by far the greater part of the novel, the narrator is a relayer; only gradually does he become a semi-participant in the recalling of Chegem. The careful manipulation of this status is one of the central means used in maintaining anything but a loose hold on its organization.

For whatever the literary fruits or material advantages of amnesia, the fact remains that *Uncle Sandro* is no more and no less than the author-narrator's immediate blood relative, his mother's own brother. Iskander very early identified a maternal uncle, Siko, as the prototype, first in 1977 and repeatedly up to the present.² In the novel itself, he is much more coy. Textual adjustments to encompass the change in their fictional relationship represent rare instances of editorial 'knitting' in Iskander. Compare, from the earliest description of their first face-to-face encounter:

Дядя Сандро спросил меня о здоровье моих деревенских родственников, потом перешел к своим родственникам, потом спросил о видах на урожай [...] [*Сельская молодежь* 1969:6, с. 29]

indignation. Therefore, there is no quibbling about the accuracy of the recollection. It is, however, situated in Mukhus, not Chegem.

¹Frank, Review of *Novye glavy*," 361.

²Искандер, "Об очаге и о доме" (интервью), 2. See also his "Живите интересно!" (интервью), 4. A more recent interview combines real-life and literary prototypes, describing Uncle Sandro as a combination of Uncle Siko, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza ("Неизвестный Сандро" (интервью)," 11). A counter-example from 1977 echoes the novel's reluctance to expose too early the direct kinship, when Iskander chose to identify the prototype as simply "мой земляк," in "Путь к счастливым находкам" (интервью), 24. In Chapter Seven, an episodic character bears the name of Siko. Identified as "one of the Chegemers," his only salient feature is his advanced age. He takes part in the grafting of Abkhazian superstition on to political necessity, which contributes to the Chegemers' acceptance of collectivization (1979: 157-61).

Subsequently, the litany of ritual inquiries is not dropped (which after all would have been the simplest solution); instead it becomes the no less stereotypical:

Удивившись, что с тех довоенных времен [the author has from the outset admitted to spending the summers of his childhood at a grandfather's house in Chegem] я довольно сильно вырос, хотя было бы удивительней, если б я остался таким же, он, посетовав на быстротекущую жизнь, успокоился и стал спрашивать о родственниках и видах на урожай в этом году. [1979:27]

Note that the Russian avoidance of possessive pronouns in a kinship context makes the sly ambiguity of the passage virtually untranslatable into English. Brownsberger is forced to specify: "began questioning me about *my* relatives,"¹ where 'his,' 'our' and potentially *all three* are conveyed by the original. (It might be pointed out in passing that the minute recording of such mandatory interest in kith and kin, however ceremonious, forms a key element in the idyllic portrait of the Abkhazian family-centred ethnos).

No less coy is the series of mystifying hints that lead up to the long-delayed revelation; for example, the admission, in Chapter 4, that "мама состояла с Щашико, *примерно*, в таком же родстве, что и дядя Сандро" (1979:135, italics mine).

From even its earliest versions, the first-encounter chapter ("Дядя Сандро у себя дома"), has featured an elaborate motivation of the author-narrator's partial recovery of memory. The first intimation of *déjà vu* is centred on the grumpy old bearer-of-honey, revealed in Chapter Ten, to have been Makhaz, the long-suffering shepherd. There, in typically Iskanderian fashion, the reminder,

¹Iskander, *Sandro of Chegem* (1983), 18. Italics mine.

the re-capitulation is perfectly, pointedly and even redundantly above-board:

У входа в дом стоял брат Сандро, тот самый старик Махаз, который когда-то поручил мне передать брату жбан с медом [...]

Махаз меня сразу узнал [...]

-- И ты в свое время потрудился на него, -- сказал он, напоминая про жбан с медом, в целости доставленный адресату, -- и ты сделал, что мог, как и все мы, -- продолжал он, присоединяя меня к людям, которые честно исполнили свой долг перед дядей Сандро, как если бы дядя Сандро превратился в символ воинского или еще какого-нибудь общепринятого долга. [1979:287-88]

To another visiting Chegemer (the encounter takes place in Mukhus), Makhaz "explains" the narrator's "Chegemian origins," in a passage absent from the earliest publications of the piece.¹

What jogs the narrator's memory is a "picture" of Makhaz beating back with grim satisfaction and a stout stick the village dogs who unaccountably persecute him (1979:24). The mutual antipathy will acquire retrospective significance after Makhaz's own chapter has sent him off, in the late 1930s, to prison and the correctional labour camps (recall *Верный Руслан*). If this is in fact an allusion to his camp days, then it represents the sole if indirect instance when the absolute silence (to date) on this aspect of the suffering shepherd's life is broken. Elsewhere the canine motif is transferred to the village idiot Kunta,² who shares with Makhaz the

¹See *Литературная газета*, 30 мая 1973, 7. There, as well as in other first printings of the various segments, Makhaz is named Mikha. Essentially, explained Mr. Iskander, (interview by author, 21 May 1988, tape recording, Moscow USSR), these are variants of one and the same name.

²See, for example, БДБД: 183. At our 21 May 1988 meeting Mr. Iskander explained the Kunta/Makhaz/dogs connection as "просто повторение образа." Village dogs, he said, tend to attack poorly dressed people--which detracts from my hypothesis that Makhaz beating his canine persecutors is reliving his camp days. Makhaz does not just simply hate dogs, though. In his own chapter, he reflects on their devotion, steadfast even beyond the grave, and recalls the wolf-hound who saved his own life (1979: 459-60). Moreover, the

status of underdog, even *pharmakos*, and with his evil brother Omar becomes the sole surviving resident of Chegem. It is tempting to read into this relationship a kind of thematic ring structure in *Sandro*: an odyssey launched by one 'insulted and injured,' finished by another, and in between--the author's rediscovery of his common roots with both, his catholic acceptance of all aspects of Chegem. This can be taken a step further, to demonstrate compilation on the level of Frye's thematic modes: the comic moving towards integration (the author's re identification with Chegem), the tragic/ironic pursuing the same end by negative means, by forcing the scapegoat into isolation (Kunta, Makhaz), and--departing from Frye--their uneasy juxtaposition in the elegiac (the swan song of Chegem).¹ To return to the kinship anchor of this mosaic, Uncle Sandro's bitter parting words: "Худшей корове коровник достался," said of Kunta and his brother, are followed by the *kinsman's* confession:

-- Ну, что ж, -- подумал я, -- когда от нас уходит все, что мы любили, все, что сияло нам светом надежды, мужества, нежности, благородства, когда от нас уходит все это, я и глупость готов прижать к груди, потому что глупость тоже часть человека, я тем более готов припасть к ней с *сыновней* грустью. Ведь она видела своими глазами, слышала своими ушами всех, кого *мы* потеряли, и мне ли не ценить последнюю свидетельницу *нашей* жизни. [1979:604; italics mine]

Significant as well is the delayed action of the man-and-dogs picture, and the distance factor involved in the classic 'double-take': the further the narrator gets from Chegem, the clearer his recollections become. As always, the admission is the author's own:

Видимо, надо было отойти от этого места, чтобы восстановить в памяти полузабытую картину. [1979:24-25]

recollection takes place on the river bank, the crossing point between Chegem and a tainted outer world.

¹Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*.

It may be noted in passing that this element of remoteness stands as physical, geographical testimony to the epic inaccessibility of Chegem, the mnemonic vertical axis of the higher/lower (rural/urban, generational) homologation operating on baldly compilative terms throughout the novel. One more geographical moment: Makhaz en route down from the mountain pauses unaccountably to cool the honey pot in the River Kodor, the novel's major boundary symbol on this axis.¹ Needless to say, it is the author who underscores the mysterious nature of this act:

Зачем ему надо было охлаждать мед -- для меня так и осталось загадкой. Не мог же он не знать, что мед и вообще-то не портится, а такое кратковременное охлаждение все равно никакой пользы не принесет. Солнце довольно сильно пекло и я, в конце концов, решил, что он погрузил жбан в холодную горную реку просто для того, чтобы сделать приятное меду или даже самому жбану. [1979:26]

At the risk of stretching a point, it might be conjectured that honey² represents the 'swarm' aspect of family solidarity. Kama watches with anxious intent the regathering of bees into the hive

¹Site of the battle (21 March 1921) which ushered Soviet power into Abkhazia (Chapter 5), the Kodor is almost invariably mentioned whenever any Chegemer proceeds down the mountain to Mukhus, considerably lower in both geographical and ethical terms than the pristine Chegem. See the donkey's tale, Chapter Nine, where Khabug descends to rescue his son Sandro from the taint of involvement in the 1937 terror; Makhaz's story, Chapter Thirteen, and the memories-within-memories inspired on its banks, centred on that same dark year.

²Meletinskii lists among the universal associations with bees and honey fertility, the discovery of spring, awakening; the tree of the world; poetry, poetic death and renewal. The beehive embraces a complex of orderliness, love of work, wisdom and eloquence (*Мифы народов мира: Энциклопедия* (Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1982), s.v. "Мед поэзии," за подписью Е.М. Мелетинского). Future researchers into the folkloric reverberations of *Sandro* will have to taken into account such potentially mythic moments as the death of Kunta's father, stung by bees for encroaching upon a sacred tree. The incident is dated, according to the Chegemers' idiosyncratic calendar, to the Year of the War between the Wild Bees and the Buzzards, somewhere within the first decade of this century (see "История молельного дерева"). Similarly, the last offense committed by Shaliko before his death-cum-purification-rite at the hands of Makhaz was the sale of watered-down honey (1979: 461).

(БДБД: 186-87), the gathering of chicks under openly symbolic "wings of love" (БДБД: 178). A number of lyric-declarative passages scattered throughout Iskander's work exploit the sound-coincidence of род and рой. From the "School Waltz" (КиУ: 198, cited above p. 241); in *Sandro*, from the "Большой день" chapter БДБД: 203, cited above p. 287); culminating in a series of philosophical reflections on the symbolic implications of hive harvesting for sweet-toothed children in that chapter, as well as the one entitled "Бригадир Кязым." Iskander's own statement of the connection reveals perhaps a fundamental metaphor for *Sandro's* on-going organic growth:

Может быть сам роман бесконечно длится и длится от *роевого, родового*, в конце концов, чувства *народа*, его сладостной нескончаемости в мире, где все так кратковременно.¹

The repetition of this motif, together with its invariably lyric-nostalgic context, illustrates the paradigmatic aspect of Iskander's compilative method: bald-faced thematic redundancy lending an after-the-fact unity strictly within the author's control.² Of interest here is its delayed entry into the syntagmatic, fabula plane of *Sandro*.

By Chapter 15, "Харлампо и Деспина" the narrator is willing to vouchsafe closer ties, though indirectly, to various members of Sandro's immediate family. Equally ambiguous is his tactical identification of the old man as his 'uncle'--a relative of unspecified

¹See Iskander's contribution to Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 205.

²See the commentary on "Большой день" and "Утраты" in В. Оскоцкая, "Доверие к подлинности," *Литературное обозрение* 1984:4, с. 20.

proximity or more?--in Chapter 17, "Хранитель гор" (1979:510).¹ By Chapter 28, "Большой день Большого дома," all dalliance with doubt falls by the wayside, though gradually even at this late date: the bulk of the chapter is presented through the third-person Jamesian focus of Kama, Sandro's sister; the epilogue bursts in with the confession: "Это мама моя!" (БДБД: 202). Even here, by virtue of its post-positioning via epilogue, the narrator's long-delayed admission remains *outside* Sandro's Chegem.

It is tempting to read the author's ephemeral presence in the Chegem of his childhood as motivated by simple biographical considerations, especially in view of Iskander's oft-declared strict allegiance to the factual truth. The real-life Chegem was an outlying neighbourhood of his grandfather's village Akhutsa, alternatively designated as Napskal in several early stories.² It appears that Iskander never actually set foot in the place:

Я вспомнил, что, когда был совсем маленьким и жил в доме дедушки, я часто слышал это слово. Оно звучало странно, хотелось побывать в этом таинственном Чегеме, но одного меня не пускали, и взрослым не приходило в голову взять меня туда. Так прошло детство, прошла юность, чуть не сказал: прошла жизнь, а я так и не побывал в этом выселке, который находился в двух-трех километрах от нашего дома.

И вот, став писать *Сандро*, я как бы исправил географию села и собственную биографию. Я нахлобучил название выселка на свое село, и теперь получается, что не следует грустить по поводу того, что я в детстве так и не побывал в Чегеме.³

¹In a similarly vague context, Sandro identifies the author-narrator as his nephew in the "Табу" chapter (БДБД: 13); Kunta places him as "Khabug's grandson" in "Чегемская Кармен" (*Знамя* 1986:12, с. 30). It should be noted that these are much later additions (1986) to the novel. See app. 2.

²For example, the first published versions of "Вечерняя дорога" in *Костер* 1963:12, с. 24; ЗП (1966): 180. The changing names of this village are discussed above, p. 169 fn. 4.

³Iskander's contribution to Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 204.

Chegem's relationship to the intertwined problems of memory¹ and loyalty is borne out in the author's admission: "Чегем -- наполовину реальность, наполовину фантазия. [...] Во всяком случае, это -- память сердца."²

The narrator's first entry³ into Chegem is postponed until Chapter 6, "Чегемские сплетни." There he plays a studiously external role as commentator. The first comment is suitably modest--parenthetical, and presented from a non-committal, ethnic first-person plural. Describing Uncle Sandro on a long-past summer's midday:

положив голову на муртаку (особый валик, который в наших краях на ночь кладется под подушку, а днем, если захочется вздремнуть, употребляется вместо подушки), так вот, положив голову на муртаку, он глядел [...] [1979: 118]

The ethnographer who explains Abkhazian burial customs is even more remote, present only indirectly in the prescriptive tone of formula (this is how it should be done):

По абхазским понятиям мертвый должен быть предан земле на семейном кладбище. И если он убит или умер очень далеко от дома, его надо во что бы то ни стало перевезти домой. [...] [1979:136]

From this remote distance he can speculate on the feelings of a secondary character led by lust to defy common sense ("Но кто знает

¹Here as elsewhere, Iskander manages to embrace the full range of thematic concerns of his age. Collective and personal amnesia stand as major themes of literature under Brezhnev, from the serious treatment of a Trifonov, to the aesthete's spoofing of a Sasha Sokolov in *Палисандрия*.

²Искандер, "Удивительный мир" (интервью), 4.

³The narrator and Sandro's pasts have actually crossed once before, in Chapter 4, "Игроки," but only indirectly and, more importantly, outside Chegem. The famous encounter between Uncle Sandro's friend and the Endurian cattle breeder takes place not in the mountain village, but in Mukhus. One of the potential 'stakes' in the game was the voluptuous Dasha. The epilogue to the chapter follows her ultimate fate: marriage to the Armenian retailer Alikhan and eventual residence in the author-narrator's own childhood home in the city. He presents the couple's arrival and lifestyle there as his own personal recollection, the first in the novel, as something he "vaguely recalls" [1979:85].

тайны женской страсти [...]," 1979:126), of an estranged wife kept from reconciliation by her overzealous brothers ("Но кто знает, что чувствовала жена его, когда он вошел во двор и на него напустили собак [...]" 1979:133). These cautious questions personalize the speculation and moreover echo the narrator's reluctance to reveal his own memories of Chegem; here as elsewhere, he assiduously refers instead to other witnesses: his mother (1979:127, 135), his father (1979:136). Where he ventures--once only in this chapter, once only thus far in the novel as a whole,--to cite his own personal knowledge of a past situation, he must first hesitate:

Я долго думал, стоит ли рассказывать, как и почему Щашико стал абреком. Не потускнеет ли этот романтический образ, о котором я столько слышал с детства? [1979:123]

The inner debate, as serious as any of the essay-digressions in "School Waltz," touches upon the writer's mandate to tell the whole truth, following only the dictates of "living feeling"; it flowers into an aphoristic digression on the meaning of life ("Жить -- это попытка осуществить серьезный замысел" 1979: 124). As in "School Waltz," the present is rigidly separate from the past; here in *Sandro*, reverting to an abstract philosophic present seems to give the narrator the authorial confidence, as it were, to take the past narrative, however briefly in this chapter, into his own hands.

The final chapter, "Дерево детства"¹ raises this modest, all but extra-territorial status to that of the semi-participant seen in the

¹Briker and Dal'gor note the chapter's "important compositional role" in the novel, its revelation of the author-narrator's allegiance to the world of Chegem (Брикер и Дальгор, "Сандро и магический реализм," 114). The present argument aims to refine their contention, by demonstrating that the disclosure puts the finishing touches on a well-prepared series.

autobiographical tales. Only towards its end does Uncle Sandro himself refer to the narrator as his nephew (1979:602). That the word ranks high in Iskander's emotional lexicon is seen from a passage in "School Waltz," where the boy and his Uncle Riza are shown bicycle riding:

Я замечаю, как встречные мужчины и женщины улыбаются нам, кивают дяде, некоторые успевают спросить:

-- Сын?

-- Племянник, -- бросает дядя, и я чувствую в голосе его улыбку.

-- «Племянник,» -- повторял я про себя вкусное, веселое слово, похожее на пряник. Мне казалось, что именно этому сходству улыбается он. [КиУ: 266]¹

Let us follow the narrator's rise from extra-territoriality through witness- up to semi-participant narrator. On it, to a considerable extent, hinges the rambling structure of "Харлампо и Деспина." The chapter's opening words would seem to indicate an extra-territorial, omniscient narrator who identifies himself as creator (not participant)² of the story about to unfold.

¹In Iskander, consonance and assonance form a playful offshoot of his penchant for aphorisms. His 'poetic etymologies' confront the reader with undisguised, aphoristic eloquence. Moreover, they can be seen to illustrate compilation (juxtaposition) on the level of the phoneme. The word 'Chegem' originally attracted him by its sound: "Мне тогда показалось," recalls Iskander, "что оно по-русски звучит чеканно, по-чегемски" (see Iskander's contribution to Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 204). For self-confessed pseudo-etymologies based on sound resemblances see Искандер, "О движении к добру," II, incorporated in "Стоянка человека" (*Знамя* 1989:9, с. 52, 55).

Compare, in *Sandro*: "дикие кабаны [...] в поисках кукурузы к весне перерили своими рылами весь приусадебный участок Камуга. (Кстати, слово «рыть» не от слово ли «рылю.» То есть, то, что роет. Как плодороден Чегем. Стоит прикоснуться к его делам, как полутно делаешь небольшие открытия в русской филологии" (1981:57). A somewhat cloying passage from the Dzhamkhukh chapter makes much of the coincidence of a father's asking his children if they are "glad of the arch [of a rainbow]" (рады дуге?) and their response (рады радуге!) (1981: 193)

From a more sombre perspective, the alliteration between поэт and палач sparks a lengthy reflection on the fine line between inspiration put to good ends and bad (1979:213).

²In the strict definition: "Персонафицированный автор находится вне событийного плана своего повествования, в металпространстве, которое с сюжетным пространством не пересекается." Атарова и Лесжис, "Семагтика и структура повествования от третьего лица," 36.

Significantly, this is the first chapter describing pre-war Chegem without Iskander's characteristic high-frequency 'source-citation' hitherto applied rigorously throughout the novel. It is as if repeated contact with Uncle Sandro has released the author from the semi-amnesia of their first encounter.

Thus, the chapter begins with and returns a little past mid-point to the 'authorial we':

Чувствую, что пришло время рассказывать о великой любви Харлампо к Дестине.

[...] о том, что случилось на восьмой год мы расскажем на этих страницах. [1981:37]

Теперь нам придется изобразить фантастическое любовное безумство, приписанное чегемцами Харлампо и, в сущности, являющееся отражением их собственного безумства. [1981:67]

Not only has the tactic abandoned entirely the use of other-source-citation in the chapter frame (the author having finally mustered the confidence to impart his own personal experience of Chegem), but, as the second example demonstrates, the author-narrator actually pits his own superior knowledge against that of his erstwhile sources, the Chegemers.

The 'authorial we' will merge inconspicuously (surely a rarity in Iskander!) into a first-person plural proper, as the author gradually insinuates himself into the childhood world of Chegem *via blood ties*, though not as yet with Sandro himself: his aunt Nutsa (1981:38), his female cousins (1981:44), his cousin Chunka (1981:46).¹ Similarly, Khabug, regularly referred to throughout

¹Repeating the pattern, established with Uncle Sandro, of gradually revealing kinship ties, Chunka is first identified, in Chapter Eleven, as Tali's cousin (1979:353). There he plays a prominent role in the chase scene that follows her elopement. In Chapter Fifteen, he has become "my cousin" and "the grandson of the brother of grandfather Khabug" (1981:46). In

the novel as "старый Хабуг" is specifically identified, in this one chapter only, as "дедушка Хабуг" (1981:46, 74).¹

Within this 'familial we,' the author-narrator will remain, as a junior member moreover, for the bulk of the chapter:

Обычно, если в доме не было гостей, все *мы* усаживались за низенький, длинный абхазский стол [...] Но если были гости, взрослые мужчины во главе с дедушкой садились за обыкновенный (русский, по чегемским понятиям) стол. Харлампо в таких случаях за этот стол никогда не сажали. Его сажали вместе с *нами, детьми*, подростками, женщинами (домашними женщинами, конечно) за низенький стол. [1981:38; italics mine]

From this comfortable standpoint, he can wax ethnographic, as above; he can also simply cite himself as part of a collective source or witness to a scene:

Когда Деспина и тетушка Хрисула уезжали в Анастасовку, *мы, дети* и тетя Нуца во главе с Харлампо провожали их до спуска к реке Кодор. [1981:66; italics mine]

He can combine such communal observation with a personal, though cautious and--more importantly, retrospective interpretation of its significance:

accordance with the compilative method of occasionally promoting secondary characters, Chunka appears in a 'starring role' as the title figure of Chapter Nineteen, "Молния-мужчина." Chapters Twenty ("Чегемская Кармеи") and Thirty-One ("Дерево детства") report the energetic lad's death on the Soviet Western front of World War Two.

¹Khabug up to this point has borne two carefully distinguished functions: as "дедушка"--that of the author-narrator's nameless maternal grandfather; as "старый Хабуг"--Sandro's father and patriarch of lost Chegem. Their exceptional amalgamation as "дедушка Хабуг" becomes a surface token of the intricate manoeuvring that isolates the author-narrator's childhood from Uncle Sandro. Never once, not even after their immediate kinship is revealed, does the author show any direct contact whatsoever between himself as a boy and his uncle as a younger man. The balance is a delicate one. Perhaps in order to avoid upsetting it, a second instance of "дедушка Хабуг," present in the first published segment, was dropped from all subsequent versions. Compare *Неделя* 1978:38; с. 7; 1981:45; *Юность* 1988:2, с. 5. Note too the narrative sleight-of-hand at work in the same "Харлампо и Деспина" chapter. Uncle Sandro takes part in the hoeing scene (1981:53-55); he presides at their wedding as tamada (1981:75-76). In both cases, the author-narrator is conspicuously absent.

Все мы, опечаленные этим прощанием, омывтые им, я думаю, неосознанно гордясь, что на земле существует такая любовь и неосознанно надеясь, что мы когда-нибудь Будем достойны ее, уходили домой, жалея Харлампю и Деспину. [1981:67; italics mine]

Seldom does the child venture beyond this rigorously peripheral status. He takes no active part in the events described; in fact, he will remain *utterly silent* throughout the chapter and participate only minimally in a scant two of the silent dialogues with which the tale of the thwarted lovers abounds.

From the 'authorial' to the 'familial we' the descent is from Olympian omniscience to collective witness. The child observer begins to emerge out from under his communal screen when overtly collective observation begins to yield to the indirect evidence of a keen, individualized eye. Iskander's propensity for source-citation manifests itself here in repeated indications of his own location on the physical plane of point of view.

Recall that all planes (evaluative, phraseological, spatio-temporal and psychological) of Uspenskii's classification rest on the fundamental two-dimensionality (двуплановость) of all art, the latent dichotomy between the depicted and the depicting,¹ and the correlation on all planes between these two elements. The depicting centre, in other words, can find itself within or without the depicted world, thereby giving rise to an internal or external perspective on or across one or several of the planes. Thus far, the analysis overlaps with the deciding factor of 'author actualization' discussed above with regard to first and third person in general; with respect to the "Харлампю и Деспина" chapter, an external per-

¹Успенский, *Поэтика композиции*, 6.

spective on the evaluative plane, corresponding to a non-actualized, extra-territorial author, is indicated by the 'authorial we' adopted in the frame.¹ Where Uspenskii's scheme is particularly helpful is in pinpointing the indirect but palpable presence of an internal (spatio-temporal) perspective within the chapter itself. Thus, the author-narrator manifests his presence, his presence in and allegiance to the depicted world of Chegem physically, visually, by recording exhaustively all the many gestures of its inhabitants. The technique is applied virtually to every character. For example, Kharlampo's frustration with his future father-in-law's obstruction registers itself in the form of a minute catalogue of his facial expressions and intonation:

-- О патера, -- произносил он сквозь зубы несколько раз в день без всякого внешнего повода и *было ясно*, что в душе его, никогда не затухая, бушует пламя обиды.

-- О патера?! -- произносил он иногда с гневным удивлением, подняв глаза в небо, и *тогда можно было понять его так*: "Отец небесный, разве это отец?" [1981:37]

where, as in "School Waltz," the tenor patently overwhelms the slimmest of vehicles (see p. 242 above, the discussion of the stone-throwing drunk). Elsewhere in a similar vein, Kharlampo's jaw muscles, their "сдержанн[ая] презрительн[ая] работ[а]" speaks very thinly justified volumes for his wounded pride (1981:39); the "hearth-

¹Uspenskii's criteria for true polyphony include the proviso that multiple independent evaluative points of view "must belong directly to participants in the narrated event." (*Поэтика композиции*, 18). The monologic work, by contrast, is governed by a totally abstract viewpoint, a stratagem of non-presence. In between these two poles lies the role fulfilled by author-substitutes or mouthpieces, which can be presented as "secondary, almost episodic characters who relate only indirectly to the action" (20). Examples listed include the marginal self-portraits of Medieval and Renaissance painting, as well as the *raisonneur* of Classicism. Both would seem to be analogous to the external, peripheral role ascribed to the narrator-witness of *Sandro*.

loving clatter" of the firewood he tosses into the grate becomes an eloquent, instantly decoded and twice-repeated sign of his husbandly potential (1981:40, 73).

By offering an interpretation of the gesture (translating from visual to semantic terms), the author's internal physical perspective intersects with an external evaluative perspective. The latter gradually assumes pride of place, as the interpreter comes to outweigh the interpretee. Despina habitually wears a kerchief to protect her "aristocratic" pallor from the sun:

Глазки ее были такие же синие, как ее косынка, и так как она косынку никогда не снимала, мне почему-то казалось, что глаза ее посинели от постоянного отражения цвета косынки. [1981:38; italics mine]

"It was clear" and "one could understand" from the description of an inwardly seething Kharlampo locates the describer--still non-committally and grammatically impersonal--on a level with the laconic grumbler himself. The transition to an openly personalized observer ("it seemed to *me*") proceeds naturally, smoothly. It is highly symptomatic of the memory-reticence aspect of *Sandro* that this, the novel's first indication of the author's actual childhood presence in the lost world of Chegem, should manifest itself in a modestly oblique case (the dative), should reinforce that modesty with an adverbial disclaimer ("for some reason") and anchor itself in a tentative but unmistakably visual mode. Very soon the evaluative tenor, still anchored in the visual periphery of non-interfering observation, threatens to overshadow its visual (spatial) vehicle entirely. Kharlampo silently spurns the silent ('nods and winks')

suggestion, by the lusty lads of Chegem, that he boldly take Despina by force, and allegorical evaluation takes over:

(Вспоминая *облик* Харлампо и особенно его этот *взгляд*, я часто думал, что нечто похожее я неоднократно встречал в своей жизни. [...] Да, точно так, как Харлампо, интеллигенция наша смотрит на людей, предлагающих насильственно овладеть Демократией: тоже гречанка, как и Деспина. И точно так же, как и Харлампо, наша интеллигенция неизменным и твердым отрицательным движением головы дает знать, что только законным путем она будет добиваться того, что принадлежит ей по праву любви.) [1981:43; italics mine]

The second application is much more assertive. As Kharlampo looks ready to attack his reluctant "aristocratic" in-laws after seven years of toiling for the right to Despina's hand:

(Я вижу Харлампо так ясно, как будто все это было вчера. И опять не могу избавиться от навязчивого ощущения его сходства с обликом нашей интеллигенции. Вот так же и она, в пересчете на исторические сроки ее терпения, не пройдет и пятидесяти лет, как набросится на своих аристократов!) [1981:73-74]

In fact, the greater part of the chapter is devoted to elaborate extra-verbal--either inter-linguistic or pantomime proper--exchanges. All are accompanied by exhaustively detailed, often allegorical commentary. Their various thematic motivations fall into three groups: (1) the Babylonian mixture of languages in Chegem, (2) the rhetorical advantages of understatement in the highly charged emotional context of mass deportation and (3) the rich and well-reaped potential for sexual innuendo against the background of thwarted courtship.

Languages in Chegem are overlaid.¹ When Despina comforts her intoxicated duenna entirely in Greek, the translator is right at hand:

¹While intercultural encounters do play a noteworthy role in the novel and elsewhere throughout Iskander's corpus, the mediation of authorial commentary is more often than not highlighted in true

[Деспина] что-то ласково приговаривала. Тетушка Хрисула ей что-то лепетала в ответ. И эта взаимная воркотня, с равномерными паузами, вздохами тетушки Хрисулы и повторами, как-то сама собой делалась понятной, словно они говорили по-русски или по-абхазски. [1981:42]

Gestures and intonation well established, there follows an extensive, unqualified translation of the exchange. The same venerable aunt gets her point across in Greek to the Abkhazian Chunka:

Тетушка Хрисула в ответ ему возмущенно залопотала по-гречески, забыв, что Чунка по-гречески не понимает. Из ее лопотанья, в котором несколько раз прозвучало: «Водка! Водка!» -- *можно было понять*, что если она, как и многие другие аристократические старушки, и любит выпить две-три рюмки, то это не значит, что она бросит на произвол судьбы [...] свою любимую племянницу. [1981:49; italics mine]

A single word isolated from foreign 'chatter' and made to stand for an extended utterance is frozen by the sheer weight of meaning it is said to bear. The relation thus established is akin to that between gesture and its allegorical interpretation, discussed above. Throughout most of a long scene--picking figs--Aunt Khrisula is heard to pronounce a single word, her niece's name in a broad ga-

aggregation/segregation fashion. This tends to substitute for dynamic contact between cultures (their mutual self-examination in the light of extra-ethnic challenges to rigidified orders, the cutting edge of Bakhtin's heteroglossia), their static juxtaposition. The result is a contrapuntal technique, noted in a different context by a number of critics, particularly with regard to the story "Летним днем" (see Г.А. Лесский, "Плюс козлотуризация всей страны," private monograph; Иванова, "Смех против страха" (1988с), 157; "Фазиль Искандер," в сб. *Избранные рассказы шестидесятишников*, 343; Burlingame, "Prose of Fazil Iskander," 154). The story features two dialogues, one between the author-figure and a German tourist on moral resistance to totalitarian pressure, and another, utterly fatuous, between two pensioners. The same strategy is seen in an overtly ethnic context, in the story "Бедный демагор," peripheral to *Sandro*, where old Abkhazians tell tales of a colourful past as two middle-aged Russian alcoholics struggle mightily with very much present needs (the hair of the dog that bit them). Within the novel, the chapter "Большой день Большого дома" features simultaneous conversations in Abkhazian (between grandmother and grandson, on loyalty to one's motherland), in Turkish (Sandro's stories to his guest), against the background of a pot-pourri of songs in Abkhazian, Georgian, Mingrelian and Russian, sung by the multilingual Kiazym. The issue awaits detailed study.

mut of registers, all supplied by the ever-present translator: "strictly," "wretchedly," "agonizingly," "despairingly," "in horror," "with hysterical reproach," etc. (1981:48-52). In addition to these adverbial qualifiers, the translator calls attention to his presence by means of an equally high incidence of parentheticals: "явно," "по-видимому," "судя по движению ее рук," "по интонациям ее голоса надо было понять," "было ясно," etc. (ibid). After all, it is he who draws the conclusions they seek to support, even while distancing him psychologically from their object.¹

Here too lies a curious disjunction of internal and external perspectives on various other planes. The internal spatio-temporal is enhanced by such parenthetical reminders of an inside observer's presence; whereas the stance taken on the phraseological plane is external. True, the external aspect is a most peculiar one. Compare Uspenskii's distinction between an external phraseological viewpoint proper and its internal counterpart. The former reproduces faithfully, "naturalistically," the foreign quality of a character's speech, thereby stressing the reporting author's external position as an outside observer. The latter concentrates on the content, the 'what' of the character's discourse, and not the 'how' of his or her verbal mannerisms. It is not uncommon to shift gradually from emphasis on manner to content, as the reader becomes accus-

¹After delineating the use of modal expressions proper to signal an external psychological perspective, Uspenskii explains: "слова подобного рода со всей очевидностью указывают на некоторого *синхронного* наблюдателя, присутствующего на месте действия" and comments: "В этом случае, по-видимому, автор ведет повествование с позиции стороннего наблюдателя, незримо присутствующего на месте действия, но не участвующего в действии, то есть со специальной позиции рассказчика" (*Поэтика композиции*, 117).

tomed to a character's idiolect.¹ Iskander follows none of these strategies. Instead of total naturalistic reproduction, he carefully edits his foreign characters' speech, reducing their alien origins to a few select words or phrases; in this chapter: патера for Kharlampo's frustration, аристократико корице ('aristocratic girl') for the theme of rural social pretensions, and кендрепессо ('for shame') for the rural code of maidenly virtue.² Such compressing facilitates the constant repetition which maintains the external perspective; at the same time it promotes their allegorical extension in the continually repeated themes to which they are invariably linked. Repetition covers the aggregation, 'external-ity' the segregation aspects of Iskander's compilative method.

If one gesture, glance or foreign turn of phrase is worth a thousand--diligently expounded--words, silence is golden, and

¹Ibid., 70-71.

²Tolstoi's use of French in *War and Peace* "annoys" Iskander, who interprets it as an excess of youthful bravado. A simple comment to the effect that such and such a conversation was held in French would have sufficed (Искандер, "Судьбы романа," 3). Similarly, Uncle Sandro objects repeatedly to Kemal's excessive use of German expressions in the latter's tale of wartime encounters on Soviet-occupied German territory (1981: 160).

The novel's avoidance of dialectical lexical markers for Abkhazian narrators was discussed above (p. 134 fn. 1). Even conversing among themselves, colourful curses, a folk saying or two ("буявол сам пашет, и сам топчет"--said of Stalin's tendency to reward with one hand and punish with the other, 1979: 382) remain among the few surface indications of non-Russian origins. In direct speech, non-Abkhazians are only rarely identified by their accent: the gambler Kolia's Greek mother (Chapter 4); Акор-ага, the Armenian patriot of Chapter 18; even the Russian country girl Dasha (Chapter 4). Makhaz reverts to fractured Russian ("моя резала амагазин ахозяин," 1979: 468), only when a cultural conflict between Abkhazian honour and twentieth-century jurisprudence calls for it. Kiazum's use of the Russian *ошибка* is carefully explained, "как некоторое важное государственное понятие, которое в переводе звучит не вполне точно" (1981: 94); *кумхоз* for *колхоз* in Chapter 7 conveys a similar resistance to "state concepts." In all modes, direct and indirect narration, authorial description, Iskander's use of local lexical colour is extremely judicious. (See, for example, Андреева, "Владелец счастья," 14.)

bursting with well-glossed significance. Such is the depiction of the exile scene, the banishment of the Greeks from the happy Babel of Chegem. The village elder defuses a volatile situation by the wordless dignity of his measured pace, mirrored in the observe-'s pregnantly slow exposition:

Он шел ровным, спокойным шагом, словно уверенный в том, что если то, что случилось в толпе, можно ввести в разумные рамки, то оно, что случилось, и так его подождет. А если невозможно обуздать разумом то, что случилось, тогда и торопиться некуда. [1981:78-79]

The gesture interpretation scheme, no less than aphorism, allegory or the whole of Iskander's lyric/satiric dichotomy, rings a series of well-defined changes between the well-defined intonational poles of the serious and the comic. From the solemn rhetoric of passages like the above it can turn, with deliberate abruptness, to the more common mimicry of sexual innuendo. Here an element of almost slapstick comedy is supplied by the outrageous imbalance between tenor and vehicle. Thus, in the fig-picking scene, Aunt Khrisula explains, in mime, how "aristocratic girls" climb trees:

она что-то залопотала, для наглядности оглаживая собственное платье и явно напоминая ей, что «аристократико корице», оказавшись на одном дереве с чужим мужчиной, не должна подыматься на такую высоту, куда чужой мужчина может снизу на нее взглянуть. [1981:48]

The proper way to descend is explained in gesture (1981:52). A piece of fruit plucked and kissed by a man must under no circumstances touch a young lady's lips; it should be offered instead to one's sweet-toothed maiden aunt--also conveyed in gesture (1981:50). When Despina disappears with said male into the leafy branches, Aunt Khrisula explodes into indignant gesticulation. So overburdened is the scene with significant body movement that

this, its climax, must be recorded by an observer who can minimize his presence no longer. Thus the narrator at long last steps forth to take an active (if only re-active) role:

Тетушка Хрисула посмотрела по сторонам, явно стараясь узнать, нет ли случайных свидетелей этого позора. Взгляд ее упал на меня, она быстро заглянула мне в глаза, стараясь опередить меня, если я попытаюсь придать своему лицу притворное выражение. Решив, что опередила, она попыталась узнать, понимаю ли я смысл происходящего. Установив, что, к сожалению, понимаю, она захотела определить, смогу ли я, если случится самое худшее, по крайней мере, держать язык за зубами. [1981:51]

Later:

Она даже на меня посмотрела пронизательным взглядом, стараясь почувствовать, не выветрился ли у меня этот порочный эпизод. И я, чтобы угодить ей, кивнул головой в том смысле, что выветрился. Тогда тетушка Хрисула выразила своим взглядом недоумение, как бы спрашивая, как я мог понять значение ее взгляда, если это порочный эпизод действительно выветрился из головы? [1981: 53]

Elsewhere the narrator-witness incorporates himself marginally into the action on the more familiar pattern of selective omniscience. The shift, in Friedman's terms, is from "multiple selective omniscience" to "I-witness" narration.¹ "Narrative knowledge," as Todorov and Ducrot point out in their overview of the issue, is a "continuous series," ranging from maximal to minimal justification,²--in simple terms, citing or not citing one's sources.

Point of view analysis has long debated the merit of isolating moments within this continuum; indeed, its primary interest has been to examine the subtle effects of its modulation. There is no subtlety, no modulation in Iskander: even his well-marked prefer-

¹ See Norman Friedman, *Form and Meaning in Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), 152-54, 150-52.

² Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Sciences of Language*, trans. Catherine Porter (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 332.

ence for restricted omniscience sets out 'blocks' of information, each traced assiduously to its source. In this light, the entire issue of narrative knowledge can be seen to be author-centred: it canonizes the author as the sole or at least prime mediator between his represented universe and his reader. That the study of narrative is a far richer field, involving myriad possibilities of interplay between author, hero and reader, is self-evident; the realization has tended to shift the emphasis away from this once central question.¹ Yet Iskander's overwhelming concern with this one facet; his excessive, almost obsessive source-citation; his continual pitting source against source to confirm, deny or equivocate between them--reflects an effort to confront his own authorial dominance. Paradoxically, it also serves to reinforce that same single centre.

It is on this pattern of strictly regulated and carefully annotated narrative knowledge that the narrator-witness of the "Kharlampo and Despina" tale proceeds to alternate the reporting of rumours on Omar's threats to the Greek shepherd (1981:67-68), with his own eye-witness confirmation of the same (1981:68-69, 70-71). Here too he lapses into the allegorical expansion of gesture: Omar standing for the inhumanity of murder and the pogroms, Kharlampo for "Hellenic valour and a Socratic scornful indifference to death" (1981:71), as the tale takes yet another 180-degree turn from ribald farce to oratorical flourish. And once again, the whole

¹See I.R. Titunik, "The Formal Method and the Sociological Method (M.M. Baxtin, P.N. Medvedev and V.N. Vološinov) in Russian Theory and the Study of Literature," app. 2 in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* by V.N. Vološinov, trans. L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), 194-195.

is underscored by a well-read gesture: the stoic tightening of Kharlampo's jaw, his theosophical shake of the head.

In the aggregation/segregation scheme anything can expand. The author-dominated interpretation impulse is no exception. Internal anchoring on the spatio-temporal plane permits wide-ranging sorties into still more abstract, external evaluation. Carefully annotated sexual innuendo, therefore, inevitably leads to its discussion in terms of 'learned wit,' at the expense of Sigmund Freud.¹ Kharlampo and Despina sublimate their yearning for each other in a frenetic hoeing match. "Самозабвение труда" becomes "напряжение трудового экстаза" and, lest the point be missed:

один из чегемских фрейдистов вдруг произнес:
--Размахались мотыгами! Небось, им кажется -- они вроде не на поле [...], а друг с дружкой усердствует! [1981:55]

On this toehold, the author intervenes to wonder whether Freud himself might not have plagiarized from the perspicacious Chegemers, whether any number of great world philosophies might not be traced to the same source (1981:53). The speculation launches a major digression (1981:53-58, 60) on the true originator of Marx's theory of surplus value, a local fanatic by the name of Khamug. An undiscovered Lysenko like Voinovich's Gladyshev,

¹Freud is often targeted by Iskander. On the gesture-interpretation pattern, Tengiz, flirting with a young girl helping him to string lights: "Когда он ей сверху подавал шипцы или кусачки или молоток, он так вкрадчиво улыбался ей, так многозначительно задерживал руку, словно подсовывал не слишком благопристойную открытку или, подавая инструменты, намекал на вездесущий фрейдистский символ" (1979: 291). "Uncle Freud" is made to compete with Aunt Katia in the interpretation of dreams (1979: 328). When Marat takes up with a lady boa-constrictor tamer to overcome the impotence brought on by Beria, Freud just barely manages to hold his own against the "ancient Russian proverb," "клин клином вышибают" (*Метрополь*: 393). It is as though the Austrian is made to stand as a rival symbolic system to Iskander's interpretation scheme.

Khamug returns to the soil one-half of every ear of corn he harvests. His heroic struggle to pursue socio-economic ideals in the teeth of common sense can, of course, be read as a pre-deciphered Aesopian allegory of the Marxist experiment.

Of more immediate interest, however, is the passage's place in Iskander's compilative use of defamiliarization, which now emerges as a corollary of his translation technique--from culture to culture; here, from political rhetoric to its stolidly absurd application. Quite naturally then, the digression launches two more interpolations, both based on *остранение*, specifically, *острzenie* of the oratorical, didactic, Tolstoyan vein honed in the childhood cycles to a fine, authoritarian pitch.

Sandwiched into Khamug's tale is one delivered by Tendel, playing on the much-touted slogans of equality of the sexes and generous state pensions. An old Russian woman who works as a night-watchman is seen by the Chegemers as a victim of her male relatives' disgraceful neglect; her glasses are "глазные стекла";¹ her guardsman's whistle--a child's toy forced upon her in mockery of her advanced years. The Chegemers are outraged and then (decoding from the fresh and unfamiliar to the straightforward

¹This might be called 'mini-defamiliarization': the *naif* re-naming of an alien object which translates from a more modern to a technologically less advanced culture. The tactic is very seldom applied by Iskander, despite what would seem to be rich grounds afforded by the cultural confrontation theme of *Sandro*. Like the English back-translation of 'fire-sticks' for *guns*, the tactic tends to carry with it an element of condescension towards the people whose supposed lack of sophistication it connotes. Iskander's orientation is rather Tolstoyan: the less 'civilized' a people, the less they have succumbed to contamination. See his word play transforming *кривая развития* into *развитие кривое* (1979:524), and the digression on "civilization" vs. "culture" (1979:535-36).

'message') amused that they should be taken for savages by such a savagely irreverent (Russian, urban) people (1981: 58-59).

There follows one of the novel's more famous, more ambitious exercises in defamiliarization: the tale of Lenin the *abrek* or Caucasian outlaw who overthrew the Russian Empire in a blood vendetta against Nicholas II (1981: 60-66).¹ The whole of Soviet history, it seems, can be translated into the simpler, untainted terms of the Abkhazian peasantry. Lenin's testament becomes a capitalized "Paper"; Big Moustache's ultimate revenge--his refusal to accord the faithful brother's (Lenin's) bones a decent burial. It is this affront to the ancient proprieties that has caused all woes afflicting Soviet society to this very day.

Thus the "Харлампо и Деслина" chapter both insinuates the narrator into the lost world of Chegem and illustrates a fundamental trait of Iskander's first-person witness-narration. The reticence discovered on the syntagmatic plane of fabula--the gradual revelation of kinship ties--repeats itself on the deeper level of narrative strategy, specifically the question of narrative knowledge and its motivation. It is as though a humble narrator-witness would not venture to offer any first-hand information, let alone speculate about a character's thoughts and motives, without first having patently established a solid, objective base. Yet it is this very speculation, and through it the assertion of his own views, that is his primary interest. Hence the interpretation pattern. The narra-

¹Interpreted by Briker and Dal'gor as part of the novel's mythologization of Soviet reality for "magic realism" ("*Сандро и магический реализм*," 110). This would represent translation on a higher plane.

tor's modest adherence to concrete physical evidence yields to the unfettered glee of interpreting that same evidence. Continual reference to objective, visual data performs the same function as the high-frequency of source-citation. Both form the bedrock for flights of aphoristic, allegorical commentary; both repeat the compilative strategy of overlaying the target of commentary against its object. It remains to demonstrate the extent of visual-to-philosophical translation in *Sandro*.

A visual orientation is evident from the outset of Iskander's career, sparking countless comments on the "plastic quality" of his poetry,¹ its high incidence of visual metaphors, its indebtedness to the graphic colours of Bagritskii. Consider the following reflection on Iskander's early verse:

Фазиль Искандер любит зрительный образ, он не представляет себе внутреннего жеста без жеста внешнего. Для каждого движения души он должен обязательно найти пластическое проявление.²

His prose reverses the direction: gestures, facial expressions, bodily posture are carefully described and instantly interpreted. Of the latest of his cycles to coalesce, the stories centred on Chik, it has even been said that mimicry and gesture all but replace verbal communication.³ *Sandro* offers a wealth of scenes played out entirely in mime, as assiduously glossed as the fig-picking episode. Among them: Uncle Sandro's daily flirtations and political weather forecasts from Lakoba's balcony (1979: 188-90); the story of the

¹See for example Б. Сарнов, "Полнота жизни," *Новый мир* 1958:5, с. 250, 252; Вл. Файнберг, "Протянутая к солнцу нить," *Октябрь* 1961:1, с. 210.; Ст. Рассадин, "Знакомство состоялось, но..." *В мире книг* 1962:4, с. 31; он же, "Среди людей," 234.

²Евг. Винокуров, "Характерность," *Литературная газета*, 24 июля 1962, 3.

³И. Логинов, рецензия на повесть Фазила Искандера, "День Чика," *Детская литература* 1972:6, с. 53.

prayer-tree recapitulated in mime by Stalin, Lakoba and Kalinin (1979: 205); the silent-movie shenanigans of Moscow factory workers and on-the-job drinking (1979: 104-5); the narrator's complex negotiations with his Svan captors (1979: 508-9); the flirtation between Abesalomon Nartovich's secretary and a visiting cosmonaut (1979: 542-43); the extra-verbal diplomacy of shifting arboreal parasols (1979: 554-62). Silent scenes, according to Uspenskii, can indicate that the observer occupies a remote position, one distant enough to accommodate a "generalized depiction."¹ This remoteness corresponds to what might be called the authoritative reticence of Iskander's first-person narrator. A vantage point on the periphery of events, one situated not so much away from the field of events as *above* them, offers rich and well-reaped grounds for authoritative commentary.

Recall Bakhtin's assertion that drama establishes an essentially monologic, a "particularly monolithic" frame of reference, or rather 'contemplation' (созерцание); this is a unity based on the remoteness, the non-participation of the 'contemplator' (созерцающий).² Iskander's first published tale, "Первое дело" (1956) exhibits the silent-dialogue technique in embryonic, and fairly simplistic dramatic form. The participants are the boy-narrator and his donkey. Gesture anchors are separated from their hypothetical exchange, marking off its beginning and end. The 'conversation' itself is rendered in direct speech, even in the textological form associated with stage scripts, i.e. by identifying the 'speakers' of individual

¹Успенский, *Поэтика композиции*, 86.

²Бактин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, 27-29.

lines.¹ Another early story, "Урок игры в шахматы" (1964), relies still more heavily on the device.² From the same period, "Посрамление фальшивомонетчиков" (1965), veers from the first- into the second-person, in an epilogue that purports to address one of the story's characters, a childhood friend of the narrator, and manages to soliloquize on the *tempus fugit* theme.³ These, of course, are simply surface tokens, compositional experiments that would seem to have been abandoned. More revealing by far is the dramatic metaphor cited above (p. 229), when the narrator confesses he would like simply to *observe* his characters from the wings, but finds himself *supervising* their every move.

The author of *Sandro* combines these two functions in the meticulous recording and stage management of his protagonists' body language as well as, to stretch the analogy still further, in blithely intrusive voice-over commentary. The novel brims with gestures and their inflated interpretation; the strategy forefronts an ostensibly coy narrator, belying his claim to objective observation, his many concessives. Often the effect is achieved by emphasizing the subtlety of some wordless exchange. Who else but Iskander would propose to codify the various degrees of approval conveyed by a handshake? or turn the proposal into a major di-

¹Фазиль Искандер, "Первое дело," *Пионер* 1956:11, с. 49-50.

²Он же, "Урок игры в шахматы," *Неделя*, 15-21 ноября 1964, с. 6, 7, 8. Also in *Московский комсомолец*, 17 октября 1965, с. 4 and the collections ЗП (1966): 216-31 and *Тринадцатый подвиг Геракла* (Москва: Советская Россия, 1966), 41-54. Discussed by Burlingame, "Prose of Fazil Iskander," 125-26.

³Он же, "Посрамление фальшивомонетчиков: рассказ," *Неделя*, 4-10 июля 1965, с. 6,7,18. Reprinted in ЗП (1966): 26-38.

gression (1979: 527-34)? When Uncle Sandro is passed over in the selection of toastmaster at the Goatibex banquet:

Я поймал взглядом взгляд дяди Сандро и по его невозмутимому взгляду понял, что он хотел сказать. А хотел он мне сказать, что он, как настоящий Профессионал, привыкший к настоящим мастерам застолья, и не хотел бы сейчас руководить этим разношерстным столом расхлябанных любителей. Он пристально вглядывался в меня, пока не убедился, что именно эту мысль я прочел в его глазах. [1979:423]

Subtlety can register itself in the form of multilayered ambiguities, each diligently expounded. Uncle Sandro ends his tale of his first encounter with the bankrobber Dzhugashvili:

дядя Сандро глядел на собеседника своими большими глазами с мистическим оттенком. По взгляду его можно было понять, что скажи он вовремя отцу о человеке, который прошел по нижнечегемской дороге, вся мировая история пошла бы другим, во всяком случае не нижнечегемским путем. [the Lower Chegem Road representing a moral decline from the Upper.]

И все-таки по взгляду нельзя было точно определить, то ли он жалеет о своем давнем молчании, то ли ждет награды от не слишком благодарных потомков. Скорее всего во взгляду его можно было понять, что он, жалея, что не сказал, не прочь получить награду.

Впрочем, эта некоторая двойственность его взгляда заключала в себе дозу демонической иронии, как бы отражающей неясность и колебания земных судей в его оценке. [1979:229]

Tengiz points out the hardships of a tyrant who can never take a spur-of-the moment vacation:

-- [...] А некоторые думают -- вождям легко!... [...]

С этими словами он постукал себя пальцем по темени, одновременно с пристальным вниманием оглядывая гостей. Палец его, постукающий по темени, намекал на умственную отсталость тех, которые так думают, одновременно давая знать, что должность вождя требует и пожирает такое количество умственных сил, что с ума сойдешь, света божьего не взвидишь. И оба эти смысла были поняты и должным образом оценены собравшимися. [1979: 296-97]

Soon after his confrontation with Khrushchev at the Twenty-Second Party Congress, Voroshilov is applauded by local pro-Stalinists. His escorts lean more towards supporting, cautiously, the current party line:

те, что держали Ворошилова, выражением своего лица показывали, что аплодисменты относятся к далеким заслугам маршала на Гражданской войне, а не к его недавним симпатиям, вызванным скорее всего легким маразмом [...] При этом они даже слегка прищуривались, как бы вглядываясь в зарево героических пожаров Гражданской войны. [1979: 429]

In a society beset with an unwritten Byzantine hierarchy on the one hand and an official policy of equality on the other, gesture can reveal that there are shades of deference even in plain toadying. Abesalomon Nartovich whispers to his subordinate, Avtandi! Avtandilovich,

который уже наклонялся к нему, успев почтительным кивком показать, что заранее согласен со всем, что Абесаломон Нартович ему скажет. Он слушал Абесаломона Нартовича, точным наклоном поднеся свое ухо в сферу улавливания шепота, однако ни на миг не злоупотребляя этой сферой и тем более не доводя свой встречный наклон до выражения хамской интимности. [1979:415]

The more awesome political implications of gesture, of even a mere glance, are exposed by the fate of Pata Pataraiia, Sandro's chief rival in the Abkhazian dance ensemble:

Его взяли, обвинив в том, что он на одном из концертов во время исполнения танца с мечами, якобы, невольно выдавая тайный замысел, *нехорошо посмотрел* в сторону правительственной ложи. *Разумеется*, он во всем признался и получил десять лет. [1979: 33; italics mine]¹

Once again, it is the author's exposition, his stylistic intervention that scores the point, which would seem to have shifted from the much discussed 'gentle satire' to outright invective.

¹When Pataraiia re-appears in the Chik cycle, the emphasis falls squarely on the human tragedy of his loss, as the mourned, mysteriously absent father of Chik's friend Nika. There too, however, a visual-graphic metaphor is used to heighten the pathos, and once again, literalization/defamiliarization is the technique employed. Chik has heard from his uncle, who like Sandro danced in the Abkhazian folk ensemble with Pataraiia, that this legendary star could dance on an upturned wineglass. He struggles with the dead metaphor and finally concludes: "Это было похоже на рисунок из замечательной книги «История гражданской войны.» [...] Там был нарисован дореволюционный крестьянин, который одной ногой стоял на своей земле, а другую держал в воздухе, потому что своей земли у него было так мало, что некуда было поставить вторую ногу" (ПОП: 223).

There are times when the author uses his mastery of the subtle language of mime to mediate between two opposing views, even two opposing cultures. Such is the encounter between a younger Uncle Sandro and the imposing Prince Ol'denburgskii. The two are at cross-purposes throughout the meeting: Sandro, arrested for attacking a hotel watchman, wants to obtain his release and perhaps be rewarded for the swan he has captured. The Prince, bound by his ideals of constitutional monarchy, must try, at least informally, a "noble savage" who wins his condescending admiration ("Дикарь, подумал Александр Петрович, но какое чувство собственного достоинства," 1979: 62). He must also impress upon his entourage true respect for the impartial administration of justice. The mixed motives of both parties are expounded via privileged access into the inner thoughts of each--which in any writer other than Iskander would call for straightforward, i.e. unmotivated omniscient narration. Iskander, however, chooses in this passage to translate their gestures and have both respond to the translation:

-- Как случилось, -- спросил принц, сутуло наклоняясь вперед и исподлобья оглядывая дядю Сандро. Эта привычка придавала его позе грузную стремительность и внушала собеседнику необходимость идти к истине кратчайшим путем.

Дядя Сандро это сразу понял и, почувствовав, что кратчайший путь к истине будет для него наиболее губительным, решил не поддаваться, а навязать ему свой путь к истине. [1979: 58]

After the swan, the Prince's favourite, has been discovered:

-- Где ты его нашел? -- спросил принц, откидываясь на скамейку и доброжелательно оглядывая дядю Сандро, как бы разрешая ему несколько удлинить путь к истине. Дядя Сандро это сразу же почувствовал и, не скупясь на краски, рассказал историю поимки черного лебедя. [1979: 59]

The tale originates with Uncle Sandro, as the epilogue takes pains to point out, as the frequent interpolation of *verba dicendi* attributed to him indicates. The chapter, in other words, is a compilation of two narrative techniques (omniscient and relay-narration) and two patriarchal systems (Russian and Abkhazian), with an author-in-the-middle who both mediates between and segregates the two.¹

In other cases, the interpreter reinforces his dominance stylistically, by translating from simple, physical facts into incongruously scientific jargon.² In the passage below, the narrator awaits a clandestine meeting in the bathroom of the Ministry of Agriculture. A stranger appears:

Грузный и рылый, он долго стоял у писсуара, побряхтывая и прислушиваясь к процессам, происходившим в его мочевом пузыре, и, время от времени оглядываясь на меня с выражением болезненного прислушивания, словно включая меня в систему препятствий, затрудняющих ему пользоваться неоспоримым правом на достойное завершение обмена веществ. Каждый раз, когда он так болезненно оглядывался на меня, я слегка прижимал сумку к ноге, показывая тем самым, что я стараюсь как можно меньше влиять на процессы, происходящие в его организме.
[1979:441]

¹The translation pattern, coupled with the patriarchal theme running the entire length of *Sandro*, would seem to argue against Ivanova's verdict on the Prince. She dismisses him as the embodiment of "excellent stupidity set in arrogance" ("Смех против страха" (1988c), 147). The true humour of this brilliantly crafted encounter, as I see it, rests on the self-importance assumed by both parties. Iskander's blend of meticulous reportage and inflated interpretation preserves the inner dignity of each, even while debunking their external pretensions.

²Deming Brown deems the use, by Iskander and Voinovich, of "inappropriate language" (official bureaucratese and newspaper formulas) in "inappropriate contexts" to be the "hallmark of the ironic style" of the 1960s. It pointed to a "new and unusual degree of linguistic experimentation" suggesting at least a partial revival of the ornamentalism of the 1920s, and in this aspect, the influence of Zoshchenko and Il'f and Petrov ("Intimacy and Irony," 60-62).

In the first physical description of Uncle Sandro, bookish translation underscores the ironic distance between the old man and his narrator-visitor:

Он протер одну ногу одним концом полотенца, затем другим концом другую ногу, словно давая каждой ноге, а также и окружающим людям урок справедливости и равноправия в пользовании благами жизни. [1979:28]

The gesture itself is highlighted by the syntactic, rhythmic redundancy of its presentation.¹ From semi-Biblical overtones (appropriate enough in the context of performing one's ablutions), the pedantic irony returns to bureaucratese. In the effort to recall a rival toastmaster:

дядя Сандро [...] презрительно выпятил нижнюю губу. В это мгновение, казалось, он мысленно пробежал картотеку своих застолий и, вытащив нужную карточку, удостоверился, что соперник никакой опасности не представляет. [1979:29]

Note, in both examples, the pseudo-modesty of the modals *казалось* and *казалось* is flaunted by the blithe eloquence of the interpretations they introduce.²

Not only gestures but physical features as well are treated to inflated commentary that swallows up cautious circumspection:

Каждый раз, когда он приподнимал голову, на его породистой шее появлялась жировая складка. Но это была не та тяжелая заматерелая складка, какая бывает у престарелых обжор. Нет, это была легкая, почти прозрачная складка, я бы сказал, высококалорийного жира, которую откладывает, вероятно, очень здоровый организм, без особых усилий справ-

¹ Smelkov quotes the majestic foot-washing scene to back his contention that Iskander's style is built on rhythmic phrasing: here the repetitions imitate the act described, as well as convey the author's candid irony. He extends the pattern to the structure of the novel as a whole, one involving a "спокойное, в крайнем случае добродушно-ироническое начало, неторопливое развитие -- и насмешливый, язвительный финал." (Смелков, "Так возникает роман," 31, 33).

² Ryan-Hayes discusses the insertion of modals into the inflated interpretation of gestures. Her focus is on their limitation of the narrator's degree of omniscience ("Soviet Satire After the Thaw," 189-90). Mine is on their virtual annulment.

ляясь со своими обычными функциями, и в оставшееся время он, этот неуязвимый организм, балуется этим жирком, как, скажем, не слишком занятые женщины балуются вязаньем. [1979: 27]

Inevitably, the same "tender fold of fat" is patted by its owner and identified by him as a "callous"--an obvious send-up of the trophies of a socialist work ethic usually displayed on a labourer's hands:

-- Думаешь, легко быть вечным тамадой, -- [...] он [...] еще сильней запрокинул голову, показывая, что когда пьешь, все время приходится держать ее в таком положении. Он снова притронулся к этой складке и даже поощрительно похлопал ее *в том смысле, что* она ему еще послужит. [1979:42; italics mine]¹

So frequently does the narrator-witness expand on his characters' non-verbal messages that the construction 'gesture + в том смысле что' ('did something to the effect that'), if not Iskander's own invention, becomes a shorthand signal for the technique. Uncle Sandro's wife thanks the narrator:

Старушка взяла жбан меда и, улыбнувшись мне *в том смысле, что* человека моего калибра, пожалуй, не стоило беспокоить из-за какого-то меда, унесла его на кухню. [1979: 27; italics mine]

A Menshevik-collaborator justifies his actions:

Он пожал плечами, *в том смысле, что* они заставили его заниматься этим некрасивым делом. [1979: 18; italics mine]

Uncle Sandro complains his wife sees him as a drunkard, and not a great tamada:

-- Вот женщина, -- пробормотал дядя Сандро и, не оборачиваясь, кивнул головой в стороне жены *в том смысле, что* она сознательно упрощает круг его общественных обязанностей. [1979:31-32; italics mine]

He silently indicates the arcane importance of his tales:

Я ждал, когда он начнет рассказывать, но дядя Сандро молчал, поглядывая на официантку, убирающую со стола, *в том смысле, что* рассказ не рассчитан для слуха непосвященного. [1979: 41-42; italics mine]

¹For the meticulous observation of physical features interpreted as a "Tolstojesque [sic] technique" indicating a child's freshness of vision, see Babenko, "Fazil Iskander," 139.

A politically risky conversation reverts to wordless glances in a transparent reference to the widespread notion that telephones in private apartments are channels for eavesdropping by the state:

Мне показалось, что последнюю фразу он сказал не столько мне, сколько телефону. Поймав мой взгляд, вернее, поняв по моему взгляду, что я понял смысл его взгляда, направленного на телефон, он решил не скрывать своих опасений и, ткнув рукой на аппарат, сделал отрицательный жест, усилив его брезгливой мимикой. Жест этот не только не оставлял сомнений, что аппарат не пользуется у него никаким доверием, но и всячески призывал меня с оттенком далеко идущего дружелюбия разделить его скептицизм.

-- Неужели и вас? -- спросил я, кивнув на телефон.

Тут он развел руками *в том смысле, что* вокруг этого вопроса сложилась обстановка удручающей неясности. [1979: 185; italics mine]

Other characters are equally aware of the political expediency of gesture. Sandro is asked by Stalin what became of Platon Pantsulaia, leader of the Abkhazian dance ensemble:

-- В тридцать седьмом арестовали, -- сказал дядя Сандро и развел руками *в том смысле, что*, мол, не повезло человеку, угодил под обвал. [1979: 305]

Under liberal attack, one official encourages another to keep to his dreams of advancement, measured in desk size:

Он выпрямился, посмотрел на меня с выражением скромной важности, перевел взгляд на администратора, как бы кивнул ему слегка *в том смысле, что* надо мечтать, что мечта его о более обширной поверхности стола замечена там, где надо, и уже обрастает деревянной плотью. [1979: 489; italics mine]

These examples illustrate the interpretation pattern as a sujet-expansion device, its use as a springboard for Iskander's famous verbose digressions. The pattern can also be applied directly to expansion on the fabula level, as in the series of miracles ascribed to the infant Tali in Chapter Eleven. The first--her pointing, aged five months, at the moon--is based, appropriately enough, on a concrete body gesture. It launches an intricate search for the

I correct reading of this particular sign from heaven, where the author manifests his control in the 'gently ironic' treatment of the Chegemers' naive literalism, the dogmatism of the scientific sceptic and the mullah, and last but not least, the highly amusing contrast of all three systems of belief (a compilative procedure in itself). As the miracles multiply (the mysterious cradle rocking, the Abkhazian drinking song), so does the compiling of their various interpretations. The final consensus emerges as a composite, a deliberately rickety composite, of all three signs.

Fabula extension of the interpretation model enters as well into the motley structure of Chapter Seven, "История молельного дерева." There the central event concerns the interpretation of the word "кумхоз" (a local corruption of "колхоз"), produced by striking the sacred tree of Chegem. Various secondary portents ensue: a cow suckling a fox (1979:151), the mysterious appearance of a cauldron and skeleton (1979: 157-58), the disappearance of a bullet and a carcass (1979: 158-59). The meaning of each is debated by the Chegemers; the authorities concoct their own explanation for the skeleton, which leads to Sandro's arrest, first encounter with Lakoba, and departure from Chegem to join the dance ensemble. As in the case of Tali's miracles, the villagers' thorough investigation of every possible alternative does not so much mock their superstition, as parody the method of scientific, or forensic, inquiry proper. The true contrast is not between scientific civilization and uncivilized gullibility, but between dogma of any stripe and down-to-earth commonsense. Thus it is the peasant Khabug who clears up the pseudo-mysteries and arrives at the proper reading of the

true issue at hand: the peasants must submit to collectivization, as inexorable as fate, and just as unfathomable.

Body gesture, feature and even pose can be frozen, recorded in the no less graphic medium of painting. Thus it comes as no surprise that Iskander's work should be studded with a number of pictures, many of which launch long and detailed interpretations. In Rembrandt's "The Prodigal Son," the reader's attention is specifically directed to the miscreant's

неуместно выпирающий зад. Выпирающий не только из грубой бродяжьей одежды, но и тайно выпирающий из самого религиозного момента, как бы свидетельствующий о затаившемся вероломстве стареющего кутилы. Эту же загадку подтверждали его сильные (пилигрима) ноги; чересчур размашисто разбросанные, они, эти ноги, намекали на возможность, получив прощение и доступ в родной дом, отхалать там чего-нибудь поприличней и дать драпака [...] [ПСГО: 183]

Lenin's portrait¹ may be vaguely discerned in the rust patterns of his neighbour's eavestroughs; nevertheless one physical feature both stands out and comes in for most suggestive commentary: "было удивительное сходство, особенно этот лобастый, как бы таранящий наклон головы" (КиУ: 241). Vasnetsov's illustration² to Pushkin's "Песнь о вещем Олеге" migrates from the essay "Победил Пушкин," to the Chik cycle ("Чик и Пушкин"), with faint echoes in the "Молния-мужчина" chapter of *Sandro*. The boy's search for a "saboteur's slogan" hidden in the picture yields to his captivation by the poem itself; a false interpretation is replaced by a true reading, a genuine love of poetry; and interpretation itself is vindicated.

¹Possibly Isaac Brodskii's "Lenin in Smolnyi" (1930).

²The picture is identified in Искандер, "Об очаге и доме" (интервью), 2; он же, "И чувство собственной судьбы" (интервью), 4. For the publication history of the Chik cycle, see app. 7.

In *Sandro*, interpretation can be parodied as overzealous 'reading between the lines,' as in the description of the painting "Козлотур на сванской башне":

Картина была неоднократно хвалима нашей газетой, помнится один абзац, где обращалось внимание на решительно приподнятую ногу, топчущую сванскую башню как символ вражды народов. Позже картина была [...] обругана в печати, между прочим, за ту же сванскую башню, вернее, за неправильную ее трактовку. Оказывается, она никак не символ вражды народов, а, наоборот, символ сопротивления мужественного народа иноземным захватчикам. [1979: 490]

Similarly, the semi-dissident picture "Трое в синих макинтошах"¹ provokes a tantalizing variety of interpretations based on such features as feet that may or may not resemble hooves. Exegesis is pushed to a hilarious extreme:

В самой позе и в выражении лиц [...] была солидность, то спокойное ожидание исхода, какое бывает у людей, стоящих на эскалаторе. В данном случае можно было предложить, что это был эскалатор эволюции видов, только движущийся в обратном направлении: вот доедем до парнокопытных, а там и сойдем. [1979:474]

Graphic material can be translated into a parody of scientific jargon:

на одной диаграмме изображалось сравнительное движение обыкновенной пищи внутри одного козлотура и рационального рациона внутри другого. Движение обыкновенной пищи было изображено в виде черного пунктира, видимо, без особой пользы проходящего через козлотура, потому что движение это прослеживалось до самого акта выброса остатков пищи, где пунктир, довольно остроумно переходя в многоточие, сыпался из-под хвоста козлотура. [1979:411-12]

Photography too can serve as grist for the interpretation mill. In Chapter 24, "Маленький гигант большого секса," the irrepressible Marat accompanies his works with "более или менее расширенными подписями" (*Метрополь*: 383), which the relay-narrator edits for newspaper

¹That the interpretation pattern, as a launcher of digressions, serves to fragment a narrative sequence, is seen in the separate publication of the dissident-painting debate, as "Трое в синих макинтошах: рассказ," *Смена* 1986:3, с. 8-11.

publication, with piquant details of amorous conquest for less official release. One effort, a shot taken in the Moscow metro, sparks polemics:

с одной стороны вагона сидят пассажиры и все до одного читают книги и журналы, а с другой стороны, напротив их, все пассажиры дремлют или спят. [...]

[...] вдруг на летучке один из наших сотрудников сказал, что снимок могут неправильно понять. Его могут понять так, как будто в стране половина людей спит, а вторая половина бодрствует и учится. [*Метортоль*: 384]

It is then suggested that the photograph be cut in half and outfitted with the caption "Our Metro and Theirs" (p. 385), so as to make the contrast more politically acceptable.

Picture-citation is all-pervasive in Iskander, contributing both the fragmentary nature of his works (their internal segregation) and the structural similarities that permit their infinite chaining (their external aggregation). An earlier version of "School Waltz," for example, played on the hackneyed political poster rhetoric of cinema advertisements (in the short story variously titled "Тяжкий путь познания," *Сельская молодежь* 1973:1, с. 21; later "Долги и страсти" in ВСН: 58 and ПОП:96; omitted from the compiled versions in *Знамя* 1988:7, с. 28 and КиУ: 220). From "School Waltz" as well we recall the political poster observed by the boy as he waits in a bread line with his father and contemplates the infamous "жить стало лучше" slogan (КиУ: 277).

Dreams are 'seen,' not 'had' in Russian (видеть сон). What could be more natural than their comparison, in *Sandro*, to film. The central issue, as always, is meaning, perhaps with a hint at what lies behind Iskander's aggregation impulse:

Сюжет сна можно сравнить с обезьяной, которая с кинокамерой на шее пробежала по джунглям нашего подсознания [...]

И тут мы начинаем понимать, что нужны были сотни нелепых кадров, чтобы сделать убедительными те два-три, которые нам приоткрыли смысл. [1979:328]

A film-analogy summarizes the ludicrously intricate ups-and-downs of the goatibex debate. "The criticism of a criticizing journal" has emboldened proponents of the hybrid, when suddenly

Неоднократно накрываемый тяжелой артиллерией критики, размолотый и засыпанный землей и щебенкой, он [журнал], как легендарный пулеметчик, вдруг открывал огонь из-под собственных обломков, заставляя шарахаться своих длинноухих врагов, бегущих назад и на бегу лягающих воздух бегущими копытами. В позднейших кинохрониках этому бегу был придан перевернутый, то есть атакующий смысл, а непонятное в этом случае лягание воздуха бегущими копытами в сторону своих тылов объяснялось избытком молодечества и невозможностью лягаться вперед. [1979: 406]

The prologue to the Goatibex Banquet compares the narrator's memories of that occasion to scraps of a torn-up picture swirling before his eyes. "Безумие, как их сложить?" asks a disembodied voice (1979: 409), foreshadowing the many Bulgakovian rhetorical questions and exclamations that bring the description of that scene close to the devilish affair at MASSOLIT. The banquet itself disintegrates all too soon into an infernal mosaic of disjointed *scraps* of dialogue. These crisscross into and out of each other like the jumbled single-lined remarks of the crowd scenes in *White Guard*.

By contrast, Chegem, in all its purity, is a perfect picture. The author recalls its original inspiration:

Замысел этого романа впервые мелькнул в детстве. Мне было, вероятно, лет десять. Я валялся на коровьей шкуре под описанной в романе яблоней и долго, старательно изображал пловца -- ностальгию по морю. Летом в горах, я скучал по морю, рядом с которым я вырос.

Вдруг я услышал голос моего двоюродного брата. Дом их находился на холме, чуть повыше дедушкиного. Он переключался с одной из своих двоюродных сестер, которая жила внизу, у самого родника.

Почему-то в это мгновение меня пронзило желание что-то такое сделать, чтобы никогда не кончались этот жаркий летний день, эта яблоня [...], голос брата и голоса сестры и все обитатели дедушкиного дома и окружающих домов.¹

When, as so many times in the past, Iskander re-worked this passage into his foreword to the most recent version of the novel, the key images were repeated almost verbatim: the hot summer's day, the apple tree, the voices of his relatives--all are re-evoked. There is one addition to the idyll--that of pigs racing to catch the occasional over-ripe fruit as it falls from the archetypically Iskanderian fertile tree. And that picture was culled, it seems, from a passage written *twenty years* previously, as the Moscow writer recalled, in "Начало," the patient pigs of his grandfather's village watching and waiting beneath those same apple trees (ДД: 22). Purity, like any positive value, is best depicted in opposition to some less unsullied image--either the coastal town, as in the passage cited above, or the disconcertingly flat plains of Moscow that surround the author of "Начало." Contrast compensates for the essentially static nature of any picture, particularly of the nostalgic variety. The latest memory concludes:

Мне страстно захотелось, чтобы и этот летний день, и эта яблоня, шелестящая под ветерком, и голоса моих сестер -- все, все, что вокруг, -- осталось навсегда таким же. Как это сделать, я не знал. Вроде бы все это надо было заново вылепить. Я это почувствовал сладостно хищнеюшими пальцами. Через несколько минут порыв погас, и я, казалось, навсегда забыл о нем. [1989/1: 3]

This is frozen lyricism, re-sculpted into art. Compare Iskander's comments on fellow master of the nostalgic, Bunin:

Для мироощущения Бунина характерна приверженность к устоявшемуся, неподвижному, вечному, замороженному самим временем. Мышление

¹Iskander's contribution to Лебедев, "Смешно сказать" (1987), 204-5.

минерала, тоска степного кургана в лунном свете, кладбищенская острота чувственности, презрение к текучести и неожиданно живая ненависть ко всему взрывному, социальному.

From this stance, he continues, emerges a tendency to "mummify all that is dear to the heart," an attempt to "preserve life from time."¹ The voices he himself sought to save for all time, their lyrically interminable calling from higher hills, resound over and again throughout the novel, most potently, as Tali disappears (Chapter 11), as children huddle in the same grandfather's house on a frightening wartime night (Chapter 31).

Such frozen lyricism is self-repetitive. It transforms readily into simple aggregation; it produces the 'nostalgic listing' technique most immediately evident in the description of his grandfather's house in "Goatibex," with its hypnotic "I-miss" refrain (ДД: 272-77; discussed above, p. 233). Each of the items in this catalogue is accorded the same scrupulous treatment applied to the many pictures that interrupt or punctuate so many other Iskanderian exercises in satiric mayhem. In this sense, each of the items missed in his grandfather's house stands as a lyric vignette--static, self-contained, subject to chaining but not development, springboard and platform for authorial commentary. Fittingly enough, one such item is itself a picture and is itself interpreted for the reader in allegorical terms: the narrator recalls a hand-embroidered carpet depicting a wide-eyed deer and hunched-over huntsman, instantly translated into the innocent nobility of one and the petty envy of the other (ДД: 274).

¹Искандер, "Идеи и приемы," 74.

More importantly, the passage encapsulates the lyric aggregate that the novel now embraces: the ingenuous enumeration, the simple adding on of illustrative moments is a natural outgrowth of the exegetic impulse examined above in the realms of ethnographic commentary, gesture interpretation, pictorial digressions and the like. For exegesis of the Iskanderian sort freezes each moment, turns each into an illustration of some larger but isomorphic whole, dissects its every facet and then recombines them all into the potentially infinite whole of a mosaic.

By the same token exegesis can be seen to form a logical extension of Iskander's uniquely, ambivalently remote first-person. Commentary of any kind,--on mores, body postures, graphic illustrations, or ultimately, on the lovingly preserved pictures of one's childhood--requires some form of distancing from its immediate object. Top-heavy commentary of Iskander's brand requires a particularly sensitive distancing, one that both permits and offsets, perhaps even disguises its more highly subjective directions. The delicate balance is maintained by a reticence not so much towards the commenting self, as in the autobiographical cycle, as towards that self's alliance with the world he has chosen to comment upon. Herein perhaps lies the significance of the author-narrator's ambivalent alliance to Chegem.

The gradual revelation of his ties to that lost world stands as a rare example of an ordering principle in a supremely disordered work. It transforms the novel into a personal odyssey of rediscovery, the narrator's journey back to his roots, to a world of which he was always both a part and yet not a part. The boy from the

seacoast town, the campaign-befuddled journalist of "Goatibex," the Moscow writer who looks up from the very pages that recreate Chegem to face the grey walls of the Soviet capital (1979: 104)--all are ephemeral, all repeat the pattern of straddling two worlds--Russian and Abkhazian, rural and urban, contemporary and patriarchal. The constant effort to explain each to the other and the whole to himself--through recording, reportage, interpretation, exegesis and commentary--is what produces the on-going saga of Iskander of Chegem. For he is now prepared to see himself as "the very last of the last Chegemers,"¹ and that fecund village's most articulate son.

¹Рассадин, "Последний чегемец," 243.

CONCLUSIONS

Compilation, in what would seem to be Iskander's well nigh unique handling of the form, turns out to be both an ordered and a disordered principle. It is here that the haphazard nature of his publishing procedures, the overwhelming evidence of bits and pieces scattered among and perpetually re-assembled from literally hundreds of venues, the tendency of themes, character and incident not only to repeat themselves with a haunting persistence but also to ignore the boundaries of genre, voice, mode and mood in the process--it is here that supreme disorder begs the need for some inner logic. For something must permit the product of such eclectic activity to hang together, however curious that product may be. That something has been the subject of this dissertation.

Aggregation/segregation was the term put forward at its beginning. It attempted to capture both the isolation of individual components and their ability to chain together, potentially, ad infinitum. More than that, it tried to demonstrate the absolute necessity for such chaining, the inner compulsion, as it were, that drives each facet to seek its counterpart and its continuation and to seek them simultaneously. It was coined in the attempt to account for the elusive phenomenon that is *Sandro of Chegem*--an unending 'whole' that will never be and has never pretended to be either uniform or complete. It might just suggest how that work mounts

a subtle attack on the heritage of the nineteenth century, our implicit allegiance to the notion of the 'well-made novel.'

Henry James, it will be recalled, bemoaned contemporary Russian efforts in that genre as "loose, baggy monsters." A similar note of condescension clings even to the terms I have been obliged to use: after all, 'chaining' comes very close to 'stringing' or 'threading,' from Shklovskii's description of the picaresque as a mere forerunner to the better-crafted products of a more sophisticated age. A hint of genre snobbery can be detected in much of the critical response to Iskander: directly in the debate on the classification of earlier versions of *Sandro*, in the discussion of his intonational about-faces or ranking on the epic scale; more invidiously among those--myself included--who would defend his cheerfully ad hoc methods. It is tempting here to quote a critical cliché no less abused than James' dictum,--Lev Tolstoi's, on the prerogative of the true work of art to set its own standards, to create its own concept of form. To leave the matter at that, however, would be a disservice to what is, even by these liberal standards, a unique creation.

Its uniqueness stems in large part from the imponderable sense of whole-ness it manages to convey to the reader. *Sandro of Chegem* can be read in any order, in any version, in any segment within or without what I have tried to prove to be incredibly porous limits. For that matter, any piece of writing by Iskander, whatever its genre or cycle label, can be read and instantly recognized as part of a single vast endeavour. To demonstrate this much has been a primary goal of my study. In and of itself, such empiri-

cal unity would seem to argue for a kind of order that is perhaps Iskander's most fascinating aspect.

This is isomorphism. Each and every level of Iskander's prose revolves on one and the same constructive principle--that, to repeat an admittedly ad hoc term, of aggregation/segregation. Genitive similes--the "hairy male of hatred," the "hairy caterpillar of envy"--yoke together or 'aggregate' in slapdash fashion two segregates, an abstract, moral concept and a more than tangible, irresistibly corporeal vehicle. Allegorical denominations, in the guise of either speaking names or Winnie-the-Pooh capitals, repeat the pattern of simple, even primitive overlaying of abstract and concrete segregates. These are segregated intonationally from their text environments as either ironic infiltrations of perfectly serious argument or vice versa. The internal segregation of each such hermetically sealed, static block of editorializing description permits its own individual extension (a is to b as a' is to b' , a potentially infinite process) and its aggregate interlocking with and overlapping into equally extensible because identically static homologations.

Static character denominations amplify into stubbornly unchanging traits and blithely repetitious re-introductions and recapitulated thumb-nail biographies. Their segregation each from the other and from the demands of more modern psychological portraiture is what permits their resistance to linear development and their constant interruption of its vehicle--chronological plot progression or even narrative consecutiveness. Moving up from the syntagma, this thesis has cited many examples of parentheticals:

the "as-it-turns-out-s" and "according-to-the-words-of" that justify extremely intrusive editing of 'other's accounts, the "gestures-to-the-effect-that" which usher in countless invasions of 'other' texts or encroachments of outright commentary on what purports to be objective omniscience; the interminable "so-he-thought-s" which launch so many instances of transparently authorial exposition. As segregation devices these mark (even where they attempt to conceal) stark transitions from the lyric to the ironic, which now emerge as poles on a continuum that measures the author's solidarity with or opposition to the text at hand. In Iskander, however, this is a counterfeit continuum, one totally devoid of modulation, a series of segments, an aggregate.

Passages are constructed in the same way. Several instances of deliberate syntactic redundancy have been cited in the course of this work: the almost archaic tendency to avoid pronoun replacement, for example, is reproduced in the mocking repetition of bureaucratic jargon or current journalese. The first harks back to the propensity for 'source-citation' that delineates segments based on varying, but carefully indicated degrees of authorial omniscience. Such compartmentalization in turn opens each segment to the aggregate processes of invasion either by others or into others, shrunk for recapitulation or expanded into digression. The second, -the continual refrain of "interesting undertaking to say the least" from "Goatibex" or hilarious variations on "light" and "heavy industry" in *Sandro*, even the latter's oft-repeated amplifications on the Abkhazian original of "watchers-over"--these all could be seen as no more than satirical exercises in polyptoton.

Certainly the simple repetition, with or without modulation, of any word or phrase does eventually empty it of all meaning. This effect is undoubtedly sought and masterfully achieved by Iskander. In structural terms each use of the device segregates its own individual passage from those around it. It does this by the sheer force of saturation, which saturation highlights an extremely primitive form of text organization. Aggregation proceeds from the potential of any repetition to repeat itself just this once more or to infect any word or part of speech so that it too will spark repetitious digressions of its own (Iskander's famous "by-the-bye-s"). It also contributes to the substitute dynamics discussed in this thesis in terms of fabula- and sujet-expansion, in that it too blocks the more familiar means of text progression (cause and continuity) and thereby creates the need for self-reproduction. Most importantly of all, the compartmentalization effect of saturation spills over into and allows the lyric use of repetition, in the catalogues of what was missed in grandfather's home, the echoing cries of cousins in the hills, the simple but lyrically-supercharged lists of fruits in their changing but ever recurring seasons, and so on without end.

Even larger text-units are prey to aggregation/segregation. This is what both powers and permits Iskander's peculiar tales-within-tales, each assiduously differentiated from its neighbours by the source-citation method discussed above. Skaz or rather quasi-skaz can be juxtaposed, thanks to such meticulously observed distinctions, with an Iskanderian version of objective monologue. The aggregate face of narrative embedding is revealed by the compulsion often to repeat or parcel out the description of

one and the same episode in a number of direct or indirect modes. Kharlampo's affair with the goat, the tale of the bandit Shchashchiko were but two of the examples cited in this dissertation; they illustrated the editorializing--ironic or moralistic--use to which such text manipulation may be put. A more extreme instance of the same impulse can be found in the most recent extension of Iskander's corpus, the re-casting of a number of stories written over two decades ago in the first-person into the third-person and their recombination as the Chik cycle. At times, this amounts to no more than a cosmetic change in verb person.¹ It seems as though the curiously remote view of his boyhood self,--what in the "School Waltz" cycle stood as the segregation of the adult-commentator and the child-focus,--has merely taken the next logical step into straightforward omniscient narration. Compilative re-casting, part of the aggregate pattern of recurrence, was examined above in the stitching-together of older first-person works into the third-person frame of "Sea Scorpion." Not that Iskander is the first writer to re-write earlier efforts, or switch narrative person in the process. What stands out is the unabashed extreme to which he indulges in the practice: one can recall that Raskolnikov's confession was remodelled from the first- into the third-person, but not that his creator would publish *both* versions simultaneously, let alone continue to expand on each.

¹"Чик и Пушкин," for example, quite simply re-writes the first-person account of the boy's first stage appearance in "Мученики сцены." Other episodes of the "School Waltz" cycle and its peripheral tales are re-capitulated, recalled or expanded upon. All its characters, to a man, woman and child,--re-appear in "Chik," making the transition with all of their static identifying features intact.

Aggregation/segregation affects thematics as well. One of the basic structural metaphors of *Sandro*,--the banquet--was shown to have spawned countless repetitions, always preserving the distinction between the perverted and the idealized variants. The rigorous separation of good and evil, can now be seen to underlie the moral axis of the work, its constant pre-occupation with 'high' and 'low,' 'mountain' and 'valley,' rustic purity and urban spoilage. Spiralling isotopies, it was suggested, form yet another arm of segregation, for seldom does one emblem appear without its counterpart. Aggregation translates on this level into the endless stacking up of moral oppositions. Thus the picaro,--Uncle Sandro with all his many reincarnations in Tengiz, Marat, Abesalomon Nartovich and others,--becomes moral man-in-the-middle between such patriarchs as Khabug and Kiazym on the one hand, and a cabal of tyrants from Stalin and Beria to the more modest aspirations of Timur and Omar on the other. His is not the dynamic ambiguity described by Bakhtin or claimed for him by several of Iskander's critics. Rather it partakes of the substitute dynamics of compilation, manifest here as the frozen ambiguity of oxymoron.

Iskanderian oxymoron, it was proposed, must forever seek its expansion in the full development of both sides of the opposition, the better to ring the changes on one central, itself unchanging contrast.

From this same dynamics proceeds the author's continual reversion to a fairly limited set of issues. This dissertation has maintained that the aggregate recurrence principle enables him to take ever new approaches to old and familiar characters, to spin and re-

I spin a proliferating number of wildly eclectic comparisons to such oxymoronic figures as Uncle Sandro or Tengiz. Hence the constant fluctuation--as reversal, retraction or reservation--in the author's open commentary on his favourite characters, even on issues beyond the scope of immediate plot and character concerns. These too can now be said to fit into the aggregation/segregation scheme. Iskander's essaistic moments, his many plot-stopping apostrophes, were originally seen as intruding upon the narrative flow on the license of segregation. They are indeed as stylistically distinct from his rollicking farces as they first struck his first critics so many years ago. More difficult to perceive is their own aggregate propulsion. The aphoristic chaining and compilation discussed in this study forms one of its parts. Another was sketched by the consideration of the Endurian question. Iskander's perpetual returning to this three-decade-old joke, the brilliant eloquence lavished again and again on its every implication, reveals the same oxymoronic eclecticism as that applied to Uncle Sandro or any of his fellow pseudo-ambiguities. Family loyalties no less than ethnic allegiances run an equally generous gamut of opposing and complementary tonal postures. As does the author's, the reluctant nephew's own position within and without the world of Uncle Sandro.

One further aspect of aggregation/segregation need be recalled: it resists and even precludes synthesis. The loose, baggy and utterly dishevelled monster that *Sandro of Chegem* has now become flaunts the very notion of literary grooming--from the editing of pre-published pieces to their smooth integration into a 'compleat

whole.' The a-literary, even the anti-literary nature of the work was examined in a number of areas: in the cocky flogging of dead metaphors, in the revival of archaic because didactic Tolstoyan defamiliarization, in the purposely gauche justification of reckless insertions. What masquerades as Sternian sophistication--the author's confidential chatter on the ups-and-downs of his career,--turns out to be not so much playing with form as a matter-of-fact disregard for its formalities. Thus flippant remarks on the 'tricks of his trade' veer into the earnest glossing of titles, turns of phrase and entire tales. Here too, perhaps, lies the secret of Iskander's quasi-skaz: it is less concerned with re-creating the intention or even the mannerisms of 'other' speech than with promoting the author's immediate role and unflagging presence as both conscientious reporter and sly interpreter. Springboards for aggregate expansion, centres of well segregated units, each and every facet of Iskander's a-literary pose enters into his compilative method.

It has been stressed throughout this dissertation that Iskander does not deviate from convention. Instead, he exploits it, with a cunning and, it seems, unparalleled audacity. So candid is his approach, so pointedly artless, that the study of his work becomes a uniquely profitable undertaking. Embracing in its grandiose scope close to the full range of contemporary interests in the Soviet literary mainstream, *Sando of Chegem* and its fellow compilations afford an extraordinary panorama of their literary age. Delving deep into the underpinnings of genre expectation, literary tradition and deeper still, into some of the unspoken assumptions of literary endeavour itself, they could also provide excellent targets for the

investigation of those same assumptions in a rough-and-ready, apparently unaffected state. All the more need, then, to put *Sandro of Chegem* into its own perspective, to try to view it in the light of all its disparate parts and the jumbled whole of Iskander's ever-growing corpus. As the first attempt of such a nature, this thesis can only approach its end. Nevertheless, it can hope to contribute to its attainment, if only by pointing out the necessity of the pursuit and its rich promise.

Appendix One

PROSE COLLECTIONS
by year

		citation reference
1966	<i>Запретный плод: рассказы</i> (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1966)	ЗП
1966	<i>Тринадцатый подвиг Геракла</i> (Москва: Советская Россия, 1966)	ТПГ
1970	<i>Дерево детства: рассказы и повесть</i> (Москва: Советский писатель, 1970) -- reprinted 1974	ДД
1970	<i>Первое дело: рассказы и повесть</i> (Москва: Детская литература, 1972) -- reprinted 1978	ПД
1973	<i>Время счастливых находок: рассказы и повесть</i> (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1973)	ВСН
1977	<i>Сандро из Чезема: рассказы, роман</i> (Москва: Советский писатель, 1977)	СиЧ
1978	<i>Начало: рассказы</i> (Сухуми: Алашара, 1978)	Н
1979	<i>Под сенью грецкого ореха: повести</i> (Москва: Советский писатель, 1979)	ПСГО
1979	<i>Сандро из Чезема</i> (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979)	1979
1981	<i>Новые главы: Сандро из Чезема</i> (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981)	1981
1983	<i>Защита Чика: рассказы и повести</i> (Москва: Советский писатель, 1983)	ЗЧ
1986	<i>Большой день Большого дома: рассказы</i> (Сухуми: Алашара, 1986)	БДБД
1986	<i>Праздник ожидания праздника: рассказы</i> (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1986)	ПОП
1987	<i>Подвиг Чика</i> (Москва: Правда, 1987)	ПЧ
1988	<i>Избранное: рассказы, повесть</i> (Москва: Советский писатель, 1988)	Изб.

		citation reference
1988	<i>Кролики и удавы: проза последних лет</i> (Москва: Книжная палата, 1988)	КНУ
1989	<i>Повести, рассказы</i> (Москва: Советская Россия, 1989)	ПР
1989	<i>Сандро из Чегема: роман, 3 кн.</i> (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1989)	1989/1,2,3

Appendix Two

SANDRO PUBLISHING HISTORY
(Chapters Ordered by 1988 Author's Projection)¹

1. Сандро из Чегема

- 1966 Сандро из Чегема: рассказ. *Неделя* 1966:7 (6-12 февраля), с. 22-23.
- 1973 Дядя Сандро, княгиня и богатый армянин *Новый мир* 1978: 8, с. 152-61.
- 1977 Дядя Сандро, княгиня и богатый армянин *СиЧ* (1977): 237-51.
- 1979 Сандро из Чегема 1979: 11-14.
1989/1: 7-22

2. Дядя Сандро у себя дома

- 1969 Дядя Сандро у себя дома: рассказ *Сельская молодежь* 1969: 6, с. 28-30.
- 1972 Труды и дни дяди Сандро (Глава из романа "Жизнь Сандро Чегемского") *Крокодил* 1972: 32, с. 6-8.
- 1973 Дядя Сандро у себя дома *Новый мир* 1973: 8, с. 161-77.
1979: 24-46.
1989/1: 22-48

3. Принц Ольденбургский

- 1971 Дядя Сандро и черный лебедь *Неделя* 1971:30 (19-25 июня), с. 8-9.
Новый мир 1973: 8, с. 177-88.
- 1977 Принц Ольденбургский *СиЧ* (1977): 274-92.
1979: 47-67.
1989/1: 49-73.

4. Игроки

- 1970 Игроки: юмористический рассказ *Сельская молодежь* 1970: 10, с. 22-26.

¹For comparison with the more widely available editions of 1979 and 1981, as well as the fullest version of 1989, see app. 3.

- 1973 Игроки *Новый мир* 1973: 9, с. 70-82.
СиЧ (1977): 293-313.
 1979: 68-85.
 1989/1: 74-95.

5. Битва на реке Кодор, или деревянный броневик имени Поля Жордания

- 1973 Битва на Кодоре *Новый мир* 1973: 9, с. 83-104.
СиЧ (1977): 313-45.
- 1979 Битва на Кодоре, или
 деревянный броневик... 1979: 86-117.
 1989/1: 96-134.

6. Чегемские сплетни

- 1975 Чегемские сплетни: рассказ *Аврора* 1975: 7, с. 28-35.
- 1979 Чегемские сплетни 1979: 118-40.
- 1989 Чегемские сплетни *Работница* 1989:3/4, с. 15-18/13-17.
- 1989 Чегемские сплетни: рассказ 1989/1: 135-61.

7. История молельного дерева

- 1979 История молельного дерева 1979: 141-86.
- 1988 История молельного
 дерева (Главы из романа
 "Сандро из Чегема") *Знамя* 1988: 9, с. 13-44.
- 1989 История молельного дерева 1989/1: 162-217.

8. Пирь Валтасара

- 1979 Пирь Валтасара 1979: 187-229.
- 1988 Пирь Валтсара
 (Главы из романа "Сандро
 из Чегема") *Знамя* 1988: 9, с. 44-75.
- 1989 Пирь Валтасара 1989/1: 217-68.
Хронограф: Ежегодник 89 (Москва:
 Московский рабочий, 1989), 4-40.

9. Рассказ мула старого Хабуга

- 1979 Рассказ мула старого
 Хабуга 1979: 230-84.
- 1984 Рассказ мула *Пионер* 1984: 6, с. 52-56.

1988 Рассказ мула старого Хабуга (Главы из романа "Сандро из Чегема") *Знамя* 1988: 10., с. 83-122.

1989 Рассказ мула старого Хабуга 1989/1: 269-333.

10. Дядя Сандро и его любимец

1970 Случай на дороге (Из цикла "Рассказы давних лет") *Труд*, 15 ноября 1970, 4.

1973 Дядя Сандро и его друзья: (Отрывок из романа "Жизнь Сандро из Чегема") *Литературная газета*, 30 мая 1973, 7.

1973 Дядя Сандро и зубной врач рассказ. (Из цикла новелл о приключениях дяди Сандро из Чегема) *Труд*, 23 сентября 1973, 4.

1973 Дядя Сандро и его любимец *Новый мир* 1973: 10, с. 116-32.
СиЧ (1977): 370-94.
1979: 285-319.

1988 Дядя Сандро и его любимец (Главы из романа "Сандро из Чегема") *Знамя* 1988:10, с. 59-83.

1989 Дядя Сандро и его любимец 1989/1: 334-75.

11. Тали--чудо Чегема

1971 Чудо Чегема: рассказ *Труд*, 29 октября 1971, 4.

1971 Девочка Тали (Отрывок из повести "Жизнь Сандро из Чегема") *Литературная газета*, 8 декабря 1971, 7.

1972 Свидание в палоротниках *Смена* 1972: 21, с. 8-10.

1972 Тали--чудо Чегема *Неделя* 1972:1 (27 декабря--2 января), с.4,5,8,9.
Новый мир 1973: 10, с. 71-125.
СиЧ (1977): 394-478.
1979: 320-89.
1989/1: 376-470.

12. Дядя Сандро и конец козлотура

- 1979 Дядя Сандро и конец козлотура 1979: 399-445.
1989/2: 3-59.

13. Пастух Махаз

- 1978 Пастух Махаз (Глава из романа "Сандро из Чегема") *Глагол* 1978: 2, с. 7-38.
- 1979 Пастух Махаз 1979: 446-69.
- 1984 Пастух Махаз: рассказ *Кавказиони: Литературный сборник*, вып. 2 (Тбилиси, 1984): 133-58.
- 1989 Пастух Махаз 1989/2: 60-88.

14. Умыкание, или загадка эндурцев

- 1979 Умыкание: рассказ *Дружба народов* 1979: 1, с. 134-50.
- 1981 Умыкание, или загадка эндурцев 1981: 7-36.
ЗЧ (1983): 160-89.
БЛБД (1986): 140-69.
Изб. (1988): 341-69.
1989/2: 89-124.

15. Харлампо и Деспина

- 1978 Харлампо и Деспина (Отрывок из романа-эпопеи) *Неделя* 1978: 38 (18-24 сентября) с. 6-9.
- 1981 Харлампо и Деспина 1981: 37-80.
- 1988 Харлампо и Деспина (Три Рассказа) *Юность* 1988: 2, с. 2-19.
- 1989 Харлампо и Деспина 1989/2: 170-222.

16а. Колчерукий

- 1967 Колчерукий *Новый мир* 1967: 4, с. 101-19.
ДД (1970, 1974): 24-55.
Изб. (1988): 183-210.
1989/2: 223-53.

16б. Бригадир Кязым

- 1981 Бригадир Кязым: рассказ *Новый мир* 1981: 4, с. 67-98.

- 1981 Бригадир Кязым 1981: 81-130.
ЗЧ (1983): 101-60.
БДБД (1986): 82-140.
Изб. (1988): 115-70.
1989/2: 254-313.

17. Хранитель гор, или народ знает своих героев

- 1973 Хранитель гор *Новый мир* 1973: 10, с. 100-16.
СиЧ (1977): 345-94.
- 1979 Хранитель гор, или народ знает своих героев 1979: 470-521.
- 1986 Трое в синих макинтошах: рассказ *Смена* 1986: 3, с. 8-11.
- 1989 Хранитель гор, или народ знает своих героев 1989/2: 314-74.

18. Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат

- 1981 На нашей улице: рассказ *Аврора* 1981:9, с. 58-68.
- 1981 Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат 1981: 131-70.
- 1988 Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат *Юность* 1988: 2, с. 19-34.
(Три рассказа)
- 1989 Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат 1989/2: 375-422.

19. Молния мужчина, или чегемский пушкинист

- 1983 Молния мужчина или чегемский пушкинист *Аврора* 1983: 8, с. 44-62.
1989/2:125-69.

20. Три формы мужества, или Чегемская Кармен

- 1986 Чегемская Кармен *Знамя* 1986: 12, с. 10-45.
(Два рассказа)
- 1989 Чегемская Кармен 1989/2: 423-79.

21. Табу

- 1986 Табу: рассказ *Новый мир* 1986: 1, с. 132-45.
- 1988 Табу КиУ: 12-28.
1989/3: 145-68.

22. Дороги

- 1984 Дороги: рассказ *Аврора* 1984: 3, с. 148-52.
 1984 Прокол: рассказ *Аврора* 1984: 7, с. 123-31.
 1986 Дороги ПОП (1986):4:33-43
 1988 Пьяные на дороге: рассказ *Смена* 1988: 7, с. 8-11.
 1989 Дороги 1989/3: 75-105.

23. Бармен Адгур

- 1986 Бармен Адгур
(Два рассказа) *Знамя* 1986: 12, с. 45-60.
 1988 Бармен Адгур КиУ: 49-67.
 1989/3: 3-28

24. Маленький гигант большого секса

- 1979 Маленький гигант
большого секса *Метрополь* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979) с. 381-443.
 1988 О, Марат: рассказ *Огонек* 1988: 21/22, с. 20-23/21-24.
 1989 О, Марат! 1989/3: 29-74.

25. Кутеж трех князей в зеленом дворике

- 1978 Рукопожатие: вместо
рассказа *Неделя* 1978:3 (16-22 января), с. 6-7.
 1979 Кутеж трех князей в
зеленом дворике 1979: 522-66.
Нева 1989:3, с. 41-69.
 1989/3: 267-320.

26. Дудка старого Хасана

- 1987 Дудка старого Хасана
(Два рассказа) *Октябрь* 1987: 4, с. 49-83.
 1989 Дудка старого Хасана 1989/3: 106-44

27. Широколобый

- 1984 Широколобый: рассказ *Юность* 1984: 1, с. 42-53.
 1985 Широколобый ПОП (1986): 443-79.
 1989/3: 169-208.

28. Большой день Большого дома

- 1982 Большой день Большого дома (Два рассказа) *Октябрь* 1982: 7, с. 136-46.
 1983 Большой день Большого дома ЗЧ (1983): 190-226.
 БДБД (1986): 170-204.
 Изб. (1988): 370-403.
 1989/3: 231-66.

29. Утраты

- 1982 Утраты (Два рассказа) *Октябрь* 1982: 7, с. 146-64.
 1983 Утраты ЗЧ (1983): 226-48.
 БДБД (1986): 205-26.
 Изб. (1988): 404-24.
 КиУ (1988): 68-83.
 ПР (1989): 396-416.
 1989/3: 209-30.

30. Джамхух -- сын Оленя

- 1981 Джамхух -- сын Оленя или Евангелие по-чегемски 1981: 171-235.
 1982 Джамхух -- сын Оленя: Народная легенда *Юность* 1982: 3, с. 36-51.
 1983 Джамхух -- сын Оленя или Евангелие по-чегемски ЗЧ (1983): 368-447.
 1989/3: 321-403.

31. Дерево детства

- 1975 Дядя Сандро и Пастух
Кунта: рассказ¹ *Труд* 12 апреля 1975, 4.
- 1977 Дерево детства *Наш современник* 1977:1, с. 27-55.
1979: 567-604.
ПСГО (1979): 345-91.
Изб. (1988): 425-66.
1989/3: 404-50.

*****2

¹Ivanova includes this title in a list of "previously unknown chapters published as separate stories" in an unspecified recent period ("Сон разума" (1988), 4; repeated in the expanded version of this article "Сон разума рождает чудовищ," послесловие к кн. Фазиля Искандера *Салиро из Чехема: роман*, кн. 3 (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1989), 452). I have been unable to locate this publication. The version appearing in *Труд* corresponds to the sleuthing feat performed in the affair of Kunta and the missing tobacco (1979: 588-97). It represents the only major revision to have appeared in this vast work over the twenty-three years of its piecemeal publication: the detective role is transferred, with minimal textual adjustments, from Uncle Sandro to his morally purer brother Kiazym. See also p. 153 fn. 1.

²An unnumbered chapter, "Слово," appears in the first volume of the *Московский рабочий* edition (1989/1: 471-78). Because it was not included in the 1988 Author's Projection that served as the basis for this dissertation, its publishing history is included in Appendix Four: Stories Peripheral to *Sandro*.

Appendix Three

SANDRO. COMPILATION ORDERINGS

I. 1973	II. 1977	III. 1979	IV. 1981	V. 1988	VI. 1989
1. Дядя Сандро, княгиня и богатый армянин	1. Дядя Сандро, княгиня и богатый армянин	1. Сандро из Чегема	1. Сандро из Чегема	1. Сандро из Чегема	1. Сандро из Чегема
2. Дядя Сандро у себя дома	2. Дядя Сандро у себя дома	2. Дядя Сандро у себя дома	2. Дядя Сандро у себя дома	2. Дядя Сандро у себя дома	2. Дядя Сандро у себя дома
3. Дядя Сандро и черный лебедь	3. Принц Ольденбургский	3. Принц Ольденбургский	3. Принц Ольденбургский	3. Принц Ольденбургский	3. Принц Ольденбургский
4. Игроки	4. Игроки	4. Игроки	4. Игроки	4. Игроки	4. Игроки
5. Битва на Колоре	5. Битва на Колоре	5. Битва на Колоре	5. Битва на Колоре	5. Битва на Колоре	5. Битва на Колоре
		6. Чегемские сплетни	6. Чегемские сплетни	6. Чегемские сплетни	6. Чегемские сплетни
		7. История молельного дерева	7. История молельного дерева	7. История молельного дерева	7. История молельного дерева
		8. Пирь Валтасара	8. Пирь Валтасара	8. Пирь Валтасара	8. Пирь Валтасара
		9. Рассказ мула старого Хабуга	9. Рассказ мула старого Хабуга	9. Рассказ мула старого Хабуга	9. Рассказ мула старого Хабуга

- I. "Сандро из Чегема: роман," *Новый мир* 1973:8,9,10,11, с. 152-88, 70-104, 100-32, 70-125.
 II. *Сандро из Чегема: Рассказы, роман* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1977), 237-478.
 III. *Сандро из Чегема* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979).
 IV. *Новые главы: Сандро из Чегема* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981).
 V. "Сандро из Чегема," author's projection (March 1988).
 VI. *Сандро из Чегема: Роман*, 3 кн. (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1989).

I. 1973	II. 1977	III. 1979	IV. 1981	V. 1988	VI. 1989
7. Дядя Сандро и его любимец	7. Дядя Сандро и его любимец	10. Дядя Сандро и его любимец	10. Дядя Сандро и его любимец	10. Дядя Сандро и его любимец	10. Дядя Сандро и его любимец
8. Тали--чудо Чегема	8. Тали-- чудо Чегема	11. Тали--чудо Чегема	11. Тали--чудо Чегема	11. Тали--чудо Чегема	11. Тали--чудо Чегема
		12. Дядя Сандро и конец козлотура	12. Дядя Сандро и конец козлотура	12. Дядя Сандро и конец козлотура	12. Дядя Сандро и конец козлотура
		13. Пастух Махаз	13. Пастух Махаз	13. Пастух Махаз	13. Пастух Махаз
			14. Умыкание	14. Умыкание	14. Умыкание
			15. Харламю и Деспина	15. Харламю и Деспина	16. Харламю и Деспина
				16[a]. Колчерукий	17. Колчерукий
			16. Бригадир Кязым	16[b] Бригадир Кязым	18. Бригадир Кязым
6. Хранитель гор	6. Хранитель гор	14. Хранитель гор	17. Хранитель гор	17. Хранитель гор	19. Хранитель гор
			18. Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат	18. Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат	20. Дядя Сандро и раб Хазарат
				19. Молния мужчины	15. Молния мужчины
				20. Чегемская Кармен	21. Чегемская Кармен

- I. "Сандро из Чегема: роман," *Новый мир* 1973:8,9,10,11, с. 152-88, 70-104, 100-32, 70-125.
 II. *Сандро из Чегема: Рассказы, роман* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1977), 237-478.
 III. *Сандро из Чегема* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979).
 IV. *Новые главы: Сандро из Чегема* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981).
 V. "Сандро из Чегема," author's projection (March 1988).
 VI. *Сандро из Чегема: Роман, 3 кн.* (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1989).

I. 1973	II. 1977	III. 1979	IV. 1981	V. 1988	VI. 1989
				22. Дороги	24. Дороги
				23. Бармен Адгур	22. Бармен Адгур
				24. Маленький гигант больш- шого ооска	23. О, Марат!
		15. Кутеж трех князей	19. Кутеж трех князей	25. Кутеж трех князей	30. Кутеж трех князей
				26. Дудка старого Хасана	25. Дудка старого Хасана
				27. Широколобый	27. Широколобый
				28. Большой день Большого Дома	29. Большой день Большого Дома
				29. Утраты	28. Утраты
			20. Джамсух--сын Оленя	30. Джамхух--сын Оленя	31. Джамхух--сын Оленя
		16. Дерево детства	21. Дерево детства	31. Дерево детства	32. Дерево детства

- I. "Сандро из Чегема: роман," *Новый мир* 1973:8,9,10,11, с. 152-88, 70-104, 100-32, 70-125.
- II. *Сандро из Чегема: Рассказы, роман* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1977), 237-478.
- III. *Сандро из Чегема* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979).
- IV. *Новые главы: Сандро из Чегема* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981).
- V. "Сандро из Чегема," author's projection (March 1988).
- VI. *Сандро из Чегема: Роман, 3 кн.* (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1989).

Appendix Four

STORIES PERIPHERAL TO SANDRO
by year

		<u>see discussed:</u>	
1956	"Первое дело"	<i>Пионер</i> 1956:11, с. 41-46. ЗП (1966): 39-48. ПД (1970, 1978): 12-21.	p 109 fn 1 p 317
1963	"Вечерняя дорога"	<i>Костер</i> 1963:12, с. 24-32. ЗП (1966): 80-102. ПД (1970, 1978): 60-77.	pp 169-70 p 297 fn 2
1965	"Под небом Колхиды"	<i>Неделя</i> 1965:49 (5-11 декабря), с. 10, 11	p. 169 fn 3
1965	"Слово"	<i>Смена</i> 1965:15, с. 8-9. ЗП (1966): 14-25. ПР (1989): 318-25. 1989/1: 471-78.	p 354 fn 2
1966	"Лошадь дяли Кязыма"	<i>Юность</i> 1966:3, с. 46-63. ЗП (1966): 62-79. ПД (1972, 1978): 71-91. ПОП (1986): 143-55. Изб. (1988): 171-82.	p 164
1966	"Созвездие Козлотура"	<i>Новый мир</i> 1966:8, с. 3-75. ДД (1970, 1974): 247-367. ВСН (1973): 308-430. ПР (1989): 4-109.	pp. 28 fn 2 pp 166, 169
1968	"Делушка"	<i>Новый мир</i> 1968:7, с. 62-79. ДД (1970, 1974): 78-107. ПД (1972, 1978): 92-121. Изб. (1988): 41-66.	p 164
1974	"Под эвкалиптом" "Бедный демагог"	<i>Неделя</i> 1974:49 (2-8 декабря) с. 6, 7. СиЧ (1977): 110-25. БЛБД (1986): 67-81. Изб. (1988): 67-81.	p 164
1974	"Ремзик"	<i>Юность</i> 1974:9, с. 21-39. СиЧ (1977): 162-212. БЛБД (1986): 17-66. ПР (1989): 349-95.	p. 163

see discussed:

- 1977 "Похищение" *Сельская молодежь* 1977:9,
с. 16-21. p. 164
- 1988 "Кофейня в море" *Театр* 1988:6, с. 130-65.
p. 111 fn. 1, 169
p. 206 fn. 1
p. 219 fn. 1
p. 248 fn 1

Appendix Five

"SEA SCORPION" COMPILATION HISTORY
CYCLE CONVERGENCE"Complete" versions:

- 1976 "Морской скорпион: Повесть" *Наш современник* 1976:7/8, с. 3-56,
71-131.
ПСГО (1979): 117-344.
ГР (1989): 110-317.

Component stories

(ordered as compiled; repetitions
indicate intersplicing)

- 1975 "На море: Рассказ" *Литературная Россия*, 21 марта 1975,
12-13.
- 1964 "Двое в море: Рассказ"
= "Молодость моря" *Сельская молодежь* 1964:11, с. 9-11.
ТПГ (1966): 55-78.
- 1975 "Прикосновение: Рассказ" *Сельская молодежь* 1975:8, с. 22-26.
- 1974 "Кино: Рассказ" *Сельская молодежь* 1974:9, с. 26-31.
- 1975 "Прикосновение" *Сельская молодежь* 1975:8, с. 9-11.
- 1976 "Заира: Рассказ" *Труд*, 26 ноября 1976, 4.
Наш современник 1977:8, с. 20-46.
- 1976 "Боль и нежность: Рассказ" *Неделя* 1976:11 (15-21 марта), с. 4-5.
СиЧ (1977): 126-161.
- 1975 "На море: Рассказ" *Литературная Россия*, 21 марта 1975,
12-13.

Peripheral (the incident and feuilleton described in the tale, see p. 174)

- 1970 "Случай в Очемира: [Очерк
о судебном процессе по делу
Чичико Долгуа, совершившего
убийство во время драки]" *Литературная газета*, 4 февраля
1970, 13.
- 1970 "После случая в Очемира:
[Ответ читателя]" *Литературная газета*, 25 ноября
1970, 3.

Reprise (the incident, feuilleton and chance meeting described in the tale):

1979 "Кутеж трех князей на зеленом дворике" 1979: 527.

Сейчас, отстукивая на машинке эти строки, я вспомнил, что и эту встречу и всю предыдущую горестную историю моего друга я уже описал в одной повести, где собственный мой добрый поступок приписал своему герою. И вот я снова к этому поступку возвратился. В чем же дело? Или меня тянет к собственному доброму поступку, как преступника к месту преступления? Или мне жалко, что я приписал его своему герою?

CROSS-REFERENCING TO SANDRO:

Place:

Когда самолет взлетел и полетел к востоку, [.] Сергей увидел знакомые с детства оголенные каменистые обрывы над его родным селом Чегемом, где он в детстве жилав каждое лето. [ПСГО: 249]

... И если путник останавливался на верхнечегемской дороге возле дома твоего деда и просил у хозяев напиться, то ему выносили кувшин с вином. И если день клонился к закату, путника просили войти в дом и переночевать... И если путник был верхом, его просили въехать во двор, спешиться и остаться на ночь...

Но в чем дело, почему все так получилось?

И вдруг ему приоткрылась истина, и все, что вызвало его тяжелое недоумение, грусть, чувство роковой ошибки, совершенной когда-то, сразу же объяснилось. [ПСГО: 337]

Character:	Grandfather	ПСГО: 161-74 passim.
	Andrei Tarkilov	see p. 199 vs. ПСГО: 325-33 passim.
	Akop-aga	see p. 206 vs. ПСГО: 150

Appendix Six

"SCHOOL WALTZ" COMPILATION HISTORY
CYCLE CONVERGENCE"Complete" Versions:

- 1987 "Старый дом под кипарисом: Повесть" *Знамя* 1987: 7, с. 3-85.
 1988 "Школьный вальс, или Энергия стыда: Повесть" *КиУ* (1988): 191-285.

Component Stories (ordered as included):

- 1973 "Первый раз в первый класс" *Труд*, 9 января 1973, 4.
 1973 "Реванш: [Отрывок из повести "Школьный вальс, или Энергия стыда"]" *Семья и школа* 1973: 1, с. 30-33.
 1973 "Мой первый школьный день: Из цикла Школьный вальс, или Энергия стыда" *ВСН* (1973): 42-55.
ПОП (1986): 47-60.
 1973 "Тяжкий путь познания: Рассказ" *Сельская молодежь* 1973:1, с. 20-25.
 1973 "Долги и страсти" *ВСН* (1973): 56-75.
ПОП (1986): 95-111.
 1963 "Запретный плод: Рассказ" *Неделя* 1963:46 (10-16 ноября), с. 8-9.
ЗП (1966): 26-38.
ТПГ (1966): 22-40.
Н (1978): 26-34.
ПОП (1986): 26-34.
 1972 "Время по часам: Рассказ" *Неделя* 1972:18 (24-30 апреля), с. 5, 16, 17.
ВСН (1973): 89-115.
ПОП (1986): 60-83.
 1974 [О Пушкине: К 175-летию со дня рождения] *Детская литература* 1974:6, с. 29-30. (see p 249)

PERIPHERAL (by year):

The publisher's note to the collection *Время счастливых находок* (1973) lists as belonging to the cycle "Школьный Вальс, или Энергия стыда" the stories "Мой первый школьный день," "Долги и страсти," "Мученики сцены," "Время по часам" и другие." The following table was compiled on the criteria of (1) narrative mode (first-person), (2) time (childhood, 1930-1940s), (3) place (Mukhus) and (4) character/incident (overlap with "School Waltz" proper).

1964	"Мой дядя самых честных правил"	<i>Неделя</i> 1964:36 (30 августа--5 сентября), с. 22-23. ЗП (1966): 124-45. ВСН (1973): 26-41. Н (1978): 49-63. ПОП (1986): 129-43. Изб. (1988): 82-95.
1964	"Тринадцатый подвиг Геракла"	<i>Сельская молодежь</i> 1964:4, с. 16-19. ЗП (1966): 103-23. ТПГ (1966): 22-40. ПД (1972,1978): 22-36. ВСН (19773): 115-30. Н (1978): 35-48. ПОП (1986): 34-47.
1966	"Время счастливых находок"	<i>Юность</i> 1966:3, с. 46-63. ТПГ (1966): 3-21. ВСН (1973): 10-25.
1968	"Не всё так просто: рассказ" = "Мой кумир"	<i>Смена</i> 1968:6, с. 24-27. ДД (1970, 1974): 227-46. ПОП (1986): 111-29.
1972	"Мученики сцены"	<i>Литературная газета</i> , 1 мая 1972, 7. ПД (1972, 1978): 47-59. ВСН (1973): 76-88. ПОП (1986): 83-94.

OTHER FIRST-PERSON CHILDHOOD TALES (by year):

- 1962 "Петух" *Юность* 1962:10, с. 71-75.
 ЗП (1966): 39-48.
 ТПГ (1966): 93-121.
 ВСН (1973): 3-9.
 Н (1978): 19-25.
 ПОП (1986): 3-9.
 Изб. (1988): 35-40.
- 1962 "Рассказ о море" *Юность* 1962:10, с. 69-71.
Московский комсомолец, 25
 ноября 1964, 3.
 ЗП (1966): 3-13.
 ПД (1972, 1978): 5-11.
 ПОП (1986): 20-25.
- 1963 "Детский сад" *Неделя* 1963: 36 (1-7 сентября),
 с. 20-21.
 ТПГ (1966): 122-36.
 ПОП (1986): 9-20.
 see pp. 170-71

Appendix Six(a)

THE 'RICH TAILOR' SUB-CYCLE¹
by year

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1969 | "Портной и фининспектор: Рассказ из цикла "Были и небылицы нашего города" | <i>Труд</i> , 13 августа 1969, 4. |
| 1970 | "Богатый Портной и другие: Рассказ из цикла "Последнее лето" | <i>Новый мир</i> 1970:6, с. 8-27. |
| 1972 | "Последний хиромант: Из цикла автобиографических повестей и рассказов "Богатый Портной и другие" | <i>Простор</i> 1972:1, с. 69-81. |
| 1977 | "Богатый Портной и хиромант" | Сич (1977): 38-94.
Н (1978): 95-151.
Изб. (1988): 288-340. |

¹See p. 256.

Appendix Seven¹

"CHIK" COMPILATION HISTORY
CYCLE CONVERGENCE
by year

Возмездие

- 1977 "Возмездие: рассказ" *Дружба народов* 1977:1, с. 170-81.
Метрополь (1979): 425-43.
ЗЧ (1983): 56-73.
БЛБД (1986): 304-20.
ПОП (1986): 346-62.

Животные в городе

- 1977 "Из рассказов о Чике" *Юность* 1977:5, с. 31-39.
1983 "Животные в городе" ЗЧ (1983): 33-56.
БЛБД (1986): 255-76.
ПОП (1986): 324-46.

Защита Чика

- 1978 "Защита Чика: рассказ" *Юность* 1978:4, с. 42-52.
ЗЧ (1983): 73-101.
БЛБД (1986) 277-303.
ПОП (1986): 362-89.

Ночь и день Чика

- 1971 "День Чика: рассказ" *Юность* 1971:10, с. 18-48.
1972 "Ночные тайны:
[Заключительная глава
из повести "День Чика"]" *Аврора* 1972:6, с. 22-24.
1972 "День Чика" ПД (1972, 1978): 122-206.
1973 "Ночь и день" ВСН (1973): 193-307.
1979 "День и ночь Чика" ПСГО (1979): 5-116.
1983 "Ночь и день Чика" ЗЧ (1983): 262-364.
ПОП (1986): 189-285.

¹At a 1988 public appearance Iskander announced the forthcoming publication of the Chik stories under a single, as yet undisclosed title (Творческий вечер, Московский государственный университет, Москва, 26 марта 1988.

Подвиг Чика

1986 "Подвиг Чика [Отрывки]" *Вечерняя Москва*, 24 октября 1986, 3.

1986 "Подвиг Чика" *Огонек* 1986:46, с. 7-11.
ПЧ (1987): 30-47.

Чаепитие и любовь к морю

1975 "Чаепитие и любовь к морю: рассказ" *Юность* 1975:6, с. 24-26.
СиЧ (1977): 7-37.
БЛД (1986): 226-54.
ПОП (1986): 295-24.

Чик знал, где собака зарыта

1985 "Чик знал, где собака зарыта" *Дружба народов* 1985:12, с. 10-26.

Чик и лунатик

1987 "Чик и лунатик: [Из цикла рассказов о мальчике Чике]" *Огонек* 1987: 31, с. 26-29.

Чик и Пушкин

[1974 "Победил Пушкин" *Пионер* 1974:1, с. 46-47.]
see pp. 249, 327

1986 "Чик и Пушкин: [фрагмент из рассказа]" *Учительская газета*, 6 мая 1986, 4.

1987 "Чик и Пушкин: рассказ" *Октябрь* 1987:4, с. 49-68.
ПЧ (1987): 3-30.

Чик идет на оплакивание

1986 "Чик идет на оплакивание: рассказ" *Знамя* 1986:6, с. 119-37.
КиУ (1988): 29-48.

Чик на охоте

1985 "Чик на охоте: [фрагменты из рассказа]" *Учительская газета*, 1/3/5 сентября 1985, 4.

1985 "Чик на охоте: рассказ" *Юность* 1985:1, с. 53-69.
ПОП (1986): 389-433.

CROSS-REFERENCING TO SANDRO:

"Мама и ее брат были родом из села Чегем. Чик любил своих чегемских родственников." ["Чик идет на оплакивание," КиУ: 30]

"Тетушка была замужем за братом мамы, а мама была замужем за братом тетушки. Нет, тут кровосмешательства не было. Это было вроде перекрестного опыления." ["Чик идет на оплакивание," *Знамя* 1986:6, с. 120; omitted from reprint in КиУ: 30]

"В Чегеме открыто называли этого человека [Сталина], а в городе почему-то испугались. Вот что удивительно! [ПЧ: 46]

CROSS-REFERENCING FROM SANDRO:

"Тогда в печати стали появляться мои рассказы о Чике, а не о нем, и он [дядя Сандро] несколько раз говорил нашим общим знакомым, что, видимо, умственные силы его племянника пришли в полный упадок и он уже не в состоянии писать о мудрых, много переживших людях и снова взялся за детей. Разумеется, сам он моих рассказов не читал, но люди ему пересказали их содержание. ["Табу," КиУ: с. 13] (see p. 278)

CROSS-REFERENCING TO OTHER WORKS:

1965	"Посрамление фальшиво-монетчиков: рассказ	<i>Неделя</i> 1965:28 (4-10 июля), с. 6,7,18. ЗП (1966): 190-215.
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character/incident overlap.

boxer's younger brother, Анести, reappears in "Чик знал, где собака зарыта," "Оплакивание," "Подвиг Чика"

Appendix Eight

"СТОЯНКА ЧЕЛОВЕКА"¹
 COMPILATION HISTORY, CYCLE CONVERGENCE
 by chapter

see discussed:

- "Знакомство с героем" *Знамя* 1989:7, с. 8-12.
- "Зана" *Знамя* 1989:7, с. 13-16. p. 281 fn. 1
- "Две женщины" *Знамя* 1989:7, с. 16-22.
- "Сердце" *Литературная газета*, 7 января 1981,
7.
ЗЧ (1983): 248-60. p. 204 fn 1
Знамя 1989:7, с. 22-30.
- "Время большого
везения" *Знамя* 1989:7, с. 30-38.
- "Охотник-ясновидец" *Знамя* 1989:7, с. 38-42.
- "Тайга и море" *Знамя* 1989:7, с. 42-54. p. 163 fn. 3
includes fragments 10 and 11 of
"О движении к добру и технологии
глупости," *Литературная газета*, 30
июля 1986, 11. p. 171
- "Идеалист: рассказ
Виктора Максимовича" *Знамя* 1989:8, с. 6-18.
- "Мальчики и первая
любовь: Исповедь
Виктора Максимовича" *Знамя* 1989:8, с. 18-47. p. 244 fn. 2
- "Беседы с Виктором
Максимовичем" *Знамя* 1989:8, с. 49-56. p. 198
includes fragments 3-6 and 12-16 of p. 300 fn. 1
"О движение к добру и технологии
глупости" (see above, ch. 7)
- "Девушка Лора и
лошадник Чагу" *Знамя* 1989:9, с. 56-71.

¹ An earlier version bore the title "И мы плывем пылающей бездной." There the segments "Идеалист" and "Мальчики и первая любовь" appeared without the subtitles directly attributing the narration to Viktor Maksimovich.

"Вечер в саду" *Знамя* 1989:9, с. 71-78.

"Последнее" *Знамя* 1989:9, с. 78-79.

CROSS-REFERENCING TO SANDRO:

В светящемся, струящемся воздухе -- без преувеличения! -- стояла температура рая. Да и пейзаж берега с легкими строениями и купаи деревьев, с холмами, прохладно лиловоюющими вдали и зелеными вблизи, на которых сквозь зелень уютно высывались пятна домов (вон в том хотелось бы жить или лучше вон в том: дымчатая эйфория бездомности), в немалой степени приближался к ландшафтам рая.

[...]

Мы с Виктором Максимовичем рыбачили на моей лодке, которой я дал название "Чегем," еще сам того не ведая, что во мне уже зреет тема моей будущей книги.

[*Знамя* 1989:7, с. 43; "О движении к добру," fragment 10; see p. 163 fn. 3]

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