Writers' Communities and Retreats of the Soviet Era in Russian Literature

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the role of Soviet-era writers' communities and official retreats in the history of 20th century Russian literature. While writers' and artists' colonies have an important place in Western cultural history, their Soviet counterparts are remarkable with regard to the ideological dissonance and multiple styles of literary creation that were a part of the history of these spaces. The major Soviet literary organization, The Soviet Writers' Union, and its allied organization, the Litfond, oversaw the creation and funding of communities and vacation retreats for writers, that were dispensed as special perks for members. These establishments, known officially as Writers' Houses of Creativity, could be found outside of major cities, as well as in areas historically tied to Russian and Soviet tourism.

While Soviet-era writers' communities and retreats are unique in that they were linked to the dominant system of Soviet socialist realist literary creation in the Soviet Union, as well as the system of rewards for ideologically compliant writers, they also held cultural elements that connected them to pre-Soviet literature and culture. The writers' retreat in Koktebel, Crimea, which was a revered destination for Soviet writers, had been the site of Maksimilian Voloshin's home and literary salon, which was an important location in the history of Russian modernism and symbolism, prior to its incorporation into the Soviet Litfond. Several Litfond writers' communities were also home to the dachas of prominent modernist writers who forged ties with the upcoming literary generation of the 1950s and 1960s. Anna Akhmatova's and Boris Pasternak's dachas in Komarovo and Peredelkino, respectively, were important meeting places

in this vein, and these locations were later celebrated for their associations with these two influential writers.

Soviet writers' retreats also served as places where the beginnings of quasi-dissident literature emerged and where writers could negotiate the boundaries of acceptability during the relatively less censorious Khrushchev Thaw era. Multiple works by 1960s writer Vasily Aksyonov particularly demonstrate how these places served as communities where quasi-dissident, or at least somewhat independent, literary culture flourished, despite these being official, state-funded residential settings. This dissertation considers the multiple ideological layers of the creative culture in Soviet-era writers' retreats and communities, and the links that these places held with the artistic and literary culture of the pre-revolutionary Russian world, shedding new light on the history of creative community during the Soviet period.

Preface

Before this project began to take shape, my original plan for the dissertation had been to write about the role of Crimea in Russian literary history. Preliminary research on this topic brought me to Maksimilian Voloshin's literary salon in Koktebel, Crimea. I found it striking that this place was both a pre-revolutionary and Soviet-era center of literary culture. This initial research led to an investigation of other Soviet-era literary communities, their origins, and cultural significance. Thus, the geographical scope of the dissertation ended up extending far beyond Crimea, although an examination of Koktebel's historical importance in different eras plays a major part in it. While many of the places examined in this dissertation are very different, both geographically and historically, they are united in their common role as sites relevant to understanding the development of Soviet-era literature.

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

Russian names and places have, for the most part, been transliterated using the Library of Congress system. An exception is the use of the "-sky" ending for individuals whose names are commonly known in English, such as Maksim Gorky, Joseph Brodsky, and Andrei Sinyavsky, which use the established spelling that is commonly used in English. Additionally, Vasily Aksyonov had a specific preference for the transliteration of his own name, which is used rather than standard transliteration. The final Cyrillic soft sign, as represented in transliteration by an apostrophe in the toponym Koktebel' (*Коктебель*), is omitted, except in citations and quotations. Koktebel is used instead. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

Note on Terminology

This dissertation is about twentieth-century writers' retreats and communities (sometimes refered to as "colonies" in scholarship) and their impact on literary production. In documents relating to Soviet-era literary history the phrase *Dom tvorchestva pisatelei* is used to describe hotel-like retreat locations where writers could live and work. A word-for-word translation of this phrase into English would be "Writers' Houses of Creativity," which sounds strange in English. During the Soviet era, many new institutions whose titles incorporated the word *dom* ("house" or "home") emerged. The names of such institutions reflected the Soviet-era cultural shift regarding the meaning of "home," which some scholars see as linked to "efforts aimed at desacralization and destruction of the pre-existing order."[1] Given their historical context, translating the names of such institutions into English is not a straightforward task. In *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* John and Carol Garrard prefer the term "writers' retreats," for *Doma tvorchestva pisatelei*, which I use in this dissertation interchangeably with "writers' houses." The word-for-word translation of "Writers' Houses of Creativity," is used in my translations of historical documents as well as in places referring to the history of the creative organizations associated with these retreats and communities. Some writers' retreats also had adjacent dacha communities for writers, particularly at Komarovo and Peredelkino, which I call "writers' communities," also using the Garrards' wording.

[1] Ludmila L. Fyodorova and Dorota Pazio-Wlazłowska. "The Russian linguistic and cultural view of ДОМ 'home/house'", *The Axiological Lexicon of Slavs and their Neighbors Vol. 1*, ed. Jerzy Bartmiński et. al., (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2018), 72.

Introduction

Cracks in the Edifice of Soviet Literature: The Soviet Writers' Union and Litfond Writers' Houses

In his magnum opus, *The Master and Margarita*, Mikhail Bulgakov satirizes bureaucratic absurdities at Soviet writers' institutions of the 1930s.[2] In particular, the chapter, "There Were Goings-On at the Griboyedov House," depicts the headquarters of MASSOLIT, a fictional Soviet literary organization that parodies the real-life Soviet Writers' Union. In this fancy restaurant and club, Soviet writers are perplexed by administrative red tape as they vie for privileges, such as writing trips to sought-after locations in the Soviet Union: "Any visitor who got into Griboyedov—if, of course, he wasn't a complete dimwit—grasped at once how good a life those lucky members of MASSOLIT enjoyed."[3] In Bulgakov's portrayal, one can hear conversations of writers trying to secure a travel voucher to a sought-after region in the USSR while at the establishment: "'Yesterday I hung around Griboyedov for two hours.' – 'Well, so how did you make out?' – 'I managed to get a month in Yalta.' – 'Good for you!'"[4] Later in the novel, a group of writers jealously discuss the dispensing of dachas (country houses outside the city) in "Perelygino," a veiled reference to the Soviet writers' community outside of Moscow at

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[2] Laura D. Weeks, *The Master & Margarita: A Critical Companion* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 11.

[3] "Всякий посетитель, если он, конечно, был не вовсе тупицей, попав в Грибоедова, сразу же соображал, насколько хорошо живется счастливцам — членам МАССОЛИТа […]" Mikhail Bulgakov, *Master and Margarita*, trans. Diana Burgin and Katherine Tiernan O'Connor (London: Picador, 1997), 45-46.; M. A. Bulgakov, *Izbrannoe: Roman "Master i Margarita."; Rasskazy*, ed. E. Sidorova and M. Chudakova (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1980), 48-49

[4] "Я вчера два часа протолкался у Грибоедова, − 'Ну и как?' – 'В Ялту на месяц добился'. – 'Молодец!" Ibid.

Peredelkino – "There's only twenty-two dachas, and only seven are being built, but there are three-thousand of us in MASSOLIT."[5]

The institutions of Stalin-era literature operated under a system of control, which had its rewards for compliance as well as its sometimes fatal punishments. Writers who wanted to see their works published had to join the Writers' Union and submit to the forms of censorship that membership entailed. Among the most desirable rewards were trips to prominent Soviet destinations and residences at special writers' communities, which were unique benefits for established writers who belonged to the Soviet Writers' Union. Membership in the Writers' Union included the privilege to use various facilities available to the association, including receiving "travel vouchers" (*putevki*), often for free or at a heavily discounted price, to so-called "Houses of Creativity" (*doma tvorchestva*) to live and work at for a period of time.[6] Reflecting on the history of "Writers' Houses of Creativity" (*doma tvorchestva pisatelei*) in the Soviet Union, the novelist Raul' Mir-Khaidarov writes that, "If you carefully examine the end of any Soviet novel, in nine out of ten editions you'll encounter the date and place of composition. Most often these will be Maleevka, Peredelkino, Dubulti, Gagry, Yalta, Koktebel', Pitsunda, Durmen', Lebiazh'e, Komarovo and so on."[7] All of these sites of official "Writers' Houses of Creativity," or "writers' retreats," left a significant imprint on the history of Soviet literature. Most of the Houses of Creativity were for short-term visits, but some writers lived for extended periods of time in literary communities surrounding them, as the Litfond provided dachas to

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[5] "Дач всего двадцать две, и строится еще только семь, а нас в МАССОЛИТе три тысячи."
[6] A. I. Tsepin, "Rol' tvorcheskikh soiuzov v organizatsii truda, material'nom obespechenii i kul'turno-bytovom obsluzhivanii tvorcheskikh rabotnikov," *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v SSSR (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)* ed. Ts. A. Iampol'skaia (Moskva: Iuridicheskaia literatura, 1970), 155.
[7] "Если внимательно посмотреть в конец любой советской книги, то на девяти из десяти изданий встретите дату и место написания. Чаще всего это будут: Малеевка, Переделкино, Дубулты, Гагры, Ялта, Коктебель, Пицунда, Дурмень, Лебяжье, Комарово и т. д." Raul' Mir-Khaidarov, *Vot i vse… ia pishu vam s vokzala. Memuary*. Tom Pervyi (Kazan': Idel'-Press, 2018), 100

certain writers. The phenomenon is particularly notable with regard to the communities of Peredelkino and Komarovo. Thus, in some cases it was not just the Writers' Houses, but the literary communities surrounding them that helped to shape Soviet-era literary history.

This dissertation examines the role of official writers' retreats and communities in the history of Soviet literature, examining their origin, function, and literary legacy. In particular, this dissertation explores these questions: What was the link between these places and pre-revolutionary literary culture? How did these writers' communities, which Mir-Khaidarov calls a "Stalinist invention," become integral to quasi-dissident writing culture of the Thaw-era, during which a small degree of freedom of expression allowed writers to navigate the newly murky boundaries of Soviet literary censorship?[8] Additionally, and perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, in the later years of the Soviet Union, as well as after its fall, several locations of these Soviet writers' communities played an important role in preserving pre-Soviet, modernist literary heritage through museums devoted to specific poets and writers who typically disregarded the mainline Soviet socialist realist system of literature of social command. Many people visited these sites of memory to pay respects, and they are also reflected in literature. How are changes in attitudes towards cultural memory reflected in the history of these sites?

Support and Control of Soviet Writers

Writer and eventual Nobel Prize winner, Joseph Brodsky, was arrested and taken to trial in 1963, and subsequently sentenced to hard labor at an Arctic camp, for "social parasitism" (*tuneiadstvo*), a charge given to people who were seen as lazy or unwilling to work. In reading the trial transcript, it is striking how a major feature of the evidence used against him relate to his

[8] Ibid., 100

non-membership in official organizations and institutions associated with the profession of writing in the Soviet Union, as well as his employment history that was viewed as having had too many changes and periods of unemployment in it for a compliant, productive Soviet citizen.[9] At one point in the trial, the judge asked Brodsky, "And who decided that you're a poet? Who listed you among the ranks of poets?" The implication was that a person could not really be considered a poet or writer unless they belonged to the Writers' Union.[10] Thus, in part, because of the perception of Brodsky's non-affiliation with mainstream Soviet writing culture, he suffered years in an Arctic prison camp. The punishments for writers who went against the grain, even in the post-Stalin era, could be harsh.

Membership in the Writers' Union was essential for anyone wanting to write professionally in the USSR. The Writers' Union was established in 1934. Its precursor until 1932 was the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (*RAPP – Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei*), which was influenced by the revolutionary-era All-Russian Union of Poets (*VSP – Vserosiiskii soiuz poetov*).[11] In 1929 Stalin set out to hierarchize and secure total control of Soviet life, and by April of 1932 he decreed that RAPP dissolve. In 1934 the Union of Soviet Writers (*Soiuz pisatelei SSSR*), now controlled by Stalin and his ruling body of ministers, the Politburo, took its place.[12] The First Congress of the Soviet Writers' Union set forth the definition of the state-prescribed literary form of socialist realism, with Zhdanov declaring it as the "truthful representation of life in its revolutionary development."[13] The ideological role that

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[9] Efim Etkind, *Protsess Iosifa Brodskogo* (London: Overseas Publications Interchange Ltd., 1988), 67-68.
[10] "А кто это признал, что вы поэт? Кто причислил вас к поэтам?" Efim Etkind, *Protsess Iosifa Brodskogo* (London: Overseas Publications Interchange Ltd., 1988), 112.
[11] Valentina Antipina. *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskikh pisatelei: 1930-1950e* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 28.
[12] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialist Realism," *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*. ed. Dobrenko and Balina (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 98-99
[13] Ibid., 109.

writers in the Soviet Union were expected to fulfill was enormous, as Stalin's well-known cliché that "writers are the engineers of human souls" became an accepted fact in the prescribed socialist realist system of literary production in the 1930s.[14] One of the reasons that writers became so important in Soviet society was that they were seen as the vanguard of Soviet ideology, and these "engineers" were, as such, entrusted with an enormous task, as it was their duty to produce the ideology-infused works that would inspire and shape the collective masses.[15] With socialist realist dogma expressly delineated, it became dangerous for writers to write in a way that veered from the prescribed mode of literary creation. Because the state controlled all presses, publishing such work was impossible. Unofficial readings and performances of literary works, as well as underground publishing and publishing abroad, halted, because any of them could become a death sentence.

Established writers in the Soviet system who towed the prescribed ideological line were also able to receive remarkable rewards. The concept of literary prestige also worked mainly through the Writers' Union, and through its allied association, the Litfond, the organization responsible for providing writers with material benefits. Likely due to the benefits of membership in the Soviet creative unions, the six creative unions saw a huge increase in the number of members between their first Congress and the late 1960s. At the first Writers' Union Congress in 1934, there were 1,500 members, and in 1967-1968 there were 6,608 members.[16]

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[14] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 127.
[15] Andrei Zhdanov, "Soviet Literature. The Richest in Ideas. The Most Advanced Literature," in *Soviet Writers Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism*, ed. H. G. Scott (1935; reprint ed. London, 1977), 21.
[16] A. I. Shchiglik," Tvorcheskie soiuzy v sisteme sovetskoi demokratii," *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v SSSR (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*, ed. Ts. A. Iampol'skaia (Moskva: Iuridicheskaia literatura, 1970), 45.

The Litfond was an organization that was technically separate from the Writers' Union, yet still very much linked with it. Litfond membership provided writers with housing, healthcare, and childcare. For example, from 1959-1966 the Litfond constructed homes for writers in over fifty cities in the USSR, and 1,330 large apartments were built for writers.[17] The writers' communities examined in this dissertation were all administered by the Soviet Litfond, and, as such, were part of the system of privileges for writers in the Soviet Union. The establishment of official "Writers' Houses of Creativity," which were essentially retreats with hotel-style accommodations where writers could live and work, began in 1930s, in line with the development of Soviet literary socialist realism. Over the course of subsequent decades, more of them were established, and they became an important part of the official Soviet literary world.

While many writers, both famous and relatively unknown ones, had the opportunity to stay in writers' retreats, established and successful writers tended to receive the most benefits from the Litfond. In fact, truly needy writers were sometimes even brushed aside with regard to financial help. For example, the Litfond offered repayable loans, but the very poorest writers were often unable to repay these loans and were sometimes refused help. However, the most prominent writers were able to garner these repayable loans and use them for things like travel or home renovation while they waited for their royalties to come in.[18] The Litfond also provided elite writers with "special rations" (*spetspaiki*), rather cryptically abbreviated in official

[17] A. I. Tsepin, "Rol' tvorcheskikh soiuzov v organizatsii truda, material'nom obespechenii i kul'turno-bytovom obsluzhivanii tvorcheskikh rabotnikov," *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v SSSR (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*, ed. Ts. A. Iampol'skaia, (Moskva: Iuridicheskaia literatura, 1970), 205.
[18] Eduard Shneiderman, "Takaia vot istoriia. 'Elitfond'. O deiatel'nosti LO LF SSSR v 1930-1950-e gody," *Zvezda* 2004, no. 1, 162.

documents as *s/s* (*spetssnabzheniie*).[19] Exactly what these special rations were comprised of remains a historical question.[20]

In his seminal 1978 study, *Privilege in the USSR*, Mervyn Matthews discusses the "Writers' Houses" (i.e., writers' retreats), which numbered 17 by 1972.[21] Matthews notes that average Soviet vacationers usually stayed in low-quality "rest homes" (i.e., "vacation houses," in Russian, *doma otdykha*), that were similar to dormitories, while "favored" state employees and their families enjoyed better travel accommodations. Matthews notes that Writers' Houses were considered superior travel accommodations, similar to those for members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers and Ministry of Internal Affairs.[22] It should also be noted that when one discusses elite privileges in the USSR, it is in a rather qualified sense – for example, Matthews notes that the lifestyles of Soviet elites in the 1970s were similar in a material sense to that of the average middle-class American; thus, the "privileges" enjoyed by the Soviet elite were by no means yachts or palaces.[23]

Destination writers' retreats, which were often in locations on the northwestern and southern peripheries of the Soviet Union, were places for writers to both vacation and do creative work. Typically, these were temporary living locations for writers, though some writers had permanent dachas at Peredelkino and Komarovo, but this arrangement was not typical with regard to the majority of "writers' retreats."[24] Many writers' retreats were located in places associated with elite tourism, such as the Crimean coast, the Caucasus Black Sea coast

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[19] Ibid., 173.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union: A Study of Elite Life-Styles under Communism* (London: George, Allen & Unwin, 1978), 49.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Merwyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), 177.
[24] John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 126-7.

(particularly in Abkhazia), and the Baltic Coast. Other writers' retreats were in rural and semi-rural locations outside of major cities, such as in the cases of Maleevka, Peredelkino, and Komarovo. These were desirable locations where writers could get away from city life and work in a pleasant environment.[25]

It should be noted that writers' retreats in suburban areas and destinations associated with tourism were not the only establishments associated with the Writers' Union for Soviet writers to visit. The "Central House of Writers" (*Tsentral'nyi dom literatorov – TsDL*) in Moscow was a place where members of the Writers' Union could participate in literary events and attend seminars. Other creative unions had similar establishments – for, example the Cinematographer's Union had the "Central House of Film" (*Tsentral'nyi dom kino*) for its members.[26] Additionally, the Writers' Union had its own institution of higher learning, The A. M. Gorky Literary Institute, which was established in 1932. Here, writers could take courses on special topics (in 1965-67, for example, there were specific seminars for writers working on revolutionary and military-patriotic themes).[27]

Between the third Writers' Congress 1959 and the fourth Writers' Congress in 1967, 3.6 million rubles were spent on the expansion of "Writers' Houses of Creativity," and by 1970, there were 16 of these establishments in the Soviet Union.[28] Other creative unions also had "Houses of Creativity" for their members – for example, there was a "Composers' House of Creativity" in Repino which was very near to the Writers' House and associated community in

[25] See maps in Figures 1, 2, and 3 in Chapter 1.
[26] A. I. Tsepin, " Rol' tvorcheskikh soiuzov v organizatsii truda, material'nom obespechenii i kul'turno-bytovom obsluzhivanii tvorcheskikh rabotnikov," *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v SSSR (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*, ed. Ts. A. Iampol'skaia (Moskva: Iuridicheskaia literatura, 1970), 202-203.
[27] Ibid., 161.
[28] Ibid., 210.

Komarovo.[29] The establishment of writers' communities had a noteworthy role in the Litfond's budget, and were part of the larger goal of providing support to writers.

Membership in the Soviet Writers' Union and Litfond not only provided writers with the ability to publish their work, but also gave them material benefits, and the opportunity to stay at special retreats for writers, and in some cases receive a permanent dacha. While creative organizations provided professional support, they also explicitly and implicitly encouraged writers to stay in line with regards to the prevailing ideology, functioning as a form a creative control.

Cultural Change in the History of Writers' Communities

During the 1950s and 1960s writers' communities became important centers where new kinds of literary works were being produced – not just the highly propagandistic Soviet socialist realism of the 1930s. In particular, certain accounts, for example, by journalist Elena Kholmogorova, depict the Writers' Houses as special places where writing culture developed beyond the strict control of the censor:

> A particular subject is an entire layer of life that no longer exists today — the Writers' Houses. The names of many of them are now only geographical, but for the older generation, they weren't even names, but were rather concepts — Koktebel', Dubulti, Pitsunda, Peredelkino, Maleevka… It was precisely at these places where we lived under one roof, read new compositions to one another, showed each other brand new paintings, and over the long, modest collective lunches and indispensable long walks, an environment beyond control, beyond the censor, was born.[30]

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[29] Ibid.

[30] "Особая тема — целый пласт ушедшей сегодня жизни — Дома творчества. Названия, теперь для многих только географические, но для старшего поколения — не названия вовсе, а понятия — Коктебель, Дубулты, Пицунда, Переделкино, Малеевка… Именно там, где жили под одной крышей, читали друг другу новые сочинения, показывали только-только просохшие картины, за долгими, хоть и скромными общими обедами и непременными дальними прогулками рождалась неподконтрольная, неподцензурная среда." Elena Kholmogorova, "Elena Aksel'rod. Dvor na Barrikadnoi," *Znamia* 2009, no. 6, accessed March 24, 2018, http://magazines.russ.ru/znamia/2009/6/ho26.html

Certain writers, particularly those of the 1960s *shestidesiatniki* ("people of the 1960s") generation, found specific official creative spaces as being profoundly fruitful locations for the creation of literary work that would become important to several literary generations. In a 1992 interview shestidesiatnik writer Vasily Aksyonov called certain Writers' Houses in Koktebel', Crimea and Dubulti in Latvia "literary confessionals" for his 1960s generation.[31] The writers' communities in Peredelkino and Komarovo were also places where modernist, independent writers, such as Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova, were able to connect with the younger literary generation and share their pre-revolutionary and unofficial experiences. The multiplicity of experiences in these Soviet-era creative refuges is vast.

The cultural environment of the Thaw at times fostered an experimental, underground creative culture in Soviet creative organizations and their spaces, many of which became famous locations and today, in the 21st century, are the sites of memorials and museums. The Litfond writers' retreats and communities were an important part of the literary scene in the Soviet Union where many of the most famous Soviet writers spent significant time on their work. These were places where the Soviet prescribed method of literary creation, socialist realism, contrasted with alternative lines of thought, which created a complex dynamic in these official literary organizations. This is important for understanding the history of literary creation in the Soviet Union as a whole, as mainstream literature was inextricably linked with writing organizations.

As mentioned, during the Thaw period, the *shestidesiatniki*, or "people of the sixties generation," like Vasily Aksyonov, dominated a Soviet literary scene very different from that of the Stalin era, during which people had been executed without hesitation for just having been

[31] Aleksandr Ol'bik, *Nostal'gicheskie khroniki* (Moscow: Avvalon, 2006), 132

rumored to have said or written something suspect. In some regards, Brodsky was unlucky to have received his harsh prison sentence in the 1960s, and he was very much "made an example of" because, in general, the Thaw was a somewhat freer era with a slightly less constraining censorship, which allowed an opening of creative expression. Nonetheless, it was still an era of show trials (the highly publicized show trial writers of Sinyavsky and Daniel' in 1965 is considered by many historians as a major event that signaled the end of the Thaw), as well as censorship. While writers did enjoy greater creative freedom in the Khrushchev Thaw than during the Stalin-era, this was a period of complex cultural boundaries, and navigating them as a Soviet writer was more than a full-time job. At times, the Writers' Houses became places where one could challenge those boundaries.

The Soviet Writers' Union and the Litfond, and the creative spaces associated with them, strongly influenced mainstream literary life in the later Soviet Union. The multi-layered creative atmosphere characteristic of Soviet-era literary establishments is an underexplored area in the history of Soviet literary culture. An examination the role of official creative spaces in the history of post-Stalin Soviet literature and their role in the development of writing culture during the Thaw will add to the historical knowledge regarding the conditions of literary creation in the post-Stalin period.

Litfond Writers' Communities as Uniquely Soviet Cultural Places

Throughout literary history certain locales, buildings, and environments have had a strong impact on the formation of literary communities and the trajectory of the development of creative work. In European culture examples abound of certain geographical locations being practically synonymous with literary generations and the writers that frequented them. For example, the

city of Paris itself has been mythologized to the point of receiving symbolic status as a legendary "literary capital."[32] In England, a genre of tourist literature associating eleven major writers with the Lake District developed during the Victorian era.[33] Certain cafés and apartments of writers and artists are inextricably linked with understandings of literary eras and their artists, such as the Stray Dog Café in St. Petersburg during the era of Russian modernism.[34] Communities and colonies specifically for writers, which came into being in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; however, were distinctive in that their main function was to provide a place for writers to live and work, and as such, they are inextricably linked with literary history.

The history of writers' colonies in the Western world is rather different from that of their Soviet counterparts. This is particularly apparent with regard to major American writers' colonies that were founded in early 20th century, which included the MacDowell colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire; the Provincetown, Massachusetts colony; the Taos, New Mexico colony; and Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York.[35] These functioned as locations where both established writers and writers outside of the mainstream American literary could work and build their own creative networks.[36] Many of the American writers who spent time at these colonies were quite obscure, and the ability to work at the colonies gave them the opportunity to for creative exploration beyond the confines of the market.[37] In some accounts of American writers'

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[32] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. Debevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 23-34.
[33] Christopher Donaldson, Ian N. Gregory, Patricia Murrieta-Flores, "Mapping 'Wordsworthshire': A GIS Study of Literary Tourism in Victorian Lakeland," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 20, no. 3 (September, 2015): 287–307, https://doi.org/10.1080/13555502.2015.1058089
[34] Inna Vasil'evna Kol'tsova, "Tvorcheskie ob"edineniia v Rossii rubezha XIX-XX vekov i ikh rol' v kul'turno-istoricheskoi zhizni rossiiskogo obshchestva." *Izvestiia Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im. A.I. Gertsena*, no. 131 (2011): 261.
[35] Kathryn S. Roberts, "Colony Writing: Creative Community in the Age of Revolt" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2016), 2-3.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 4.

colonies, the writers at them are even depicted as "monk-like pariahs," greatly removed from the dominant arena of American literature.[38] This is vastly different from the Soviet writers' communities, where writers were expected to produce works upholding Soviet ideology — in fact, it was the most prominent and publicly celebrated Soviet writers who could most easily garner trips to writers' retreats and receive dachas at writers' communities. In this respect, certain sociological aspects of Soviet and American writers' communities in the mid-20th century are diametrically opposite. However, the fact that mainstream writers worked and lived at the Soviet writers' communities does not mean that all of them inwardly and unthinkingly supported all aspects of Soviet ideology and socialist realist aesthetics (see Chapter 3).

Writers' colonies were also most important in pre-World War II in American literary history (although the major writers' colonies later still continued to function and flourish). After 1945 universities became the dominant force in elite American literary production.[39] In his book, *The Program Era*, Mark McGurl examines how creative writing programs in the United States interacted with the history of post-war American literature — before this period in American literary history, however, writers searched for financial support in many different ways during what Hugh Kenner called "the Pound era," referring to poet Ezra Pound.[40] American literary colonies were particularly significant in the literary history of the "Pound era," as they presented an opportunity for patronage before the system of university-centered creative writing took hold. Conversely, Soviet writers' retreats and communities saw a particular flourishing during the 1950s and 1960s, and the American system of creative writing programs that McGurl studies does not have a Soviet or Russian parallel.

[38] Ibid., 5.
[39] Ibid., 10.
[40] Ibid., 10-12.

Another way in which Soviet writers' communities differ from their Western counterparts is that by the 1960s several of them became important sites of memory to which literary pilgrimages were (and still are) made. Later, during *glasnost'* and *perestroika* and after the collapse of Soviet Union, several communities featured museums for specific writers. These sites paid homage to writers that were controversial when they were still ostensibly ideologically Soviet spaces. This political dissonance also significantly distinguishes them from many literary house museums in the West. In examining the history of the Pasternak museum at Peredelkino and the Voloshin museum in Koktebel, one sees notable characteristics, distinguishing them from many other writers' house museums in the Soviet Union and the West – particularly, that these museums were created when these communities were still functioning as working spaces for officially sanctioned Soviet writers. Anne Trubek, in *A Skeptic's Guide to Writers' Houses*, sees Western writers' museums as melancholic, odd relics that few people visit, and that are perhaps unnecessary due to the fact that the connections with the writers they venerate are sometimes tenuous.[41] Trubek treats house museums for Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Ernest Hemingway, and many other writers as cultural shrines, cementing the importance of particular writers in the culture at large. The establishment of some house museums for particular writers in the late Soviet period, notably those who had been previously denounced as anti-Soviet or ideologically incorrect, was in the context of politically oriented debate about what writers were important in Russian literary history. The pronounced ideological debate embedded in the history of Soviet writers' house museums is another component that is absent from a discussion of Western ones.

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[41] Anne Trubek, *A Skeptic's Guide to Writers' Houses* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 5.

Literature Review

No detailed scholarly study has yet fully examined the role of writers' retreats and communities as a unique phenomenon in Soviet-era Russian literary history, and there is little work in English on this topic beyond the Garrards' short discussion in *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*. Valentina Antipina's history of writing culture in the USSR, *The Daily Life of Soviet Writers: The 1930-1950s* (*Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskikh pisatelei: 1930-1950e*) offers a helpful history of the Litfond and some Litfond spaces in the 1930s and 1940s.[42] Maryna Hrymych has written on the history of writing culture in the Ukrainian Litfond writers' community in Irpin' outside of Kiev.[43] Mervyn Matthews' *Privilege in the Soviet Union* presents a more general, contextual treatment similar to that of the Garrards.[44] Matthews discusses the role of special privileges available to the Soviet elite, including major writers. Diane Koenker's history of Soviet tourism, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (2013), offers valuable contextualization in understanding travel during the Soviet period.[45] Stephen Lovell's work on the history of the dacha offers needed background on the importance of suburban dacha spaces in Russian culture.[46]

Regarding place studies and semiotics, Toporov's work on the "city text," and Aleksandr Liusyi's work on the particularities of Crimea as a cultural space are important contextualizing

[42] Valentina Antipina, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskikh pisatelei: 1930-1950e* (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005)
[43] Maryna Hrymych, "Ukrainian Writers' Colonies: Subculture of Ukrainian Soviet Writers," *Ukrainoznavstvo* 60, no. 3 (2016): 166-169.
[44] Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978); John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (New York: Free Press, 1990)
[45] Diane Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013)
[46] Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003)

works for understanding the role of certain places in Russian culture.[47] On the history of individual writers' communities, major works include Lev Lobov and Kira Vasilyeva's *Pedelkino*, the collection of memoirs about Maleevka, edited by N. B. Babochkina and I. S. Borisov, *Maleevka, Dear to My Heart* (*Milaia serdtsu Maleevka*), and Elena Travina's work on Komarovo.[48] Il'ia Dimshtein's *Our Jurmala* (*Nasha Iurmala*) offers helpful background on the history of Dubulti and the Jurmala coast in Latvia.[49] A large number Russian scholars have examined Voloshin's work and the role of Koktebel' in Russian literary history, with Vladimir Kupchenko being the most detailed and prolific. In English, Barbara Walker's book examines the literary culture of Voloshin's Koktebel', and Marianna Landa's work studies the enduring significance of Voloshin's work in twenty-first-century Russian culture.[50]

Writers' Communities and Retreats of the Soviet Era in Russian Literature draws from a broad array of literature, literary memoir, historical studies, and literary criticism that deal with particular creative sites in Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet culture in order to understand the role of Writers' Union and Litfond spaces in the USSR. This work particularly advances our understanding of the dynamics of literary creation in spaces supported by the state during the Soviet era and adds to our knowledge of the process of literary production and community formation in the latter decades of the USSR.

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[47] Vladimir Toporov, *Peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury: Izbrannye trudy* (Sankt Peterburg: Iskusstvo—SPB, 2003); Aleksandr Liusyi, *Krymskii tekst v russkoi literature* (Sankt Peterburg: Alateiia, 2003)

[48] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'eva, Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 509; N. B. Babochkina and I. S. Borisov, *Milaia serdtsu Maleevka: o pervom Dome tvorchestva pisatelei Rossii: sbornik* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Pul's, 2001); Elena Travina, *Komarovo i Repino: Kellomiaki i Kuokkala. Dachnaia zhizn' sto let nazad* (Sankt-Peterburg: «Tsentr sokhraneniia kul'turnogo naslediia», 2014)

[49] Il'ia Dimshtein. *Nasha Iurmala*. (Riga: AB-Print, 2013)

[50] Vladimir Kupchenko, *Dvadtsat' let v dome M. A. Voloshina* 1963-1983 (Bolero, 2013); Barbara Walker, *Maximilian Voloshin and the Russian Literary Circle: Culture and Survival in Revolutionary Times* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Marianna Landa, *Maximilian Voloshin's Poetic Legacy and the Post-Soviet Russian Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015)

Chapter Summary

This dissertation is comprised of five major sections. In addition to this introduction to the cultural phenomenon of Litfond Writers' Houses, three main chapters and a conclusion deal with major sites of literary and cultural creation associated with official Soviet literary institutions. Chapter One, "From Pre-revolutionary Estates, Dachas and Tourist Destinations to Soviet Literary Centers: The Establishment of the Writers' Communities in the USSR," examines the origins of Soviet writers' colonies in pre-revolutionary Russian suburban areas and on estates that subsequently became part of the Soviet Litfond. I focus especially on the history and literary impact of pre-revolutionary country estates and dacha communities and their incorporation into the Litfond. The pre-Soviet history of many of these places influenced their reputation as important literary sites. Aspects relating to the pre-revolutionary history of these places are also manifested in specific works of literature and memoir produced during the Soviet era, such as depictions of Koktebel in the works of Vassily Aksyonov.

Chapter Two, "Soviet Socialist Realism and New Forms of Expression Under One Roof: Literary Culture in Writers' Communities during the Thaw Era," examines the complex and at times contradictory role that Litfond Writers' Houses played in writing culture in the USSR during the Thaw period, as centers of socialist realist writing, as well as places where dissident literary networks emerged, and experimental fiction was produced, in which writers went to the limits of what was permitted, testing the boundaries of the Soviet censor. This chapter gives particular emphasis to the Litfond writers' retreats in Dubulti, Latvia and in Koktebel, Crimea during the 1960s. Koktebel particularly became symbolically important for writers of the Thaw era, when it became renowned for its free-spirited atmosphere. With regard to literature, this chapter particularly investigates the work of Vasily Aksyonov – a major sixties-generation

Russian writer. While perhaps not as known in the West as other late-twentieth-century Russian-language writers, Aksyonov was immensely famous in the USSR. Writer Evgenii Popov notes, making a play on the quip about Gogol's *Overcoat* attributed to Dostoevsky, that "From Aksyonov's jean jacket, like Gogol's overcoat, emerged all contemporary [Russian] prose."[51] It is worth repeating that Aksyonov called the writers' communities at Koktebel' and Dubulti, "literary confessionals," emphasizing his perception of their role at the forefront of Soviet-era writing culture. His experience in Koktebel is particularly reflected in his literary work, in particular his novels, *The Island of Crimea* (*Ostrov Krym*, 1979) and *Mysterious Passion: A Novel About Shestidesiatniki* (*Tainstvennaia strast': roman o shestidesiatnikakh*, 2007), and his essay "Karadag-68," as this chapter shows.

Chapter Three, "Koktebel, Peredelkino, Komarovo: Memory Spaces for Modernist Writers at Soviet-era Literary Communities," examines how pre-revolutionary literary culture bridged the Soviet period at state-controlled writers' communities. Koktebel remained linked to Voloshin and his literary circle after it was incorporated into the Litfond. This chapter examines the importance of such connections to pre-revolutionary modernism in Litfond spaces during the Soviet era. Beyond Voloshin, I consider Boris Pasternak's and Anna Akhmatova's relationship to Soviet writers' communities in the 1950s, and how networks developed that memorialized modernist literary culture in the post-Stalin era, which literary commissars had tried to erase in prior decades. While Pasternak and Akhmatova were able to obtain some material benefits through the Litfond, their work (as a whole) was not steeped in ideology the way that the creative

[51] Oleg Koriakin, "Roman s dzhinsami: V Kazani rasskazali, kak Vasilii Aksenov povliial na sovetskuiu modu," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, December 9, 2019, http://rg.ru/2019/09/12/reg-pfo/kak-vasilij-aksenov-povliial-na-sovetskuiu-modu.html/.

output of many writers of the 1940s and 1950s was, and their meetings with members of the younger literary generation at their dachas inspired and influenced the work of these writers.

Koktebel, Peredelkino, and Komarovo, besides being sites of writers' retreats and communities, also became famous sites of memory for the famous modernist writers associated with them (respectively, Voloshin, Pasternak, and Akhmatova). Chapter Three considers these places from the perspective of contemporary memory studies, particularly in light of the concept of the *lieu de memoire*, or "site of memory," first articulated by cultural historian, Pierre Nora, who analyzes monuments and historically relevant spaces in French culture.[52] The "memory" inherent in these spaces is a shared cultural memory, which is distinct from a given specific memory of a particular person. For Nora, *lieux de memoire* are cultural narratives, which are "open to signification" as they play a role in defining a given culture's way of understanding the past. This chapter analyzes the establishment and impact of these literary sites of memory in the Soviet period, as well as their significance in post-Soviet Russian culture.[53] In particular, it shows how the memory of independent and modernist literature, which many tried to suppress during the Soviet era, survived in these places.

The final chapter and conclusion of the dissertation summarizes how writers' communities and their role in the history of twentieth-century Russian-language literature are treated in Russian culture and literature today, and how some of these places, which were associated with the Litfond, particularly Koktebel, continue to be mythologized in Russian art and culture. This section briefly considers creative works, such as Liudmila Ulitskaia's 2010 *The Green Tent* (*Zelenyi shater*), Vasily Aksenov's 2009 *Mysterious Passion: A Novel About*

[52] Pierre Nora, *Présent, nation, mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011)
[53] Ibid., 39-41.

Shestidesiatniki (*Tainstvennaia strast': roman o shestidesiatnikakh*), and Natal'ia Galkina's 2003 novel *Villa Renault* (*Villa Reno*).

The experience of writers in the Soviet Union is distinctive in numerous regards. The constraints of writing in an atmosphere of intense censorship and the closely controlled ideological environment in the USSR influenced the ways by which writers produced their work. An analysis of important spaces in which their creative work was produced will further our post-Soviet understanding of literary history of the late Soviet Union. This dissertation shows how writers' retreats in the Thaw era became, to a certain extent, incubators for the younger, post-Stalin generation to experiment in literature and even politics. Some of the most famous writers' retreats also became sites of memory and museum spaces for major writers, but not for Soviet socialist realist writing culture, as much as key modernist writers who lived and worked at these locations. The contradictions and complexities of literary creation in the Soviet Union, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century, which manifested themselves in literary spaces allocated to writers, is a captivating prism through which we can perceive some of the cracks in the authoritarian façade of cultural control and begin to understand less-familiar aspects of Soviet literary history.

Chapter One

From Pre-revolutionary Estates, Dachas and Tourist Destinations to Soviet Literary Centers: The Establishment of the Writers' Communities in the USSR

From former nineteenth-century country estates of the landed gentry to exotic tourist destinations on the northwest and southern coasts of the Russian Empire, pre-revolutionary Russian cultural spaces, in many cases, served as the substrate for Soviet-era writers' retreats and communities. The Soviet Litfond founded many Writers' Houses in places that had pre-revolutionary cultural significance, for example, former country estates, Baltic Sea resorts, or dacha areas, which were often frequented by the creative intelligentsia. This chapter examines accounts of the most famous official writers' communities from the perspective of the history of cultural spaces in both Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, considering the history of dachas, country estates, and domestic tourism, and the historical relationship between pre-revolutionary Russian cultural space with spaces devoted specifically to official Soviet-era writing culture. It considers writers' retreats and communities as locations that, in many cases, had a demonstrable link with pre-revolutionary literature and writing culture. Moreover, this chapter provides background for Chapter 2, which examines writers' retreats and communities as locations where the mainline stringent socialist realist writing culture coexisted with an atmosphere that fostered somewhat freer expression that resisted and, to a degree, undermined doctrinaire modes of literary creation.

To understand this dynamic, it will help to investigate how these culturally multifaceted institutions came into existence in the Soviet Union. As we will see, some of the most famous and important centers were inextricably connected with pre-revolutionary literary culture. Two important private homes associated with the pre-revolutionary literary intelligentsia were

Maleevka (the estate of editor of *Russkaia mysl'*, Vukol Lavrov, located on the outskirts of Moscow; see Fig. 3) and Koktebel (the home of poet and artist Maksimilian Voloshin; see Fig. 2). The dacha communities in Komarovo (outside St. Petersburg; see Fig. 1) and Peredelkino (outside of Moscow; see Fig. 3) were famous communities for Soviet writers. While Komarovo was a pre-revolutionary dacha community, Peredelkino was established in the Soviet era, spearheaded by Maksim Gorky in the early 1930s.[54] Additionally, travel destinations associated with nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century tourism, such as the Baltic coast and the Caucasus Black Sea coast, became sites where Writers' Houses were established later in the 20th century (Dubulti on the Latvian coast (Fig. 1); and Pitsunda and Gagra on the Abkhazian coast (Fig. 2)). The most significant writers' retreats and communities, thus, were mainly located in areas traditionally associated with tourism, or were in the suburbs of major cities, whether they were in the north or (Fig. 1) south (Fig. 2), or central (particularly Moscow suburban) region of the Soviet Union (Fig. 3).

[54]Frank Westerman, *Engineers of the Soul: In the Footsteps of Stalin's Writers* (London: Harvill Secker, 2010), 169-170.

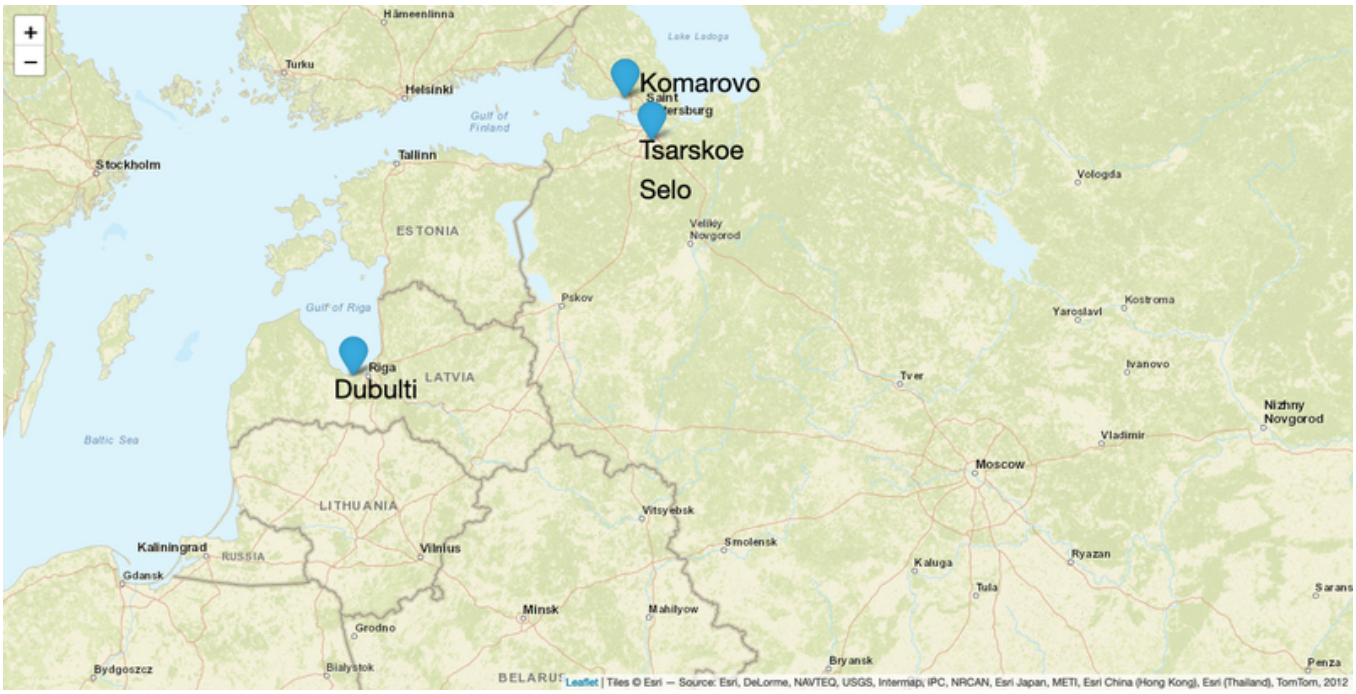

Figure 1. Northern writers' retreats (Figures 1-3 created using Leaflet and Folium; Basemap source: Esri, DeLorne, GEBCO, NOAA, NGDC, and other contributors.)

Figure 2. Southern writers' retreats

Figure 3. Central writers' retreats

Keeping the history of Russian tourism in mind, an analysis of these areas important in Soviet writing culture will shed light on their role in Soviet literary production, particularly from the perspective of understanding the seemingly contradictory writing cultures that emerged in them (see Chapter Two). Finally, this chapter will emphasize the unique setting of Koktebel, a significant cultural space in Russian modernism and home of poet and artist Maksimilian Voloshin, which later became incorporated into the Litfond, and how Koktebel's history has features relevant to the previously discussed categories. As a whole, this chapter investigates how certain spaces, associated with pre-revolutionary writers, patrons of the arts, culture and tourism, became absorbed into Soviet writing culture.

Country Estates

Writers and artists sojourning on country estates have a long history in Russian culture, first appearing in Russian literature at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. Prior to the Great Reforms of 1861, the *usad'ba*, or "country estate," was the domain of the nobility, similar to country villas in Western Europe. These estates in the early nineteenth century were bastions of the gentry where lives of the privileged played out in ways very different from the lives of the majority of the populace in the Russian Empire. The Russian nobility were one of the last in Europe to build ornate country estates, a process that began in the mid-eighteenth century, following Peter I's Westernization of Russia.[55] Russian country estates were, to a certain extent, modeled on Western European counterparts, but each took on its own particular character, as it developed.[56] Writers of eighteenth century, such as Derzhavin, and writers of the Romantic era, including Pushkin, set their scenes in these unique places tied to the aristocracy. Larger estates often incorporated highly ornate foreign elements in their architecture and design, with a pervasive trend towards English gardens in landscaping, though smaller estates often had more distinctly "Russian" atmosphere.[57] This is notable in the differing depictions in Pushkin's short story "Mistress into Maid" ("Baryshnia-krestianka"), which shows the main character, Grigory Muromskii, spending his fortune on an authentic English garden and English-style landscaping. In contrast, the smaller country garden in of Tatiana Larina's dream in *Eugene Onegin* is an example of a country estate in literature that is more representative of Russian nature.[58]

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[55] Priscilla R. Roosevelt, *Life on the Russian Country Estate: A Social and Cultural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 3.
[56] Ibid., 3-33.
[57] Ibid., 98-99.
[58] Ibid., 98-99; 75.

The *usad'ba* of the nineteenth century was also a place where serious intellectual debate took place. Decembrist sympathizers of the 1820s discussed politics at the Davydov's estate, Kamenka.[59] The Bakunins' estate at Pryamukhino was an important center of the Slavophile/Westernizer debates of the 1840s.[60] Sergei Aksakov, the highly-influential Slavophile philosopher, had an estate called Abramtsevo (that later transformed into a late nineteenth artists' colony – see discussion below), where some of the most famous writers of the mid-nineteenth century, including Ivan Turgenev and Nikolai Gogol', stayed as guests.[61] The country estate as a setting for philosophical discourse is particularly prominent in the novels of Ivan Turgenev – in fact, it is a "constant reference point" that symbolizes the values of nineteenth century nobility.[62] In much of his work, and in particular, the novel *Rudin*, the country estate is a world unto itself, which is at the same time embedded in the culture of the nobility at large.[63]

The lifestyle on the *usad'ba* took a dramatic turn in the 1860s, with Tsar Alexander II's emancipation of the serfs in 1861. After this momentous historical turning point, when landowners lost the economic basis supporting their estates, many country estates were purchased by new industrialists and entrepreneurs, and others fell into decline by the end of the nineteenth century.[64] Tat'iana Miasnikova describes a particular "country estate text" (drawing from the critical tradition of "place texts" in Russian literary studies) appearing in mid-

[59] Roosevelt, *Life on the Russian Country Estate: A Social and Cultural History*, 304.
[60] Ibid., 308-309.
[61] Ibid., 312.
[62] Victor Ripp, *Turgenev's Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1980), 86.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 320.

nineteenth century Russian literature, which coincided with Tsar Aleksander II's reforms.[65] In this "country estate"/"old house" text, the old estates of the past and their owners have aged, many buildings are uninhabitable, parks and greenery are overgrown, though the "old house" of the estate is semantically linked with a rich history and world of traditions, with portraits of previous owners and memories of a distance past. It is precisely this "old house" of the country estate that Miasnikova notes as a central feature of Anton Chekhov's "House with a Mezzanine" ("Dom s mezoninom") and the country estate text of the late nineteenth century.[66] The tension between the old country estate and new dacha settlements of the late nineteenth century is an important theme in some of Chekhov's work, most notably *The Cherry Orchard*. There is some evidence that indicates the prototype of the late-nineteenth century country estate depicted in Chekhov's story "House with a Mezzanine" was Maleevka, which later became a Litfond Writers' House during the Soviet period.

Lavrov's Maleevka developed in a historical context during which the prior cultural functions of Russian country estates were transforming. This was the era of post-serfdom reform and the growing popularity of dachas. In the late nineteenth century, certain country estates acquired an entirely different cultural role, becoming somewhat more like dacha communities that were meeting places for important cultural voices and centers for the arts (see next section for further discussion of dachas). One of the outstanding examples is railroad magnate Savva Mamontov's artist colony at Abramtsevo. Savva Mamontov was a wealthy industrialist, known as "Moscow's Lorenzo de' Medici" for his patronage of the arts.[67] In 1870, he purchased the

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[65] Tat'iana Sergeevna Miasnikova, "Kontsept "staryi dom" v rasskaze A. P. Chekhova 'Dom s mezoninom (rasskaz khudozhnika)'," *Vestnik Voronezhkogo Universiteta. Filologia. Zhurnalistika,* 34, no. 1 (January-March 2016), 34.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Hanna Chuchvaha, *Art Periodical Culture in Late Imperial Russia (1898-1917)* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 62.

Abramtsevo estate outside of Moscow, which was to become one of the most famous centers for artistic innovation in Russia of the 1870s-1890s. Abramtsevo had already had a long history in Russian literary culture, as it had been the estate of Slavophile writer Sergei Aksakov. At Abramtsevo, Mamontov created an artist colony, frequented by some of the greatest Russian artists of the period (such as Repin, Vasnetsov, and Vrubel'), as well as a folk arts school, whose purpose was to teach peasants to create marketable handicrafts. Stephen Lowell notes that Abramstevo exemplifies cultural shift at certain country estates in the nineteenth century, as it has characteristics of both a country estate (which Mamontov would have considered it) and a dacha community (which visitors to it were more likely to see it as, since their residence there was only for a short period of time).[68] Abramstevo was a unique cultural center, where artists designed and constructed new, stylistically inimitable buildings. One such innovation was a bathhouse in a wooden hut with a carved foundation resembling chicken legs, to evoke the home of the witch Baba-Yaga in Russian folklore. Operas were also staged at Abramtsevo, including *Boris Godunov, Prince Igor*, and *Sadko*.[69] The admiration for and promotion of traditional Russian folklore in the arts that was part of the culture in late-nineteenth century Abramtsevo later influenced the neo-primitivist art of Natal'ia Goncharova, Pavel Filonov, and Mikhail Larionov.[70]

Another reimagined country estate, with a transformed dacha culture, somewhat similar to Mamontov's Abramtsevo, was Princess Tenisheva's estate, Talashkino, which was known as the place where Igor Stravinsky composed the *Rite of Spring*. Talashkino also attracted the

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[68] Stephen Lowell, *Summerfolk* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 93.
[69] Roosevelt, *Life on the Russian Country Estate: A Social and Cultural History*, 323-4.
[70] John E Bowlt, "Mikhail Larionov and the Primitive", *Experiment* 1, no. 1: 169-182.; Josephine Karg, "The Role of Russian Symbolist Painting for Modernity: Mikhail Vrubel''s Reduced Forms," *The Symbolist Roots of Modern Art,* ed. Michelle Facos (New York: Routledge, 2015), 49.

designers and artists Sergei Maliutin and Nikolai Roerikh.[71] Although similar in conception, Talashkino was outshined by Abramtsevo, due in part to Savva Mamontov's high-spirited personality, as well as Princess Tenisheva's focus on the commercial sustainability of the estate.[72] A slight rivalry arose between the owners of Talashkino and Abramtsevo: Princess Tenisheva derided the creations produced at Abramtsevo as "unimaginative."[73] However, this criticism may have sprung from Mamontov's decision to bypass Tenisheva, who possessed an operatic soprano voice, for a role in his opera company.[74] These places also accommodated the burgeoning revival of and romanticizing of folk culture in Russian arts and crafts.[75]

Though the most famous, Abramtsevo and Talashkino were not the only important country estates functioning as artist colonies in the late 19th century. Another renowned estate was theater actor, director, and theorist Konstantin Stanislavsky's (Alekseev) family estate, Liubimovka, where his family had built a professional theatre stage in 1877.[76] Theater troupes began to perform at Liubimovka regularly, and the Alekseev Circle at Liubimovka became renown for the theatrical arts. It was at Liubimovka in 1902 that Anton Chekhov first had the idea for his famous play, *The Cherry Orchard*.[77] During the late 19th century, Liubimovka played an important role in the development of Russian drama with plays being staged in an old outbuilding, and later, after 1877, on a stage built specifically for theater. Notably, dramatic

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[71] John E. Bowlt, "Art", in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, ed. Nikolai Rzhevsky (Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*, 1998), 208.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Peter Hill, *Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Hanna Chuchvaha, *Art Periodical Culture in Late Imperial Russia (1898-1917)* (Danvers, MA: Koninklijke Brill, 2016), 65.
[76] Andrew R. White, *The Routledge Companion to Stanislavsky* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 7.
[77] Liudmila Vasil'evna Ivanova, *Dvorianskaia i sel'skaia usad'ba v Rossii XVI-XX vv.: istoricheskie ocherki* (Moskva: URSS, 2001), 588.

productions at Liubimovka played an important formative role for Stanislavsky's work.[78] After the revolution, Liubimovka was nationalized, the area was later used as an orphanage, a hospital, and, later, the Babaev candy factory.[79]

This transformation of country estates in the late 19th century exerted a distinct influence on modernist Russian literary culture. While not as well-known as those late-nineteenth-century artistic centers, Maleevka was definitely a well-known cultural center among the pre-revolutionary Moscow intelligentsia. A brief consideration of the history of Maleevka extending back to Chekhov's story "House with a Mezzanine" (1896) demonstrates the cultural thread connecting the Soviet-era Litfond Writers' House of Maleevka with the pre-revolutionary literary culture of the post-reform *usad'ba*.

One of the most famous Litfond Writers' Houses of the Soviet era, Maleevka had a fascinating pre-revolutionary history as a country estate and literary-intellectual center. Maleevka was the home of Vukol Lavrov, the editor of the leading journal, *Russkaia mysl'* (*Russian Thought*) and major translator of Polish literature into Russian.[80] It is important to understand Maleevka, which officially became a Litfond Writers' House in 1927, in the context of usad'ba/country estate literary and artistic culture.[81] Purchased in the 1880s from Count Vorontsov by the merchant Maleev, Lavrov then bought the estate from Maleev in 1893.[82] Initially Lavrov had wanted to move to the Black Sea coast, but after visiting it, he decided to

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[78]Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 94.
[79]Anna Geronimus, "Liubimovka Stanislavskogo: epokhi i litsa," *atmosfera*, Jan. 27, 2021, https://www.i-podmoskovie.ru/history/usadba-lyubimovka-epokhi-i-litsa/
[80] Vladimir Alekseevich Giliarovskii, *Moskva gazetnaia: Druz'ia i vstrechi* (Minsk: „Nauka i Tekhnika", 1989), 4.
[81] O. A. Iakunin, et al., *Ruzskii krai: vchera, segodnia, zavtra, Tom 2* (Moskva: VegaPrint, 2008), 242.
[82] N. Babochkina and I. S. Borisov, *Milaia serdtsu Maleevka: o pervom Dome tvorchestva pisatelei Rossii: sbornik* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo « Pul's », 2001), 9.

settle in the Moscow area.[83] At Maleevka he built a home and moved away from Moscow, deciding to live at Maleevka full-time, traveling to Moscow only for editorial duties about once a week. The estate soon became known as "the writers' corner" (*pisatel'skii ugolok*) in Moscow, as well as the "corner to keep an eye on" (*podnadzornoi ugolok*) among the Moscow police.[84] Among Lavrov's guests were writers Dmitrii Mamin-Sibiriak and Pavel Mel'nikov-Pecherskii, as well as Anton Chekhov (who worked for *Russkaia mysl'* for a period of time). The Marxist writer Aleksandr Serafimovich and the famous journalist Vladimir Giliarovskii also frequented Maleevka.[85] A veritable literary village was established at this former *usad'ba*. Lavrov started selling parcels of land to his various friends and colleagues, such as V. A. Gol'tsev, M. N. Remizov, and Vladimir Giliarovskii, who named his home "Giliaevka" and lived there in the summer.[86]

It is interesting to note that Maleevka likely figured as a setting in the work of Anton Chekhov. According to A. C. Lazarev-Gruzinskii, although Chekhov was acquainted with all of literary Moscow, he was close friends with a very small number of people, who included Vukol Lavrov and V. A. Gol'tsev, editors of *Russkaia mysl'*.[87] As Chekhov and Lavrov were good friends, Chekhov spent considerable time at Lavrov's Maleevka. Scholars have noted the role of country estates in Chekhov's work, and certain works by Chekhov can serve as historical accounts of the changed role of the usad'ba or country estate in the post-serfdom Russian

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[83]Ibid., 19.
[84] O. A. Iakunin, et al., *Ruzskii krai: vchera, segodnia, zavtra, Tom 2* (Moskva: VegaPrint, 2008), 242.
[85] Viktor Sytin, *Chto tam, za povorotom?* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1985), 22.
[86]Vladimir Alekseevich Giliarovskii, *Moskva gazetnaia: Druz'ia i vstrechi. Tom 3* (Moskva: Direkt-Media, 2014), 177.
[87]N. Babochkina and I. S. Borisov, *Milaia serdtsu Maleevka: o pervom Dome tvorchestva pisatelei Rossii: sbornik* (Moscow : Izdatel'stvo Pul's, 2001), p. 53.

Empire.[88] Some believe that Maleevka, as a setting, is embedded in Chekhov's work – particularly the philosophical story "House with a Mezzanine" ("Dom s mezaninom"). This story takes place on an usad'ba known as "Shelkovka," which some see as a stand-in for Maleevka. In certain respects, "House with a Mezzanine" is one of Chekhov's "problem stories" like "Difficult People" or "Enemies," in which a philosophical or contemporary (to Chekhov's time) problem is central to the story. In "House with a Mezzanine" Shelkovka forms the setting of the intense debate and discussions between the main characters.[89] In the story a bored artist finds himself living in Shelkovka with the Volchaninov family. Here, he gets into heated discussions with the eldest Volchaninov daughter, Lydia, about education for the peasantry and practical work done to improve their lives.

Some of the characters in "House with a Mezzanine" may originate in the Lavrov family. While there are different theories about the prototypes of the Volchaninov family, there is significant evidence pointing to Lavrov's his daughters serving as prototypes for the characters Lidiia and Missius.[90] V. M. Lavrov's son, M.V. Lavrov, reminisced that Chekhov's opinions during debates at Maleevka about the situation for peasants in Russia were embedded in the personal views of the unnamed painter in the story.[91] Vukol Lavrov's granddaughter, A. V. Doroshevskaia ardently defended Maleevka as the setting of "House with a Mezzanine."

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[88] Tat'iana Sergeevna Miasnikova, "Kontsept "staryi dom" v rasskaze A. P. Chekhova 'Dom s mezoninom (rasskaz khudozhnika)'," *Vestnik Voronezhkogo Universiteta. Filologia. Zhurnalistika* 2016, no. 1 (January-March), 34, http://jour.vsu.ru/editions/journals/vestnik_filology/2016_1_vestnik.pdf

[89] Donald Rayfield, *Understanding Chekhov: A Critical Study of Chekhov's Prose and Drama* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 40.

[90] A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsatykh tomakh. Sochineniia- tom deviatyi 1894-1897*, ed. A. S. Miasnikov (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo «Nauka», 1977), 490-493.

[91] M. V. Lavrov, "A. P. Chekhov v 90-kh godakh. Po lichnym vospominaniiam," *Turkestanskie vedomosti*, no. 47 (February 26, 1910) as cited in A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsatykh tomakh. Sochineniia- tom deviatyi 1894-1897*, ed. A. S. Miasnikov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1977), 490-493.

According to Doroshevskaia, her mother claimed that "the representation of Lidiia Volchaninova, was, in certain personal respects, inspired my mother, Lidiia Vukolovna. Anton Pavlovich left the name Lidiia [in the story] and the name of the usad'ba—Shelkovka. The name 'Shelkovka,' referring to my grandfather's country home, was used even more often than 'Maleevka' at time."[92] Another article by A. V. Doroshevskaia ("Missius, where are you?" – "Misius', gde ty?") argues that her aunt, Anastasiia Vukolovna, was the prototype of Missius in the story.[93] While there are other scholarly opinions regarding the prototypes of the characters and setting of "House with a Mezzanine," the fact that the official edition of Chekhov's works published in the Soviet Union notes the connection to Maleevka is significant.[94] Because Chekhov and other contributors to *Russkaia mysl'* spent significant time at Lavrov's Maleevka, this estate should be considered an important space in late nineteenth-century Russian literature.

The pre-revolutionary literary and artistic heritage of Maleevka and its environs is significant in considering the history of the establishment of the Litfond Writers' House at Maleevka in the 1927. Lavrov's widow continued to live on the estate in the 1920s. Initially the Litfond did not want the property, thinking that it would be difficult for writers to get to this swampy area, which was quite far to the northwest of Moscow (Fig. 3). Nonetheless, a group of

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[92] "образ Лидии Волчаниновой некоторыми своими чертами характера был навеян образом мамаши Лидии Вуколовны. Антоном Павловичем было оставлено имя Лидия и название усадьбы — „Шелковка". Это название „Шелковка", отнесенное к поместью деда, употреблялось в то время еще чаще, чем „Малеевка"; The guestbook (kniga otzyvov) at the Dom tvorchestva Litfonda SSSR im. A. S. Serafimovicha, February 21, 1961 as communicated by N. A. Roskina (soobshcheno N. A. Roskinoi) as cited in A. P. Chekhov, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsatykh tomakh. *Sochineniia- tom deviatyi 1894-1897*, ed. A. S. Miasnikov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1977), 490-493.
[93] A. V. Doroshevskaia, "Misius', gde ty?" *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 48 (November 28, 1973), as cited in A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsatykh tomakh. Sochineniia- tom deviatyi 1894-1897*, ed. A. S. Miasnikov (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo «Nauka», 1977), 490-493.
[94] M. P. Gromov. "Nashlas' li nakonets Misius'? Neskol'ko zamechanii o prototipakh v tvorcheskoi biografii A. P. Chekhova," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 38 (September 18, 1974) as cited in А. П. Чехов. A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsatykh tomakh. Sochineniia- tom deviatyi 1894-1897*, ed. A. S. Miasnikov (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1977), 490-493.

writers formed a creative community and took up residence at Maleevka. This community grew to thirty people, and in its first year of existence more than 70 literary works were written there.[95]

In its early days Maleevka had some issues with infrastructure, including water supply, as well as a lack of necessary items for daily life, such as beds and bedding.[96] In her book, *The Everyday Life of Soviet Writers (1930s-1950s)*, Valentina Antipina cites a 1932 note in *Literaturnaia gazeta* that complains about the logistics of getting to this isolated area. In 1936 and 1937 a report from the audit commission of the Litfond (*revizionnaia komissiia Litfonda*) took issue with the atmosphere of drunkenness at Maleevka, and particularly with the fact that there was not a single portrait of the party leader, Joseph Stalin.[97]

The history of Maleevka was something that writers who stayed there in the 1930s were certainly aware of, and some even reflected on the unique history of Maleevka. Antipina quotes an unpublished poem by the writer Ivan A. Belousov:[98]

> Maleevka! A long famous
> literary corner.
> Here Gol'tsev once sipped
> cognac with Lavrov
> Here Giliarovskii sat with his snuff box
> by the banks of the Vertushinka
> and raised strawberries.
> Sometimes he held races—
> His Orlov trotter outraced
> the coachman's troika.
> Chekhov was here at Lavrov's,
> And Rubinshtein was here.
> But the home was quiet, as was the collective
> Back then it [the home] didn't carry any [ideological—i.e., Soviet] pretenses
> Lavrov stayed here, summer and winter,
> translating Sienkiewicz.

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[95] N. Babochkina and I. S. Borisov, *Milaia serdtsu Maleevka: o pervom Dome tvorchestva pisatelei Rossii: sbornik.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Pul's, 2001), 190-191.
[96] Valentina Alekseevna Antipina, Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskikh pisatelei 1930-1950e (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 140-142.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 143.

> The past is over. And the Soviet order
> has arrived here en masse. To relax, mind and body,
> away from noisy city life.[99]

The awareness of the literary past of Maleevka, embedded in this poem, speaks to Maleevka's pre-revolutionary significance for some writers who lived and worked there during the Soviet period.

Although there are some similarities between Maleevka and Koktebel, especially in terms of the importance of their pre-revolutionary literary history, Koktebel was an "exotic" destination with a unique history tied to one writer who wove together specific threads of Russian modernism, rather than a nineteenth century estate typical of Russian landed gentry. A small seaside village, Koktebel was located far from Moscow on the southern Crimean coast.

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[99] И. А. Белоусов
МАЛЕЕВКА
(в прошлом и в настоящем)

Малеевка! — давно известный
Литературный уголок.
Здесь Гольцев некогда с Лавровым
Тянули коньячок,
Здесь Гиляровский с табакеркой —
Где Вертушинки берега,
Сидел и разводил клубнику, —
Порой устраивал бега:
Его «орловец» в перегонку
С ямщицкой тройкою бежал…
Бывал здесь Чехов у Лаврова,
И Рубинштейн здесь Н. — бывал.
Но тих был дом — и коллектива
Тогда он вида не носил, —
Лавров сидел зимой и летом
Сенкевича переводил.
Ушло былое. И толпою
Пришел сюда советский строй.
Чтоб отдохнуть душой и телом
От шумной жизни городской.

After addressing the history of dachas and pre-Soviet and Soviet tourism, I will turn the discussion to Koktebel.

Dacha Spaces

Historically linked to the tradition of country estates were the numerous dacha areas that developed in pre-revolutionary culture. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, dachas did not have the same connection to the nobility that country estates of the pre-emancipation Russian empire did. While there was definitely some overlap between the role of country estates and dachas in providing a residence outside the city, some landowners considered dachas and dacha culture to be "vulgar" and less cultured, and they tried to disassociate themselves and their properties from them.[100] The sense of the end of a golden age of country estate culture is noted as a dominant theme in several Chekhov works.[101] Indeed, as noted above, the distinction between country estate culture and new twentiweth century dacha residency is particularly apparent in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (*Vishnevyi sad*, 1904), in which Liubov' Ranevskaia's estate is purchased by the entrepreneur Ermolai Lopakhin, who intends to convert the land into numerous dacha parcels. Lowell notes that, while the precise economic reasons for the popularity of selling of country estates in the late 19th century are debated, sales of country estates for the express purpose of dacha settlement construction similar to the transaction in *The Cherry Orchard* was certainly a feature of country life in late nineteenth-century Russia.[102]

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[100] Lovell, *Summerfolk*, 88-90.
[101] Joost van Baak, *The House in Russian Literature: A Mythopoetic Exploration* (Amsterdam: BRILL, 2009), 261-279.
[102] Lovell, *Summerfolk*, 65-66.

Some non-urban dacha regions that played a significant role in pre-revolutionary Russian culture would later undergo transformations in the Soviet period, remaining important, yet quite altered, centers for Soviet-era cultural life. One of the most notable of these dacha areas in terms of its importance for Russian literature in the twentieth century was the area on the Karelian isthmus (Fig. 1), to the north of St. Petersburg along the Gulf of Finland. The Litfond writers' community established in Komarovo in the 1950s was in a location that had originally been a village called Kellomäki before the revolution. The Kellomäki area was famous for several dachas of cultural celebrities, such as Fabergé, and the architect G. B. Baranovskii, who built a unique home, which later came to be known as the "Harp Castle" (*Zamok arfa*).[103]

Before discussing dacha communities as centers of Soviet writing, it will be helpful to consider briefly the history of dacha spaces in general in pre-revolutionary Russian culture, particularly in contrast to country estates. While the word *dacha* was first a legal concept (coming from the Old Russian for "to give"), which was linked to government apportioned land allotments, springing from the reign of Ivan the Terrible in the 16th century, the first modern dachas appeared in the reign of Peter the Great, when Peter's Westernizing efforts and establishment of the city of St. Petersburg brought about new cultural traditions and perspectives.[104] The road to Peter's palace at Peterhof to the south of St. Petersburg saw the development of a large number of exurban homes for the nobility. Peter envisioned the Peterhof Road as being aesthetically similar to the road from Paris to Versailles.[105] Lowell notes the distinction in function between the eighteenth century dacha and country estates – dachas outside the city allowed for numerous short outings throughout the year, as opposed to country estates,

[103] Oksana Usol'tseva, *Zolotaia kollektsiia luchshikh mest Sankt-Peterburga* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2012), 485.
[104] Lovell, Summerfolk, 8-9.
[105] Ibid., 2-9.

which were larger dwellings further away from the city and, as such, associated with longer trips.[106] Also, it is interesting to note that the early history of the dacha is more linked to the development of St. Petersburg, as opposed to Moscow, which had a stronger tradition of country estates and aristocratic palaces in the environs of the city.[107]

Although until the early 19th century dachas were mainly associated with the cultural elite, in the 1830s a new group of *dachniki* ("dacha people") emerged, not comprised solely of the gentry, but also of the merchant estate and *raznochintsy*, the professionals belonging to no particular estate. Thus, towards the mid-nineteenth century a distinct group of "middle-class" dacha-goers arose, which was often the target of satire directed at a supposed vulgarity.[108] In St. Petersburg, the city also began to be viewed negatively, as a dangerous, unpleasant place in the 1830s, as represented in works by Gogol. In the 1840s a large cholera outbreak overwhelmed St. Petersburg, which also encouraged people to leave the city for dachas in the summer months.[109] Dacha culture developed to a larger extent in the latter half of the nineteeth century, when the development of railroads brought about a veritable dacha boom.[110] The development of the Finland line was particularly important for the history of Kellomäki/Komarovo, which would later become a famous cultural setting in 20th century Russian literature. The completion of the Finland railway line in 1870 brought about a new stage in the development of dachas in settlements along the Karelian isthmus.[111]

From the 1870s onward, citizens of St. Petersburg began to use the north coast of the Gulf of Finland as places for dachas. At this time this area was part of the Grand Duchy of

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[106] Ibid., 12.
[107] Ibid., 23.
[108] Ibid., 4.
[109] Ibid., 38-39.
[110] Ibid., 99.
[111] Lovell, 68-69.

Finland in the Russian Empire. The initial dachas in this area were modest, yet comfortable. Residential development greatly expanded after the construction of the railroad line Riihimäki–St. Petersburg, which was built in 1870.[112] In the early 20th century, the Vyborg Gubernia in Finland became a veritable center for the Russian cultural elite, as what one scholar calls "the Finnish Riviera."[113] Here, along the Karelian isthmus on the coast of the Gulf of Finland, artists and writers flocked to newly built dacha communities, and created new works while in contact with Nordic culture.[114] For example, the writer Leonid Andreev had a home built near the Raivola station, that became an important place in pre-revolutionary Russian cultural history. The construction and design of the house was overseen by Andreev, and from the outside it looked like an "enormous Viking ship." It became a famous literary salon both in St. Petersburg and Finland, and writers as diverse as Blok, Bunin, Merezhkovskii, Gorky, and many others came to Andreev's house to discuss literary questions.[115] According to N. V. Grigor'eva, as cited in Velikhovskii and Kandaurova, the outdoor environment and nature of this area inspired Andreev and other writers.[116] Velikhovsky and Kandaurova also cite Andreev's diaries regarding the draw to the area:

> The nature of Finland has a magical quality— at first, it doesn't really affect you, but the longer that you live among the homely Finnish swamps, the deeper a love for this desolate land sinks into your soul. None of the beauty of the Caucasus, Crimea, or the Volga can compare to the humble, deeply human Finnish beauty.[117]

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[112] Elena Travina, *Komarovo i Repino: Kellomiaki i Kuokkala. Dachnaia zhizn' sto let nazad* (St. Petersburg: Tsentr sokhraneniia kul'turnogo naslediia, 2014), 3.
[113] L. N. Velikhovskii and T. N. Kandaurova, "Kul'turnoe prostranstvo i kul'turnye gnezda Vyborgskoi Finliandii," *Dokument. Arkhiv. Istoriia. Sovremennost' - Vypusk 10* (Ekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo universiteta, 2009), 110. http://elar.urfu.ru/handle/10995/4988
[114] Ibid., 133.
[115] Ibid., 114-115.
[116] N. V. Grigor'eva, *Puteshestvie v russkuiu Finliandiiu* (Moscow: Norma, 2002), 40-43.
[117] "Природа Финляндии обладает магическим свойством, вначале она не действует на вас, но чем дольше вы живете среди невзрачных финских болот, тем все глубже западает в вашу душу любовь к этому заброшенному краю. Никакие красоты Кавказа, Крыма и Волги не могут сравниться со скромной, глубоко человечной финской природой." L. N. Andreev, *S.O.S.: Dnevnik (1914—1919). Pis'ma (1917—1919). Stat'i i interv'iu (1919). Vospominaniia sovremennikov (1918—1919),* ed. R.

It should be noted that although his residence was built in the period of dacha culture and construction of dacha settlements, Andreev considered it to be a "house," rather than a "dacha", distancing himself from dacha culture.[118] Andreev's insistence is another example of varying definitions and perceptions of what constituted dachas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Many dacha settlements along the Karelian isthmus were historically significant for the Russian cultural elite at the start of the 20th century, and the two neighboring settlements of Kellomäki and Kuokkala were particularly noteworthy. The two settlements of Komaravo (Kellomäki) and Repino (Kuokkala) are historically and culturally linked to one another and geographically adjacent — this connection is reflected in the title of Elena Travina's book, *Komarovo and Repino: Kellomiaki and Kuokkala. Dacha Life One-Hundred Years Ago* (*Komarovo i Repino: Kellomiaki i Kuokkala. Dachnaia zhizn' sto let nazad*). The pre-revolutionary towns, bearing the Finnish names Kellomäki and Kuokkala saw significant settlement after the construction of the railway stations running through them—this occurred in 1897 in Kuokkala and 1901 in Kellomäki.[119] Their geographical location can be observed on the 1917 railroad map in Figure 4.

Devisa and B. Khellmana. (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Atheneum, Feniks, 1994), as quoted in L. N. Velikhovskii and T. N. Kandaurova, "Kul'turnoe prostranstvo i kul'turnye gnezda Vyborgskoi Finliandii," *Dokument. Arkhiv. Istoriia. Sovremennost' - Vypusk 10* (Ekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo universiteta, 2009), 115. http://elar.urfu.ru/handle/10995/4988

[118] Lovell, Summerfolk, 95.

[119] Elena Travina, *Komarovo i Repino: Kellomiaki i Kuokkala. Dachnaia zhizn' sto let nazad* (Sankt-Peterburg: Tsentr sokhraneniia kul'turnogo naslediia, 2014), 4.

Figure 4. Map of the Finnish/Russian Border in 1917, showing the Petrograd—Vyborg railroad line. Near the Finnish/Soviet border, the stations of Kuokkala (later Repino) and Kellomäki (Komarovo) can be observed. The orange area represents Finnish territory. The area up to and including Vyborg was annexed by the USSR at the conclusion of the Winter War. (Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:Kartta Suomen rautateistä vuoden 1917 lopulla.jpg," *Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository,* https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Kartta_Suomen_rautateist%C3%A4_vuoden_1917_lopulla.jpg&oldid=475938233)

At the beginning of the 20th century, Kuokkala was a veritable stronghold of artistic culture, and was particularly historically significant for Russian visual art in the 1910s, as the famous painter Il'ia Repin spent a large amount of time here. Repin's dacha estate in Kuokkala was named "Penaty" after the Latin words "Dii Penates" which was the phrase given to Ancient Roman deities who were guardians of the home and hearth.[120] Children's author Kornei Chukovskii also

[120] Andrei Gusarov, *Ot finliandskogo vokzala do Vyborga* (Sankt Peterburg: Izdatel'stvo Tsentrpoligraf, 2016), 242.

reflected with great fondness on his dacha here, and later wrote an almanac containing reminiscences, entitled *Chuokkala*.[121] The famous academic Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev remarked that Kuokkala was "a refuge for artistic and intellectual St. Petersburg."[122] The interest that many residents of Kuokkala had in the arts and culture was reflected in the names given to various places and structures in Kuokkala — there was a gazebo with a stage known as "the Cathedral of Osiris and Isis" (*Khram Ozirisa i Izidy*), where people danced, sang, and drank tea from a samovar; an artesian well known as "Poseidon" (*Pozeidon*); Repin built a watchtower for observing the environs, which was known as "Scheherazade's Tower (*Bashnia Shekherezady*), and it had two tiers and a spyglass.[123] Penaty was the cultural center of Kuokkala. Among the writers who visited Repin at Penaty were Gorky (who lived at the dacha called "Lintula"), Korolenko, Andreev, Kuprin, Maiakovsky (who wrote *Oblako v shtanakh* while staying in Kuokkala), and Esenin.[124] The fact that Kuokkala was close to St. Petersburg, but was geographically located in the autonomous Duchy of Finland was one of the reasons that it became an early twentieth century haven for left-wing members of the intelligentsia and various organizations, including the Bolsheviks, who had a permanent dacha there, known as "Vaza."[125]

Kellomäki (renamed Komarovo after World War II and the annexation of previously Finnish territory by the Soviet Union) was adjacent to Kuokkala, and had a similar culture linked to the intelligentsia in the early years of the 20th century. The merchant Nikolai Chizhov laid out a magnificent park with waterfalls in Kellomäki, and sold his estate in 1918 to Emile Renault, a

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[121] Elena Travina, *Komarovo i Repino: Kellomiaki i Kuokkala. Dachnaia zhizn' sto let nazad* (St. Petersburg: «Tsentr sokhraneniia kul'turnogo naslediia», 2014), 61-62.
[122] "Куоккала – пристанище художественного и интеллектуального Петербурга." Andrei Gusarov, *Ot finliandskogo vokzala do Vyborga* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Tsentrpoligraf, 2016), 241.
[123] Ibid., 244.
[124] Ibid., 225.
[125] Ibid., 240.

Belgian who built a resort for vacationers on the spot. The resort was known as "Villa Renault" ("Villa Reno") or "Vanda Feodorovna's Resort" (Renault put Vanda Feodorovna Oreshnikova in charge of the resort) up until World War II.[126] Vanda Oreshnikova was a Finnish relative of the Renaults. Notably, the family of eminent scientist Ivan Pavlov lived at Villa Renault at times in the 1920s.[127] The property belonged to the Renault family until the war between the Soviet Union and Finland in 1940.[128] After World War II a Litfond writers' community was established in Kellomäki, newly renamed Komarovo in 1948 after the former president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, V. L. Komarov.[129]

The writers' dacha community in Komarovo became famous in the 1950s and 1960s as the location of Anna Akhmatova's dacha. She spent substantial time at her dacha there and was later buried in Komarovo. Chapter 3 examines the role Komarovo played in linking Akhmatova with the younger generation of poets and writers in the Soviet Union during the late 1950s and 1960s. As with Maleevka, the pre-revolutionary cultural significance of Kellomäki persisted into the Soviet period, even after the implementation of major historical and cultural changes during the twentieth century. Thus, the status of the settlements on the railroad line along the Gulf of Finland as a stronghold for Russian literary and artistic culture began in the early twentieth century, and this role persisted through the post-war Soviet period, even with the area not being Soviet territory (belonging to Finland) from 1917 until the conclusion of the Winter War with the Moscow Peace Treaty of 1940, when the Karelian Isthmus (including the city of Vyborg) was ceded to the USSR. In the 1940s the Finnish names of many towns were replaced (this also

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[126] Natal'ia Kurchatova, "Komarovo: Ot kramol'nogo berega k zapovedniku intelligentsii," *Vremia Kul'tury,* 2013, no. 2: 66.
[127] Daniel P. Todes, *Ivan Pavlov: A Russian Life in Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 445-6.
[128] Elena Smirnova, "Villa Reno," https://elena-smirnova.ru/villa-reno/.
[129] Elena Travina, "Kolokol'naia gora: Po kom zvonit kolokol?" *Vremia Kul'tury*, 2013, no. 2: 61.

happened in Crimea – see the discussion on Koktebel/Planerskoe), and Kuokkala became Repino, while Kellomäki became Komarovo. It is clear that the Soviet cultural organizations wanted these places to retain a link to Russian literary and cultural heritage, even after they had spent many years as Finnish territory, as Repino was obviously named after Il'ia Repin and both of these settlements became the sites for Soviet "Houses of Creativity," as a Writers' House of Creativity (*Dom tvorchestva pisatelei*) was established in Komarovo, and a Composers' House of Creativity (*Dom tvorchestva kompositorov*) was established in Repino.

Another area outside of St. Petersburg that was associated with dacha culture and later became the site of a Litfond Writers' House was Tsarskoe Selo. Most famous for being the home to the tsars' summer palace and lyceum where Aleksandr Pushkin studied, Tsarskoe Selo was also an area famous for its dachas, which later grew into a veritable suburb of St. Petersburg. For Tsarskoe Selo, this transformation from dacha area into a suburb was linked to increased housing prices in St. Petersburg in the early 1900s.[130] The renowned Stalin-era novelist, Aleksei Tolstoi, settled in Tsarskoe Selo in a home which was originally a summer home to the Vuich family – Serbian immigrants who were known for their loyalty to the Romanovs.[131] In 1938, Tolstoy moved to Moscow and gave his home to the Leningrad Litfond. It was an important cultural center in the late 1930s, with many writers and intellectuals, such as Il'ia Ehrenburg, Mikhail Zoshchenko, Chukovskii, Tikhonov, Eikhenbaum, and Tynianov all staying there. However, World War II destroyed the Writers' House to a large extent, and in the 1950s the

[130] Lovell, *Summerfolk*, 78.
[131] "Tserkovnaia 6. Dom Vuicha (Tolstogo)" Entsiklopediia Tsarskogo Sela.https://tsarselo.ru/yenciklopedija-carskogo-sela/adresa/cerkovnaja-6-dom-vuicha-tolstogo.html; Galina Semenova, *Tsarskoe Selo: znakomoe i neznakomoe* (Moskva: Tsentr-ploigraf, 2010), 395-396.

building was rebuilt and repurposed as a preschool.[132] This, however, was one specific building, rather than really a dacha space, though the town itself was associated with suburban recreation.

It should be noted that not all of the Writers' Houses' locations had a history as prior country estates or dacha settlements. For example, the Writers' House at Golitsyno is described as a small, modest building, where writers came to quietly work.[133] The furniture and amenities are old and worn, and the Writers' House as a whole is described as being similar to a student dormitory of the 1920s.[134]

It is worth mentioning that historically culturally important spaces on the periphery of major cities were also used for other Soviet creative organizations. For example, a historically important Artists' House of Creativity (*Dom tvorchestva khudozhnikov*) was established at the former estate of Prince Nikolai Shakhovskoi at Staraia Ladoga. This location was specifically chosen for its links to pre-revolutionary art – the painters Nikolai Roerich, Ivan Aivazovsky, Aleksei Venetsianov, and Boris Kustodiev had all spent time on creative work in Staraia Ladoga.[135] Many of the areas chosen for Houses of Creativity clearly had ties to pre-revolutionary artistic and literary culture.

The history of Peredelkino (Fig. 3) is unique for that of a dacha area, due to its establishment in the 1930s under the initiative of Maksim Gorky and Stalin. Belobrovtseva's and Kul'ius' notes to Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* note that Peredelkino was officially established with a decree enacted by the Politburo of the Central Committee under the order of

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[132] Ibid.
[133] B. Subbotin, "O knige Seramimy Ivanovny Fonskoi," *Dom v Golitsyne*, ed. S. I. Fonskaia (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1967), 5
[134] S. I. Fonskaia, *Dom v Golitsyne*, (Moskva: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1967), 7-8.
[135] D. P. Buchkin, "O dome tvorchestva «Staraia Ladoga»" *Graviury i rasskazy* (St. Petersburg: Bibilioteka Nevskogo al'manakha, 2004), 10.

Stalin on October 23rd 1934.[136] The first dachas in 1935 were given to V. Ivanov, K. Trenev, A. Malyshkin, P. Pavlenko, V. Lindin, I. Ehrenburg (occupied by V. Kataev when Ehrenburg was absent), B. Pil'niak, E. Permitin, and A. Serafimovich. During the 1930s Peredelkino was sometimes known humorously as the "suburban-Moscow Switzerland" (*podmoskovnaia Shveitsariia*). As Bulgakov intimates in early drafts of *Master and Margarita*, Peredelkino was rife with various intrigues and rumors. Bulgakov calls it "Peredrakino" (from the word *draka*, "fight") and "Dudkino" (from the idiomatic expression, *dudki*, which expresses discontent). In the final draft he settled on the name "Perelygino", which is derived from the word *lgun*, or "liar," which indicates Bulgakov's feelings on the atmosphere of this dacha community in the 1930.[137]

While Peredelkino had functioned as a settlement since the 17th century (known as Peredel'tsy), and prior to the revolution a center for tuberculosis patients had existed in the village, it was not until 1934, at the initiative of Maksim Gorky that Peredelkino was made into a dacha-style settlement for writers.[138] Allegedly, in one of several unsubstantiated legends about the establishment of Peredelkino, a conversation took place between Stalin and Gorky, during which Stalin asked Gorky how writers in other countries worked. Gorky replied that they had their own sort of "writers' dachas" outside of the bustle of the city.[139] Allegedly, Stalin asked if Soviet writers had these sorts of dachas, and upon hearing Gorky's response that they did not, Stalin expressed discontent at this lack and asked Gorky to give him a list of 40-50 of the best

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[136] Irina Belobrovtseva and Svetlana Kul'ius, *Roman M. Bulgakova «Master i Margarita» Kommentarii* (Moscow: Knizhnyi Klub 36.6, 2007), 200-201.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Aleksandr Bobrov*, Serebrianyi vek Podmoskov'ia* (Moskva: Algoritm, 2008), 124.; Vladimir Karpov. *Zhili-byli pisateli v Peredelkino*. (Moscow: Veche, 2002), 4.
[139] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'ieva, *Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke* (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 13.

Soviet writers. Gorky gave a list to Stalin, and Stalin allotted 48 dachas for writers at the expense of the state.

In reality, Gorky likely had to expend a bit more effort convincing Stalin to allocate state monies to build dachas at Peredelkino. At first, Stalin was concerned that giving writers special dachas would separate them too much from the rest of the population and would cause them to develop exaggerated opinions about their self-importance. However, after some persuasion, Stalin eventually yielded, likely out of interest for having a large number of prominent writers in one specific location so that he could keep his eye on them.[140]

In *Engineers of the Soul*, Dutch writer and journalist Frank Westerman's literary account of the history of Soviet writing culture, the unique atmosphere concerning the establishment of Peredelkino is conveyed:

> Amid 'wild applause' (the minutes say), Gorky announces that the Politburo has allocated one million roubles to a newly created literature fund, LitFond. These funds are earmarked for the construction of a 'writers' laboratory': a village of dachas in the hilly forests west of the capital, not far from the meandering Moskva. Along a network of sandy paths, twenty-four wooden two-storey houses are to be built. This settlement, Peredelkino, named after a nearby 15th-century monastery, is billed as the world's first state-supported writers' colony.
> 'Stalin's cherry orchard,' the writers say, with a nod to Chekhov.[141]

Peredelkino was established with the greatest amount of Soviet oversight and planning, in comparison to other Writers' Houses that were linked with dacha and country estate history. In fact, part of the rationale for the establishment of the writers' dacha settlement in Peredelkino was the perceived inadequacies of Maleevka, which were addressed in an article in *Literaturnaia*

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[140] Ibid., 35-36.
[141] Frank Westerman, *Engineers of the Soul: In the Footsteps of Stalin's Writers* (London: Harvill Secker, 2010), 169-170.

gazeta in 1932.[142] After the publication of these articles and the holding of the First Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, construction began on the first dachas in Peredelkino, a project for which the Sovnarkom apportioned 1.5 million rubles.[143] It is ironic then, that Peredelkino, with most of its early history as a writers' house and village linked to the era of Stalin, in literary history, is first and forement, usually most remembered in terms of its role in the life of Boris Pasternak, a modernist writer, whose novel *Doctor Zhivago* was decried as anti-Soviet when it was published in the 1950s. The function of Peredelkino as the home of Pasternak in the 1950s and 1960s, and later as important site of memory in unofficial Soviet culture and post-Soviet culture, is one of the centerpieces of Chapter 3.

It should also be noted that while the dacha community at Peredelkino was established in the 1930s, the territory itself was the site of two *usad'by* in the pre-revolutionary era—Izmalkovo and Lukino.[144] The Izmalkovo estate was the home of the Samarin family starting in 1829. The famous Slavophile thinker, Yuri Samarin, lived at Izmalkovo for many years.[145] (See chapter 3 for a discussion of reflections on Izmalkovo in the poetry of Boris Pasternak.)

Both dacha culture and this history of Russian country estates influenced major writers' communities in Soviet literary history. Dachas communities for literary professionals were looked upon by the authorities as a way to conveniently keep writers in one place, as well as provide ideologically conforming writers with special benefits. While the pre-Soviet histories of

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[142] "V Maleevke stalo luchshe, no eshche ne stalo khorosho," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 11 ,1923, 1.; E. Pel'son, "V Maleevke ne stalo luchshe," *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, July 29, 1932, 4, quoted in Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 154.
[143] Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 154.
[144] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'ieva, *Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke* (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 480.
[145] Ibid., 480.

Peredelkino and Komarovo differ substantially, these two areas became the two most important dacha communities where Soviet writers lived year-round.

Spas and dachas: Tourism, Distant and Domestic

In the history of Russian tourism, there have been certain destinations, that, while geographically within the bounds of the Russian Empire, were nonetheless far away, on its seacoasts, and were viewed as desirable travel destinations in European Russian culture. These places, such as the Caucasus Black Sea coast and the Baltic coast, tended to be hundreds of kilometers away from the largest cities in the Russian Empire and were coastal landscapes that were unusual in the everyday life of most Russians. These places were culturally distant from European Russia, due to their relatively recent annexation into the Russian Empire and their non-Russian cultures and ethnic groups. Much of the Russian Empire's conquest of the Caucasus took place over the course of the 18th century – for example, Peter the Great captured Derbent in Dagestan in 1722, in 1769 Azov and Taganrog were annexed into the Russian Empire, and Georgia was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1801.[146] The development of the Caucasus Mineral Waters resort area began in 1803.[147] The Russian Empire, under the rule of Catherine II, had annexed Crimea in 1783.[148] As these regions developed economically over the course of the 19th century, tourism grew as well. Tourism in Crimea, particularly in Yalta, became popular in the second half of the 19th century, along with the Black Sea coast and the Northern Caucasus spa regions.[149]

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[146] Austin Jersild, Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917 (Montreal: MQUP, 2002), 13.
[147] Lovell, Summerfolk, 24.
[148] John T. Alexander, *Catherine the Great: Life and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 249.
[149] Lovell, *Summerfolk*, 16.

In the 1920s and 1930s developments in Soviet tourism focused on three major areas: Crimea, the Caucasus Mineral Waters area (which had consisted of four major towns in the nineteenth century – Piatigorsk, Essentuki, Zheleznovodsk, and Kislovodsk), and the Caucasus Black Sea coast.[150] While the Caucasus Mineral Waters area was not one of the places where Litfond Writers' Houses were established, during the post-war era, Writers' Houses were founded on the Caucasus Black Sea coast, at Gagra and Pitsunda (see Fig. 2). This area, located in the modern-day contested region of Abkhazia, was an important destination for Soviet political leaders and members of the cultural elite. Writers' Houses were also established in Crimea, in Yalta and Koktebel. Koktebel was a particularly important destination for Soviet writers, whose origins deserve an independent discussion, which is presented in the section below. The Baltic coast, particularly in the post-war era, developed as another important area for Soviet tourism – new resorts were constructed in Latvia and Lithuania that attracted many tourists (but the southern coastal areas remained just as popular as ever).[151]

The minutes from the Second Soviet Writers Congress in 1954 note the significance of the trio of Gagra (on the Caucasus Black Sea coast in the Abkhazia region), Dubulti (in Latvia on the Baltic coast), and Koktebel (in Crimea) for writers during the summer months, noting that 700 vouchers were given to writers and their families to these places.[152] These three writers' retreats in Gagra, Dubulti, and Koktebel were quite distant from one another, but in areas strongly linked to Soviet tourism. Thus, although the coast of Abkhazia, Crimea, and the Baltic coast are historically very different, during the Soviet period they served similar functions in

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[150] Diane Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 24.
[151] Ibid., 26, 187.
[152] "Desiatyi den' s"ezda 24 dekabria, utrennee zasedanie," *Vtoroi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei. 15-26 dekiabria 1954 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*, ed. M. Bazhan, V. Latsis, V. Smirnov, A. Surkov (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1956), 517.

tourism and in what could be called Soviet "writer tourism" to Litfond Writers' Houses. The Garrards' study of the Soviet Writers' Union noted that trips to writers' retreats combined professional work with vacation and leisure.[153] It is beneficial to consider the writers' retreats in vacation destinations individually by region, which I will do below, devoting a special section to Koktebel because of its unique role in Russian-Soviet literary history.

The above-mentioned paragraph from the Writers' Union conference documents is also interesting in that it notes that not all of the travel vouchers to writers' retreats were given to writers. This phenomenon was particularly true in the off-season. Travel vouchers to Koktebel were given to miners from Donetsk in the autumn.[154] In fact, the Literary Fund had an agreement with the Central Committee's Professional Union of Miners (TsK Profsoiuz shakhterov) and other professional organizations about giving travel vouchers to them during the off-season period. Apparently, this arrangement may have applied to sports organizations as well — when the Strugatsky brothers came to Gagra for the first time in March 1965, they shared the house with the entire soccer team Zenit St. Petersburg.[155]

The Litfond Writers' House at Pitsunda in the Abkhazia region opened in the 1970s and soon became a popular destination. The minutes from the Fifth Congress of Soviet Writers in 1971 note the current construction of a Writers' House in Pitsunda, which was designed to provide writers with the highest degree of convenience and comfort.[156] The Writers' Houses in

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[153] John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 120.
[154] Liudmila Ulitskaia, *Zelenyi shater* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2010), 457. and Natal'ia Lesina, Planerskoe, Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel' (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1976), 44.
[155] Boris Vishnevskii, *Arkadii i Boris Strugtskii: Dvoinaia zvezda* (Moscow: AST, 2001), 101.
[156] "29 iiunia Vechernee zasedanie. G. Guliia," *Piatyi s"ezd pisatelei SSSR: Stenograficheskii otchet*, ed. G. M. Makarov et. al. (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel': 1972), 29; and "'Literaturnyi fond SSSR' Otchet ob organizatsionno-tvorcheskoi rabote pravleniia," *Piatyi s"ezd pisatelei SSSR: Stenograficheskii otchet*, ed. G. M. Makarov et al. (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel': 1972), 200.

coastal locations associated with tourism were particularly popular in the summer months, with the vast majority of writers wanting to visit them when the weather was good. The problem of the seasonal nature of demand for travel vouchers to Writers' Houses discussion during the Second Writers' Union Congress in the 1954 was also discussed during the Fifth Writers' Union Congress in 1971.[157] This "seasonal fever" of writers taking only summer vouchers to visit the Writers' Houses in the Baltic and on the Black Sea highlights the relationship between writers' visits to these places and Soviet tourism. With writers visiting many of the Litfond writers' retreats during the height of the tourist season, their link to leisure travel is apparent, particularly given their location, and their history cannot be separated from the history of Russian and Soviet tourism. Belonging to the Writers' Union, and by extension, the Litfond, provided writers with the opportunity to stay at writers' retreats located in destinations in the Soviet Union most associated with Soviet tourism, as well as the history of late imperial Russian tourism: the Black Sea coast and the Baltic coast.

The Caucasus Black Sea Coast: Gagra and Pitsunda

Many Soviet and foreign writers visited and worked at the writers' retreat in Gagra, including Aleksandr Fadeev, Konstantin Fedin, Oles' Gonchar, Ol'ga Berggol'ts, Evgenii Evtushenko, and interestingly, as a Soviet-era tour book to Abkhazia notes, "the great friend of the USSR, James Aldridge" ("bol'shoi drug SSSR Dzheims Oldridzh"), who was an Australian-British writer primarily of adventure and war novels.[158] Prior to the establishment of the writers' retreats, Gagra had a significant role in literary history, and in the history of Russian tourism after its annexation and settlement. Abkhazia was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1810, but resorts

[157] Ibid., 29.
[158] B. P. Pachulia, *Abkhaziia. Istoriko-kul'turnyi ocherk* (Sukhumi: Izdatel'stvo "Alashara", 1976), 93-94.

were not established there for a significant amount of time. In 1866 new legislation affected the Gagra region — the law "On the Settlement of the Chernomorskii Okrug and the Management of it" ("O zaselenii Chernomorskogo okruga i upravleniia onym"), which was to make the land between the Bzyb' and Tuapas Rivers ready for settlement. Citizens were given land and money to settle in this area, and much of the local Muslim Abkhazian population had been deported to Turkey in 1864.[159]

The history of Russian tourism in Gagra really starts in the 1890s, when a relative of the tsar, Prince Ol'denburgskii, wanted to turn Gagra into a resort destination. Allegedly, although he wanted to do so to keep Russian money inside of the empire, discouraging the upper classes to spend their money at resorts in Germany and elsewhere, in actuality, this enterprise was more focused on his personal goals. Over 7.5 million rubles of public money were spent on the development of the resort, although much of the money went to building a palace for the prince himself.[160] Abkhazian writer Fazil' Iskander's famous novel *Sandro from Chegem* remarks upon the history of Ol'denburgskii's activities in Gagra:

> For the creation of the Caucasian Riviera, Prince Ol'denburgskii proposed a very effective argument, the idea of which was that Russian fat cats go to Gagra, rather than spend their money on the Mediterranean coast. But even this important enough suggestion was only a sophisticated tactical move. The real dream of the prince, carefully hidden from all, was that he would, here on the Black Sea coast, inside the Russian Empire, build a small, but cozy island of the ideal monarchy, a kingdom of order, fairness, and a complete merging of the monarch with the people, and even peoples.[161]

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[159] Ibid., 83.
[160] Ibid., 84-5.
[161] "Для создания кавказской ривьеры принц Ольденбургский выдвинул весьма действенный аргумент, заключавшийся в том, что русские толстосумы будут ездить в Гагры, вместо того чтобы прокучивать свои деньги на Средиземноморском побережье. Но даже сам этот достаточно важный расчет был только тонким тактическим ходом. Истинная пламенная мечта принца, пока тщательно скрываемая от всех, заключалась в том, что он здесь, на Черноморском побережье, внутри Российской империи, создаст маленький, но уютный остров идеальной монархии, царство порядка, справедливости и полного слияния монарха с народом и даже народами." Fazil' Iskander, *Sandro iz Chegema*, quoted in "Dvorets printsa Ol'denburgskogo: mechta ob ideal'nom mire," *Sputnik*

While the history of Russian tourism to Gagra does date back to the late 19th century, before World War I the number of tourists was less than 5,500 visitors per year. Nonetheless, the town of Gagra played a role in pre-revolutionary Russian literature. Chekhov visited the area several times, and in 1900 he visited Gagra with A. M. Gorky and the artist A. V. Vasnetsov. Chekhov's later novella, *The Duel* (*Duel'*), was based on events that took place in the environs of Gagra.[162] The writers' retreat in Pitsunda, as noted above, was not established until the 1970s. The twentieth history of Russian tourism to the Abkhazia coast and its status as a top vacation destination in the post-war Soviet period was likely linked to the choice for another writers' retreat to be established in Pitsunda.

Dubulti and the Baltic Coast

The Soviet Union annexed the Baltic states in 1940, and after World War II the Baltic coast also developed as a major destination for Soviet tourism, as it had been in the pre-revolutionary era. The writers' retreat at Dubulti in Latvia was established in 1946, and soon became a popular destination for Soviet writers. Vasily Aksyonov referred to it as a "northern Koktebel."[163]

Russian tourism on the Baltic coast has a long history. In the case of Dubulti (in the coastal region of Jūrmala, outside of Riga), it dates back to the early nineteenth century, at which time it was known as Dubbeln, due to German influence.[164] The construction of a railroad on the

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Abkhaziia, Feb. 16, 2017, https://sputnik-abkhazia.ru/Abkhazia/20170226/1020413158/dvorec-princa-oldenburgskogo-mechta-ob-idealnom-mire.html/

[162] B. P. Pachulia, *Abkhaziia. Istoriko-kul'turnyi ocherk* (Sukhumi: Izdatel'stvo „Alashara", 1976), 88.

[163] Aleksandr Ol'bik, Nostal'gicheskie khroniki (Moscow: Avvallon: 2006), 132.

[164] Il'ia Dimshtein, *Nasha Iurmala* (Riga: AB-Print, 2013), 9.; German was one of the official languages of the Estlandskaia, Liflandskaia, and Kurlandskaia gubernias of the northern Baltic region. The Estlandskaia, Liflandskaia guberniiyas were established after the region was annexed into the Russian

Jūrmala coast (Jūrmala is a small region made up of fourteen Latvian districts) in 1877 brought about a great influx of tourists to the area, and marks the beginning of health spa tourism to Jūrmala.[165] The entire beach area of Jūrmala was known as the "Strand," and many of the districts were famous for tourism. The Kemeri district was known as the "Baltic Piatigorsk" (*Ostzeiskii piatigorsk*), a comparison linking it to the Caucasus mineral springs area.[166] Dubbeln was known for its famous sanitorium, Marienbad. (See Fig. 5 for a postcard map of the Jūrmala "Strand" with the various municipalities shown in relationship to one another.)

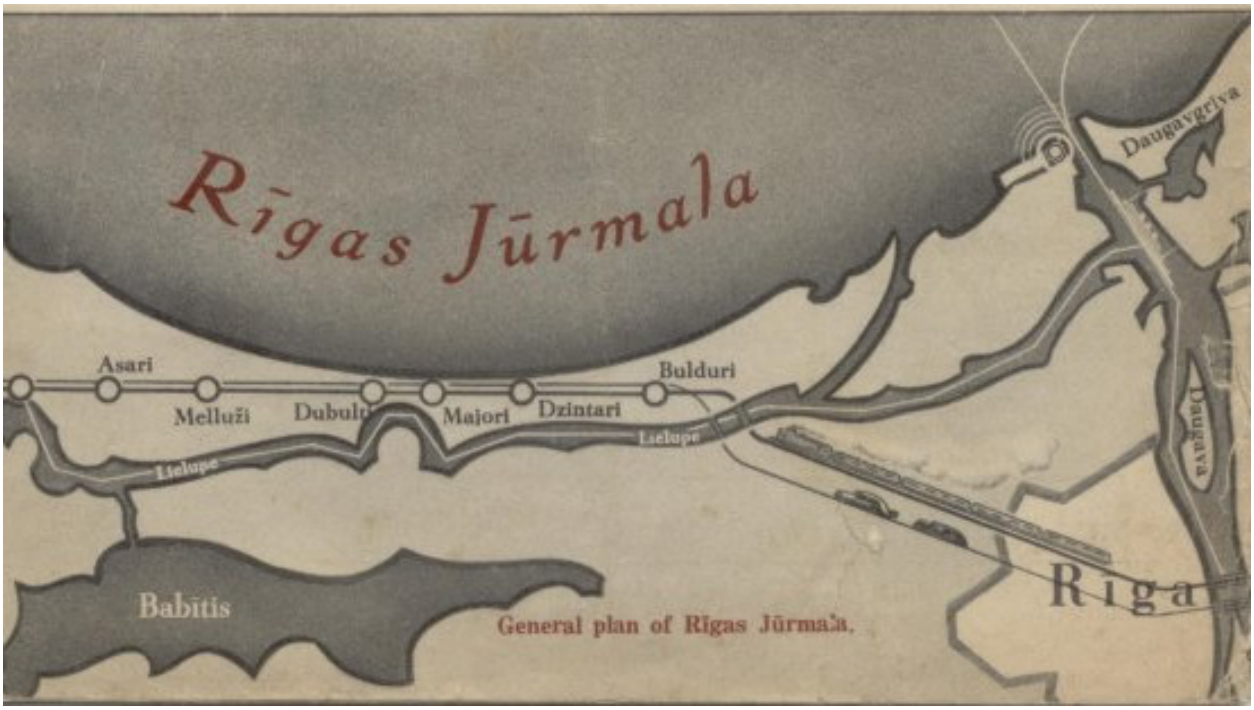

Figure 5. Map of Jūrmala from a vintage postcard. Note Jūrmala's location to west of Riga, and that Dubulti is one of the many small municipalities (often frequented by tourists) in Jūrmala. (Image of 1930s English-language tourist postcard, "History of Jūrmala," *On Latvia*, http://www.onlatvia.com/history-of-jurmala-560.)

Empire at the conclusion of the Great Northern War with Sweden with the Treaty of Nystad in 1721, and this region had a significant history of German influence as part of the Hanseatic League.

[165] Liuba Timonina, "A Ticket to the Past: Taking the First Train to Jūrmala," *Deep Baltic*, May 5, 2016, https://deepbaltic.com/2016/05/05/a-ticket-to-the-past-taking-the-first-train-to-jurmala/

[166] Il'ia Dimshtein, *Nasha Iurmala* (Riga: AB-Print, 2013), 50.

Jūrmala was significant for Russian literary culture before the revolution – Nikolai Leskov and, decades later, Leonid Andreev spent time on the "Strand," and for Ivan Goncharov, the author of *Oblomov*, the Jūrmala coast was a second home for the nine summers he spent there.[167]

During the Soviet era, Jūrmala and Dubulti were major tourist destinations as well as places for rest and relaxation for the Soviet elite. The sanitorium for the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR (*sanatorii Soveta Ministrov SSSR*) was located in Dubulti and known among the people as "Kosygin's dacha," referring to the post-Khrushchev premier of the Soviet Union, Aleksei Kosygin.[168] According to Dimshtein, Kosygin was one the few members of the party elite who preferred the Baltic beaches to the south of the USSR.[169] From the 1950s through the 1980s Dubulti was a favorite destination for Soviet writers, with Paustovsky, Kaverin, Kataev, Arbuzov, and Granin all staying at the writers' retreat at different times.[170]

It should be noted that the history of estates in Crimea is also relevant with regard to the development of Soviet cultural centers on the peninsula. The writers' retreat established in Yalta, Crimea on the former estate of the prominent pre-revolutionary milling/grain entrepreneur, Anton Maksimovich Erlanger, has, according to writer Raul' Mir-Khaidarov's memoir, elements linking its origin to Stalin. The writers' retreat in Yalta was founded in 1934, soon after the First Soviet Writers' Congress. Mir-Khaidarov states that Stalin personally played a role in selecting Erlanger's former estate as the site for the Yalta writers' retreat.[171]

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[167] Il'ia Dimshtein, *Nasha Iurmala* (Riga: AB-Print, 2013), 7.
[168] Ibid., 94.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Raul' Mir-Khaidarov, *Vot i vse… ia pishu vam s vokzala. Memuary. Tom Pervyi* (Kazan: Idel'-Press, 2018), 245.

The Caucasus Black Sea coast, Crimea, and the Baltic coast were all regions in the post-war Soviet Union that were highly desirable destinations for tourism, both for ordinary citizens and the Soviet elite. The history of tourism in these regions in pre-revolutionary Russia is significant, and the continuation of elements of pre-revolutionary tourism culture into the Soviet era are particularly evident when one considers specific destinations. The fact that Soviet "Houses of Creativity" were developed in these certain areas indicates that it was perceived that the Soviet cultural elite merited vacations precisely to the Black Sea and Baltic coasts. These were places where writers and artists who represented the height of Soviet creative culture should rest and work at special establishments.

Koktebel

Perhaps the single most famous literary destination for Soviet-era writers was Koktebel, which, historically had elements of a dacha, country estate, and tourist destination with its history as the site of Maksimilian Voloshin's renowned "Poet's House" (*Dom poeta*). Because Voloshin wanted his house to continue to serve as a cultural center, in the late 1920s he committed to giving his house to the Litfond. While his house became a part of Soviet literary culture, the unique mythology relating to the Koktebel area that he had developed in the 1910s and 1920s persisted and brought a palimpsestic cultural dynamism to perceptions of Koktebel in the Soviet and post-Soviet period. Voloshin created a particular mythology linked to Koktebel's ancient past that endured in perceptions of the unique destination. Because contemporary perceptions of Koktebel are tied to Voloshin's mythologizing of its history, particularly during antiquity, it is worthwhile to consider the history of Koktebel in detail.

Like all of Crimea, the history of southeastern Crimea, where Koktebel is located, is complex and multifaceted. Ancient Greek sources reference the Taurians who lived on the peninsula, prior to the establishment of Greek colonies. The name of this ethnic group is in fact the source of one of the poetic names given to Crimea in Russian, *Tavrida*. However, some writers, particularly Voloshin, saw the Koktebel area as not belonging to ancient *Tavrida*, but rather the dark northern land of "Cimmeria," mentioned by Homer in *The Odyssey*.

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus travels to throughout the world, and, arriving at its northernmost extreme, he reaches the "land and city of the Cimmerians, wrapped in mist and cloud. Never does the bright sun look down on them with his rays either when he mounts the starry heaven or when he turns again to earth from heaven, but baneful night is spread over wretched mortals."[172] Voloshin drew from ancient sources in developing his "Cimmerian myth," and his beliefs regarding Koktebel's connections to ancient Cimmeria significantly informed his work, and, in turn, his own myth of Koktebel, which persists in Russian culture, and semantic associations with Koktebel conjure up literary history and artistic depictions of unique landscapes.

Voloshin's development of Koktebel's aesthetic mythologization also drew from other periods of Crimean history, separate from the era of the Cimmerians. According to the fifth century B.C. historian Herodotus, the invading Scythians brought about the end of the Cimmerians on the north of the Black Sea.[173] Later, Greek settlements appeared in Crimea, with the most famous polis being Chersonesus. As millennia passed, Crimea spent centuries as part of the Bosporan Kingdom (itself for a period of time a Roman state under Nero), the Hunnic and

[172] Homer, *Odyssey, Volume I: Books 1-12,* trans. A. T. Murray, revised by George E. Dimock, Loeb Classical Library 104 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 401.
[173] D. A. Prokhorov and N. I. Khrapunov, *Kratkaia istoriia Kryma* (Simferopol: Dolya, 2013), 34-35.

Byzantine Empires, the Khazar Khanate, as well as Kievan Rus'. According to Lesina, prior to the 10th century, local tribes who were descended from the Taurians and Scythians lived in the Koktebel area, along with emigrants from the Bosphorus, such as Greeks, Sarmatians, and Alans. In the 10th century this settlement was destroyed by the Pechenegs, a semi-nomadic Turkic people.[174]

In the 14th century during the rule of the Republic of Genoa (one of the most developed maritime republics, others including Venice, Pisa, and Amalfi) on the Black Sea, Genoese traders expanded settlements the north of the Black Sea, along the coast of Crimea. In the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries Italian Genoese traders likely established the town Callitra in the environs of Koktebel.[175] Callitra is also known as "Kalliera" in Russian. The Genoese history of Koktebel is imagined in the 1926 sonnet "Kalliera," by Voloshin (who, in his wide range of scholarly interests, also conducted the first archaeological digs of Kalliera). Voloshin's poem sees Kalliera as a later stage in Koktebel's development from antiquity that is yet aesthetically connected to it:

> The jagged edge [in the mountain] that ascends above [the place where] a town [once stood]
> Is known by the people as the "depleted crown"
> As a sign that its time has passed,
>
> That the measure of your fortunes has been consumed to the dregs,
> Adolescent of the Hellenic land,
> In Venetian beads, Kalliera![176]

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[174] Natal'ia Lesina, *Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel'* (Simferopol': Tavriia, 1976), 44; Liudmila Ulitskaia*, Zelenyi shater* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2010), 6-10.

[175]S. M. Zelenko, "Podvodnye arkheologicheskie issledovaniia v raione karadaga," *Karadag: Istoriia, biologiia, arkheologiia* (Simferopol': Sonat, 2001), 296.; Natal'ia Lesina, *Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel'* (Simferopol': Tavriia, 1976), 44;
Ulitskaia, *Zelenyi shater* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2010), 6-10/

[176]Зубец, над городищем вознесённый,
Народ зовёт «Иссыпанной короной»,
Как знак того, что сроки истекли,

Voloshin's mentions of the local name, "depleted crown" (*issypannaia korona*) of a geographical feature above the town because he sees it as reflective of the fate of the Genoese town, Kaliera (Calitra), which is linked to both Greek antiquity and the history of the medieval Italian maritime activity in Crimea. It is noteworthy that Greek antiquity is indicated as primary here, as Voloshin sees the earth itself as "Hellenic," which is a recurrent motif in literary treatment of the Koktebel area in his work.

Genoa and its alliance with the Byzantine empire disappeared from Crimea in the fifteenth century when the Ottomans conquered Constantinople in 1453 and the allied Crimean Khanate conquered the Crimean Genoese colonies in 1475.[177] While most of Crimea became part of the Crimean Khanate, a vassal of the Ottoman Empire, the southeastern edge of Crimea remained under direct Ottoman control, until 1783 when all of Crimea was annexed to the Russian Empire under the leadership of Catherine II.

There is little historical record of the Koktebel area specifically in the era of the Ottoman occupation of Crimea. It is known, however, that the toponym *Koktebel* is Crimean Tatar in origin – there are two possible etymologies for it. One is that it is composed of three Crimean Tatar words, which mean "land of the blue hills" or "land of the grey hills."[178] This is the etymology found in the majority of guidebooks. Another possible etymology is that Koktebel

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Что судьб твоих до дна испита мера,
Отроковица эллинской земли
В венецианских бусах — Каллиера!
Maksimilian Voloshin, "Kalliera", *Sobranie sochinenii tom 1*, ed. V. P. Kupchenko and A. V. Lavrov (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 2003), 175.

[177] D. A. Prokhorov and N. I. Khrapunov, *Kratkaia istoriia Kryma* (Simferopol: Dolya, 2013), 234-235.

[178] Natal'ia Lesina, *Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel'* (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1976), 6; Constantine Pleshchakov, *The Crimean Nexus: Putin's War and the Clash of Civilizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 96.

means "grey horse with a star on its forehead" as *töbel* in Crimean Tatar refers to a star shape on the forehead of an animal.[179]

As mentioned, Koktebel's history is rather sparse, until the nineteenth century when the small village appears to have been settled mainly by ethnic Bulgarians. Crimean Tatars from the *Koktashskaia volost'* then moved into the area. A document called "The List of Inhabited Places in the Tavricheskaia Guberniia Reported in 1864" ("Spiska naselennykh mest Tavricheskoi gubernii po svedeniiam 1864 goda") notes Koktebel as having 27 residents, a mosque, border guards, and fish yards.[180] Russian settlement in the area became much more pronounced after a 1893 announcement appeared in the newspaper *Moskovskie vedomosti*, informing readers about the opportunity to buy a cheap personal plot of land at Koktebel.[181]

This announcement in the Moscow newspaper was placed by the descendants of Eduard Andreevich Iunge, an optometrist who had settled in Koktebel about a decade before. One of the first Russian settlers in the late nineteeth century of the Koktebel area, Iunge had traveled throughout Northern Africa studying diseases of the eye. He had studied a kind of cataract common among the Bedouins and developed a method for treating it. In 1878 he acquired 973 *desiatiny* (about 1,063 hectares) of land from a local landowner, Bakhtish Murza Shirinskii, and in this way, became the owner of almost all of the coastal area in Koktebel.[182] He retired in 1882, and came to Koktebel interested in building a kind of irrigation system in the area. However, his funds were insufficient to pay for his planned infrastructural development and his agricultural

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[179] Valerii Anatoliiovych Bushakov, *Leksychnyi sklad istorychnoi toponimii Krymu* (Kyiv: NAN Ukrainy, 2003), 221, http://irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/ulib/item/UKR0005177

[180] M. Raevskii, *Tavricheskaia guberniia. Spisok naselennykh mest po svedeniiam 1864 g.* (St. Peterburg: Tsentral'nyi Statisticheskii komitet MVD, 1865), 84. https://dlib.rsl.ru/viewer/01003831183#?page=84

[181] Natal'ia Lesina, *Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel'* (Simferopol': Tavriia, 1976), 44; Liudmila Ulitskaia, *Zelenyi shater* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2010), 7.

[182] Igor' Levichev and A. Timurgazin, *Koktebel. Staryi Krym: Stoletiiu Doma Poeta posviaschaetsia* (Sonat, 2003), 21.

interests. Thus, in 1893 Iunge and his family members decided to sell shares of land in Koktebel, advertising them in the Moscow newspaper, *Moskovskie vedomosti*.[183]

One of the first people to respond to the announcement in *Moskovskie vedomosti* was Maksimilian Voloshin's mother, Elena Ottobal'dovna Voloshina. She bought a plot of land by the sea, which would later become the famed destination of Russian modernists as Maksimilian's home and literary salon, both before the revolution and during the New Economic Policy era of the 1920s, as well as the site of the future Litfond destination. Gradually, after the Voloshins' settlement, in the 1900s more and more members of the intelligentsia from St. Petersburg and Moscow also moved to Koktebel, such as the children's author I. I. Manaseina, the poet P. S. Solov'eva, and the opera artist V. I. Kastorskii.

Travel to Koktebel expanded greatly in the first two decades of the 20th century. By the early 1910s, Koktebel was primarily a space inhabited by Russians. It was also during this time that Maksimilian Voloshin's home became a literary destination primarily for modernist writers and artists.[184] After traveling and spending much time in Paris during the 1900s, Voloshin decided to return home, and spent the majority of the 1910s in Koktebel, making trips to St. Petersburg and Moscow from time to time. Starting in 1903, he oversaw the construction of his new house, which he conceptualized as a center for the arts. Voloshin worked on the architectural plan of the house and supervised the construction, which began in 1905. The house's place in the geography of the landscape was paramount for Voloshin; he placed it in the

[183] Natal'ia Lesina, *Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel'*, 8; Igor' Levichev, *Koktebel: Staryi Krym* (Sonat, 2003), 21.
[184] As an interesting side note, an early visitor to Koktebel' was Vladimir Lenin's brother Dmiitrii Il'ich Ul'ianov, who lived in the neighboring town of Feodosia. Dmitrii Ul'ianov came several times to Koktebel' as a local administration (zemstvo) doctor.; Ibid., 11

middle of the curve of the bay, with the mountain Siuriuiu-Kai in the background.[185] In 1912 he added a work studio to the building, the addition of which caused the façade to look somewhat like an apse (a recess in the shape of a semicircle, often found on religious architecture).[186] After the construction of the house, Koktebel become a famed destination for the Russian modernist intelligentsia. It is notable that due to Voloshin, in a relatively short time, Koktebel transformed from "an unknown village in the boondocks" to a location that became "one of the most memorable symbolic spaces in Russian poetry."[187]

Indeed, the sheer number of important writers and artists who visited Koktebel is astounding. Marina Tsvetaeva, Mikhail Bulgakov (whose famous work "The Fatal Eggs" ("Rokovye iaitsa") was inspired by a giant snake from the Feodosia region that was discussed in company at Voloshin's house),[188] Vladimir Maiakovskii, Osip Mandel'shtam, Konstantin Chukovskii, Maksim Gorky, Aleksandr Grin, and Aleksei Tolstoi, among many other creative intellectuals visited Voloshin during the 1910s and 1920s.[189]

It was also during the 1910s and 1920s that Voloshin formulated his myth of Koktebel and Cimmeria, which is a constant artist theme throughout his poetry and watercolors. References to antiquity, sometimes Voloshin-inspired, can even be found in Russian literature about Koktebel in the 1960s. Such references are evident in Liudmila Ulitskaia's *The Green*

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[185] Mariia Voloshina, *O Makse, o Koktebele, i o sebe. Vospominaniia. Pis'ma* (Feodosia: Koktebel', 2003), 81.
[186] N. P. Komolova, *Koktebel' v russkoi literature XX veka* (Institut vseobshchei istorii RAN, 2006), 110.
[187] "В начале века Коктебель был никому не ведомой глухой деревушкой. Сегодня, благодаря жизни в этом уголке Максимилиана Волошина и его стихам, Коктебель превратился в один из самых паиятных символов в русской поэзии, и в этом качестве он известен всем," Aleksandr Liusyi, *Krimskii tekst v russkoi literature* (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2003),162.
[188] Iu. G. Vilenskii, Mikhail Bulgakov i Krym (Simferopol': Tavriia, 1995), 217
[189] Mariia Voloshina, *O Makse, o Koktebele, i o sebe. Vospominaniia. Pis'ma* (Feodosia: Koktebel', 2003), 14; Natal'ia Lesina, Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel' (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1976), 16.

Tent, where Mikha, one member of the group of friends that travels to Crimea, recites Voloshin's lines about Cimmeria, as well as in Vasily Aksyonov's essay "Karadag-68", where the tongue-in-cheek Free Republic of Karadag is decreed as a subject of ancient, not modern, Greece. Voloshin is also discussed in relation to the landscape of the Koktebel area in Aksyonov's *Island of Crimea*, which will receive treatment in Chapter Three.

Voloshin's place-inspired myth creation developed over the 1910s, as Koktebel and "Cimmeria" became, according to Liusyi, a place of personal redemption for Voloshin after his separation from Margarita Sabashnikova.[190] In Koktebel, Voloshin was deeply impressed by the landscape, and he delved into studying it, eventually creating his own mythology of Koktebel. Liusyi compares Voloshin to Christopher Columbus in his role in discovering the "history of the Crimean poetic topos," noting that Voloshin created the Cimmerian myth of Crimea (as opposed to the *Tavrida* myth).[191] Liusyi also cites Voloshin's essay "The Culture, Art, and Monuments of Crimea" ("Kul'tura, iskusstvo, pamiatniki Kryma") in recounting the poet's take on the history of Crimea in the Russian literary imagination: "The attitude of Russian artists towards Crimea has been the attitude of tourists, surveying places resounding with picturesqueness."[192] Liusyi notes that Voloshin goes against this current, and that for Voloshin this traditional image of Crimea is a "museum of bad taste, competing with the international European dens on the Riviera."[193] Voloshin's essay goes on to say that the exception to this touristic artistic image of Crimea is "comprised of only one region (oblast') of Crimea, outwardly less picturesque and ornate, and therefore less visited—Kimmeria [i.e., Cimmeria, which he identifies symbolically

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[190] Aleksandr Liusyi, *Krimskii tekst v russkoi literature* (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2003), 167.
[191] Ibid., 161.
[192] "Отношение русских художников к Крыму было отношением туристов, просматривающих прославленные своей живописностью места. Этот тон был задан Пушкиным." Voloshin cited in Ibid., 183.
[193] Ibid., 167-8.

with Koktebel]."[194] Although Koktebel would later become a place visited as much as other parts of Crimea (partially due to its artistic heritage initiated by Voloshin), when Voloshin created his artistic circle in the 1910s, Koktebel was a relatively rarely visited space in Crimea.

Voloshin's Koktebel was immersed in the spirit of literary Symbolism, with its leanings toward occult and mystic teachings. An undercurrent of Russian Symbolism involved the propensity to find and create symbolism and mythologies within particular environments, and in the case of Voloshin, Koktebel became a highly symbolic space for him and his contemporaries.[195] Zaiats notes the profound role of biblical imagery and antiquity on the creation of Voloshin's "Cimmerian myth," claiming that Odysseus and Jesus were important in Voloshin's world view and understanding of Cimmeria.[196] Voloshin delved into the archaeological history of Koktebel and created a myth revolving around Koktebel in the Russian literary world, the likes of which had never been seen before, with a synthesis of Biblical elements, antiquity, and Slavic mythology.[197]

While Voloshin actively created an artistic impression of Koktebel linked with Greek antiquity, and other historical motifs, the atmosphere in Koktebel, was, of course, influenced by cultural particularities of Russian Symbolist literary culture. Andrei Belyi, in a letter to Zinaida Gippius, disapprovingly noted the atmosphere of "Ivanizm" in Koktebel, referring to its similarities to Viacheslav Ivanov's "Tower" (*bashnia*) in St. Petersburg, and the accompanying lethargic, bohemian atmosphere.[198] Liusyi sees the St. Petersburg text (in reference to Toporov's

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[194] Maksimilian Voloshin, "Kul'tura, iskusstvi, pamiatniki Kryma," *Koktebel'skie berega*, ed. N. B. Stroganova (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1990), 212
[195] Sergei M. Zaiats, *Mifotvorchestvo i religiozno-filosofskie iskaniia Maksimiliana Voloshina na pereput'iakh Serebrianogo veka* (Moscow: Flinta, 2016), p. 37-49.
[196] Ibid., p. 87.
[197] Ibid,, p. 88.
[198] Aleksandr Liusyi, *Krimskii tekst v russkoi literature* (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2003), 162.

theory of "city texts"), along with the Moscow and Paris texts as informing Voloshin's "Cimmerian text."[199] Other scholars, noting the particularities of Voloshin's Koktebel, have interpreted the myth of "Cimmeria" as the antithesis of St. Peterburg and Moscow.[200] Liusyi also notes A. V. Lavrov's idea that Koktebel became a symbolic image of the universe for Voloshin, as well as liminal edge of the earth that provided the ability to escape civilization.[201]

The land formations and landscape in Koktebel and Voloshin's perceptions of it figure strongly his mythology. Osip Mandel'stam concludes his famous study on Dante Alighieri, *Conversation about Dante* (*Razgovor o Dante*), which was written while Mandel'shtam was in Koktebel in the 1930s shortly after Voloshin's death, with a remark linking Voloshin to Dante in terms of his relationship to the landscape: "M[aksimilian] A[leksandrovich] was the warden of a wonderous geological accident, called Koktebel'. He dedicated his entire life to this bay, which was entrusted to him by a magnetic force. He successfully completed the Dantean task of merging with the landscape."[202] It is worth noting the importance of Koktebel in Mandel'shtam's poetry, as well. Mandel'shtam's celebrated 1915 poem "Insomnia. Homer. Tight sails" ("Bessonitsa. Gomer. Tugye parusa…") was written in Voloshin's house. Apparently, Voloshin had found a plank that appeared to be a piece of a ship in the Koktebel bay. As Odysseus had allegedly sailed along the banks of Crimea (including the Koktebel shore in Voloshin's historical interpretation), Voloshin thought the plank to be significant, potentially a piece of Odysseus' ship (in metaphorical sense), and he attached it above a small sofa in a niche

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[199] Ibid., 162-3.
[200] Sergei M. Zaiats, *Mifotvorchestvo i religiozno-filosofskie iskaniia Maksimiliana Voloshina na pereput'iakh Serebrianogo veka* (Moscow: Flinta, 2016), 9.
[201] Ibid., p. 167.
[202] "М. А.— почетный смотритель дивной геологической случайности, именуемой Коктебелем,— всю свою жизнь посвятил намагничиванью вверенной ему бухты. Он вел ударную дантовскую работу по слиянию с ландшафтом." Osip Mandel'shtam, *Razgovor o Dante* (Moscow-Ausburg: im Werden Verlag, 2004), 34.

in his living room – this space became known as "the cabin" (i.e., of a ship; *kaiuta*). It was lying on this sofa, under the board from "Odysseus' ship," listening to the waves of the Black Sea, that Mandel'shtam composed his famous poem that references Homer's *Odyssey*.[203]

Ancient Greek literature and mythology as linked to the Koktebel landscape held a central place in Voloshin's myth creation. The Kara Dag Mountain (referred to in Russian simply as Karadag)[204] was important to Voloshin's work, which Voloshin (as cited in Zaiats) describes as "a mountainous massif of volcanic origins near Koktebel'" as well as a "marvelous cliff formation… [That] resembles the entrance to Hades."[205] Zaiats sees the description of the Kara Dag Mountain in Voloshin's poem "Koktebel'" as being linked to Voloshin's myth of Koktebel and Cimmeria, with the "ocean" (geographically, the Black Sea) playing an integral role as well.[206] These perceptions of the landscape, with references of the "dark land of Cimmeria" and the semantic linking of Koktebel with the Kara Dag Mountain, extend into literature written about Koktebel' in the 1960s by Ulitskaia and Aksyonov, which I discuss in later chapters. The symbolic significance of Koktebel and its environs in Voloshin's work and myth-creation cannot be underemphasized, and Zaiats notes that "Koktebel'[…] becomes, for him, the center of not only Cimmeria, but of the entire universe."[207] Voloshin's cosmological understanding of Koktebel' was that of a place beyond worldly existence.[208]

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[203] Valentin Korovin, *Istoriia russkoi literatury XX – nachala XXI veka. Chast' I. 1890–1925 gody* (Moscow: VLADOS, 2014), 1985.
[204] Karadag means "Black Mountain" in Crimean Tatar.
[205] This link to Greek mythology that appears in Tsvetaeva's description above-referenced description as well.; Voloshin as cited in Sergei M. Zaiats, *Mifotvorchestvo I religiozno-filosofskie iskaniia Maksimiliana Voloshina na pereput'iakh Serebrianogo veka* (Moscow: Flinta, 2016), 117
[206] Zaiats examines Voloshin's myth-creation of Koktebel' in relation to the Kara Dag mountain and the symbol of the ocean (118-119).
[207] "Коктебель [...] становится для него своеобразным центром не только Киммерии, а всего мироздания." Sergei M. Zaiats, *Mifotvorchestvo i religiozno-filosofskie iskaniia Maksimiliana Voloshina na pereput'iakh Serebrianogo veka* (Moscow: Flinta, 2016), 118.
[208] Ibid.

Some scholars have focused on Voloshin's home (the House of the Poet/*Dom Poeta*) itself as being important in Voloshin's worldview and myth creation concerning Koktebel. Zaiats claims that, for Voloshin, the image of the House of the Poet itself represented a "heavenly cathedral" ("nebesnyi khram") for Voloshin, and the house becomes a "house of the spirit" ("dom dukha") in Voloshin's universe.[209] Noting the great importance of Voloshin's home in Russian cultural history, Zaiats goes as far as to say that the house is not a "cultural phenomenon," but a "method of life-creation," which follows the legacy of Kirill and Methodius, in which a Russian thinker is not only a creator of theoretical systems, but one who creates a specific reality.[210] Koktebel and Voloshin's "House of the Poet" (later the main corpus of the Koktebel Litfond Writers' House) became well-known among the Russian cultural intelligentsia. In the Soviet period this place of deep personal and spiritual meaning for Voloshin and other writers and artists became incorporated into the Litfond in 1931, carrying, to a certain extent, the mythic quality associated with Koktebel, which continued on throughout the 20th century. This mythic quality also persists into the 21st century, as Marianna Landa's work on the revival of Voloshin's popularity in post-Soviet Russia indicates (see further discussion in Chapter 3 and Conclusion).

With Voloshin's salon at the House of the Poet, Koktebel was one of the last outposts of Russian Modernism. During the Russian Civil War, many people (including writers and intellectuals) who were against the Bolsheviks moved to Crimea and emigrated elsewhere from the peninsula. Crimea was one of the last holdouts of the White Army, and the Southern Front of the Russian Civil War ended with the defeat of General Wrangel's army in Crimea in 1920.

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[209] Ibid., 356.

[210] "Волошинский Дом – это не только культурный феномен, это способ жизнестроительста. Волошин своим образом продолжал великое кирилло-мефидиево наследие, в котором русский мыслитель не творец умозрительных систем, но человек, созидающий особое бытие." Ibid.

The Communist military success later led to a campaign of terror against those who had opposed the Bolsheviks in Crimea. The Red Terror in Crimea was launched by Trotsky with the leadership of a former leader of the Hungarian Communist uprising, Bela Kun, and Rozalia Zemliachka, a revolutionary leader who assisted Kun in administering the executions of thousands of people. This was a horrific time for residents of Crimea, and Voloshin wrote highly influential poetry with pacifist themes about this period. In Voloshin's 1926 poem "The House of the Poet" (*Dom poeta*), he refers to the role that his house served during these years:

> Again wine and blood poured forth
> In recent tragic years.
> The different peoples, crossing sword and flame
> Lifted up, from its depths, the ancient terror—
> Hatred, hunger and war.
> In these years my house – hazy and empty—
> Functioned as a refuge, like a cathedral.
> And only fugitives disappeared,
> As they hid themselves from the noose and firing square.
> And the Red leader, and the White officer—
> Fanatics of unreconcilable beliefs,
> Searched for, under the roof of the poet,
> Refuge, support, and advice.
> I did everything to hinder brothers
> From harming themselves and exterminating each other,
> And I even once read in my own name in
> A column of one of the bloody lists.[211]

[211] Опять вином и кровью напились
В недавние трагические годы.
Усобица и голод и война,
Крестя мечом и пламенем народы,
Весь древний Ужас подняли со дна.
В те дни мой дом — слепой и запустелый —
Хранил права убежища, как храм,
И растворялся только беглецам,
Скрывавшимся от петли и расстрела.
И красный вождь, и белый офицер —
Фанатики непримиримых вер —
Искали здесь под кровлею поэта
Убежища, защиты и совета.
Я ж делал всё, чтоб братьям помешать
Себя — губить, друг друга — истреблять,
И сам читал — в одном столбце с другими

The last two lines of "The House of the Poet" refer to a situation in which Voloshin befriended a Red Army commander, who showed Voloshin a list of those to be executed and told him that he could cross one name off the list. Astonished, Voloshin saw his own name there, and the Red Army commander proceeded to cross Voloshin's own name off for him.[212]

In "The House of the Poet," Voloshin's identification of his home with a cathedral confirms Zaiats' comments regarding the symbolic imagery of Voloshin's house. Voloshin compares the Koktebel landscape to a church, and the personal meaning that Voloshin found in the Koktebel landscape finds expression in the following lines as "The House of the Poet" continues:

> But in those days of snitching and trepidation
> My house left me a happy fate:
> The powers didn't take it away, enemies didn't burn it,
> A friend didn't betray [me], a thief didn't rob [me].
> The storm has calmed. The fire has burned out.
> I received this life and this house as a gift,
> Unconsciously-- it was entrusted to me by fate,
> As a sign that I was adopted by the earth.
> With its breast towards the sea, my studio,
> Faces the east, like a church,
> And again, the flow of people is coming
> Through the doors again, not dissipating.[213]

В кровавых списках собственное имя
Maksimilian Voloshin, "Dom poeta", *Sobranie sochinenii tom 2*, ed. V. P. Kupchenko and A. V. Lavrova (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 2004), 80-81.

[212] Some Russian sources state that this official was Bela Kun himself, although Marianna Landa's research demonstrates that this was a rumor that grew out of a misidentification of the officer in question. Marianna S. Landa, *Maximilian Voloshin's Legacy and the Post-Soviet Russian Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 121.

[213] "Но в эти дни доносов и тревог
Счастливый жребий дом мой не оставил:
Ни власть не отняла, ни враг не сжег,
Не предал друг, грабитель не ограбил.
Утихла буря. Догорел пожар.
Я принял жизнь и этот дом как дар
Нечаянный — мне вверенный судьбою,
Как знак, что я усыновлен землею.

These lines indicate the profound symbolic personal meaning that Voloshin saw in his home and also illustrate Voloshin's great relief that his home was not destroyed during the Red Terror in Crimea. The last lines in the excerpt above indicate his happiness at the return of poets and writers to his home at the conclusion of the Red Terror in Crimea.

In 1923, after the Red Terror in Crimea, Voloshin opened his home to a new generation of poets and writers. He created within his home KOKhUNEKS, the Koktebel' Artistic and Scholarly Experimental Studio (*KOKhUNEKS-Koktebel'skaia Khudozhestvenno-nauchnaia undefinedksperymental'naia studyia*). Surprisingly, the authorities were mostly unaware of the freethinking elements in Koktebel at this time in the 1920s and Voloshin's artistic organizing efforts met with little bureaucratic opposition.[214]

However, during the early years of Soviet rule, Crimea was a dangerous place for freethinkers. Repressions were still a significant problem in Crimea in the late 1920s during the collectivization drive.[215] In the late 1920s, Stalin intensified his rhetoric of "sharpening the class struggle" (*obostrenie klassovoi bor'by*), which meant doing away with perceived anti-regime elements. Voloshin sensed the harsh environment and, fearing for his own safety and out of an instinct for self-preservation, joined the All-Russian Union of Writers' or VSP (*Vserossiiskii*

Всей грудью к морю, прямо на восток,
Обращена, как церковь, мастерская,
И снова человеческий поток
Сквозь дверь ее течет, не иссякая"
Maksimilian Voloshin, "Dom poeta," *Sobranie sochinenii tom 2*, ed. V. P. Kupchenko and A. V. Lavrova (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 2004), 81

[214] Iu. G. Vilenskii, *Mikhail Bulgakov i Krym* (Simferopol': Tavriia, 1995), 15; Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, *Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 66.

[215] A notable example is the 1928 trial of Veli Ibraimov, the head of the Crimean Tatar Central Executive Committee of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, who was accused of "bourgeois nationalism" for supporting the Crimean Tatar national party, Milli Firka, and was subsequently sentenced to death by firing squad in May of 1928.

soiuz pisatelei – VSP) in 1928. Voloshin's VSP member's card (*chlenskii bilet*) was signed by the then chair of the VSP, Boris Pil'niak.[216] Perhaps sensing the danger of the situation and the necessity of being in the good graces of the authorities, at this time, Voloshin gradually grew closer to official literary organs. For example, he started to have friendly relations with the Pushkin House of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad.

Vladimir Kupchenko implies that by the late 1920s Voloshin was concerned about the legacy of the House of the Poet, and wanted to ensure its continued functioning, even as a part of the official Soviet literary-bureaucratic world. Voloshin wanted the Pushkin House to continue "the traditions of free shelter for artists and poets" after Maria Stepanovna's and his deaths, and to make proper use of his archive.[217] In Crimea, collectivization of private property was underway, and Voloshin was apprehensive about the future of his home. He first considered giving his home to the Pushkin House (*Pushkinskii dom*) in Leningrad. Instead, writer Vsevolod Rozhdestvenskii recommended the Litfond to Voloshin, who later got in contact with the head of the Leningrad division of the Litfond, Boris Lavrenev, which set the path of Voloshin's home becoming part of the Litfond into motion.[218]

When Maksimilian Voloshin died in 1932, his will gave his home to the Soviet Litfond. Voloshin's home, the "House of the Poet," was officially made the main building of the Litfond Writers' House of Koktebel. It would remain the main corpus until 1974, when the Voloshin house became the literary division of the Feodosia Aivazovskii Art Gallery (*literaturnyi otdel feodosiiskoi kartinnoi galerei imeni Aivazovskogo*).[219] During the Thaw era the Litfond Writers' House in Koktebel continued to be of great significance in Russian literary history. Chapter 3

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[216] Vladimir Kupchenko*, Stranstvie Maksimiliana Voloshina* (St. Petersburg: Logos, 1996), 438.
[217] "традиции бесплатного убежища для художников и поэтов" Ibid., 464.
[218] Ibid., 464-467.
[219] Natal'ia Lesina, *Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel'* (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1976), 11.

focuses on the unique culture that developed in the Koktebel writers house in the 1960s during the Thaw era. The culture that emerged in Koktebel during the Soviet period, however, is deeply and inherently connected to the artistic atmosphere and personal mythology of Koktebel that Voloshin devised in the 1910s.

Conclusion

The choice of geographical areas for Litfond writers' retreats and communities was not accidental or arbitrary and in most cases was influenced by pre-revolutionary Russian literary sites. Locations associated with leisure, such as dachas and distant resorts influenced the choice of place for the establishment of Litfond Writers' Houses. In this regard, the history of tourism and artistic and literary networks in dacha areas both significantly impacted the development and history of Soviet writers' retreats and communities. Of special note, the pre-revolutionary history of Koktebel presents particular interest, as Koktebel was an incredibly significant destination in early-twentieth-century Russian literary culture, about which a quasi-mystical mythology was developed by the writer and artist who in many respects, put it "on the map," Maximilian Voloshin. Even though Koktebel was associated with a decidedly non-Soviet literary and cultural pre-revolutionary history, due to Voloshin's initiative to maintain the continued relevance of his house in Russian literary culture, it remained highly culturally significant after its incorporation into the Litfond. The writers' retreat in Koktebel also took on a new life in 1960s Soviet literary culture, which is examined in detail in the following chapter. While the early history of Koktebel in Russian culture contains elements of pre-revolutionary country estate, dacha, and tourism culture, it also has its own unique cultural history, inextricably

linked with Russian modernism and Symbolism, as well as Voloshin's Symbolism-inspired mythologization.

The cultural history of the writers' retreats and communities (and the pre-revolutionary history of the spaces in which they were located) played a significant part in the trajectory of literary creation in the Soviet Union. Even with the articulation of Soviet socialist realism in the 1930s, certain historical ties to prior literary eras can be observed in Soviet literary culture, and, as has been shown, many of these places were geographically influenced by prerevolutionary literary and leisure culture. Membership in the Writers' Union conferred special privileges to writers, one of which was the ability to visit and spend time at the writers' retreats. Because many of the writers' retreats were special, historically significant places, it makes sense that visits to them were opportunities conferred to the literary elite in the Soviet period. In certain respects, many of them represented a linkage between the highest echelons of literary culture of pre-revolutionary Russian and the established writers of the Soviet era who were, by default, members of the Writers' Union, which provided them access to these places. In spite of the Soviet Union's official policy regarding literary creation and the denouncement of "bourgeois" art, many of the writers' retreats that established writers stayed in for work and relaxation were, in important, significant ways, historically and culturally influenced by Russia's literary past.

Chapter 2

Socialist Realism and Experimental Writing Under One Roof: Literary Culture in Writers' Communities during the Thaw Era

While Soviet writers' retreats and communities have been described as a "purely Soviet, Stalinist invention," there is evidence that for the post-Stalin generation, some of these places became sites of relatively dissident literary experimentation. [220] For example, the Latvian writer Anatols Imermanis remembers that "a sprouting of dissident literature" developed at the writers' retreat in Dubulti, Latvia.[221] The contradictions and complexities of culture during the post-Stalin era played out in many milieux in the Soviet Union. In fact, the conflicted dynamics of the Thaw era could be felt in, and, in certain regards, became a central characteristics of life in official spaces associated with Soviet literary production. The Litfond writers' retreats in Koktebel, Crimea and Dubulti were cherished institutions for the Thaw-era literary generation, known as the *shestidesiatniki* ("people of the '60s"), and these places functioned as arenas in which quasi-dissident and party-line socialist realism co-occurred, in a constant ever-changing process. This chapter examines how the most renowned Litfond writers' retreats of the Thaw-era became theaters for qualified challenges to socialist realism.

In particular, this chapter discusses the role of a number of writers' retreats, which older non-Stalinists, such as Konstantin Paustovskii, and younger sixties-generation writers, such as Vasily Aksyonov, valued as places somewhat apart from the strict Stalinist culture. I start with

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[220] "Дом творчества – изобретение чисто советское, а если точнее, сталинское." Raul' Mir-Khaidarov, *Vot i vse… ia pishu vam s vokzala. Memuary. Tom Pervyi* (Kazan: Idel'-Press, 2018), 100.
[221] "В свое время здесь всходили ростки диссидентской литературы." Aleksandr Ol'bik, *Nostal'gicheskie khroniki* (Moscow: Avvallon, 2006), 125.

short anecdotes about particular writers' retreats, and then move into a detailed discussion of accounts of the writers' retreat in Dubulti, which Aksyonov once called "a northern Koktebel" (*severnyi Koktebel'*) for the writers of his generation. Next, this chapter examines the unique cultural position of Koktebel in the 1960s and its relevance in the work of *shestidesiatnik* writers. In particular, it examines the work of Aksyonov, a leading shestidesiatnik, whose particular conception of Koktebel was associated with resistance to elements of mainstream Soviet ideology, as well as with his literary imagining of an alternative, politically freer Crimea. The discussion of Koktebel is unique in that it considers how the cultural environment of writers' retreats in the 1960s was sharpened in Aksyonov's literary and political experiments and challenges to the literary status quo. Of particular interest will be his 1979 novel, *The Island of Crimea*.

Soviet-era Writing Culture

Before presenting the most important sites of literary challenge, it will be helpful to remind ourselves of the specificities of Soviet socialist realist writing culture. The history of the socialist realist aesthetic and its importance in Soviet literature beginning in the 1930s is a crucial point of reference for any discussion regarding Soviet writing culture. With the establishment of the Stalinist state in 1928 and following, Party leaders introduced massive changes in cultural realms, and most importantly in literary production. These changes were consolidated and extended in the 1930s, particularly with the First Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934. The Congress cemented "socialist realism" as the official and only acceptable aesthetic for Soviet

writers.[222] Soviet Socialist realism stressed that writers ground their work in revolutionary history and Communist Party ideology. Aspects of socialist realism included the "positive hero" who correctly embodies Marxist-Leninist ideology and narratives that legitimized myths propagated by the Soviet state.[223] Socialist realist novels were formulaic, and, as Katerina Clark notes, sometimes resembled a Bildungsroman, in which there is no actual personal *Bildung* (Germ. "education"), but rather emphasis on the development of public values that supported Stalinist myths.[224] This approved literary aesthetic of the 1930s was the single permitted literary style of literature produced in the dangerous and repressive environment of the 1930s. Many of the writers who produced work in this aesthetic mode did not envision anything beyond it, and, for those who did, attempting to publish work expressing sentiment that was critical of the authorities could be a death sentence.

The publishing environment changed significantly after the death of Stalin in March 1953. In December 1953, Vladimir Pomerantsev's important article "On Sincerity in Literature" ("Ob iskrennosti v literature") was published in *Novyi mir*. This article claimed that conventional Soviet literature was insincere in the sense that it did not depict actuality and established conventions that encouraged disregarding truth.[225] This article led to an intense discussion of the depiction of Soviet conditions in literature. In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev gave his secret speech to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which was entitled "On

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[222]Regine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 9-10.
[223]Katerina Clark, "Socialist Realism in Soviet Literature," in *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*. ed. Neil Cornwall (New York: Routledge, 2001), 176.
[224]Ibid.,178-9.
[225] George Gibian, *Interval of Freedom: Soviet Literature During the Thaw* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota: 1960), 6-7.

the Cult of Personality and its Consequences," ("O kul'te lichnosti i ego posledstviiakh"), and it criticized the cult of personality surrounding Stalin.[226]

In the mid-1950s, cultural policy and censorship relaxed somewhat, resulting in the period known as "the Thaw" in Soviet history. Anatoly Gladilin notes that the "zeal of the literary 'generals' ran up against secret or half-open opposition in Moscow at this time," noting that this period saw a rejuvenation in Soviet literature, marked, in his opinion, by the publication of Dudintsev's novel *Not By Bread Alone*.[227] *Not By Bread Alone* was published in *Novyi mir* 1956 and depicts court proceedings during the Stalin era.[228] It was also in the late 1950s and 1960s that a new generation of writers with new ways of thinking began to appear on the Soviet literary scene, with experimental styles of literature that became known as "youth prose." The writers of youth prose who came of age in the 1950s eschewed the traditional socialist realist aesthetic and forged their own particular styles and themes. Among the best known and celebrated were Vasily Aksyonov, Andrei Bitov, and Iurii Kazakov.[229]

For "youth prose" writers, the prescribed "positive hero" of socialist realism is notably absent, giving way instead to distinctive "quixotic" characters.[230] Gladilin uses the term "star boys" to refer to these new characters – heroes in prose works that were markedly un-ideological in content (as opposed to the heroes of the highly ideological works of Soviet socialist realism). The term comes from the title of Vasily Aksyonov's pivotal novel in the youth prose movement,

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[226]Polly Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 18.
[227]Anatoly Gladilin, *The Making and Unmaking of a Soviet Writer: My Story of the "Young Prose" of the Sixties and After*, trans. David Lapeza (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 86.
[228]Polly Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 69-70.
[229]Greta N. Slobin, "Aksyonov beyond "Youth Prose": Subversion through Popular Culture," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 31, no. 1 (1987): 50-51.
[230]Ibid., 51.

A Ticket to the Stars (*Zvezdnyi bilet*), which was first published in the literary journal *Youth* (*Iunost'*) in 1961. This novel and other works of youth prose generated a heated debate in the Soviet literary press of the 1960s, with literary critics from the previous generation, who were acclimated to the system of Stalinist socialist realism, railing against the decidedly unideological nature of youth prose literature.[231]

Indeed, although the new "youth prose" writers were extremely popular among the Soviet reading public, they still were not always in favor with the authorities. In 1962, Nikita Khrushchev began to take issue with new forms of art that were appearing on the Soviet art scene. At the famous incident at the Manege art gallery in Moscow, Khrushchev decried the forms of representation used by artists whose work he viewed as distasteful and not representative of Soviet values. In 1963, he turned his attention to writers and called an assembly on March 7-8, 1963.[232] The writers Andrei Voznesenskii and Vasily Aksyonov were called up to the podium and publicly accosted by Khrushchev himself for their supposed dismissal of the preset tenets of socialist realism and Soviet artistic policy.[233] Gladilin relates Aksyonov's interaction with Khrushchev:

> As Aksyonov told it later, he thought the floor was falling away beneath his feet as he walked to the podium. He doesn't remember how he started his speech. Khrushchev, red as a beet, pounded his fist, spewed saliva, and interrupted Aksyonov at every phrase. Aksyonov expected in a moment the order would be given, and the hall would tear him to pieces. Khrushchev's words reached him as if out of a fog.
>
> 'You're taking revenge on us for you father's being executed!'
>
> 'Nikita Sergeevich,' said Aksyonov, 'my father is an old Communist, he was rehabilitated, he's alive, and we associate his rehabilitation with your name.'

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[231] Gladilin, *The Making and Unmaking of a Soviet Writer: My Story of the "Young Prose" of the Sixties and After*, 91-93.
[232] Ibid., 107.
[233] For more discussion of Voznesenskii's interaction with Khrushchev with regards to Pasternak, see chapter 4.

> And once again Ilichev slipped from his place and whispered something to Khrushchev.
>
> 'Okay,' Nikita Sergeevich changed his tone, 'if you're with us, we'll help you, turn against us and we'll annihilate you!"[234]

Thus, for writers like Aksyonov, literary success involved the dual tasks of success in publishing one's work in major Soviet journals and being read by the public, as well as success in staying in good graces with the authorities. The "youth prose" of the 1960s is marked by a turn away from socialist realism and communist ideology, but not a complete turn, as is the case of dissident works published through *samizdat* channels. Many *shestidesiatnik* "youth prose" writers were accepted (perhaps begrudgingly, by some authorities) by Soviet literary organizations during the Thaw era, such as the Writers' Union and the Litfond, and they received certain perks as successful authors and members of the Writers' Union, such as the opportunity to travel to some of the most desirable Litfond writers' retreats. Of course, they brought their own subculture with them to these spaces, which at times clashed with that of the old socialist realists who had enjoyed success during the Stalin era. The interaction of these divergent literary groups coexisting in writers' retreats and communities in the 1950s and 1960s, and the cultural influence of these spaces on the new generation of shestidesiatnik and youth prose writers is the focus of the discussion of the writers' retreat at Koktebel, in particular.

Cultural Contrasts at Writers' Retreats and Communities

At Soviet writers' retreats there were distinctly different cultural groups. While independent, freer-thinking writers lived and worked in these places, there were also hardline supporters of the party, and even informers to the authorities. Memoirs and archival documents indicate the dual culture of these places. For example, differing accounts of the Ukrainian Writers' House at

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[234] Gladilin, *The Making and Unmaking of a Soviet Writer*, 109.

Irpin', outside of Kiev, illustrate this dynamic. Historian Oleh Rohotchenko describes how Irpin' was a central hub for Ukrainian literature, where many famous writers lived and worked. He notes that many writers produced works praising Soviet leaders and Soviet life there.[235] Maryna Hrymych writes that a part of the subculture at Irpin' in the 1960s onward involved the creation of stories and literature which employed Aesopian language to subvert the censor.[236] She notes that culture at Irpin' was aesthetically both a mixture of an extremely Soviet style and a certain bohemianism (which is reminiscent of the dual accounts of the environment at Dubulti, which will be addressed below).[237]

Some accounts of Maleevka indicate, to a degree, an active dissident subculture embedded within the dominant literary culture there. The collection *Maleevka, Dear to my Heart* (*Milaia serdtsu Maleevka*) relates episodes taken from several reminiscences of the writers who spent significant time at Maleevka. Natal'ia Bianki writes that the manuscript of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was read in secret there.[238] An interview in the collection with Boris Slutskii notes the pile of unpublished "self-censored" works by

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[235] Oleksii Oleksiiovych Rogotchenko, "Sotsiokul'turne tlo 1945–1960-kh rokiv radians'koii ukraiiny iak model' nyshchennia vil'noii dumky," *Visnyk Kharkivs'koi derzhavnoi akademii dyzainu i mystetstv*, no. 3 (2015), 91. Rohotchenko also gives an account of the atmosphere of Irpin' during the Stalin-era and describes the presence of informers there. He cites an example of a denunciation against the screenwriter and filmmaker Oleksandr Dovzhenko. This denunciation about the anti-Soviet sentiments of Dovzhenko was written by an unknown informer to Lavrentii Beria, the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, and it is clear that the author of the denunciation stayed at the Ukrainian Writers' House in Irpin'. (Oleksii Oleksiiovych Rogotchenko, "Metody borot'by ofitsiinogo derzhavnogo aparatu z predstavnykamy tvorchoi ukraïns'koi inteligentsii 1940–1960-kh," *MIST: Mystetstvo, istoriia, suchasnist', teoriia: zb. nauk. prats'* Vyp. 11 (Kyiv: Feniks, 2015), 186.) Another archival document references specific anti-Soviet conversations at Irpin' that the author witnessed Dovzhenko engaging in. (Ibid., 190-191.) Thus, archival evidence clearly shows that informers were definitely at Irpin'.

[236] Maryna Hrymych, "Ukrainian Writers' Colonies: Subculture of Ukrainian Soviet Writers," *Ukrainoznavstvo* 60, no. 3 (2016): 168, http://ndiu.org.ua/book/journal/2016/3/13.pdf

[237] Ibid., p. 167.

[238] Natal'ia Bianki, "Rukopis' Solzhenitsyna chitali v Maleevke taikom" in *Milaia serdtsu Maleevka: O pervom dome tvorchestva pisatelei Rossii. Sbornik*, ed. Natal'ia V. Babochkina and I. S. Borisov (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Pul's, 2001), 572

Aksyonov at his desk in Maleevka.[239] Thus, while Maleevka was officially linked with the Soviet Writers' Union, evidence points to a subculture inclined towards freer thought at the writers' retreat.

The Writers' Retreat at Dubulti

One of the most popular all-Soviet writers' retreats was the Jānis Rainis Writers' House in Dubulti, Latvia. As noted, Aksyonov remembered that Dubulti was a "northern Koktebel" for him and his generation, and it has been noted that if one considers all of the literary work produced in Dubulti during the 1950s, one can speak of the "Dubulti period in the history of Soviet literature."[240] To what extent, however, was there a distinctly freer atmosphere in Dubulti? Although for Aksyonov and Paustovsky, Dubulti was clearly, a highly meaningful place for their literary creation, conflicting accounts do exist. For example, the first chapter of Albanian writer Ismail Kadare's memoir-based novel, *Twilight of the Eastern Gods*, depicts the young narrator (modeled on Kadare himself) and his dismay about the domineering presence of socialist realist ideologues at the Dubulti writers' retreat. Conflicting accounts of this unique cultural space in literature produced during or written about the Thaw can shed light on how renowned destinations for creative writers in the USSR were experienced by writers during the Thaw.

Twilight of the Eastern Gods deals with Kadare's experiences in the Soviet literary world of the late 1950s. The first chapter of the novel is based on a short story that Kadare wrote in

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[239]Andrei Iakovlevich Sergeev, "Slutskii v Maleevke," in *Milaia serdtsu Maleevka: o pervom dome tvorchestva pisatelei Rossii. Sbornik*, ed. Natal'ia V. Babochkina and I. S. Borisov (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Pul's, 2001), 752.
[240]Il'ia Dimshtein, *Nasha Iurmala* (Riga: AB-Print, 2013),5

Albanian, entitled "A Summer in Dubulti" (1962), which details Kadare's experience at the writers' retreat. He equates the writers' retreat in Dubulti with the one in Yalta, where he had sojourned the previous summer. In 1961 the relatively undogmatic Konstantin Paustovsky, now a very famous mainstream writer who managed never to sing the praises of Stalin or make denunciations of his contemporaries, had stayed in Yalta.[241] Paustovsky made an impression on Kadare:

> It was my second holiday at a writers' retreat and I knew most of the ropes, as well as the oddities of the inmates. The previous winter I had spent some time in Yalta. My room had been next to Paustovsky's. The lights stayed on in his room until late; we all knew he was writing his memoirs. Whenever I went out into the corridor I encountered the *starosta*, our course leader at the Institute, Ladonshchikov by name, who was forever watching the light in Paustovsky's room.[242]

Kadare's description of residents as the writers' retreat as "inmates" is telling – he views these places as decidedly lacking freedom. An interview with Kadare also mentions that Paustovsky was likely being watched by Ladonshchikov while he was at Yalta.[243] Kadare's recollection of the writers' retreat at Yalta is inherently linked with the atmosphere created by ideologues on the premises. His impressions of the writers' retreat at Dubulti are similar to that of Yalta. While Aksyonov equated Dubulti with his beloved Koktebel, Kadare equates Dubulti with Yalta in a way that is unambiguously less enthusiastic:

> I had hoped that life in the Riga retreat [Dubulti and the Jurmala area are located to the southeast of Riga] would be less sinister, but what I encountered were some of the people I had seen at Yalta, table-tennis instead of billiards, and intermittent rain, confirming Pushkin's bon mot about northern summers being caricatures of southern ones. The similarity of faces, conversations and names (the only ones missing were Paustovsky and Ladonshchikov, oddly enough) gave me a sense of constant déjà vu. The life we led there had something sterile about it, like an extract in an anthology.[244]

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[241] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'eva, "Mog li Konstantin Paustovskii poluchit' Nobelevskuiu premiiu?" Gazeta «Kul'tura», No. 25 (7638) (3 July 2008), 4.
[242] Ismail Kadare, *Twilight of the Eastern Gods*, trans. David Bellows (New York: Grove Press, 2014), 5.
[243] "Albantsy i russkie legko vpadaiut v krainosti," *Literaturnaia Rossiia* https://litrossia.ru/item/1847-oldarchive/
[244] Ibid., 5-6.

Kadare finds the atmosphere to be uncanny and disconcerting, and somehow disconnected from real life. However, what upsets him the most, and what evokes his greatest sense of indignation, is the fact that particular Stalinists, such as Vladimir Ermilov, are vacationing there:

> In my mind I saw in the long procession of all those mediocre writers, eyes lit with envy (some were still jealous of Mayakovsky), who had made fools of themselves in the view of the younger generation by writing so badly about the Revolution. I could see the crimson face of Vladimir Yermilov, whom I found odious because I knew he was one of those responsible for Mayakovsky's suicide. Every time I saw him, with his ugly snout, having lunch in the dining room at the writers retreat I was astounded that the assembled company didn't charge at him, beat him up, lynch him, drag him out to the road, then to the dunes and all the way to the dolphin fountain.[245]

Kadare sees the fact that Ermilov was at Dubulti as emblematic of the cultural and political clout of the hardline socialist realist writers who gained prominence during the Stalin era. For him, writers' retreats at both Dubulti and Yalta as being overrun with numerous ideologues of the Stalinist era who are interested in the high social status that being a state-approved Soviet writer affords them. Kadare perceived himself as an outsider in this milieu due to his personal convictions, and he viewed the older generation in the environment as being linked with the hardline socialist realist past.

However, Kadare's account of Ermilov at the writers' retreats is different from another one, which suggests that Kadare possibly misread the situation and that Ermilov may not have had much standing at these establishments. Lidia Chukovskaia's memoir contains an account of Paustovsky describing to Anna Akhmatova the atmosphere surrounding Ermilov at the writers' retreat in Yalta. On May 26, 1963, Chukovskaia wrote in her journal:

> I was called to her [Akhmatova] in the evening. …. Her guests were Emma, who was doing chores, and Paustovsky, who was talking. He had just come back from Yalta.

[245] Ibid., 31

> There, in the Writers' House were many people, and among them was [the Stalinist] Ermilov. Nobody says 'hi' to him.
> 'So you say we don't have public opinion" [i.e., shared, though perhaps not publicly stated, viewpoints], Paustovsky noted. "That's not true. It's there."
> I said that if it's there, then it is only among a small circle of the intelligentsia, and it's only among a small group, and at that, it doesn't fully exist, it's only just coming through, it's only just appearing.[246]

It is likely that by the 1960s Ermilov did not have as much power and influence as he did in earlier years. Paustovsky's comment, as told by Chukovskaia, casts doubt on the idea of consensus opinion regarding Ermilov and his type amongst all of the writers present at the writers' retreats in Yalta and Dubulti. Paustovsky suggests that Ermilov did not earn the respect that Kadare implies he receives—on the contrary, by Paustovsky's account, he is mostly avoided for his earlier collaboration with the Stalinist authorities during the era.

It is possible, too, that Paustovsky's perceptions regarding relationships between writers in the writers' retreats in Dubulti and Yalta is colored by his own personal experiences and idealized impressions of the landscapes and environment in these places. Paustovsky loved Dubulti and had fond memories of it and remarked that if one were to examine all of the literature produced at the Writers' House there, one could speak of the "Dubulti period in the development of Soviet literature," highlighting the importance of this place in mid-century mainstream Russian-language writing.[247]

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[246] "26 мая 63 Я была звана к ней [Anna Akhmatova] вечером. Ардовых нет. Она в столовой, у нее в гостях Эмма – хозяйничающая, и Паустовский – рассказывающий.
Он только что из Ялты. Там, в Доме Творчества, много народу, и среди них Ермилов. С ним никто не здоровается.
– Вот и говорите, будто нет у нас общественного мнения, – заметил Паустовский. – Это неверно. Оно есть.
Я сказала, что если и есть, то лишь среди узкого круга интеллигенции, да и то – по узкому кругу поведения, да и то – еще нет его, а оно только проклевывается, нарождается[…]"
Lidiia Chukovskaia, *Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoi Tom 3* (Moscow, Vremia: 2013), 48

[247] Natal'ia Polytsia, " Luchshie v Soiuze: kak otdykhali v sovetskoi Iurmale?" *RuBaltic.com*, last modified March 6, 2015, https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/kultura-i-istoriya/06032015-yurmala/

For Paustovsky, the writers' retreat at Dubulti was much more than a place for the production of stridently ideological works in the Stalinist vein, as it is presented by Kadare. Instead, his work presents Dubulti as a place to commune with nature, where he reflects upon his writerly vocation. Paustovsky's scenic and somewhat sentimental impression of the Dubulti area can be observed in his short sketch entitled "The Inscription on the Boulder" ("Nadpis' na valune") in the 1955 collection *The Golden Rose* (*Zolotaia roza*). In the sketch the narrator (Paustovsky) reflects upon the seaside landscape of Jūrmala (of which Dubulti is a part). His depiction represents Dubulti and the writers' retreat there as an aesthetically meaningful place. The description of the landscape is picturesque, remembering that the Baltic Sea is known as the "Amber Sea" ("Dzintara jūra") in Latvian, "not only because [it] throws out a lot of amber [onto the shore], but also because its water gives off a slight amber-yellow color." However, there is also an element of forlornness in the depiction of the landscape, that is "gloomy and deserted" in the wintertime.[248]

The sketch features a meaningful inscription on a boulder on the shore which forms the core of Paustovsky's reflection. It reads: "In memory of those who died, and will die, at sea." Although, at first, the inscription seems lugubrious to Paustovskii, a Latvian writer tells him that it is actually the opposite: "It's a very courageous inscription. It says that people will never give up, and in spite of anything, they will complete their activity. I would place this inscription as an epigraph to any book about human labor and obduracy. For me, this inscription sounds like this— 'In memory of those who overcame and will overcome the sea'."[249]

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[248] "Латыши называют ее «Янтарным морем» («Дзинтара юра»). Может быть, не только потому, что Балтика выбрасывает много янтаря, но еще и потому, что ее вода чуть заметно отливает янтарной желтизной." Konstantin Paustovsky, *Sobranie sochinenii v deviate tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literature, 1982) vol. 3, 173-4.

[249] "Это очень мужественная надпись. Она говорит, что люди никогда не сдадутся и, несмотря ни на что, будут делать свое дело. Я бы поставил эту надпись эпиграфом к любой книге о

Paustovsky agrees with his Latvian colleague. He then reflects on a writer's calling. He remarks that being a writer is, in part, a "call from the heart" ("zov sobstvennogo serdtsa") also well as a "call from one's own time and people" ("zov svoego vremeni i naroda").[250] Paustovsky's epigraph to the sketch, a passage from Saltykov-Shchedrin, also echoes this reflection: "Complete joy comes to a writer only when he is sure that his conscience corresponds to the conscience of those close to him."[251] He ties this idea to the experience of Dutch writer Eduard Dekker, known pseudonymously as Multatuli, who listened to the "voice of his heart," giving up a career to write about his perception of injustices in Dutch Java during periods of extreme personal financial struggle.[252] Paustovsky surmises that his cogitation about artists from the Netherlands may be linked to the landscape surrounding him: "It's possible that I thought about Dekker precisely here, on the banks of the gloomy Baltic because this same pale northern sea extends alongs the shores of his homeland – the Netherlands."[253] Next, Paustovsky writes about the difficult and fervent artistic calling of Vincent Van Gogh. He writes that in spite of great personal struggles, Van Gogh fully dedicated himself to creating beautiful works of art that "enrich the world of a person of a socialist society."[254]

Although the aesthetic comparison between the Jūrmala seaside and the Netherlands on the part of Paustovsky signals the perceived connectedness of these two areas for Paustovsky, it is a still also a place for him to reflect upon what it means to be a Soviet writer. For Paustovsky,

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человеческом труде и упорстве. Для меня эта надпись звучит примерно так: 'В память тех, кто одолевал и будет одолевать это море'." Ibid., 175.

[250] Ibid., 175-6.

[251] "Для писателя полная радость наступает только тогда, когда он убеждается, что совесть его находится в соответствии с совестью ближних." Ibid., 173.

[252] Ibid., 177.

[253] "Возможно, что я вспомнил о Деккере именно здесь, на берегу сумрачной Балтики, потому, что такое же бледное северное море расстилается у берегов его родины – Нидерландов." Ibid., 176.

[254] Ibid., 179.

being a writer means to follow one's conscience and listen to one's calling in the creative process. It is also possible that for Paustovsky, Dubulti and the writers' retreat there represent an almost extra-Soviet space, where he could reflect on the meaning of his vocation – not only in the context of the Soviet Union, but in a broader, wider-reaching sense.[255]

For Paustovsky, the writers' retreat in Dubulti was a place for him to be productive and reflect on his profession in a thought-provoking, picturesque environment, where he also meditates on Dutch artists and writers and the expression of universal truths in writing. It is important to note that the creative work of Paustovsky cannot be classified as Soviet socialist realist in the way that much of the writing of his generation could. As a writer from the 1930s generation, that came of age in the Stalin regime, the generation before Aksyonov and the *shestidesiatniki*, Paustovsky had a worldview and experience different from that of later Soviet writers. While celebrated in the Soviet press, Paustovsky's work is not stridently propagandistic, unlike much work of other writers of his era, who attempted to conform to the demands that the system of socialist realism placed upon them. Paustovsky was also vocally critical of some tendencies in Soviet literature – he wrote an article in *Literaturnaia gazeta* decrying the need for a saccharine happy end in many works and the presence of the "lifeless language of bureaucratic red tape."[256] In fact, he went so far as to posit that, "It is, perhaps, that we shout so much and so loudly about truth in literature precisely because we lack it."[257] Thus, while Paustovsky was not a

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[255] The comparison between the Dubulti/Jūrmala coast with culturally Dutch areas is also found Aleksandr Shtein's story "A Meeting in Dubulti" ("Vstrecha v Dubultakh," which is in the 1985 collection "Nepridumannoe…"), which presents the area as a "pastoral space that is not as much Latvia, as the Flemish lands" ("пасторальное пространство, не столько Латвия, сколько Фламандия"). Glushakhov P.C., "Memuaristika i semiotika prostranstva (iz kommentariev k vospominaniiam A. Sheina i V. Astaf'eva", *Kritika i semiotika*, 14 (2010), 322.

[256] Arthur Schlensinger Jr., "Varieties of Communist Experience," *The Politics of Hope* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963), 288.

[257] Ibid.

dissident writer, he managed to stick to his personal set of principles and was not afraid to voice some somewhat polemical opinions.

While Paustovsky's work points to greater subtlety in the cultural dynamic at the writers' retreat, some accounts recollect the non-conforming, and even dissident writers who visited Dubulti. It is worth repeating that Latvian writer Antatols Imermanis remarks that "in its day, in [Dubulti] there were the first sprouts of dissident literature."[258] This sentiment is echoed in a 1992 interview with Vasily Aksyonov, who wrote about the Litfond Writers' House in Koktebel, and whose perception of Koktebel certainly influenced his novel *The Island of Crimea*, and, in turn, possibly to a certain extent, perceptions of Crimea in Russian culture in the 21st century. Aksyonov is steadfast in his characterization of the significance of Dubulti and the influence of progressive writers on its culture in the 1960s:

> -Vasilii Pavlovich, is it possible to speak definitely about the existence of a "Dubulti period" in your work?
> -Yes, for sure. For me it is a period of nostalgia. Dubulti—it's the same thing as Koktebel in Crimea. It's not simply a geographical place, it's a literary confessional. It's a real world, that is famous far beyond the borders of Russia. I repeat, Dubulti—it's its own kind of Koktebel—northern, Baltic. It is precisely here that a real European internationalism and writerly brotherhood appeared.[259]

The works by Kadare, Paustovsky, and the interview accounts indicate the mixed perceptions regarding the lived experiences of Soviet writers in the Writers' House in Dubulti during the 1950s and 1960s. Some of these works focus on elite "nomenklatura" writers

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[258] "В свое время здесь [in Dubulti] всходили ростки диссидентской литературы" Aleksandr Ol'bik, *Nostal'gicheskie khroniki* (Moscow: Avvallon, 2006), 125.

[259] "Василий Павлович, значит, можно совершенно определенно говорить о существовании в вашем творчестве "дубултского периода"?
- Да, это так. Это для меня момент ностальгии. Дубулты - то же самое, что Коктебель в Крыму. Это не просто географическое место, это литературная исповедальня. Это реальный мир, который известен далеко за пределами России. Повторюсь, Дубулты - это своего рода Коктебель - северный, балтийский. Именно здесь появились настоящий европейский интернационализм, писательское братство." Aleksandr Ol'bik, *Nostal'gicheskie khroniki* (Moscow: Avvallon, 2006), 132.

primarily interested in their own privileges, while others identify Dubulti with other times and independent places outside the Soviet Union, mythologizing the locale. Finally, the accounts by Imermanis and Aksyonov point to the perception on the part of some writers as the Writers' House in Dubulti as having a dynamic alternative element.

The various literary and scholarly accounts concerning the Litfond writers' retreats in Dubulti, Yalta, Maleevka, and Irpin' demonstrate different qualities concerning the culture and atmosphere of these spaces in the post-Stalin period. Quite a number of similar reminiscences are found in accounts of the writers' retreat in Koktebel, Crimea. Koktebel, in particular, is unique as it had a specific mystique for writers in the 1960s, which I will examine in detail in the following section. Beyond its aura as a center for modernist writers before the revolution, the Litfond Writers' House in Koktebel took on new cultural attributes in the 1950s and 1960s.

Koktebel in Thaw-Era Writing Culture and the Work of Vasily Aksyonov

For a writer during the Khrushchev era, a travel voucher to the Koktebel Writers' House was a sign of having "made it" in the literary world. In episode two of the 2016 Channel 1 Russia television adaptation of Vasily Aksyonov's 2009 novel, *A Mysterious Passion* (*Tainstvennaia strast'*), a group of writers having lunch at the restaurant of the Central House of Writers in Moscow talk about Koktebel.[260] At this lunch, they discuss the possibility of the writer Vakson (representing Aksyonov) gaining membership in the Writers' Union. One of the writers asks Vakson's wife if she has ever been to Koktebel, to which she replies in the negative. Vakson is

[260] *Tainstvennaia strast'*. Episode 2. Directed by Vlad Furman. Channel 1 Russia (Pervyi kanal), October, 2016.

then told, "Vakson, you must bring this young woman to Koktebel. It's magical there! Just because of Koktebel writers are rushing to join the [Writers'] Union."[261]

Distinct from other locations in the USSR, in the 1960s Koktebel acquired a reputation as a "free-spirited" place, where one could find groups of Soviet young people with an aesthetic somewhat similar to American hippies.[262] The role that Koktebel played in the literary scene for the *shestidesiatnik* writers during the Thaw era sheds light on the cultural particularities of the era. While, in order to maintain their livelihoods, it was dangerous for writers to overstep the boundaries of ideological acceptability in their creative writing, in Koktebel writers balanced between a free-spirited, mildly transgressive thinking and behavior and lip service to official literary institutions and the accompanying socialist realist mentality.

By the 1950s the Writers' House in Koktebel had undergone major renovation. In the late 1940s the corpus had received needed construction and repair, and finally, electric lighting was put into place, replacing the antiquated kerosene lamps.[263] Voloshin's wife, Mariia Stepanovna, continued to live in the main house.

The Koktebel Writers' House became a space associated with the new wave in the Thaw-era Soviet culture, becoming a kind of "cultural island." For many writers and artists who visited Koktebel in the 1960s, Koktebel existed as a space somewhat symbolically "beyond" the USSR. It was a place where Soviet social norms were at times brushed aside, and people experimented with non-conformist attitudes and behaviors.

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[261] Ibid.
[262] Vasilii Aksyonov, *Tainstvennaia strast': Roman o shestidesiatnikakh* (Moscow: Sem' dnei, 2011), 350.
[263] Valentina Antipina, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskikh pisatelei 1930-1950e gody* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 148.

The depiction of Koktebel and the writers' retreat as an extra-Soviet enclave within the Soviet Union itself, particularly for the shestidesiatnik writers of the Thaw era, can be seen in Aksyonov's fictionalized memoir, *Mysterious Passion: A Novel about Shestidesiatniks* (2009). In *Mysterious Passion* the beginning of the novel takes place in Koktebel. The first section is called 1968, "The end of July. L'vinaia" ("konets iiulia. L'vinaia"), referring to "L'vinaia bay" ("L'vinaia bukhta") on the coast, where Vlad Vertikalov (a pseudonym for the actor and poet, Vladimir Vysotskii) is on a rock-climbing excursion on the cliffs overlooking the Black Sea and later gives a concert at the Litfond terrace. Kukush Oktava (the Moscow bard, Bulat Okudzhava) is also there, and the next section, "1968. Litfond. The Start of August" ("1968, nachalo avgusta Litfond"), opens with Robert Er (a leading sixties-generation poet, Robert Rozhdestvenskii) early in the morning at the Litfond Writers' House. Robert has a hangover from the previous evening, spent in the company of Kukush and Nella Akhkho (one of the three most prominent Russian poets of the 1960s, Bella Akhmadulina). Vladimir Vysotskii, Bulat Okudzhava, Robert Rozhdestvenskii, and Bella Akhmadulina were all some of the most famous writers of the post-war Soviet period, well known to educated Russians, and they were Aksyonov's contemporaries and in some cases personal friends. Aksyonov's subtitle of the novel is "a novel about the shestidesiatniki." It is significant that Aksyonov chose Koktebel specifically as the site of the novel's exposition. This indicates that Aksyonov, a leading shestidesiatnik, saw Koktebel as the touchstone for young writers during the Thaw era and Thaw-era culture.

Aksyonov depicts an environment in which characters, the leading *shestidesiatniki*, mildly challenge Soviet cultural norms and behave like Soviet "hippies." The episode "Shorts" ("Shorty") in Aksyonov's novel, which takes place in Koktebel, is based on a real-life

journalistic and literary exchange, in which famous journalist Arkadii Perventsev (in Aksyonov's novel appearing as the minor character, Arkadii Perventsev-Bliznetsov) wrote a polemical article in 1963 in the journal *Sovetskaia kul'tura* (*Soviet Culture*) criticizing youth culture in Koktebel. The article is entitled "Kurinyi bog," literally, "chicken god." In Russian, this phrase refers to a stone that has a naturally occurring hole in it. This kind of stone is called an *adder stone* in English, and it has a role in various cultural legends and mythologies and was sometimes viewed as an important amulet. Adder stones are often found on seashores. The article uses "chicken gods" (i.e. adder stones) as a metaphor to depict what the author sees as the shameless youth in Koktebel, whose behavior he characterizes as anti-Soviet. The article describes young people who seek these unique Koktebel rocks and the author's opinion regarding their cultural and behavioral shortcomings. As a side note, it is notable that the stones (particularly the red cornelian stones) on the Koktebel shore have long been important in Russian culture.[264]

Perventsev is harsh in his description of the young "chicken gods," calling them groups of morally corrupted young people who have no physical and moral strength and are alcoholics and rogues. He sees their weak bodies and lack of overt optimism as being signs of degradation in youth culture in the Soviet Union, and he views them as being a harmful influence on the proper Soviet youth. He ends his article with the slogan-like sentence "Down with the psychology of the 'chicken god'!"[265]

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[264] Constantine Pleshchakov, *The Crimean Nexus: Putin's War and the Clash of Civilizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 95.
The rocks of Koktebel come up in numerous places in Russian literature. Osip Mandel'shtam was inspired by the cornelian stones while he was writing *A Conversation with Dante*, but later expressed his preference for the "simple grey stones that nobody is excited about getting" ("Но мне милей простой солдат / Морской пучины - серый, дикий, / Которому никто не рад") in one of his final poems—interestingly, this grey stone was known by some as Voloshinite (Boris Vladimirskii. "Voloshinit." *Toronto Slavic Quarterly*. Accessed January 21, 2018, http://sites.utoronto.ca/tsq/19/vladimirsky19.shtml) All of these examples illustrate the importance of Koktebel stones in Russian culture and literature.
[265] Arkadii Perventsev. "Kurinyi bog," *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, August 24, 1963, 2.

Perventsev views these "chicken gods" as bringing a harmful cultural element to the scenic Koktebel area. He sees the area as truly picturesque, writing that the land reminds "some of Castile [a region in Spain]," others of "Biblical legends."[266] He describes "emerald mounds of the vineyards seemingly rolling into the sea," as well as the history of the brave defenders of the Soviet Union in the area during World War II.[267] He describes how people look for adder stones (that is, stones that have a natural hole in them) on the seashore, which are thought to bring happiness. However, Perventsev harshly decries an element of Soviet youth culture that he sees in Planerskoe and uses the adder stone as the central metaphor of his article.[268] He writes that in spite of Koktebel's natural beauty, there are unpleasant blots on the scenery – gangs of renegade youth, separating themselves from everyone else. These hoodlums arrive "half naked with sandals on their dirty legs," and make a point of upsetting people with their "sticky-poisonous little thoughts and muscle-less bodies."[269]

These young people also like to wear adder stones on their necks. Because they are not adept at sports and, according to Perventsev, water makes them feel "nauseous," they cannot naturally find any adder stones on their own.[270] Instead, Perventsev claims, they will trade cigarettes for a real stone found by a tanned person who has been swimming, or they will even find an ordinary cobblestone and pay for a hole to be drilled into it at the bazaar. These people

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[266] "Кто-то сравнивает эти места с Кастилией, кто-то находит здесь сходство с природой библейских легенд." Ibid.
[267] "Изумрудные валы виноградников будто катятся к морю" Ibid.
[268] Ibid.
[269] "«Шарага» прибывает уже полунагая, в сандалетах на грязных ногах, заранее предвкушая озноб от того самого «эпатирования ортодоксальной значительности», которую они обязались расшатать всеми своими безмускульными средствами и ядовито-клейкими мыслишками." Ibid.
[270] "[…] они не копаются в пене прибоя, их тошнит от воды, они выменивают камешки у смуглых пацанов за дешевые сигаретки или поступают еще проще: берут первый попавшийся под сандалий булыжник и за «четвертную звонкую монету» просверливают дырку на базаре." Ibid.

spend their time as "cheaply" and "stupidly" as possible, trying to, in their own slangy language, "'ruin naïve Madonnas'" and "'lead sweaty, honest laborers astray'."[271] Perventsev calls these people "chicken gods," or "adder stones."

In Perventsev's description, these "chicken gods" are regarded as a something of a threat and their dress signals non-Soviet, foreign influence. The presence of the "chicken gods" in Koktebel causes the police instinctively to reach for their holsters and border guards to "think about their training" (i.e. to reflect upon what they should do with criminals in a dangerous situation) when they see them.[272] However, the "chicken gods" are cunning enough to avoid breaking any laws, and their documents are always in order. They travel in groups of four, with three guys, and one "completely collectivized female companion."[273] The guys also have facial hair that was relatively uncommon for the average Soviet man, either having beards with shaved mustaches, or goatees.[274] Perventsev devotes an entire paragraph to a description of their clothing, emphasizing their "shorts": "They wear 'shorts' – this is what they call ordinary, cheap, Chinese pants, which they shorten to the length of underwear."[275] Sometimes they wear "thick sweaters on their backs, letting the sleeves drop under the armpits, and then they tie [the sleeves] together at the back of the neck, [as] 'this is how the Americans wear them.'"[276] They carry portable radios, listening to faint hints of foreign rock-and-roll from the airwaves. They walk

[271] "Их задача — «гробить наивных мадонн», «охмурять потных работяг», как можно дешевле и глупее провести время на побережье." Ibid.
[272] "Степенные люди сторонятся при появлении мрачной «шараги», милиционеры ощупывают кобуры и свистки, пограничники вспоминают задачи на классных учениях." Ibid.
[273] "«Шараги» сплачиваются обычно четверками. Высший шик — три парня и одна полностью коллекти¬визированная спутница." Ibid.
[274] Ibid.
[275] "Они ходят в «шортах» — так они называют обычные дешевые китайские штаны, самолично укороченные до размеров трусиков." Ibid.
[276] "На четверых хотя бы один черный свитер из толстой шерсти: его носят на спине, пропустив рукава под мышки и завязав их у затылка: «так ходят американцы»." Ibid.

with cigarettes in the corners of their "wet, limp lips," thinking that the "plebs" surrounding them should read the mystery of their superior, skeptical outlook in their "dim" eyes.[277]

Perventsev sees the "chicken gods" as social parasites (*tuneiadtsy*). He writes that their neglect of physical labor (*trud,* much extoled as being virtuous in Soviet propaganda) as being readable by looking at their "feeble, wobbly hands."[278] In the 1950s new anti-vagrancy legislation had been implemented and able-bodied people who did not engage in consistent employment were subject to five-year sentences in labor camps.[279] In fact, the law against social parasitism from 1957, which greatly expanded the definition, even potentially targeted unemployed people who liked to hang around foreigners.[280] Perventsev's article emphasizes the dislike of labor (*trud*) on the part of the "chicken gods," which is meant to be particularly condemnatory in the context of widespread social and legal disapproval of "social parasitism."

The lack of athleticism among the young "chicken gods" is another point of contention for Perventsev. He compares the unathletic, feeble, lazy "chicken gods" with superior young people vacationing in Planerskoe (the post-World War II official Soviet name for Koktebel), who are the epitome of Soviet youthful vigor, in his view. In contrast to the "chicken gods," these proper Soviet young people have tanned, golden bodies and engage in physical exercise (*fizzariadka*) in the morning and swim in the sea. They have "beautiful bodies, [and are] healthy, strong young people with clear eyes."[281] This description of ideal athleticism is characteristic of

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[277] "Они идут шеренгой, параличной походкой, развинченные, сутулые, с сигаретками в уголках мокрых, безвольных губ, с тупыми глазами, в которых, как им кажется, весь остальной «плебс» должен прочитать тайну их высшего скепсиса." Ibid.
[278] "«Куриные боги» болтаются на их тщедушных телах, а хилые, вихляющиеся руки как бы нарочито подчеркивают пренебрежение к труду." Ibid.
[279] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Social Parasites: How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 47, no. 1/2 (2006): 381.
[280] Ibid., 377.
[281] "Красивые тела, здоровые, сильные молодые люди с ясными глазами." Ibid.

Soviet propaganda which emphasized the value of engaging in sports. Soviet ideological emphasis on "physical culture" (*fizkul'tura*) had developed in the 1920s, mainly as a response to major social problems affecting the populace during the NEP era.[282] Perventsev's emphasis of the "chicken gods'" lack of athleticism is intended to paint them as somewhat anti-Soviet.

Many visitors in Koktebel read this article and found it quite ridiculous. The section of Aksyonov's *Mysterious Passion* (*Tainstvennaia strast'*) entitled "1964, August. Shorts" (1964, avgust. Shorty") recounts the astonished reaction to this article and its aftermath on the part of writers visiting Koktebel. In the section, which takes place after the publication of the article, all visitors are told that shorts are not allowed on the embankment — only pants. The section discusses Perventsev's stay in Koktebel and the aftermath surrounding the infamous article about the bad "short-wearing mores" of young writers in Koktebel. After the publication of the article, local officials made shorts-wearing an enforceable offense. In Aksyonov's novel a group of shestidesiatniki, including Robert Er, his wife Anna, and daughter Polinka, go to a place that serves cocktails while wearing shorts.[283] The demand for cocktails is so huge that an enormous number of people stand in line to purchase the drinks, and the crowd becomes quite big. Suddenly, two municipal vans arrive to arrest and take away everyone wearing shorts, including the famous Robert Er (Aksyonov's pseudonym for the poet, Robert Rozhdestvenskii) who yells at the authorities "[You] savages!", one of whom in turn responds, "You yourselves are the savages, you with your naked thighs!"[284]

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[282] Susan Grant, *Physical Culture and Sport in Soviet Society: Propaganda, Acculturation, and Transformation in the 1920s and 1930s* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 49.
[283] Vasilii Aksyonov, *Tainstvennaia strast': Roman o shestidesiatnikakh* (Moscow: Sem' dnei, 2011), 34
[284] "—Дикари!
--Сами вы дикари, кто с голыми ляжками." Ibid., 37.

In the novel, Ralissa's husband, Semyon Kochevoi (film director Roman Karmen), and the writer Khokholkov (the author of the lyrics for the Stalinist anthem, Sergei Mikhalkov) are able to get the others released by using their connections as renowned Soviet writers who received the Lenin Prize. Following their release, news about the incident with the shorts quickly spreads around Koktebel. That night at the Litfond Writers' House cafeteria, Khokholkov is applauded for saving everyone from further trouble. Later, on the terrace of the Voloshin House, the poet/humorist Liudik Akhnov (pseudonym for Vladlen Bakhnov, a famous screenwriter) sings a song he wrote about the article by Bliznetsev-Perventsev (Perventsev), which had spurred the anti-shorts policy.[285]

Vladlen Bakhnov indeed wrote an actual song entitled "Kokteblia" that gained notoriety in the 1960s, which Aksyonov reproduces in its entirety in his novel.[286] Bakhnov's song fervently and somewhat crudely satirizes the attitudes in Perventsev's article, and refers to the "social parasites" wearing "shorts, and shorts, and shorts."[287] There are also elements of Bakhnov's song that could be interpreted as mocking aspects of official Soviet culture — if this song was actually performed in the Litfond space, it is certainly indicative of the atmosphere that prevailed there during the Thaw era. Thus, it is notable that in Aksyonov's novel, the performance of Akhnov's (Bakhnov's) song takes place at a symbolically highly significant site, on the terrace of the Voloshin House.

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[285] Ibid., 38.
[286] Bakhnov's most famous work was the screenplay for the extremely popular 1973 film, *Ivan Vasil'evich Changes His Profession* (*Ivan Vassil'evich meniaet professiiu*, released in English distribution as *Ivan Vasilievich: Back to the Future*). http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0070233/releaseinfo?ref_=ttco_ql_2
[287] Aleksandr Sidorov, *Pesn' o moei Murke: Istoriia velikikh blatnykh i ulichnykh pesen* (Moscow: PROZAiK, 2010), 229-231.

Bakhnov's song draws stylistically from the tradition of "blatnaia pesnia," the song genre that explores the harsh realities and language of criminal life.[288] Even its title, "Kokteblia," incorporates a Russian swear word into the name of the town, creating a pun. Instead of using the proper form of Koktebel in the genitive case, "Koktebelia," Bakhnov removes the final "e" to make the final syllable of the word an offensive Russian word, which literally means "whore," but is tonally and stylistically similar to the English f*** word, and it is repeated throughout the song.

Bakhnov's song also draws thematic elements from a 1920s crime song by Akhill Levinton called *Marseilles* (*Marsel'*), in which a French spy's cover is blown by a group of criminals. Moreover, Bakhnov's song borrows the tune and rhythm from the popular criminal (*blatnaia*) song, "It was in the old times" ("A eto bylo v starinu").[289] Bakhnov also dedicated his song to Vasily Aksyonov, as texts of the song in print confirm. Indeed, the song strongly satirizes the article by Perventsev, starting from the first verse:

> Oh, what glorious land
> Around the bay of Kokte****:
> Collective farms , f***, state farms, f***, nature!
> But, ruining the beautiful landscape,
> Who have come here, but social
> parasites, f***, moral monsters![290]

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[288] Aleksandr Sidorov, *Pesn' o moei Murke: Istoriia velikikh blatnykh i ulichnykh pesen: «Murka», «Gop so stykom», «S odesskogo kichmana», «Tsyplenok zharenyi», «Kupite bublichki», «Postoi parovoz», i dr.* (Moscow: PROZAiK, 2010).

[289] Ibid., 229.

[290] "Ах, что за славная земля
Вокруг залива Коктеб**:
Колхозы, б**, совхозы, б**, природа!
Но портят эту красоту
Сюда приехавшие ту-
неядцы, бля, моральные уроды!" Aleksandr Sidorov, *Pesn' o moei Murke: Istoriia velikikh blatnykh i ulichnykh pesen* (Moscow: PROZAiK, 2010), 229-231.

In his song, Bakhnov mocks the description in the article of the so-called "chicken gods" as ruining the entire atmosphere in Koktebel. As mentioned above, term "social parasite" (*tuneiadets*) is used as well in a mocking way here, as lack of a willingness to work was considered to be "social parasitism" (*tuneiadstvo*) and was legally punishable with a five-year sentence in a labor camp.[291] Thus, Bakhnov's sarcastic use of the term "social parasites" carries strong political undertones here.

In another verse, Bakhnov satirizes Perventsev's propagandistic emphasis on physical fitness and his vision of ideal Soviet youth, while bringing up the issue of wearing shorts:

> The social parasites sleep under a bush,
> They don't engage in labor,
> Or sports, f***, or sports, f***, or sports.
> You don't even see them wearing pants,
> There's one whore for three of them put together,
> And shorts, and shorts, and shorts.[292]

All of these sarcastic lines refer to the description in the article of the groupings of four young people together. The stanza refers to Perventsev's statement that the "chicken gods" travel in groups of four with three guys and a "completely collectivized female companion." Bakhnov thematically connects physical labor and sports as the article does, mocking the propagandistic emphasis on labor and sports in the article. Forms of the Russian words for shorts ("shorty") and sports ("sport") are also connected, highlighting Perventsev's objection to shorts.

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[291] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Social Parasites: How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism." *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 47, no. 1/2 (2006): 381.

[292] "Спят тунеядцы под кустом,
Не занимаются трудом
И спортом, б**, и спортом, б**, и спортом.
Не видно даже брюк на них,
Одна чувиха на троих
И шорты, б**, и шорты, б**, и шорты." Aleksandr Sidorov, *Pesn' o moei Murke: Istoriia velikikh blatnykh i ulichnykh pesen* (Moscow: PROZAiK, 2010), 229-231.

In a later verse, Bakhnov pays homage to Levinton's popular song "Marseilles" ("Marsel'"), in which a French agent offers a criminal a bribe in exchange for information about "the Soviet factory's plan." Bakhnov combines the article's disparagement of the beards that the "chicken gods" wear with a reference to "Marseilles":

> Today a guy drinks whiskey,
> Tomorrow he gives away the plans [to the enemy]
> Of the factory, f***, our dearly beloved, f***, factory!
> Today he walks around wearing a beard,
> And tomorrow, where? At the NKVD [offices]–
> Freedom, f***, freedom, f***, freedom![293]

As in the other verses, Bakhnov directly mocks lines from Perventsev's article, while paying tribute to the tradition of the *blatnaia pesnia*, the Russian song genre fostered in the criminal underworld, which makes use of slang and underworld language. Bakhnov's song and Aksyonov's novel (including the role of Bakhnov's song within it) in conversation with Perventsev's article depict the cultural shifts occurring in 1960s Koktebel. While overt Soviet cultural attitudes are apparent, Koktebel is a place where people with different cultural sympathies express themselves and get away with mocking oppressive cultural attitudes. Aksyonov's novel describes the night when Bakhnov's song is performed on the terrace of the Voloshin house, and he ties his description of the evening to the previous generations of Russian writers who spent time there:

> That evening on the terrace such a great number of people gathered that the long-suffering terrace, on which only three decades ago Mandel'shtam and Andrei Belyi

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[293] "Сегодня парень виски пьет,
А завтра планы выдает
Завода, б**, родного, б**, завода!
Сегодня ходит в бороде,
А завтра — где? В НКВДе —
Свобода, б**, свобода, б**, свобода!" Ibid.

> exchanged caustic remarks, today, under the group of *shestidesiatniki* lightly sagged down.[294]

Aksyonov notes the presence of Robert Er (Rozhdestvenskii), Vakson (himself), Kukush Oktava (Bulat Okudzhava), and other shestidesiatniki on the terrace. They drink bad white wine, everyone is happy, and once again Aksyonov recalls past literary events on the terrace:

> Nonetheless, everyone was happy. To sit on the terrace where once Maksimilian drank real wine from an amphora and seduced poetesses of Olga Berggolts' generation! To sing along with Lodik Akhnov [Vladlen Bakhnov]! To make fun of that suck-up to the authorities [[Perventsev]! To laugh loudly, as if we were all free people […]! And finally, to tap the rhythm of boogie-woogie music on the table made of boards![295]

In this scene, Aksyonov paints an environment in which the *shestidesiatniki* experience a sense of freedom. In his mind, elements of the atmosphere echo the bohemian culture cultivated in Voloshin's Koktebel in the 1910s and 1920s. While elements of the Soviet regime and its ideological constraints are discernible, Koktebel, for Aksyonov, is a place where one can gain a temporary sense of freedom from these constraints – even though they are substantial.

The reference to boogie-woogie music, for example, carries an element of cultural resistance with it. In the Soviet Union, jazz was considered subversive, as S. Frederick Starr notes that during the Thaw: "Jazz, with its emphasis on individuality and personal expression became the lingua franca of dissident Soviet youth."[296] Jazz had strong political implications, only confirmed when Nikita Khrushchev denounced it in 1963 as part of his campaign against

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[294]"На террасе в тот вечер набралось народу столько, что она, эта многострадальная литературная терраса, на которой всего лишь три десятилетия назад пикировались Мандельштам с Андреем Белым, нынче, под сборищем шестидесятников слегка окончательно присела." Vasilii Aksyonov, *Tainstvennaia strast': Roman o shestidesiatnikakh* (Moscow: Sem' dnei, 2011), 40.

[295]"Тем не менее все были счастливы. Сидеть на террасе, где некогда Максимилиан пил настоящее из амфор вино и соблазнял поэтесс поколения Ольги Берггольц! Подпевать Лодику Ахнову! Издеваться над жополизом владык! Хохотать громогласно, как будто мы все свободные люди, Юст! И наконец, отбивать ритм буги-вуги на дощатом столе." Ibid.

[296] Frederick S. Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917-1991* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1994), 242.

modern art.[297] Starr suggests that the early work of Aksyonov (and others), which expressed admiration for jazz, may have actually played a role in forming Khrushchev's opinion.[298] Thus, the scene in Koktebel of the writers mocking a dogmatic journalist and listening to jazz music as they drink wine on the terrace of the Voloshin house is portrayed as engaging in somewhat non-Soviet activities in a Soviet literary establishment.[299] Koktebel with its mildly countercultural elements functioned, at times, as a space somewhat outside or, at least, on the edge of Soviet sociocultural reality.

An autobiographical essay by Aksyonov links Koktebel's subculture of the 1960s with the "Prague Spring" of 1968 under Alexander Dubček's leadership. During the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, censorship was abolished, free thought was encouraged, and a new environment for expression emerged as the country attempted to create "socialism with a human face."[300] This short period of relative freedom ended with the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries and the de facto arrest of Dubček and his fellow leaders.[301] The essay "Karadag-68" was published in the journal *Strelets* (Shooter) in 1984 (events in it also appear in Aksyonov's later novel *Mysterious Passion*), and further develops this representation of Koktebel as a not completely Soviet space.[302] In "Karadag-68," Aksyonov describes the tongue-in-cheek creation of a new non-Soviet "country" that took place near Koktebel in 1968:

> it happened in actual Crimea, on the peninsula of Crimea, and not on some imagined island, but in the Crimean oblast' of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and not in

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[297] Ibid., p. 270
[298] Ibid., 272.
[299] Dmitrii Petrov's biography of Aksyonov describes 1960s Koktebel for Aksyonov and the shestidesiatniki as what San Sebastian, Spain was for Hemingway and the "Lost Generation." Dmitrii Petrov, *Vasilii Aksyonov: Semtimental'noe puteshestvie* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2012), 126.
[300] Günter Bischof, Stefan Karner, and Peter Ruggenthaler, *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 44.
[301] Ibid., 123.
[302] Vasily Aksyonov, "Karadag 68," Praga— russkii vzgliad: vek vosemnadtsatyi-vek dvadtsat' pervyi, ed. N. L. Glazkova (Moscow: VGBIL, 2003).

> some mythical kingdom, and how it happened, I remember completely clearly, in August of 1968.[303]

The fact that Aksyonov notes that this event occurred in actual Crimea, and not on some imagined island could be a reference to his 1979 alternate-history novel *The Island of Crimea*, which is discussed below. Aksyonov, who himself was in Koktebel in August 1968, writes that he and the people who accompanied him in Koktebel "as always" began to "be grasped by the Voloshin-esque artistic spirit [of Koktebel], a Mediterranean exhilaration similar to champagne."[304] He implies that Koktebel has an non-stifling atmosphere, and a certain taste of freedom (which he links to its past history of Voloshin's salon), previewing his later depiction of the even more liberated "Free Republic of Karadag." Next in the esaay, Aksyonov finds out from some journalists that near the Kara Dag Mountain (near Koktebel), that a new, "real 'bourgeois' democracy" cropped up on inlets inaccessible from land. The tongue-in-cheek "Free Republic of Karadag" elected a parliament and a president, and even made their own state flag. Aksyonov later meets some of these "citizens" of Free Karadag, and they talk about how their elections were only preliminary, and some want the republic to join with Greece, not modern, but Ancient Greece.[305]

Rumors about this group of "hippies" who created the republic make their way to the authorities, and military personnel eventually appeared. Eventually, the authorities quietly

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[303] "дело было в настоящем Крыму, на полуострове Крым, а не на каком-то воображаемом острове, в Крымской области Украинской Советской Социалистической Республики, а не в каком-то мифическом государстве, и происходило это, совершенно отчетливо помню, в августе 1968 года." Ibid., 300.

[304] "Как всегда в Коктебеле нашу компанию начинал постепенно охватывать волошинский артистический дух, средиземноморское возбуждение сродни шампанскому." Ibid.

[305] Note that "Kara Dag Mountain" with a space is more commonly used in English, whereas the direct translateration of the Russian "Карадаг" omits the space.

disposed of the Free Republic of Karadag, and Aksyonov ties the end of the Free Republic of Karadag temporally to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia:

> It is unknown how events would have turned if the Warsaw Bloc's army had not invaded Czechoslovakia on the night of August 21st. The attention of all humanity was drawn [to these events]; everywhere, including on the Koktebel beaches, Dubček and Smrkovský alone were the subjects of discussion. The Karadag Republic was broken by the whims of fate, and, as I found out a week later, was very quietly occupied by army squads from Feodosia. In this way, the occupation of Czechoslovakia served as a smoke screen, and the world didn't find out about the fall of a different free country […][306]

In this passage, Aksyonov temporally, but also symbolically, identifies the invasion of Czechoslovakia with the fall of the "Free Rupublic of Karadag," both of which occurred in August of 1968. The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia was a watershed moment for people living in the Soviet Union, which made many people rethink Soviet ideology. The subsequent ambivalence and discontent with Soviet propaganda and ideology was one of the elements that led to the eventual break-up of the Soviet Union. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was also a vital, watershed event for underground writers in the Soviet Union in the late 1960s and 1970s, appearing, as well, in works such as Venedikt Erefeev's famous underground anti-travelogue, *Moscow to the End of the Line* (*Moskva-Petushki*, 1973).

The invasion of Czechoslovakia is considered to be one of three major events that definitively brought an end to the Thaw era and ushered in the start of the "Stagnation" period of Brezhnev's rule (*zastoi*). Komolova notes that the atmosphere in Koktebel during the Stagnation was similar to that of the Stalin era, and that people looked at Mariia Stepanovna with fear and

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[306] "Неизвестно, как бы повернулись события, если бы в ночь на 21 августа армии Варшавского блока не вторглись в Чехословакию. Внимание всего человечества было отвлечено; повсюду, в том числе и на Коктебельских пляжах говорили теперь только о Дубчеке и Смырковском. Республика Карадаг была брошена на произвол судьбы, и, как я узнал через неделю, оккупирована феодосийскими карательными отрядами без всякого шума. Таким образом оккупация Чехословакии послужила как бы дымовой завесой, мир не узнал о падении другой свободной страны[…]" Ibid., 302-303.

suspicion.[307] In this regard, Aksyonov's vision of Koktebel as a freer, extra-Soviet space is linked to the Thaw era. The fact that many scenes in his novel about the shestidesiatniki (the sixties writers) take place in Koktebel throughout the Thaw (roughly 1955-1968), but that after the Thaw Koktebel plays a significantly smaller role in the novel, is telling. Koktebel and the relative, carefully manifested sparks of freedom within it are part of Thaw era culture. Aksyonov sees Koktebel as being inextricably link with his vision and experience of Soviet literary life during the Thaw.

For Aksyonov the end of the Free Republic of Karadag is the end of Koktebel as a freer Thaw-era space in Soviet literary life. Aksyonov's experiences in Koktebel during the Thaw stayed with him for the rest of his life. The idea of Koktebel as being a space beyond Soviet reality is an image that comes up repeatedly in his work. In Aksyonov's post-1968 works this idea of a freer space with greater civil freedom extends to the whole of Crimea. As I argue below, in works such as *The Island of Crimea* (*Ostrov Krym*, 1979), Aksyonov was clearly conflating Koktebel and Crimea in the symbolic image of the "island," be it a cultural island or a geographical island.

During the Thaw era Koktebel was a unique cultural space for Aksyonov, unlike anywhere else in the Soviet Union. The Litfond writers' retreat in Koktebel attracted some socialist realist idealogues who disapproved of cultural trends that they found in Koktebel. However, the Litfond Writers' Houses also facilitated literary and artistic community particular to the Thaw era, which was inspired in some respects by the past literary history of Voloshin and the modernists on the territory. For some of the writers and artists who visited Koktebel and

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[307] "Во времена сталинизма и застоя Дом творчества отнюдь не был хранителем волошинских традиций. Напротив, в те годы его администрация и приезжие писатели с подозрением и опаской относились к Дому Поэта и к Марии Степановне." N. P. Komolova, *Koktebel' v russkoi literature* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk: Institut vseobshchei istorii, 2006), 161.

stayed in the Litfond Writers' House present there, Koktebel represented a place beyond the confines of day-to-day existence in the USSR.

Among the work of the shestidesiatnik writers, the representation of Koktebel as a supra-Soviet space is most strongly apparent in the works of Aksyonov, who was arguably among the most significant novelists of his generation. Apart from their presence in *Mysterious Passion: A Novel about the Sixties Generation* (*Tainstvennaia strast': Roman o shestidesiatnikakh),* Koktebel and Crimea come up time and again in his work, often carrying significant symbolism regarding his cultural understanding of these locations. It is particularly notable that Aksyonov wrote much of his 1979 alternate history and political thriller, *The Island of Crimea* (*Ostrov Krym*) while at Koktebel.[308]

A. P. Mashchenko notes two different "Crimean kingdoms" existing in Aksyonov's oeuvre: the Free Republic of Karadag (in *Tainstvennaia strast'* and "Karadag-68"), and the Taiwan-esque state in *The Island of Crimea*.[309] Is it possible that Koktebel and Crimea as a whole were semantically linked in Aksyonov's conception of them? While Koktebel, with its unique culture during the 1960s, was only a small town in southeastern Crimea, Aksyonov's numerous visits to Koktebel and his enchantment with the area as a kind of Soviet "cultural island" may have colored his perceptions of Crimea as whole in a way that is observable when considering his works as whole. In *The Island of Crimea*, an alternative history political thriller (in which Crimea was an actual island that developed independently of the USSR), Crimea is

[308] Natal'ia Grigorieva, "Ostrov Krym. Otryvok iz romana Vasiliia Aksenova," *Argumenty i fakty*, 8/20/2014, https://aif.ru/culture/classic/ostrov_krym_otryvok_iz_romana_vasiliya_Aksyonova

[309] Note that "Karadag" without a space is a transliteration of the Russian "Карадаг," while the mountain is typically refered to as "Kara Dag," with a space in English. This is possibly to avoid confusion which various Turkish toponyms and the Turkish word for the country of Montenegro ("Karadag," without a space, literally means "Black Mountain" in both Turkish and Crimean Tatar). It is also sometimes spelled with a hyphen, as in "Kara-dag."

represented as an idealized space, but it is not exactly utopian because within it there exists a dialectic of different ideological voices. Rather than utopia, the terms that scholars have used to refer to Aksyonov's Crimea is *meta-utopia*. A meta-utopia is informed by the traditions of utopias and dystopias, but presents a utopia in which different ideological voices co-exist, offering a "'warning" about dogmatism."[310]

The novel takes place in the 1970s, the decade of its composition. Crimea is a thriving capitalist country with a developed system of highways and an established consumer and tourist economy. However, the main character Andrei Luchnikov, a journalist and publisher-editor of the newspaper, *Russian Courier* (*Russkii kur'er*), is part of a rebel organization called the Union of Common Fate (*Soiuz obshchei sud'by*), which wants Crimea to become annexed by the Soviet Union. Luchnikov's political activities relate specifically to this goal. However, at the end of the novel, when Soviet armed forces invade and do take Crimea, and Andrei's loved ones are killed, the mistake that he made becomes clear to him. Aksyonov represents Crimea in opposition to the Soviet Union, with Crimea, to a large extent representing freedom, and the Soviet Union representing oppression. Only after he has lost everything is Andrei Luchnikov able to realize the error in his actions and beliefs, and how special the "island of Crimea" really was.

In Andrei Luchnikov's Crimea, numerous different cultural and political groups promote their own ideological positions, and, as a meta-utopian character, Andrei is put in the position of navigating and evaluating the social environments that are available to him.[311] However, Aksyonov juxtaposes the meta-utopian community of the island with the purported Soviet "utopia," and, in the end, Andrei makes the fateful choice of choosing the Soviet option, which

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[310] Edith W. Clowes, *Russian Experimental Fiction: Resisting Ideology After Utopia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 4.
[311] Ibid., 125.

proves catastrophic for him. In this regard, *The Island of Crimea* presents the island as a "meta-utopian 'paradise lost.'"[312] Thus, Aksyonov's representations of Crimea are, on one level, paradisiacal, yet there is a more complex philosophical layer underpinning his ambivalence about the cultural role of his imagined geography of Crimea in *The Island of Crimea*.

Mashchenko sees the idea of "the island of Crimea" as repeating again and again in Aksyonov's work and as not being only manifested in his famous novel *The Island of Crimea.* In fact, Mashchenko sees the events depicted in "Karadag-68" as being linked to the concept of "the island of Crimea" in Aksyonov's work.[313] Of course, "Karadag-68" describes events that took place near Koktebel, and not Crimea as a whole, but nonetheless the depiction of a cultural island is present in Aksyonov's presentation of the new republic in "Karadag-68." It is arguable that the society depicted in "Karadag-68" represents freedom for Aksyonov, freedom from the stifling components of Soviet life, and the relative freedom that was prevalent in certain places during the Thaw period (as discussed above, Aksyonov symbolically links the end of the "Free Republic of Karadag" with the end of the Thaw). Mashchenko writes that Crimea, as a place, symbolizes freedom for Aksyonov: "Crimea, for Aksyonov and his friends, is a peninsula (or island) of freedom. For him, it is the antithesis of the Soviet Union, as a mainland of unfreedom, and the very fact of Crimea's existence undermines the main principles of the Soviet system."[314] The symbolic identification of Crimea with freedom in the work of Aksyonov indicates that he overlaid his experiences of Koktebel during the Thaw with his understanding of Crimea as a

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[312] Ibid., 178.
[313] Ibid., 126
[314] "Крым для Аксенова и его друзей — это полуостров (или остров) свободы. Антипод Советского Союза как материка несвободы. По Аксенову, Крым самим фактом своего существования подрывает основы советского строя." A. P. Mashchenko, "Rai na zemle (Krymskii tekst v khydozhestvennoi proze Vasiliia Aksyonova)" *Sovremennaia kartina mira: krymskii kontekst.* (Simferopol: 2017), 157.

whole. Thus, experiencing the "island of Koktebel" led to the creation of the *The Island of Crimea*.

It is notable that while *The Island of Crimea* takes place in several different Crimean cities, Koktebel itself has particular significance in this novel. The fact that the mansion belonging to Andrei Luchnikov's father Arsenii is on the slope of the mountain of Kara Dag, shows that Aksyonov had Koktebel in mind when he wrote the novel. Kara Dag, the symbolic mountain in Voloshin's verse about the Koktebel area, and the place that inspired the name of the Free Republic of Karadag are semantically linked with the particularities of Koktebel as a unique cultural space, while being the location of Arsenii Luchnikov's home. The surroundings of Koktebel also play an important role in the novel as the site of Arsenii's estate "Kakhovka." At the start of the novel, Andrei goes to meet his father Arsenii as he "round[s] the final curves of Suru-Kaya before Kakhovka."[315] Suru-Kaya is the name for the sharp ridge that goes up towards the Kara Dag Mountain by Koktebel.[316] Later, after meeting his father and son and others at Kakhovka, Andrei walks around Koktebel by himself, and the novel describes the scenery as Andrei sees it:

> The different facets of the mountains in sunlight and moonlight, the way they met and joined the sea, the lone olive tree trembling at the edge of a crag that marked the grave of […] Max Voloshin—it all pointed to an omnipresent soul.[317]

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[315] Vasilii Aksyonov, *The Island of Crimea*, trans. Michael Henry Heim. (New York: Random House, 1983), 13.

[316] In Heim's translation of the novel, *Сююрю-Кая* is spelled "Suru-Kaya." A direct ALA transliteration of this toponym would be "Siuiuriu-Kaia." "Siuiuriu-Kaia," Toponomicheskii slovar' Kryma, https://crimea_toponyms.academic.ru/562/Сююрю-Кая

[317] "Вот все перекаты этих гор, под луной и под солнцем, соприкосновение с морем, скалы и крутые лбы, на одном из которых у камня Волошина трепещет маслина, – все это столь отчетливо указывает нам на вездесущее присутствие Души." Vasilii Aksyonov, *The Island of Crimea*, trans. Michael Henry Heim. (New York: Random House, 1983), 47. Vasilii Aksyonov, *Ostrov Krym* (Moscow: IZOGRAF, 1997), 343.

The beginning of the final chapter of the novel also offers a vivid description of the environs of Koktebel. In this chapter Crimea is invaded by the Soviet Union, and many people die in the process, including Andrei Luchnikov's father Arsenii. The start of this chapter finds Arsenii Luchnikov, who lives at the Kakhov estate on Kara Dag Mountain, reflecting on his impressions of scenery, almost imbuing it with a sublime profundity, as well as tying its past and future to Voloshin.[318]

> In the middle of spring—that is, toward the end of April—the slopes of the Kara-Dag, Suru-Kaya, and Holy Mountain are covered with mountain tulips and poppies, a joy and inspiration to the eye, and wormwood, savory, and lavender fill the air with a fleeting but unforgettable olfactory poetry. No one misses an instant of the string of brief instants when they are in bloom: windows stay open at night, mountain walks are the order of the day. I hope this slope blooms thousands and thousands of times after I'm gone, thought Arseny Nikolaevich. The way it's bloomed for Max these fifty years.[319]

The final line of this excerpt is a clear reference to Maksimilian Voloshin, who was buried on the Kuchuk-Enishar Mountain in 1932. Both of these excerpts reveal a deep perception of the Koktebel landscape on the part of Aksyonov, that links Koktebel to its history as Voloshin's home. Aksyonov's choice of precisely the Koktebel area as the setting for Arsenii's home highlights the cultural significance that Aksyonov saw in this area for Crimea.

It is arguable, that given the attention focused on Koktebel in numerous works by Aksyonov, that he, on a certain level, conflates his imagined "island of Crimea" with the cultural

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[318] The mountain near Koktebel' is known as "Карадаг" in Russian but is referred to as the "Kara Dag" Mountain in English, possibly to avoid confusion which various Turkish toponyms and the Turkish word for the country of Montenegro ("Karadag," without a space, literally means "Black Mountain" in both Turkish and Crimean Tatar).

[319] Aksyonov, Vasilii. *The Island of Crimea*, trans. Michael Henry Heim. (New York: Random House, 1983), 329; "В середине весны, то есть к концу апреля, склоны Карадага, Сюрю-Кая и Святой горы покрываются цветами горного тюльпана и мака, что радует и вдохновляет зрение. Цветение полыни, чабреца и лаванды наполняет воздух мимолетной, такой, увы, летучей и быстро пропадающей обонятельной поэзией. Не хочется пропустить ни мига из этой череды быстро проносящихся мигов цветения. Ночью – окна настежь, днем – блуждание по горам. «Я надеюсь, что после меня тысячи тысяч раз будет цвести этот склон, ведь вот после Макса чуть не полсотни раз цветет… – думал Арсений Николаевич." Vasilii Aksyonov, *Ostrov Krym* (Moscow: IZOGRAF, 1997), 368

"island" of Koktebel that he adored. In *The Island of Crimea*, Andrei Luchnikov speaks to an interviewer about the way that Crimea is represented in the press, saying, "Take our all but imaginary island, for example. A UFO if there ever was one, but a UFO with a difference—an Unidentified Floating Object. Our whole world is built on fantasy, on the free play of the imagination."[320] Within the imagined world that Aksyonov depicts, Crimea is represented as a place of greater freedom, but is also a place which is difficult fully to understand. The definition of Crimea as a unique geographical and cultural space is a constant tension in the novel, which is never fully resolved.

Interestingly, some scholars have noted a semantic over-identification of Koktebel with Crimea as a whole amongst certain members of the Russian intelligentsia. Konstantin Pleshchakov ponders the cultural significance of Crimea in Russian culture, devoting part of one chapter to the role of Koktebel, in which he claims that Russian culture has "fetishized" Crimea, with certain parts of Crimea being particularly important in the cultural consciousness.[321] He sees a particular metaphor in the phenomenon of people collecting the rocks on the coast of Koktebel (the symbolism of Koktebel stones, as many examples have shown, are reflected in literature as well), writing that "nothing exemplifies the fetishization of Crimea more than the 'Koktebel rocks'."[322] Pleshchakov concludes that for many Russians, particularly the progressive intelligentsia, Koktebel and its history are mythologized and are fetishistically conflated with the whole of Crimea.[323] The process of the symbolic identification of Koktebel with Crimea is multi-layered, dating back to the Voloshin period. It is very likely that representations of

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[320] Ibid., 115.; Vasilii Aksyonov, *Ostrov Krym* (Moscow: IZOGRAF, 1997), 126.
[321] Constantine Pleshchakov, *The Crimean Nexus: Putin's War and the Clash of Civilizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 93-211
[322] Ibid., 95
[323] Ibid., 111

Koktebel as a cultural island are linked to imagery of Crimea itself, as a geographical "near" island, in Aksyonov's work, and that Aksyonov's cultural perceptions of and personal experience in Koktebel influenced the writing of *The Island of Crimea*.

Aksyonov's novel has been relevant in the 21st century and was included in the 2010 official Ministry of Education document "100 Books for Schoolchildren" ("100 knig dlia shkol'nikov"). It has also been used for political purposes. The "Perekopat' perekop" ("Dig across the Perekop [isthmus]") protest of 2006 was an event in which separatist activists with shovels symbolically separated Crimea from mainland Ukraine.[324] The activists had copies of Aksyonov's novel *The Island of Crimea* and when they were asked by authorities about whose idea it was to separate Crimea from the mainland, they replied, "Aksyonov's."[325] While such tremendously literal interpretations of *The Island of Crimea* do exist, they involve a certain amount of separation of Aksyonov's work from the context of the Soviet Union and Aksyonov's personal understanding of Crimea and certain geographical locations.

A major issue with overlaying the plot of *The Island of Crimea* onto actual political historical events rests on the fact that the genre of Aksyonov's novel was alternate history, a genre linked to science fiction in certain respects, in which a reality significantly divergent from actuality is presented. "Alternative history" was first used to refer to this science fiction genre in 1977, and the analogous term "alternate history" appeared in 1954.[326] Thus, Aksyonov's novel

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[324] A. P. Mashchenko, "Rai na zemle (Krymskii tekst v khydozhestvennoi proze Vasiliia Aksyonova)" *Sovremennaia kartina mira: krymskii kontekst* (Simferopol: 2017), 153-54. http://politlinguist.ru/materials/mono/Крымскийконтекст.pdf#page=146.
[325] "Vasilii Aksenov pishet ocherednuiu knigu - krymskii "Proryv" gotovit ocherednuiu postanovku." *Regnum informatsionnoe agenstvo*, July 26, 2006. https://regnum.ru/news/679265.html/.
[326] Jeff Prucher and Gene Wolfe. *Brave New Worlds: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4-5.

contains elements of the history and culture of Crimea, but they are presented from a fantastic, "alternative history" perspective.

It is clear that 1960s perceptions of Koktebel continue to have 21st century implications in terms of how the town is understood, and, even Crimea as a whole in some cases. The continued cultural perceptions of Koktebel indicates the importance and resonance of Koktebel as a cultural space, particularly in the Khrushchev-era Soviet Union. The fact that a space associated with the Soviet Litfond, first, had such a significant role on semi-dissident late-Soviet literature, and second, through its interpretation and depiction in the work of a leading shestidesiatnik, Vasily Aksyonov, impacted late 20th century perceptions of Crimea as a space, is testament to the cultural significance of Koktebel, not only as the site of Voloshin's House of the Poet, but also as an official destination for Soviet writers.

Several of the Litfond Writers' Houses of the Soviet era, and locations associated with them, are reminisced upon in memoirs and find reflection in works produced during the Soviet era, and Koktebel particularly has remained relevant in post-Soviet cultural mythology (which is also due, of course, to its pre-revolutionary history as Voloshin's home). The cultural particularities that existed in writers' retreats during the Thaw era, such as in Koktebel, Dubulti, and Maleevka point to certain aspects of post-war Soviet writing culture and its linkages with cultural networks and particular spaces. While at times represented in contrary manners in different literary works and historical accounts, these places left an indelible mark on Soviet literary history of the post-war period and showcase the different layers and elements of the Soviet literary world, which existed in these official, state-funded spaces. In the case of Koktebel particularly, the culture of the Litfond Writers' House in the 1960s has significantly impacted Russian literary culture and has been remembered in 21st century creative work.

Conflicting accounts and cultural reflections of the atmosphere at Soviet writers' retreats demonstrates the existence of dual cultures in Thaw-era Soviet creative spaces. On one hand, the atmosphere Kadare depicts is fully tied to Soviet socialist realist ideology and writing culture; on the other, Aksyonov's Koktebel and Dubulti are "literary confessionals" that are spaces almost beyond official ideology. The differing accounts provide authentic useful clues that help us examine the complexities of the multi-layered atmosphere in official Soviet creative spaces.

Chapter 3

Peredelkino, Komarovo, and Koktebel: Memory Spaces for Modernist Writers at Soviet-era Literary Communities

I. Introduction

From Maksimilian Voloshin's artistic myth-creation about the southeastern Crimean town of Koktebel', to Boris Pasternak's depictions of the seasons in the Peredelkino cycle of *On Early Trains*, to Anna Akhmatova's reflection that nature in the Komarovo area on the Karelian isthmus was "forever memorable" to her — some writers' communities in the Soviet Union became sites of memory associated not with socialist realist writers but with modernist poets.[327] While these communities were a part of Soviet literary culture, directly funded and controlled by the Writers' Union and Litfond, where boilerplate ideological literature was produced, as places of memory today they bring to mind more independent writers (who, despite their dissimilarities, are united in their loyalty to their own unique artistic visions). Thus, as sites of memory, these communities, in part, shed their original purpose as government-controlled places for the production of Soviet socialist realist party literature. Their role in the Russian cultural heritage is now linked to the memory of Russian modernist writers. How did that shift happen?

Contemporary scholarship regarding historical monuments is by and large grounded in sociologist Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de memoire* ("sites of memory"), which defines monuments as manifestations of state power, rather than representations of a community's historical past. Nora's concept has been so influential that one reviewer notes it as having

[327] Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de memoire* has been variously translated into English as "places of memory," "memory spaces," and "sites of memory." Throughout this chapter "places of memory" is used.

"spawned a veritable industry of cultural studies."[328] Nora's *lieux de memoire* project consisted of 7 volumes published between 1984 and 1992, with about 120 essays by different scholars. The *lieux de memoire* examined could be physical locations or statues, or "symbolic" *lieux*, such as "ceremonies or pilgrimages," or, they could be "functional" items that served to preserve memory, such as dictionaries.[329] Thus, "sites of memory" were not necessarily monuments, in Nora's conception, but rather any object or phenomenon, real or imaginary, which held meaningful symbolic importance for a given country.[330] This chapter examines three Soviet writers' communities as sites of memory for three major modernist writers whose creative work did not reflect official ideology, indicating layers of complexity beyond Nora's concept in terms of how state memorialization and its relationship to independent and underground memorialization can be considered, especially within the context of the USSR.

Nora's highly influential work was inspired and informed by the work of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who was an early scholar of social and collective memory, who himself expanded upon and moved away from certain ideas of the prominent sociologist Emile Durkheim.[331] Halbwachs was a student of Durkheim, who had first used the term "collective memory."[332] Halbwachs believed that collective memory is shaped by the present as well as the past. In his 1925 book, *The Social Frameworks*, he emphasized the social nature of memory, and how it is intricately connected to the various social groups to which an individual belongs.

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[328] Jay Winter, review of *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past (Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions)*, ed. Pierre Nora, *H-France, H-Net Reviews*, October 1997, http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=1354.
[329] Stephen Legg, "Contesting and surviving memory: space, nation and nostalgia in Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23, no. 4: 481–504.
[330] Nancy Wood, "Memory's Remains: Les lieux de memoire," *History and Memory* 6, no. 1 (1994): 123-149.
[331] Legg, "Contesting and surviving memory: space, nation and nostalgia in Les Lieux de Mémoire," 482.
[332] Dee Briton, "What is Collective Memory?" Memorial Worlds, accessed April 15, 2020, https://memorialworlds.com/what-is-collective-memory/

Another essay by Halbwachs, "Historical Memory and Collective Memory," advances the idea that there is a significant difference between history, which strives to present objective truth, and "collective memory," which group agreed-upon historical-cultural beliefs maintain in any given setting.[333]

In the 1980s, when Nora's thinking became popular, studies on collective memory reemerged as a new approach to understanding ethnic and national identity. Nora expands on Halbwachs "by stating that collective memory is used by groups to interpret a past, and yet these memories become detached from the past."[334] Thus, these memories take on a new life that is perpetuated through *lieux de memoire*.[335] For Nora, these sites of memory serve as symbols that shape actual memory for citizens of a given region or country (though his work focuses almost exclusively on France). These *lieux de memoire* become symbolic of the state-promoted perceptions of the past but were not representative of actual personal or community memory.

As scholars have expanded upon Nora's concept, a major critique has been that Nora's work both seems to insist that cultural memory is dictated by the nation-state, ignoring the multiple layers of cultural memory that can exist in a particular cultural context.[336] According to cultural geographer Stephen Legg, "Nora's terms and concepts can be utilized effectively, but only if they are heavily qualified."[337] In Nora's work, "memory" is portrayed as passive, while

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[333] Kirk Savage, "History, Memory, and Monuments: An Overview of the Scholarly Literature on Commemoration," National Park Service, Organization of American Historians, http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/hisnps/npsthinking/savage.pdf ,1-2.
[334] Britton, "What is Collective Memory?" op. cit.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Legg, "Contesting and surviving memory: space, nation and nostalgia in Les Lieux de Mémoire," 491-493; Michael Rothberg, "Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de mémoire to Noeuds de mémoire," *Yale French Studies*, no. 118/119 (2010): 3-12.
[337] Legg, "Contesting and surviving memory: space, nation and nostalgia in Les Lieux de Mémoire," 481–504.

'history' is dominant, and "dictatorial, commanding, all-powerful."[338] While social understandings of history are undoubtedly influenced by cultural institutions and an all-encompassing knowledge of the past is impossible, it may not be wholly useful to draw a distinction between "memory" and "history'"in this manner. Thus, in some cases it will be necessary to extend and fine-tune Nora's concepts. Nora's ideas may also need to be adapted somewhat to describe the politics of memory in countries where the politics of monuments has been complicated by multiple shifts in type of governance in the last century (examples of wide-sweeping changes in monument and memory practices include both Lenin's "monumental propaganda" and the post-Soviet "Leninopad").[339]

There are certainly "transnational" and "postnational" sites of memory that do not fully correspond to Nora's idea that sites of memory function to support state power. Foote has noted that scholarly work focused on memorialization with regard to Eastern Europe has highlighted the fact that in these countries, sites of memory can be "local, diffuse, and polysemic," and that by viewing sites of memory as inherently national, the existence of subcultures and local communities are neglected.[340] With regard to the Soviet era, the development of places of memory for writers who were considered ideologically suspect, also demonstrates that places of memory can be multi-layered, not necessarily constituting a nation-defining project.

While the conceptual framework in this chapter draws primarily from Nora's work, concepts from Russian literary criticism should also be mentioned, as many Russian sources on these places, particularly Koktebel, reference ideas such as the "city text" and "genius loci,"

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[338] Ibid.
[339] Anastasiya Pshenychnykh, "Leninfall: The spectacle of forgetting," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 23, no. 3 (2020): 393-414; Katarzyna Trzeciak, (2015). "The Petrified Utopia: Monumental Propaganda, Architecture Parlante, and the Question about (De)Materialisation of Monuments," *Philosophy Study* 5, no. 1 (2020), 29-34.
[340] Legg, "Contesting and surviving memory: space, nation and nostalgia in Les Lieux de Mémoire," 493.

which are much more widespread in Russian-language literary criticism. The history of the "city text" in Russian literary scholarship has its roots in N. P. Antsiferov's study of St. Petersburg (influenced by I. M. Grevs' "excursion method") and was expanded upon by Toporov and Lotman's work on semiotics.[341] The urban, city landscapes of Moscow and St. Petersburg have received the most attention regarding their meaning and role in Russian literature and cultural memory. Toporov's work on the St. Petersburg text is the most well-known with regards to semiotic "city texts," and there has been significant debate concerning the existence of a discernable "Moscow text."[342] The study of geographical locations as "texts" in Russia has also expanded in scholarship to include, for example, the cities of Perm' and Samara.[343]

Antsiferov's and Grevs' prior work on the Petersburg city text was displaced in mainstream Soviet scholarship by "regional studies" (*kraevedenie*) approaches in 1923.[344] However, in much Russian literary scholarship today, both "regional studies" focal points and methods that incorporate concepts like geographical semiotic "texts" and Antsiferov's "genius loci" seem to merge. For example, Voloshin is often referred to as contributing to the "genius loci" of Koktebel'. Additionally, the "dacha text" has been suggested as a tangible phenomenon of late-nineteenth-century Russian literature.[345] This chapter examines regional dacha and destination spaces associated with literary history in the 20th century, which function as cultural

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[341] Frances Nethercott, *Writing History in Late Imperial Russia: Scholarship and the Literary Canon* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 130-1.
[342] Sidney Dement, *Textual Dimensions of Urban Space in M.A. Bulgakov's Master and Margarita* (Ph.D. diss., the University of Kansas, 2011), 22-26.
[343] N. G. Samarina, Rostov i Iaroslavl': Kul'turnaia pamiat' ili kul'turnyi proekt? *Istoriia obrazov i predstavlenii* 38, 2012: 289.
[344] Frances Nethercott, *Writing History in Late Imperial Russia: Scholarship and the Literary Canon*, 131.
[345] Stephen Lowell, "Dachnyi tekst v russkoi literature XIX veka," *Voprosy literatury* 2003, no. 3: 34-73. See also Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003)

heritage sites and memory spaces that are linked with the memory of particular modernist writers. In addition, these three dacha and destination spaces are all linked in that they were official spaces associated the Soviet Litfond and Writers' Union where writers lived and worked, funded by the state.

The argument of this chapter is that some of the most famous locations of Soviet writers' communities (containing a central Writers' House), which were created by the Soviet state to reward ideologically compliant Soviet writers, became enduring sites of memory for authors whose work was not always ideologically compliant. In fact, in some cases, the Writers' Union and its Litfond spaces, somewhat paradoxically, given the pervasive environment of Soviet socialist realist artistic production, actually facilitated inter-generational contact between the generation of pre-revolutionary modernists and the post-war literary generation of the 1960s (particularly so with regard to Komarovo and Peredelkino). The establishment of sites of memory also reflects ideological change in the late Soviet Union, particularly with respect to the establishment of the museums to Pasternak at Peredelkino and Voloshin at Koktebel during the *perestroika* era. In addition, while Akhmatova, Pasternak, and Voloshin were contemporaries, they were all vastly different writers and cultural figures. Thus, it is somewhat surprising that different destination and dacha-settlement-type towns that were affiliated with the Writers' Union and Litfond (and were the sites of a Litfond Writers' House in the Soviet era) came to be associated with these relatively independent writers. However, between the different locations examined in this chapter, certain overlapping characteristics in their development into sites of memory are observable. The writers in this chapter were inspired by these locations which came to be associated with them, and this is reflected in their writing. These locations all also fostered inter-generational connections with younger writers in the form of visits and pilgrimages.

Finally, sites of memory (including gravesite monuments and house museums) to these writers developed into important cultural landmarks.

Two out of the three places examined in this chapter are the locations of writers' museums – the Boris Pasternak Museum is in Peredelkino and the Maksimilian Voloshin Museum is in Koktebel. These museums present special interest for a broader, interdisciplinary and comparative consideration of writers' museums as tourist destinations. Anne Trubek, in *A Skeptic's Guide to Writers Houses*, characterizes writers' house museums in the Western world as dark, semi-voyeuristic spaces, dissociated from the works of literary creation themselves.[346] But what about the role of museums as asserting the cultural significance of literary figures in an ideologically contentious atmosphere? The memory places examined in this chapter were also established in locations that were writers' communities where active literary production was still occurring. Indeed, the history of the discussion and resistance of the authorities to the creation of specific writers' house museums in the Soviet Union adds a layer of complexity regarding the history of the creation of these memory spaces.

Writers' house museums, have, in the English and American context, shaped the understanding of the national literary canon. In these cases, pilgrimages to authors' houses influence the reception of their work, and even perhaps functioning, as Anne Trubek notes, as "secular shrines."[347] In the Soviet Union, pilgrimages to sites associated with certain authors took on an additional ideological aspect. In the context of an atmosphere where specific writers and their works were denounced in the press, a pilgrimage to a site associated with such a writer functioned as inner affirmation of one's own beliefs. As pilgrimage is a crucial aspect of

[346] Anne Trubek, *A Skeptic's Guide to Writers Houses* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 3-5; 46.
[347] Ibid.

establishing sites of memory, a consideration of the role of pilgrimage to sites of memory will be a thematic component of this chapter.

Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova, and Maksimilian Voloshin were writers whose work was characterized by an independent spark in ideologically highly charged eras that left them subject to denunciation and censorship. However, the Soviet cultural spaces in Komarovo, Koktebel, and Peredelkino are inextricably linked with their memory and function in part as places of memory to them. These artists emphatically do not represent one creative vision, and they often took issue with each other's work. For example, Akhmatova was not particularly fond of Voloshin and derided the "whole 'Koktebel' institution," writing off Voloshin's continued influence to his "luck" of being shown in a positive light in the memoirs of Marina Tsvetaeva and Ilya Ehrenburg.[348] Nonetheless, the locations associated with the Litfond and Writers' Union in the 1950s and 1960s examined in this chapter all enabled Thaw-era links to "Silver Age" or modernist literary culture, of which Akhmatova, Pasternak, and Voloshin were all a part. This chapter examines how locations of Soviet creative production became fused with the memory of these writers, which in turn cemented aspects of Russian literary history that the Soviet authorities often tried to suppress. The gradual establishment of monuments and museums became part of Russian collective remembrance of literary history, and they acted as a counter-tradition to official Soviet literary prescriptions.

This chapter first examines Koktebel's cultural mythology, first promoted by Voloshin himself, and the expansion of perceptions of its historical importance in Russian literary culture, leading to the eventual establishment of the Voloshin Museum. Then, Peredelkino is considered from the perspective of its treatment in Pasternak's work, its resonance among Pasternak's

[348] Antoly Naiman, *Remembering Anna Akhmatova*, trans. Wendy Rosslyn (London: Peter Halban, 1991), 146.

followers in the sixties generation, leading to the creation of the Pasternak House Museum. Finally, the role of Anna Akhmatova's dacha and gravesite at Komarovo are discussed in terms of the function her dacha held for intergenerational literary contact between her and her followers, as well as the interrelationship between her gravesite at Komarovo and sites of memory devoted to Akhmatova in St. Petersburg. The history of the sites of memory and pilgrimages associated with these three suburban and rural locations of Soviet writers' communities sheds light on how Soviet writers' communities became sites of memory for these writers, and how these places are also textually embedded in the literary output (prose and poetry) of the authors who are memorialized at the locations today.

II. Voloshin's Mythologized Koktebel' as a Site of Memory

The Green Tent (*Zelenyi shater),* Liudmila Ulitskaia's 2010 novel about a group of students from the sixties generation, involves two characters named Il'ia and Mikha who visit Crimea in 1967. As the narrator notes, the "genre of the trip [to Crimea] was that of a pilgrimage—to the grave of a poet whom Mikha adored."[349] It is worth stressing that the act of pilgrimage plays a unique role in cementing a given location as a "site of memory" in a given cultural context. Notable examples of pilgrimages to revered artists and writers abound in cultural history past and present. Venerated writers from distant eras, such as Cicero, Virgil, and Chaucer have for centuries drawn pilgrims to sites associated with them.[350] From Europeans visiting the mausoleum of

[349] "Жанр поездки был паломнический – на могилу к поэту, которого Миха обожал." Liudmila Ulitskaia, *Zelenyi shater* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2010), 457.
[350] Allison Booth, *Homes and Haunts: Touring Writers' Shrines and Countries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 28.

Omar Khayyam in Iran, to Americans being drawn to Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon or Thomas Carlyle's house in Chelsea, as well as fans visiting Jim Morrison's grave at Pere-Lachaise cemetery in Paris, the phenomenon of pilgrimage to sites associated with cultural figures is seen in many different temporal and geographic contexts.[351] In part through such repeated visits revered artistic figures remain relevant in their specific cultural milieux.

The pilgrimage in Ulitskaia's novel is to Koktebel, where Maksimilian Voloshin had long been a fixture in the landscape. In fact, along the edge of the Kok-Kaia cliff in southeastern Crimea, near Koktebel, a line appears to form the profile of a man, and it has become custom to view this line in the cliff the profile of Voloshin himself—the poet, artist, mystic, and historical figure who built his house on the coast of the Koktebel bay below. Voloshin's myth and myth-creation has come to be indelibly connected to the geography of Koktebel and the house that he built. The house later became a Soviet writers' community, and, subsequently, a museum and site of cultural memory. Incidentally, Voloshin chose to be buried on the Kuchuk-Enishar mountain. His house stands on the bay stands between his "profile" on Kok-Kaya in the west, and his gravesite in the east, with the town of Koktebel being metaphorically embraced by Voloshin on both sides. Few locations in Russian literary history are so deeply associated with one writer (see Fig. 1).

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[351] Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 110-111.; Peter Jan Margry, "The Pilgrimage to Jim Morrison's Grave at Pere-Lachaise" in *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 143-72.; Allison Booth, *Homes and Haunts: Touring Writers' Shrines and Countries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 6-7.

Figure 1. The Kuchuk-Yenishar mountain where Voloshin is buried is to the northeast of his house in Koktebel, while the ridge Kok-kaya (which some say, forms Voloshin's profile) is part of Karadag is to the southwest. Thus, as some scholars have noted, Koktebel is symbolically embraced by Voloshin on both sides. (Google Earth, 2018.)

The development of Koktebel into a site of memory associated with Voloshin has origins first in Voloshin's own mythologization of Koktebel, which was further promulgated by Marina Tsvetaeva in her memoir *The Living about the Living* (*Zhivoe o zhivom*). However, when considering the history of the establishment of Koktebel as a "site of memory" for Voloshin during the Soviet period, it is significant that its designation as an important site of Russian cultural heritage was not fully established until the 1980s. For many years prior to the Thaw, in certain aspects Koktebel' remained a quasi-dissident "site of memory," whose significance was debated in a mainstream publication by prominent Soviet writer, Valentin Kataev. The following sections examine the origin of perceptions of Koktebel as an important site in Russian culture and the development of sites of memory linked to Voloshin during the Soviet period.

Voloshin's Mythologization of Koktebel

Koktebel is unique not just as a site of memory, but the site of an entire mythology created by the so-called "Tsar' of Cimmeria," Maksimilian Voloshin. This mythologization would play a role in later literary tourism and "pilgrimages" to Koktebel. Voloshin's mythology is linked to perceptions of distant antiquity, namely, the idea that the Koktebel area is the "Cimmeria" that Homer mentions in the *Odyssey*.[352] That the history of Voloshin's home, which he called the "House of the Poet" (*Dom poeta*), became a significant place in Russian literature, adds another layer to the mythologization of Koktebel. Voloshin's salon attracted countless important Russian literary figures, such as Marina Tsvetaeva, Osip Mandel'shtam, Andrei Belyi, Maksim Gorky and Mikhail Bulgakov.[353] After playing an important role in the history of Russian modernism in the 1910s and 1920s, Voloshin's house was incorporated into the Soviet Litfond, and eventually became an important site of literary-cultural memory and a renowned destination. Voloshin's myth of Koktebel was multi-layered – in a syncretic manner it included elements of Greek antiquity, Biblical imagery, and the early 20th Symbolist movement. In the end, Voloshin's myth of Koktebel ended up as his own unique creation (which is strongly reflected in his literary output) and came to be a place not just associated with Voloshin's myth, but with Voloshin himself as a site of memory to the poet.

After extensive travels in Western European and Russia, Voloshin decided move back to his home in Koktebel, the landscape of which would become a major topic of his poetry and watercolor work. It was Koktebel specifically, and not Russia as a whole, which, according to Sergei Zaiats, became Voloshin's "motherland." Voloshin stated this explicitly in a 1909 letter,

[352] For a detailed examination of the recorded history of Koktebel', see chapter 1.
[353] Kur'ianova I. A "Dom V. Voloshina kak forma zhiznetvorchestva v perekhodnoi kul'ture," *Kul'tura narodov Prichernomor'ia* 39, 2003: 182-185.

"I need to go 'home' to my motherland. And that land is not Russia for me, but only, 'the sad region of Cimmeria'."[354] Over the next decade, Voloshin would develop his aesthetic vision of Cimmeria in relation to Koktebel. He would write over sixty poems about Cimmeria, the most famous of which are in the cycles "Cimmerian Twilight" and "Cimmerian Spring," as well as paint numerous watercolors of landscapes in the Koktebel area.[355] His perception of the landscape and its relationship to history became fused with his artistic work.

While Voloshin interpreted Homer's account in the *Odyssey* as referring to southeastern Crimea as the historical Cimmeria, since the 18th century, classicists have disagreed on the actual location of Homer's "Cimmeria." Homer may have been actually referring to locations in the Mediterranean, inaccurately using the toponym "Cimmeria" (which, historically, refers to land of an ancient people who lived along the Black Sea). Although scholars have argued that Sicily is a major setting for the *Odyssey*, Voloshin believed that its setting was the area in southeastern Crimea where he lived, and it is this interpretation that is important for understanding Russian literary culture in early 20th century Crimea.[356]

While Voloshin understood Koktebel in relation to Greek antiquity, there are no ruins from that era in the area – he saw all that remained from antiquity as being the landscape itself.[357] It was precisely this landscape that was so personally meaningful for Voloshin in his poetry and painting. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the Cimmerians lived at the edge of the world near the entrance to Hades. Elements of the Koktebel seaside panorama was crucial to the foundation of Voloshin's Koktebel myth. According to I. V. Shapovalova, the toponym Kara-Dag (i.e., the

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[354] "Надо «домой» на родную землю. И это земля для меня не Россия, а лишь «Киммерия печальная область»," Ibid., 84.
[355] Sergei Pinaev, *Voloshin* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 227.
[356] Jonathan S. Burgess, "Localization of the *Odyssey*'s Underworld," *Cahiers des études anciennes* 52, 2016: http://journals.openedition.org/etudesanciennes/906
[357] Ibid., 218.

Kara Dag Mountain), was part of a semantic triad with Cimmeria and Koktebel' in Voloshin's poetry. For example, in his 1918 poem "Kara-Dag," one finds the lines "Go down into the basalt grottoes / Peer into the crevices and emptiness / That resemble the entrance to Hades."[358] In Voloshin's poetry, Kara-Dag is the origin of "spirit" (*dukh*) and "thought" (*mysl'*), and is depicted as a symbol of not only southeastern Crimea, but of spiritual growth as well.[359] Thus, although Homer was unlikely acquainted with the Kara Dag mountain in this specific area of southeastern Crimea, through his own, personal myth-creation, Voloshin embedded the Homeric legend in the topography of the area and, most importantly, in his own poetry.

Voloshin's myth of Koktebel extended further than merely linking it to Greek antiquity – his deeply personal perception of the area is reflected in his poetry that incorporates Biblical imagery and motifs from Slavic mythology and other religions.[360] Voloshin expert Sergei Zaiats sees this syncretism as embedded in Voloshin's poetry – notably in the poem "The Star Wormwood" ("Zvezda polyn'"), which connects Cimmeria with the visions of John the Apostle on the island of Patmos, and in "The Dark Faces of Spring" ("Temnye liki vesny"), which represents Koktebel as a as path to transformation and Christ.[361] In the poem "The Storm" ("Groza"), Voloshin synthesizes Cimmeria of antiquity with Slavic mythology, and in other places in his work references deities and concepts from Egyptian, Buddhist, and Vedic religious

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[358] "Спустись в базальтовые гроты/ Вглядись в провалы и пустоту/ Похожие на ход в Аид." I. V. Shapovalova, "Toponim *Kara-Dag* v sisteme poeticheskogo mirovospriiatiia Maksimiliana Voloshina (opyt analiza elementa v structure liricheskogo minitsikla)," *Visnyk Luhans'kogo natsional'nogo universitetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka* 100, no. 5 (2006): 110.
[359] Ibid., 111, 115.
[360] S. M. Zaiats, *Mifotvorchestvo i religiozno-filosofskie iskaniia Maksimilian Voloshina na pereput'isakh Serebrianogo veka* (Moscow: Flinta, 2016), 83-92.
[361] Ibid., 84-85.

traditions.[362] Koktebel became the center of Voloshin's artistic universe, as both the entrance to Hades, and the embodiment of elements from different religions and mythological contexts.[363]

While Voloshin's Cimmeria was his own creation, it should be noted that certain elements of his Cimmerian myth-creation are also are also keeping with the era of Russian Symbolism. Many Symbolist writers were influenced by the concept of "zhiznetvorchestvo," or "life-creation." Wanting to merge creative work with life, writers sought a reciprocal relationship between their literature and personal biography, with each influencing the other.[364] The concept of "zhiznetvorchestvo" is prominent in the writing of philosopher-poet Vladimir Solov'ev, who considered 'theurgic art' to be the goal of creation for an artist.[365] Voloshin was influenced by Solov'ev's work, and it is likely that his writings influenced Voloshin's own myth about Koktebel.

In summary, in the 1910s Voloshin wove the myth of Koktebel and promoted Koktebel as a place of literary pilgrimage for artists and writers (though not yet the historic-cultural pilgrimage linked to a memory of the literary past, which will receive attention later in this chapter). The linking of ancient Cimmeria with Koktebel, as well as the creation of the cultural association of the area with Russian literature and art, was very much the work of Voloshin. While Voloshin's myth of Koktebel and "Cimmeria" had its inspiration from various different sources, it was Voloshin's personal endeavor, and strongly reflected in his creative output.

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[362] Ibid., 89-92.
[363] Ibid., 92.
[364] Michael Wachtel, *Russian symbolism and literary tradition: Goethe, Novalis, and the poetics of Vyacheslav Ivanov* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 143.
[365] Ibid., 144.

Remembering Koktebel in Marina Tsvetaeva's Memoir

After Voloshin died in 1932, Marina Tsvetaeva wrote a memoir, *The Living about the Living* (*Zhivoe o zhivom*), that continues certain aspects of Voloshin's own mythologization of Koktebel. Tvetaeva's memoir about Voloshin is almost hagiographic in tone, but it is also self-reflective, reminiscing on her own poetic beginnings in connection to her time in Koktebel. In certain regards, *The Living about the Living* functions as a kind of manifestation of a collective, historical memory about Koktebel that Tsvetaeva is constructing for posterity.

Life writing and memoirs can have an important role in the development of collective memory within a given social group. As mentioned above, the idea of "collective memory" in the social sciences is rooted in Maurice Halbwachs' work. In *La memoire collective* he elaborates the distinction between "cultural memory" (the agreed-upon customs, rituals, and beliefs about a shared past within a given group) and "historical memory" (how an understanding of the past is manifested in the present in a given group context).[366] One can see Tsvetaeva's work as functioning to influence the perceptions and "historical memory" of the Russian cultural past in Koktebel, and about the era of Russian modernism as a whole. Additionally, as Tsvetaeva expert Aleksandra Smith has remarked, Tsvetaeva's memoir both addresses the émigré community (particularly in Paris) and uses 1910s modernist modes of understanding art and the relationship of antiquity to art in order to mold collective opinion about the importance of Voloshin in Russian cultural history.[367]

It has been noted that, as a memoir, *The Living about the Living*, contains elements not entirely accurate from a historical perspective, and incorporate what Svetlana Kornienko called

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[366] Ibid., 91.
[367] Aleksandra Smith, "Memuarnyi ocherk Mariny Tsvetaevoi Zhivoe o zhivom (1932 g.) v kontekste mifotvorcheskikh tendentsii rossiiskogo evropeiskogo modernizma 1910kh-30kh godov". *Autobiografija* 2012, no. 1.

"false reminiscences".[368] Rather than focusing on a detailed, recollection, Tsvetaeva engages in a form a myth-creation herself, extending Voloshin's invention. According to Smith, it was likely that Tsvetaeva was influenced by ideas of the English anthropologist and classicist, Jane Harrison, about the role of myth in culture, and was engaging in a myth-making project of her own. Harrison believed, that through the creation of myth, life can be transformed into art. By incorporating elements of her own myth-creation into *The Living about the Living*, Tsvetaeva is knowingly continuing Voloshin's creative work, as well as creating her own myth.[369]

In her memoir, Tsvetaeva reinforces the idea of Koktebel as an important place in early 20th century Russian literature and ties it to the memory of Voloshin. She creates her own version of a mythologized Koktebel and Voloshin, depicting him as an heir to ancient Greek traditions and a Russian Orpheus.[370] By linking Koktebel with Homer's Cimmeria in *A Living Word about the Living*, Tsvetaeva reiterates Voloshin's own poetic linking of Koktebel with the Greek underworld. She writes about Voloshin showing her the entrance to Hades:

> Cimmeria. The land of the entrance to Orpheus' Hades. When Max, during midday hikes, told me about the land on which we were walking, it seemed to me that the person walking next to me was– not even Herodotus, for Herodotus spoke through rumors, and the man walking with me talked like someone with personal knowledge. The capacity of the poet to see the mysterious is most of all the capacity of eyewitnessing: through an inner eye seeing all times. An eyewitness to all times is a seer of mysteries.[371]

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[368] "ложные воспоминания"; Svetlana Konienko, *Samoopredelenie v kul'ture moderna: Maksimilian Voloshin – Marina Tsvetaeva*, 104.

[369] Aleksandra Smith, "Memuarnyi ocherk Mariny Tsvetaevoi Zhivoe o zhivom (1932 g.) v kontekste mifotvorcheskikh tendentsii rossiiskogo evropeiskogo modernizma 1910kh-30kh godov". *Autobiografija* 2012, no. 1: 195-6.

[370] Ibid., 38.

[371] "Киммерия. Земля входа в Аид Орфея. Когда Макс, полдневными походами, рассказывал мне о земле, по которой мы идём, мне казалось, что рядом со мной идёт - даже не Геродот, ибо Геродот рассказывал по слухам, шедший же рядом повествовал, как свой о своём. Тайновидчество поэта есть прежде всего очевидчество: внутренним оком - всех времён. Очевидец всех времён есть тайновидец." Tsvetaeva as cited in Anastasia Savchenko-Moore, *Orphic Mythologemes in Marina Tsvetaeva's Oeuvre* (M.A. Thesis, The University of Oregon, 29), 29; Marina Tsvetaeva, "Zhivoe o

Rather than approaching her memoir as a dry, fact-collecting project, Tsvetaeva presents Voloshin as an Ancient Greek guide, taking her to the entrance of the underworld, in what is, indisputably, Cimmeria, the edge of the Greek world. This metaphor serves to represent Voloshin's wisdom in a semi-panegyric manner, and also to further Voloshin's own myth of Koktebel, with Tsvetaeva's own stylistic twist. Smith notes the preponderance of ancient Greek imagery (with Voloshin represented as a Dionysian figure), as well as the blurriness of the line between reality and dreamlike vision in *The Living about the Living*.[372]

Tsvetaeva's *The Living about the Living* has many layers. In it, she praises her recently deceased friend by promoting his own myth-creation (*mifotvorchesto*) about Koktebel in a positive light. She also, as an artist, embeds her own myth-creation in a way that aligns with Voloshin's, and also incorporates her own creative streak. Aleksandra Smith also demonstrates that Tsvetaeva's memoir had an interpretative and persuasive function within émigré communities in France, where Voloshin was disregarded, because it was perceived that he did not sufficiently resist Soviet power.[373] Thus, with this preconception in mind, it is possible that Tsvetaeva's memoir may have also served to influence public perception about Voloshin in a positive light outside the Soviet Union.

As Tsvetaeva's memoir was published abroad in Paris, it is impossible to ascertain whether it circulated at all in the Soviet Union, as it would have been a forbidden text. In recently published letters from Voloshin Museum archive, Tsvetaeva's daughter, Ariadna Efron, addressed Maria Stepanovna in May 1956, asking her to confirm if she had a copy of *The Living*

Zhivom," in *V odnom potoke bytiia…: Marina Tsvetaeva i Maksimilian Voloshin*, eds. V. A. Antipina, N. M. Miroshnichenko, and I. N. Palash (Moscow: Tsentr knigi Rudomino, 2013), 44-106.

[372] Smith, "Memuarnyi ocherk Mariny Tsvetaevoi," 199-202.

[373] Ibid., 173.

about the Living; she was clearly under the impression that Maria Stepanovna, did, in fact, have one.[374] This is evidence that there was some awareness of Tsvetaeva's memoir in specific cultural circles in the Soviet Union, prior to the time when it became officially permissible to publish her work. In any case, the *The Living about the Living* serves as a strong example of the continued mythologization of Koktebel after Voloshin's death and the beginnings of cementing Koktebel as a "site of memory" and a place of literary pilgrimage in Russian culture.

Koktebel as Voloshin's Archive and Place of Memory

In the 1920s, after the death of his mother, Voloshin found out that the Soviet authorities were trying to take the house away. Thinking about the future of the "Poets' House," he decided to give the house to the Soviet Litfond.[375] During the late 1920s, Voloshin was actively focused on the legacy of his house. He was particularly concerned with the continued function of his home as a creative space, and the house became incorporated into the Soviet Litfond. By the 1930s, Koktebel had become established as a destination for leading Soviet writers.[376] Voloshin's widow, Maria Stepanovna continued to live in main house.

Koktebel's future was threatened during World War II when the German army invaded. Maria Stepanovna was instrumental in safeguarding the house and archive. Although Crimea was occupied by the German army, and Koktebel was a site of naval warfare, she continued

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[374] M. N. Fedorenko, "Pis'ma docheri Mariny Tsvetaevoi Ariadny Efron k Marii Stepanovne Voloshinoi (Iz fonda Doma-muzeia M. A. Voloshina) K 55-letiiu vykhoda v svet pervogo posmertnogo sbornika proizvedenii Mariny Tsvetaevoi v SSSR," *Kimmeriiskii topos: mify i real'nost'* (Simferopol: Antikva, 2013-2016), 408.

[375] Vladimir Kupchenko, "Istoriia doma E. O. Kirienko-Voloshinoi ("doma Iunge") v Koktebele," *Toronto Slavic Quarterly* 6, 2003: http://sites.utoronto.ca/tsq/06/kupchenko-dom06.shtml

[376] Valentina Antipina, *Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskikh pisatelei 1930-1950e gody* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 148. See chapter 1 for a discussion of the early history of Voloshin's "Poet's House."

living in the house, now a Litfond Writers' House. In the 1930s she had saved the archive from the Soviet authorities, as earlier an NKVD boss from Staryi Krym had come and asked her for Voloshin's manuscripts, and she refused to give him anything.[377] In the 1940s, on one occasion during the war a German soldier came into the house wanting to take a table that Voloshin himself had built. Maria Stepanovna laid down on the table, exclaiming to the soldier, "Kill me, I won't give it to you!" At that point the soldier left.[378] Maria Stepanovna's determination to keep the memory of Koktebel alive can be considered important in the history of the establishment of Koktebel as a "site of memory." While there was no official museum until the 1980s, it is clear that strong consideration was given to artifacts and Voloshin's archive many decades prior to his reassessment as a cultural figure during *glasnost'* (see discussion in subsequent section).

Challenging Voloshin's Sites of Memory in Koktebel' in Kataev's "Eternal Glory"

In the 1950s, Koktebel had not yet taken its place in Russian cultural memory. Sites linked to Voloshin were visited, yet there was no museum (the Voloshin House Museum would not be established until 1984). Voloshin was considered an ideologically suspect writer and cultural figure from a Soviet ideological perspective and praising his work was dangerous in the pre-Thaw period. At the very start of the Thaw, a 1954 short story entitled "Eternal Glory" ("Vechnaia slava"), published in the literary journal *Ogonek*, written by leading socialist realist writer, Valentin Kataev, demonstrates the semi-established, yet contested nature of sites in Koktebel in Soviet culture. "Eternal Glory" serves to depict the history of Voloshin's House of

[377] N. P. Komolova, *Koktebel' v russkoi literature* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk: Institut vseobshchei istorii, 2006), 162
[378] Ibid., 163.

the Poet in a negative light from the point of view of mainline Soviet ideology, as well as to represent sites of memory linked to Voloshin in Koktebel as competing with a site of World War II military memory, depicting the sites from different era as competing for the attention of Soviet citizens in how the past of Koktebel is remembered.

"Eternal Glory" is more of an essay or sketch than a story in the traditional sense, even though it is categorized as a story in Kataev's collected works. Kataev's description of Koktebel and Voloshin is at the forefront of the work. He writes that upon arriving in Koktebel, one is almost immediately brought to sites that are associated with "Apollinarii Vostokov" (a stand-in name for Voloshin). The description of "Vostokov" is decidedly negative – he is portrayed a clueless mediocrity from a distant past, who once enjoyed a certain level of fame or glory, but is now only known only because a few famous people stayed at his house:

> Vostokov himself is long dead, forgotten. Only a few admirers remember his poems. In the encyclopedic dictionary a few lines are devoted to Apollinarii Vostokov: a decadent [in Russian, this word is very negative from a Soviet perspective—for example, Zhdanov's 1946 denunciation of Akhmatova] poet, an adherent to the theory of 'art for arts' sake' and so on. Before the revolution he had some fame, even glory. In the fashion of that time, the poet looked for solitude and built for himself, on the wild shore, where plots of land stood literally cost pennies, a small two-story house made out of local stone with a semicircle facade that resembled an altar, with four narrow windows, facing sharply to the east, which was meant to resemble a basilica. However, the house didn't resemble a basilica as much as it did a Karaite synagogue. Here Apollinarii Vostokov lived year-round to his complete satisfaction, with the exception of times when he, having accumulated a bit of money, would go to Paris for two months. There, after putting on a tailcoat and a top hat and fluffing out his brown beard a la Jean Richepin, he would sit for days on end at Closerie de Lilas with a cup of absinthe, discussing the questions of new art with French decadents. Upon returning home, to Crimea, he, like Moses coming down from the mountain, preached to his students and adherents the latest literary trends of Montparnasse.[379]

[379] "Сам Востоков давно умер, забыт. Его стихи помнят лишь немногие любители. В энциклопедическом словаре Аполлинарию Востокову посвящено несколько строк: поэт-декадент, сторонник теории искусства для искусства и прочее. До революции он пользовался некоторой известностью, даже славой. По моде того времени поэт искал уединения и построил себе на диком берегу, где участки земли стоили буквально гроши, небольшой двухэтажный дом из местного камня с полукруглым фасадом вроде алтаря, с четырьмя узкими окнами, выходящими строго на восток, что должно было еще больше напоминать базилику. Впрочем, дом напоминал не столько

For Kataev, Vostokov lived in his own fantasy world and, as such, did not participate in the revolution: "Wars and revolutions occurred in the world. Vostokov didn't participate in them. He continued to live in his imagined world, certain that he had succeeded in bringing back a golden age on his small plot of land," Kataev, writing from a highly ideological perspective, implies that his non-participation in revolutionary violence represents a serious flaw in his political character.[380]

"Eternal Glory" goes on to describe Voloshin's gravesite as having become a tourist site (*dostoprimechatel'nost'*). Much to his chagrin, he thus admits such sites associated with Voloshin have become sites of memory. This admission indicates Kataev's awareness even in the 1950s of a culture of remembrance dedicated to Voloshin. Kataev writes that: "It was already the period of Soviet rule when he [Vostokov/Voloshin] died, and to the end of his days, remaining the same, incorrigible oddball, for whom the world was nothing more than an extension of his fantasies."[381] Kataev describes how "Vostokov", according to his wishes, was buried on a hill outside of Koktebel with a stunning view, and that "in this manner, yet another local site appeared – "The Grave of Vostokov", a place for good walks."[382]

базилику, сколько караимскую синагогу. Здесь Аполлинарий Востоков и жил круглый год в полное свое удовольствие, за исключением тех редких случаев, когда ему удавалось, скопив немного денег, месяца на два съездить в Париж. Там, надев фрак и цилиндр, взбив круглую каштановую бороду а-ля Жан Ришпен, он сидел по целым дням в кафе «Клозери де лила» за рюмкой абсента, обсуждая с французскими декадентами вопросы нового искусства. Возвратившись домой, в Крым, он, как Моисей, сошедший с горы, проповедовал своим ученикам и поклонникам последние литературные моды Монпарнаса." Valentin Kataev, "Vechnaia slava," *Sobranie sochinenii: Tom chervertyi, Rasskazy, skazki, ocherki* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1956), 432-433.

[380] "В мире происходили войны, революции. Востоков не принимал в них участия. Он продолжал жить в своем воображаемом мире, будучи уверен, что ему удалось на своем небольшом клочке земли возродить золотой век." Ibid., 434.

[381] "Он умер уже при Советской власти, до конца своих дней оставаясь все тем же неисправимым чудаком, для которого мир был не больше, чем порождением его фантазии." Ibid.

[382] "Таким образом, появилась еще одна местная достопримечательность – «Могила Востокова», место отличных прогулок." Ibid.

For Kataev, the sites associated with Voloshin are given undue attention by visitors to the area. He describes the "House of the Poet" in a disapproving manner. Maria Stepanovna is portrayed in "Eternal Glory" as "Ol'ga Ivanovna." For Kataev, she is nice enough, though he views her as an old woman who is out of touch with her times, comparing her incongruously to "Dushechka" in the short story by Chekhov. The importance of Maria Stepanovna's archival work is downplayed by Kataev, who considers her as rather removed from reality:

> Ol'ga Ivanovna sacredly honors the memory of Vostokov and completely sincerely considers him to one of the greatest Russian poets. She keeps his office completely untouched, has made it into a thing resembling a museum and willingly shows it to chosen people. In the house constantly live several clueless old women, admirers of Vostokov, who help Ol'ga Ivanovna maintain the legend about the singular personality of the poet and about his eternal glory.[383]

In contrast to his diminution of Voloshin, Kataev then promotes the history of the Russian sailors who were killed by the German army in the Koktebel bay during World War II. He describes their landing on the shore and how they were killed. He describes how "Ol'ga Ivanovna" invited one wounded sailor into the House of the Poet and tried to help him, but he left, and died with the others.[384]

It should be noted that it is difficult to determine if the specifics of the description of the Koktebel Landing are correct in Kataev's story — there seems to be little detailed information available about this minor World War II naval event. Particularly confusing is Kataev's depiction of the monument to the sailors, as it seems that there was no actual monument to the

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[383] "Ольга Ивановна свято чтит память Востокова и совершенно искренне считает его одним из самых выдающихся русских поэтов. Она хранит его кабинет в полной неприкосновенности, устроила из него нечто вроде музея и охотно показывает его избранным. В доме всегда живет несколько бестолковых старушек, поклонниц Востокова, которые помогают Ольге Ивановне поддерживать легенду о необыкновенной личности поэта и об его вечной славе." Ibid., 434-5.
[384] Ibid., 436-440.

sailors established until years after "Eternal Glory" was published.[385] Kataev ends the story describing the monument to the sailors (perhaps creating a verbal "monument" as a nudge to the authorities that there *ought* to be a commemorative statue):

> The monument to the sailors who perished is a typical cement obelisk. It is surrounded by an anchor chain, hanging between four egg-shaped mine cases, sawed in half. On the obelisk there is an inscription: "Eternal glory to the heroes – the 25 sailors of the Black Sea Navy, who died in battle for the freedom and independence of our Motherland." [386]

Maria Stepanovna, obviously dissatisfied with his descriptions of her and Voloshin, thought that Kataev's description of events was incorrect. She wrote in a March 6, 1954 letter, "I am upset at Kataev [for the following reasons] 1) I had thought he was more intelligent and thoughtful; 2) I had thought he was well-disposed to the House of the Poet, because he stays as a guest yearly in the house donated by Maks, and as such, should respect it." She goes on to write, "And there is no eternal glory to the sailors there, because there are no sailors there. He completely distorted [things] and, incompetently, made up his own concoction."[387] It appears that an actual monument to the sailors (which was not an obelisk) was not established until 1958. This monument was then destroyed in a storm in 1968, and a new stone monument was erected in 1975. To repeat, there appears to be no historical evidence of the obelisk in memory to the sailors about which Kataev wrote in 1956.[388]

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[385] N. I. Lezina and Iu. F. Kolomiichenko, "Po sledam desantnikov," Po mestam boev krymskikh partisan (Simferopol': Tavriia, 1985), http://adminland.ru/crimea/books/m2163285/part04.htm.
[386] "Памятник погибшим морякам представляет обычного типа цементный обелиск. Он окружен якорной цепью, повешенной между четырьмя яйцевидными корпусами мин, распиленных пополам. На обелиске имеется надпись: «Вечная слава героям – 25-ти морякам Ч. Ф., павшим в боях за свободу и независимость нашей Родины»." Kataev, "Vechnaia slava," 440.
[387] "Я огорчилась за Катаева: 1) считала его умнее, содержательнее; 2) думала, что он доброжелателен к Дому поэта, потому что он ежедневно гостит в подаренном Максом доме и уж элементарно должен был уважать его."; "И вечной славы матросам там нет, потому что и матросов нет – и он извратил и бездарно выдумал отсебятину." Mariia Stepanovna Voloshina, *O Makse, O Koktebele, i o sebe* (Feodosia; Moscow: Izdatel′skii dom "Koktebel′", 2003.), 266.
[388] N. I. Lezina and Iu. F. Kolomiichenko, "Po sledam desantnikov," Po mestam boev krymskikh partisan (Simferopol': Tavriia, 1985), http://adminland.ru/crimea/books/m2163285/part04.htm.

Kataev, in a sense, constructs an idea that sites and monuments relating to Voloshin and the era of Russian modernism in Koktebel' somehow stand in opposition to a monument to soldiers in the Soviet navy who died in World War II. This depiction also relates to his representation of "Vostokov," a self-involved mediocrity, who in past times had been the recipient of undeserving "glory." Rather suggesting that both might be important sites of memory from different historical periods, Kataev's story "Eternal Glory" draws a forced comparison between sites linked to Voloshin and the monument to Soviet sailors. The message is clear, for Kataev, a properly-minded Soviet citizen does not need to remember or heed the pre-revolutionary, especially modernist, literary history of Koktebel. Thus, "Eternal Glory" provides a germane example, demonstrating the authorities' efforts to undermine a site of memory linked to the modernist past of Koktebel. This contestation of Voloshin stands in stark contrast to the way he and his work would be remembered in cultural memory in the latter part of the 20th century.

Koktebel as a Literary Destination and a Site of Memory

While Kataev's story seemed to have almost a personal stake in removing Voloshin and his circle from the cultural memory of Koktebel, an examination of Voloshin's importance to later generations in cultural memory shows a resistance to Kataev's narrative. This competing narrative regarding the cultural past of Koktebel can be observed in sources depicting Voloshin and his home and environs in the following decades. During the "Thaw," Voloshin, as a cultural figure, became less off-limits for Soviet citizens. For example, one of the most prolific Voloshin scholars, Vladimir Kupchenko, first became interested in visiting Koktebel' in 1961, when Voloshin's name was no longer banned, at least in his activity as a watercolorist. In 1961, there

was even an exhibition of Voloshin's watercolors, an article about his art in the journal *Iskusstvo*, and, for the first time, positive reminiscences about Voloshin were published in Ilya Ehrenburg's memoir *People, Years, Life* (*Liudi, gody, zhizni*).[389] Kupchenko moved to Koktebel' in that same year and lived there for 20 years.

In Ulitskaia's description in her 2010 novel, *The Green Tent*, even in the 1960s the house stands out completely from its surroundings, and her protagonist, the student Mikha, is able to quickly distinguish it from other houses built after the revolution and the war.[390] Sitting on rocks outside the home, Mikha recites Voloshin's poetry:

> "[…] My entire soul is in your inlets of the sea,
> Oh, dark land of Cimmeria,
> Contained and transformed."[391]

Upon hearing Mikha recite the poetry, in Ulitskaia's novel, Maria Stepanovna appears and invites the travelers into the house. They go into the first floor of the house, which Ulitskaia writes was known "as Corpus 1" and usually housed miners from the Donbass region in Eastern Ukraine during the off-season.[392] Maria Stepanovna allows the travelers to stay in two empty rooms on the lower floor. Over the next few days, they do various tasks, for example, cleaning up the house. They spend an entire day cleaning Voloshin's gravesite.[393] At night they drink tea and converse under the sculpture of the Egyptian pharaoh Taiakh that Voloshin found in Paris,

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[389] Vladimir Kupchenko, *Dvadtsat' let v dome Voloshina 1964-1983 : vospominaniia, dnevniki, pis'ma* (Kiev: Bolero, 2013), 160-161.
[390] Ibid., 458.
[391] "[…]Так вся душа моя в твоих заливах,
О, Киммерии темная страна,
Заключена и преображена."
Liudmila Ulitskaia, *Zelenyi shater* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2010), 458.
[392] Ibid., 459.; Ulitskaia's description is historically accurate--Lesina's 1976 travel guide of Koktebel' mentions that in late autumn the Writers' House allocated a part of the travel vouchers to miners from Donbass as a privilege, which became a tradition. Natal'ia Lesina, *Planerskoe Koktebel': Ocherk putevoditel'* (Simferopol: Tavriia, 1976), 44.
[393] Liudmila Ulitskaia, *Zelenyi shater* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2010), 459.

which figures prominently in descriptions of the Voloshin house.[394] Sometimes they meet with younger writers staying at the Writers' House. Although one of the characters dislikes a certain famous writer, the traditions of the house dictate that they not fight during meal times. Mikha and another character Edik find the writers at the house to be a bit too Soviet and official for their liking, yet on the road to Staryi Krym, which Maria Stepanovna advises them to visit, Mikha notes his opinion on "the nature of Soviet power, which in Mikha's opinion, was weaker on the periphery [i.e., places outside Moscow and Leningrad] is weaker than in the center, and [the atmosphere is] more human." Edik disagrees, thinking that power in peripheral spaces is even harsher. As a rebuttal Mikha argues that if Voloshin had lived closer to the center, he would have been killed in 1918.[395]

As a work of historical fiction, it is significant that Ulitskaia depicts a student from the 1960s, who knows Voloshin poetry by heart, intentionally undertaking a journey to visit Koktebel for personal, almost spiritual, reasons. Ulitskaia's accurate representation of 1960s Koktebel shows how Voloshin's house was linked to its literary past through the very presence of Maria Stepanovna herself. And certainly, with this novel Ulitskaia perpetuates Voloshin's Koktebel myth and the idea of Koktebel as a site of memory.

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[394] Russian Egyptologist Viktor Solkin has recently identified this sculpture as actually being of Mutnedjmet, the younger sister of Nefertiti. V. V. Solkin, "Istinnoe imia *Taiakh' Vostochnaia kollektsiia* 48, no.1 (Spring 2008): 104-111. accessed January 21, 2018, http://maat.org.ru/public/0031.shtml/.

[395] "Миха с Эдиком всю дорогу обсуждали природу советской власти, которая, по мнению Михи, на периферии была слабее, чем в центре, да и почеловечнее." Ulitskaia, *Zelenyi shater*, 459.

Establishing the Voloshin House Museum

In the last years of Soviet rule, Voloshin became a gradually more accepted cultural figure. In 1984 the Voloshin House Museum was established. The first intimations to create an official museum started in the 1970s, although, as Vladimir Kupchenko writes, Crimean cultural authorities were dragging their feet in approving the museum: "After all, it would be a museum of an ideologically foreign poet, officially unrecognized, and practically unpublished: what kind of precedent would this be for other 'decadents'?"[396]

The next decade would see attitudes about Voloshin gradually change. Kupchenko, who had moved to Koktebel in the 1960s, and whom Maria Stepanovna took under her wing to help maintain the archive, artifacts, and cultural legacy of the house, did enormous amounts of archival work, interviewing people, writing books and articles on Voloshin, and preparing exhibits for the future museum over the 1970s. However, Kupchenko was forced to leave Koktebel a year before the museum that he had promoted received its license. In a 1983 article in the satirical journal "Krokodil," Kupchenko was accused of stealing rare objects from the Voloshin house, and of being incompetent in taking care of important house-related documents and historical artifacts.[397] Kupchenko's career was over after this article appeared, and he had no choice but to leave Koktebel, where he had devoted decades of work to the cultural memory of Voloshin. Thus, published opinions on the cultural importance of the archive and artifacts in the Voloshin house changed incredibly over the course of a few decades. Writing in 1954, Kataev essentially rejected the idea that there was anything important for Soviet cultural memory related to "Vostokov." The opinion about the importance of Voloshin's archive had completely

[396] Kupchenko, *Dvadtsat' let v dome Voloshina*, 57.
[397] A. V. Lavrov, "Pravednik," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 4 (2004): https://magazines.gorky.media/nlo/2004/4/pravednik.html

reversed in the 1983 accusatory article in *Krokodil*. As a writers' house museum, the history of the Voloshin museum cannot be considered separately from the history of Soviet culture and ideology. Over the course of thirty years, a complete reevaluation of Voloshin in mainstream publications had taken place.

Koktebel from a Contested to a Recognized Place of Modernist Literary Memory

The myth of 1910s and 1920s Koktebel was promoted and maintained in Russian culture through the establishment and preservation of the Writers' House in the Soviet Union, as well through the publication of literary memoir abroad (Marina Tsvetaeva's *The Living about the Living*). The mythologized "Koktebel text" links Koktebel with Greek antiquity, particularly with the depiction of Cimmeria in Homer's *Odyssey.* As myth is reworked and recreated when it appears in new cultural contexts, Voloshin's Koktebel myth received further layers, as it was advanced by Tsvetaeva in her memoir, which incorporated her own myth-creation on top of Voloshin's own mythology. Both Voloshin and Tsvetaeva were both intimately concerned about how Koktebel and the modernist era related to it would be remembered by posterity.

Although after Voloshin's death Maria Stepanovna focused on maintaining documents and artifacts, she also repeatedly concerned herself with the future of the house. Sites linked to Voloshin's Koktebel were depicted with scorn in Kataev's "Eternal Glory," an ideologically saturated story from the early-Thaw period, which implied that it was not worthwhile, and perhaps even anti-Soviet, to remember places linked to the eccentric modernist "Apollinarii Vostokov." Over the course of the next decades, Voloshin became gradually more permissible,

first with the Thaw, during which, as Ulitskaia indicates, literary pilgrimages became more frequent, and then finally, in the 1980s, Voloshin gained open reverence as a cultural figure.

When Voloshin created his myth of Koktebel in the 1910s and 1920s it was certainly not a given that Koktebel would remain an important cultural destination in Soviet and Russian cultural memory. Kataev's story "Eternal Glory" shows how hardline Soviet ideologues tried to minimize the cultural significance of the modernist-era literary past in Koktebel. The meaning of places connected to cultural memory can shift. These places are subject to prevailing cultural attitudes and opinions. Nora's concept of a "site of memory" implies that a "site of memory" is linked with state power and serves to reinforce national identity. While the Voloshin House in Koktebel remained intact only through submission to Soviet power as the location of a Litfond Writers' House, its cultural associations with the memory of Voloshin and his literary salon created the grounds for an unofficial site of memory, that was far more powerful and compelling than Soviet ideology.

In any country, there will be conflicting viewpoints on how the past is remembered and what sites are important. While Nora's *lieux de memoire* are, by definition, fully underpinned by state power, there exist specfic monuments and places of memory where certain cultural groups play a role in creating an unofficial or quasi-official collective memory. The reassessment of Voloshin's in Soviet-era culture was a process that spanned several decades, as was the reevaluation of Boris Pasternak's cultural role, which receives attention in the next section. It is notable that the house museums for both of these writers began as unofficial archival projects that were first dismissed by the authorities, before later becoming culturally significant places of memory.

Conclusion to Koktebel Section

The seaside southeastern Crimean town of Koktebel was little known prior to the establishment Maksimilian Voloshin's literary salon in the 1910s. Voloshin created a unique mythology for the Koktebel area, linking it to the "dark land of Cimmeria," referenced in Ancient Greek classical literature. This mythologization played and extremely prominent role in Voloshin's poetic and artistic output, and it was further continued by other writers and artists, most notably Marina Tsvetaeva in her memoir *The Living about the Living*.

During the period of the Soviet era when Koktebel functioned as a destination for Soviet writers, the area had already become a site of memory for Voloshin. However, the role of sites of memory to Voloshin in the area was not met without debate, as is evidenced by Kataev's story "Eternal Glory." Nonetheless, by the 1980s Voloshin's role in Russian cultural memory was acknowledged with the establishment of the Maksimilian Voloshin House Museum in Koktebel, with a concomitant change in many mainstream depictions of Voloshin's cultural significance during *glasnost'*. While Voloshin's house in Koktebel was functioning as a destination for mainstream Soviet writers, it was also a carefully maintained archive (particularly under the care of Maria Stepanovna and Vladimir Kupchenko), waiting for the day that cultural conditions would allow it to become a museum.

III. Pasternak and the Reframing of Peredelkino in Cultural Memory

While a large number of important writers and artists lived in the "Writers' Village" (*pisatel'skii gorodok*) of Peredelkino during the Soviet era, in Russian cultural consciousness today the location is first and foremost associated with Boris Pasternak.[398] Pasternak was assigned a dacha by the Litfond in 1936, and then his permanent dacha in 1939, which would eventually become the site of the Pasternak museum. He spent the latter part of his life in Peredelkino, and composed much of his magnum opus, *Doctor Zhivago*, at his dacha.[399] Recent scholarship has noted that Pasternak, is in his own right, in a sense wrote himself into the landscape, becoming part of what has been called the *genius loci* or "local character" of Peredelkino.[400] It is interesting that while Peredelkino was founded as a community intended for Soviet ideologically correct literary production (with the approval of Stalin), it became, in late-Soviet and post-Soviet cultural memory, most associated with a writer whose work, while sometimes compliant with Soviet strictures and often praised internationally, could also be derided in the Soviet press as being harmful propaganda. In the 1950s Boris Pasternak was, along with Anna Akhmatova, the major living modernist writer. He had survived the Stalin terror and built relationships with talented younger writers of the Thaw era, directly influencing the trajectory of Russian-language

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[398] A. V. Sviatoslavskii, "Peredelkinskii tekst v poezii Borisa Pasternaka i ego rol' v formirovanii obraza Rossii-rodiny," *Kul'torologicheskii zhurnal* 15, no. 1 (2014): 2.

[399] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'ieva, *Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke* (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 509.

[400] Pasternak could also be considered a 'genius loci' as well in the town of Vsevolodo-Vil'vi in the Ural Mountains, which houses another Pasternak museum. G.V. Liutikova, "Genii – mesto – genii mesta (k postanovke problemy)," *Geografiia i turizm* 1, (2018): 149. http://www.pstroganov.com/files/books/_i_turizm_okonchatelnaya_verstka.pdf ; The concept of the genius loci, "spirt of the place" has a significant role in Russian-language literary criticism, having been popularized by N. A. Antsiferov (a contemporary of Mikhail Bakhtin and participant in the "Voskresenie" group). With regards to the other literary locations examined in this chapter, Voloshin is indisputably the *genius loci* of Koktebel', and Akhmatova's relationship to Komarovo exists in intertextual dialogue with her poetry and places of memory in the city of St. Petersburg.

literature in the post-Stalin period, most notably in the work of Andrei Voznesenskii. Pasternak's dacha in Peredelkino served as an important meeting place for writers in the 1950s. Peredelkino became a site of memory associated with Pasternak for these writers and artists of the "shestidesiatnik" generation, especially following his death in 1960. While other writers have museums located in Peredelkino (for example, Kornei Chukovsky and Bulat Okudzhava), which are also important for the writers' village in cultural memory, as Peredelkino transformed from a 20th century writers' community into a museum and cultural heritage space in the post-Soviet era, Pasternak's legacy is by far the most dominant feature in Peredelkino's character as a broadly visited site of memory.

Although all three of the sites examined in this chapter are connected to significant modernist poets, it is worth repeating that a number of considerations distinguish Peredelkino from Komarovo and Koktebel'. Peredelkino was a centrally located, ex-urban site near Moscow, first founded and subsidized by the Soviet Litfond, while Komorovo and Koktebel were on the edges of the old empire. While Komarovo (Kellomäki) and Koktebel were well known pre-revolutionary cultural centers where many writers and artists congregated in the early 1900s, Peredelkino was a private estate that did not have a similar history in that regard. Peredelkino developed most significantly as a literary and cultural center only in the Soviet period, starting in the 1930s. The village of Peredelkino was only established in the late 19th century as the railroad was being laid, and the village's connection to literary culture did not begin until the foundation of the "writers' village" (*pisatel'skii gorodok*) by Gorky and Stalin.

This section examines how Peredelkino came to be associated with Boris Pasternak, a story that represents an overturning of the early Stalinist intentions for Peredelkino and becoming a place of memory linked with the creator of *Doctor Zhivago*. To start with,

Peredelkino became a setting for some of Pasternak's mid-career poetry and its landscape also appears at times in *Doctor Zhivago*. Then the history Pasternak's dacha served as a meeting place for members of the intelligentsia, the site of composition of much of his work, the start of the publication history of *Doctor Zhivago*, Pasternak's funeral, and the licensing of the Pasternak museum, which all mark stages in securing Peredelkino as Pasternak's site of memory.

Peredelkino in Pasternak's Life

The period of Pasternak's life that he spent living at Peredelkino constitutes a discernible stage in his creative work. Born in Moscow, Pasternak received the majority of his education in the city, with one semester at the University of Marburg in Germany in 1912. He chose Marburg in part on the advice of his friend Dmitrii Samarin, whose family estate, incidentally, later became the location of the writers' community at Peredelkino.[401]

Although he was a successful and established poet, in the late 1920s, Pasternak lived in an uncomfortably crowded communal apartment on the Volkhonka that housed six families.[402] In 1931 he moved out of that apartment when he left his wife Evgeniia for Zinaida Neigauz.[403] He spent the year rather nomadically, living with the Pil'niak family (while novelist Boris Pil'niak was in the USA). In May he visited the Urals, and on the insistence of Viacheslav Polonsky participated in a tour of new industrial sites that was part of a propaganda campaign to compel writers to write about Soviet industrial progress during the first five-year plan.[404] In

[401] J. W. Dyck, *Boris Pasternak (Twayne's World Authors Series)* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), 31.
[402] Christopher Barnes, *Boris Pasternak: A Literary Biography vol. 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 15.
[403] Ibid., 44.
[404] Ibid., 50.

October, when they returned to Moscow, there was no other choice but to move into the communal apartment, where Evgeniia still lived.[405] After several dramatic semi-itinerant months, spent partially at the apartment of Pasternak's brother Aleksandr, they were able later, through the help of Maksim Gorky and others, to obtain a two-room apartment on Tverskoi Boulevard.[406] He later switched apartments again with Evgeniia and moved back into Volkhonka.

Pasternak was a somewhat controversial literary figure in the 1930s. During this decade he was lucky to remain in relative favor with the authorities, given the charges hurled by critics against him. Many denounced his work as displaying attributes of anti-Soviet "formalism." All the same, he remained in the good graces of key people. For example, the political leader Nikolai Bukharin remained a staunch and steadfast supporter of Pasternak. Eventually Bukharin fell out of favor and was killed during the purges. After Maxim Gorky died in 1936, the anti-formalist Vladimir Stavsky was appointed Secretary of the Writers' Union, and he was much less approving of Pasternak.[407]

Pasternak received a dacha in Peredelkino in 1936.[408] Given the political circumstances and his increasingly uneasy standing in the official press and literary community, his feelings about receiving the dacha, which was large and pleasant, reflected strong ambivalence. Barnes notes that he felt that "his new material wellbeing was a form of 'manupulative favour,' given how the current authorities viewed him.[409] It should be noted that being provided with a dacha in Peredelkino did not, however, confer immunity from the Stalinist purges. During the Great Terror, for example, the writers Isaak Babel and Boris Pil'niak, were arrested at their

[405] Ibid., 59.
[406] Ibid., 64-5.
[407] Ibid., 130.
[408] Ibid., 127
[409] Ibid., 131.

Peredelkino dachas. The Pasternak family personally witnessed the arrest of Pil'niak, who was later executed, which naturally heightened their anxieties about the prevailing political climate.[410] A climate of fear reigned in Peredelkino as everywhere in the Soviet Union in 1937. Many people stayed in their dachas and avoided talking to other people. At this time, Pasternak behaved in a way that seemed foolhardy to some in Peredelkino, talking to people who had fallen out of Stalin's good graces. For example, when the dramatist Aleksandr Afinogenov was expecting his arrest at Peredelkino in 1937, for which most people avoided him, Boris Pasternak was the only person who would talk to him.[411]

Inscribing Pasternak in the Peredelkino Landscape

The move to Peredelkino marked a turning point in Pasternak's creative life after a period of personal despair, creative anxiety, and relative silence. At the same time as Pasternak faced criticism during the 1937 Pushkin Jubilee and the Fourth Plenary meeting of the Board of the Union of Writers, his poetry became infused with Peredelkino landscapes. Pasternak's son, Evgenii Pasternak, writes that it was likely the winter atmosphere in Peredelkino, where he spent the winter of 1937 in isolation, that allowed him to renew his creative energies after a period of time during which it had become nearly impossible for him to write.[412] In 1940 Anna Akhmatova visited Pasternak in Peredelkino, spending several days at his dacha, and, remembering his

[410] Peter Finn and Petra Couvée, *The Zhivago Affair: The Kremlin, the CIA, and the Battle Over a Forbidden Book* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2014), 4; Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, 147.
[411] Nika Repenko,
"«Pasternak vel sebia neadekvatno» Kak zhilos' v elitnom poselke, kotoryi Stalin postroil dlia pisatelei," *Lenta.ru*, February 27, 2020, https://lenta.ru/articles/2020/02/27/rehau1/.
[412] Evgenii Pasternak, *Boris Pasternak: The Tragic Years*, trans. Michael Duncan (London: Collins Harvill, 1990), 103.

difficulties in previous years, concluded that it was precisely the natural setting at Peredelkino that helped him overcome his period of artistic anxiety.[413]

During the 1940s Pasternak wrote a cycle of poems entitled, "Peredelkino," inspired by the dacha-settlement environs. While this poetry was derided by critics as being the work of a "summer cottager" (*dachnik*), Evgenii Pasternak writes that, in fact, the depictions of nature in his father's poetry have a spiritual quality to them, almost certainly missed by Stalinist critics.[414] In 1943, in the middle of World War II, the collection *On Early Trains* (*Na rannikh poezdakh*) was published, which contained Pasternak's Peredelkino cycle.[415]

Several of the poems in the "Peredelkino" cycle have a seasonal quality. Poems like "Summer Day" ("Letnii den'") and "First Snows" ("Zazimki") feature picturesque descriptions, emphasizing the cyclicity of nature and personal feelings that arise from natural patterns. "First Snows" connects winter conditions to childhood memories:

> The door was open, and, in a burst of steam,
> Air rolled into the kitchen,
> And everything instantly became old,
> As in childhood during those same evenings.[416]

The personal nature of many of the poems in the "Peredelkino" cycle points to the personal significance of Peredelkino for Pasternak. These bright poems stand in contrast to some of the more tragic poems in *On Early Trains*.[417] Imbued with picturesque imagery, many nature poems

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[413] Ibid., 124.
[414] Ibid., 125.
[415] Ibid., 127.
[416] "Открыли дверь, и в кухню паром
Вкатился воздух со двора,
И все мгновенно стало старым,
Как в детстве в те же вечера."
Boris Pasternak, *Polnoe sobranie sochineii s prilozheniiami: V odinnadtsati tomakh. Tom II*, ed. D. V. Tevekelian (Moscow: Slovo, 2004), 109.
[417] Ol'ga Nikolenko i Marina Melashchenko, *Impressionizm v tvorchestve Borisa Pasternaka*, (Kiev: Raduga, 2014), 96.

in the "Peredelkino" cycle make use of impressionistic techniques to create an artistic world inspired by Peredelkino scenery onto which poet's feelings are overlaid.[418] Two poems in the "Peredelkino" cycle, "Waltz with Deviltry" ("Val's s chertovshchinoi") and "Waltz with a Tear" ("Val's s slezoi"), which were Pasternak's favorite poems in *On Early Trains*, emphasize the Christmas theme, which also arises elsewhere in Pasternak's oeuvre, particularly in *Doctor Zhivago*.[419] These poems are infused with holiday festivity and an element of magic, incorporating winter motifs, such as the Christmas/New Years' fir tree (*novogodniania elka*). It is worth noting that Christmas celebrations figure in the fate of the characters in *Doctor Zhivago*, when Lara Guichard and Iurii Zhivago accidentally meet at the holiday party at the Sventitsky's home.[420] A sense of enchantment with the holiday season and the fir tree associated is palpable in "Waltz with a Tear" as the narrator exclaims:

> How I love it on those first days
> Just in from the forest or the snowstorm!
> The branches are still awkward
> The threads are lazy, without vanity,
> Slowly shimmering on its body,
> Dangling as a silver thread.
> The stump is under a muffled sheet shroud.[421]

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[418] Ibid., 97.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid.
[421] "Как я люблю ее в первые дни
Только что из лесу или с метели!
Ветки неловкости не одолели.
Нитки ленивые, без суетни,
Медленно переливая на теле,
Виснут серебряною канителью.
Пень под глухой пеленой простыни."
Pasternak, *Polnoe sobranie sochineii s prilozheniiami*, 114.

The poem continues praising the fir tree, using a variety of impressionistic motifs. It ends with the lines "How I love it on those first days, when all talk is about the fir tree!"[422] Pasternak's incorporation of nature-oriented Christmas/New Years' motifs in poetry from the "Peredelkino" cycle in *On Early Trains* points to the influence of the Peredelkino environs on work that likely influenced poetry in *Doctor Zhivago*, which, as discussed below, also incorporates Christmas motifs, associated with the Russian natural environment.

In 1946 Pasternak began to work on a novel, entitled *Boys and Girls*, which was to become the first version of *Doctor Zhivago*.[423] Literary scholar Aleksei Sviatoslavskii posits that Peredelkino models the nature of Russia as a whole in much of Pasternak's later work. Sviatoslavskii also notes one of Iurii Zhivago's poems, "Christmas Star," has imagery from the Peredelkino graveyard.[424] This poem is also discussed in the prose section of the novel, where Iurii Andreevich thinks about writing a Russian version of "'The Adoration of the Magi' [Poklonenie volkhvov], like the Dutch, with frost, wolves, and a dark fir forest."[425] In this line, Pasternak refers to the art of sixteenth century Dutch artist Pieter Bruegel's *Adoration of the Magi in a Winter Landscape*, which depicts the Biblical story in a northern European setting. While inspired by Bruegel, "Christmas Star" takes elements of the northern, winter imagery, re-imagining them in a central Russian environment, inspired in part by the Peredelkino area.[426] It should be noted that Pasternak was deeply moved by traditional Russian culture and was inspired, both aesthetically and spiritually, by the Russian Orthodox faith, although he had an

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[422] "Как я люблю её в первые дин,/ Когда о ёлке толки одни!" Ibid.
[423] Evgenii Pasternak, *Boris Pasternak: The Tragic Years*, 165.
[424] Aleksei Vladimirovich Sviatoslavskii, "Peredelkinskii tekst v poezii Borisa Pasternaka i ego rol' v formirovanii obraza Rossii-Rodiny," *Kul'turologicheskii zhurnal* 15, 1(2014): 6.
[425] Boris Pasternak, *Dr. Zhivago*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 72.
[426] Nadezhda Biriukova, "Poklonenie volkhvov v podmoskovnom peizazh," Arzamas Academy, https://arzamas.academy/materials/379

ethnically Jewish background. Isaiah Berlin (as cited in Finn and Couvée) observed in Pasternak "a passionate, almost obsessive desire to be thought a Russian writer with roots deep in Russian soil."[427] The poetic linking of the Christmas story with the imagery of the Russian landscape (which some have seen as channeling the painting of landscape artist Savrasov) in "Christmas Star" is major component of the poem, and the fact that imagery of Peredelkino can be perceived in the poem is significant.[428] According to Sviatoslavskii, many of Pasternak's poems "were not only written by Pasternak in Peredelkino, they are parts of the very 'spirit of the place', about which N. P. Antsiferov wrote."[429]

Perhaps in a similar vein to "The First Snows," another poem from the 1942 collection *On Early Trains*, "The Old Park" ("Staryi park"), ties descriptions of nature to recollections of the past. This poem appears in the cycle entitled "Poems about War" ("Stikhi o voine") and also incorporates the Peredelkino environs. Recent scholarship posits that Pasternak's personal historical associations with Peredelkino in this poem, with regard to a particular childhood friend, may be reflected in *Doctor Zhivago*. "The Old Park" describes a wounded patient who finds himself in a hospital and suddenly recognizes his surroundings from his early childhood:

A doctor in a white coat
Was swabbing a stitched limb,
When the patient recognized
A childhood friend, his fathers' home

Again he's in the old park,
Frosty mornings flash again,
And when they put on compresses,

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[427] Finn and Couvée, The Zhivago Affair, 32.
[428] Biriukova, "Poklonenie volkhvov v podmoskovnom peizazh, https://arzamas.academy/materials/379
[429] "[…], составившие золотой фонд поэзии о Родине-России не просто написаны Пастернаком в Переделкине, они и есть частицы той самой «души места», о которой писал Н.П.Анциферов." A. V. Sviatoslavskii, "Peredelkinskii tekst v poezii Borisa Pasternaka i ego rol' v formirovanii obraza Rossii-rodiny," *Kul'torologicheskii zhurnal* 15, no. 1 (2014): 1-3.

Tears run down the outer pane[430]

The poem later makes references to Pasternak's personal friend, Dmitrii Samarin (1890-1921), whose family lived during the pre-revolutionary era on the Izmalkovo estate (which later became part of Peredelkino). The implication is that Samarin is the patient imagined in the poem. K. M. Polivanov advances the idea that Dmitrii Samarin would later serve in part as a prototype for the character of Iurii Zhivago (along with Aleksandr Blok and Pasternak himself).[431] Polivanov notes April 1959 correspondence between Pasternak and a Belgian professor, A. Deman, about similarities between the fate of Dmitrii Samarin and Iurii Zhivago, and Pasternak responded that "His image [that of Samarin] was before me when I described Zhivago's return to Moscow."[432]

Dmitrii Samarin was a friend of Pasternak who studied philosophy at Marburg University (under whose advice Pasternak went to study philosophy there in the 1910s), after which he underwent a spiritual crisis. During the 1910s he wandered throughout Russia, visited many monasteries, and was imprisoned in Siberia. He returned to Moscow in 1921, where he soon

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[430] Boris Pasternak, "The Old Park," trans. Jon Stallworthy and Peter France, *The Hudson Review* 34, no. 4 (Winter, 1981-1982): 550-551.
"Раненому врач в халате
Промывал вчерашний шов.
Вдруг больной узнал в палате
Друга детства, дом отцов.

Вновь он в этом старом парке.
Заморозки по утрам,
И когда кладут припарки,
Плачут стекла первых рам."
Boris Pasternak, *Polnoe sobranie sochineii s prilozheniiami, Tom II*, 123.

[431] Konstantin Polivanov, *"Doktor Zhivago" kak istoricheskiĭ roman* (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tartu, 2015), 164-172.

[432] "Его образ был передо мной, когда я описал возвращение Живаго в Москву." K. M. Polivanov, *Pasternak i sovremenniki* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom GU VShE, 2006), 46.

died.[433] When Pasternak received his dacha at Peredelkino, he was aware of the area's pre-revolutionary history as the site of the Samarin estate and its connection to his friend.[434]

The Samarins were a famous Slavophile family, whose estate of Izmalkovo later became the site of the Peredelkino Writers' Village as well as the Peredelkino Children's Tuberculosis Sanitorium.[435] Growing up in the 1900s, Dmitrii Samarin was a sensitive, somewhat unusual person, who often preferred staying inside with books (especially studying Latin and the history of Ancient Rome) to outdoor activities at Izmalkovo and on vacation at the Riga coast.[436] As an acquaintance of Pasternak's, the impression he made on the poet was significant enough to be reflected in several of his works. Pasternak's autobiographical work, *People and Situations* (*Liudi i polozheniia*), discusses Samarin. V. S. Frank argues that he included a discussion of Samarin in the text to serve as a hint to readers regarding the prototype of Iurii Zhivago.[437]

It is credible that personal reflections on the history of the Peredelkino area and reminiscences of Dmitrii Samarin's relationship to it influenced the composition of *Doctor. Zhivago*. The role of unexpected coincidences and fate in life play an important role in the plot of *Doctor Zhivago* as well – when Lara, Pasha, and Iurii accidentally meet on Kamergerskii pereulok, Pasternak alludes to Zhukovskii's poem about fate and love, "Svetlana" – bringing attention to the importance of unexpected meetings and events.[438] It is plausible that reflections on coincidence and fate in "The Old Park" were, in part, earlier manifestations of this episode in

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[433] M. F. Mansurova, E. A. Chernysheva-Samarina and A. V. Komarovskaia, *Samariny. Mansurovy. Vospominaniia rodnykh* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo PSTBI, 2001), 210.
[434] Polivanov, *Pasternak i sovremenniki*, 46.
[435] Ibid., 46.
[436] Ibid., 46-7.
[437] Konstantin Polivanov, *"Doktor Zhivago" kak istoricheskiĭ roman* (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tartu, 2015), 164-172.
[438] Konstantin Polivanov, "Konspekt Skreshcheniia sudeb v «Doktore Zhivago»," in *Kurs No.16 «Doktor Zhivago» Borisa Pasternaka*, *Arzamas Academy*, https://arzamas.academy/materials/611.

Doctor Zhivago. Indeed, Finn and Couvée note that significant parts of Pasternak's early work were later reimagined in *Doctor Zhivago*, "as if Pasternak were on a lifelong journey toward his novel."[439]

The idea of fate and coincidences as being associated with Samarin's ties to the Peredelkino area are clearly reflected "The Old Park" ("Staryi park"). As mentioned above, the poem describes a hospital built on a former estate, where a patient suddenly recognizes his surroundings and is overcome by an onrush of memories from his childhood. A section of the poem directly mentions the Samarin family:[440]

> Legends have aged the park.
> Napoleon camped here
> And Samarin the Slavophil[e]
> Served and was buried here
>
> Descendent of the Decembrist,
> Great-grandson of a heroine,
> [The raven from Monte Cristo beat its wings][441]
> And overcame Latin.

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[439] Finn and Couvée, *The Zhivago Affair*, 48.

[440] "Парк преданьями состарен.
Здесь стоял Наполеон,
И славянофил Самарин
Послужил и погребен.

Здесь потомок декабриста,
Правнук русских героинь,
Бил ворон из монтекристо
И одолевал латынь.

Если только хватит силы,
Он, как дед, энтузиаст,
Прадеда-славянофила
Пересмотрит и издаст."

Boris Pasternak, *Polnoe sobranie sochineii s prilozheniiami, Tom II*, 123.

[441] Changed mistranslated line from the original cited translation ("Here he shot at cawing crows"). This rather cryptic line may refer to the Count of Monte Cristo (who had "raven-black hair") being a Bonapartist and serving as somewhat of a model for the Decembrists.

> If only he has strength enough,
> The new enthusiast will
> Revise his great-grandfather's works,
> Edit the Slavophil[e].[442]

While some of the details of the poem are historically inaccurate (Napoleon was never at Izmalkovo, for example), the references to the Samarin family are noteworthy. The coincidence of Pasternak's old friend, Dmitrii Samarin's, family estate of Izmalkovo becoming the Peredelkino Writers' Village clearly inspired "The Old Park," and the aesthetics of fate and coincidence that are reflected in the poem may be precursors to elements of *Doctor Zhivago*, where the idea of fate plays an important role.

Pasternak and the Sixties Generation

Peredelkino played an important role as a setting where Pasternak's relationships with the younger literary generation developed. Pasternak held public readings of *Doctor Zhivago* both at Peredelkino and his apartment in Moscow. In the early 1950s he lived mainly at Peredelkino in the summer and Moscow in the winter. At Peredelkino readings of sections of *Doctor Zhivago* would take place on Sunday.[443] Shestidesiatnik poet Andrei Voznesensky reminisces about these events at Peredelkino:

> The dacha reminded one of a wooden facsimile of a Scottish tower. Like an old chess castle, it stood lined up with other dachas at the edge of an enormous rectangular field. At the other edge of the field, from behind a cemetery, there glistened a 16th-century church and a belfry. They were like figures of another suit - a carved wooden king and a queen, painted like toys, dwarf kin to St. Basil's.

[442] Boris Pasternak, "The Old Park," trans. Jon Stallworthy and Peter France, *The Hudson Review* 34, no. 4 (Winter, 1981-1982): 550-551.
[443] Finn and Couvée. *The Zhivago Affair*, 77.

> The readings took place in a semicircle in his study on the second floor. Usually there were some 20 guests. From the windows, one could see September all around. The woods were aflame with autumn. From behind the cemetery, one could glimpse another church, brightly colored, like a rooster. The air trembled over the field. In the study, the air was filled with the same agitated tremor. It quivered with anticipation.
>
> The guests quieted down. Pasternak sat down at his table. He wore a field jacket of the type that has recently become fashionable again. He read "White Night," "Nightingale," "Fairy Tale" - his entire notebook of that period. At the end, he would read "Hamlet." Ah, these Peredelkino feasts! There were never enough chairs. Stools had to be dragged in."[444]

The gatherings on the second floor where Pasternak read his work, including parts of *Doctor Zhivago*, left a very strong impression on the audience, and on Voznesenskii in particular.[445] Dmitrii Bykov notes that Pasternak had many admirers, but the writer who alone can be most considered to be his "student" was Voznesenskii.[446] Bykov sees in Vonzensenskii's work a Pasternakian mixing of tragedy with joy. Rather than being the disciple of any particular poetic school, Pasternak's influence on Voznesenskii is more manifested in the underlying feeling of many poems. Bykov sees this line of influence in Voznesenskii's "Fire at the Architectural Institute" ("Pozhar v Arkhitekturnom") and "Perhaps" ("Avos'"). Additionally, Bykov notes a continuity between works by Pasternak and Voznesenkii with regard to the function of poetry to memorialize and mourn the departed, which will be treated below.[447]

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[444] Andrei Voznesensky, "A Russian Poet's Homage to Pasternak," trans. Vera S. Dunham, *The New York Times*, June 28, 1981, Section 6, 26, https://www.nytimes.com/1981/06/28/magazine/a-russian-poet-s-homage-to-pasternak.html.
[445] "Nevestka Pasternaka rasskazala o ego druzhbe s Andreem Voznesenskim," *RIA Novosti*, February 6, 2010. https://ria.ru/20100602/241566472.html
[446] Dmitrii Bykov, *Boris Pasternak. Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh liudei* (Molodaia gvardiia: M. 2005), 818-822.
[447] Ibid.

Peredelkino as Launch for *Doctor Zhivago*'s Publication Abroad

This dissertation argues that Soviet writers' communities functioned as places somewhat apart from their official designation, as places where writers could at times commune a bit more freely. This argument is support in a consideration of the publication history of *Doctor Zhivago*. At Peredelkino publishing abroad, which had been punishable by death in the Stalin era, now became thinkable. It was at Peredelkino where in 1956 Italian Communist Sergio D'Angelo, who had been working at Radio Moscow, received the copy of *Doctor Zhivago* that he took out of the USSR, which he brought to an Italian publisher, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, leading to its eventual first publication abroad.[448] By the time D'Angelo arrived in Peredelkino, Pasternak had been trying to get *Doctor Zhivago* published for five months, but the Soviet state literary publisher, Goslitizdat, had been silent after he submitted the novel to them.[449] Pasternak, at his Peredelkino dacha, gave D'Angelo a package containing "433 closely typed pages divided into five parts."[450] Each individual part was "bound in soft paper or cardboard, was held together by twine that was threaded through rough holes in the pages and then knotted."[451] This exchange set into action the publication history of *Doctor Zhivago.* Later in the summer of 1956, he gave numerous copies of the manuscript of *Doctor Zhivago* to foreign visitors at Peredelkino. One of these was the French-Russian literature scholar, Hélène Peltier, who later translated the novel into French, and to whom Pasternak gave correspondence in French to Feltrinelli later that year. Pasternak was extremely focused getting *Doctor Zhivago* published abroad. When the Cambridge University philosopher Isaiah Berlin visited him at Peredelkino in 1956, he witnessed the arguments that the

[448] Finn and Couvée, *The Zhivago Affair*, 3.
[449] Ibid., 11.
[450] Ibid., 12.
[451] Ibid.

Pasternak family was having regarding Boris' attempts to get the novel published abroad.[452] Zinaida Pasternak spoke personally to Berlin, asking him to intervene in Boris' attempts, and expressed concern about the consequences it might have for their family. Pasternak gave Berlin a copy of the novel to read, and later told him he was planning to give world rights of the novel to Feltrinelli.[453] After the KGB found out about Pasternak's meetings with foreigners and his plan for the novel's publication, a diplomatic dispute arose between the Soviet Union and Italy. Peter Zveteremich, the Italian translator of the novel, was asked to return the manuscript through the vice-secretary of Italian Communists, Pietro Secchia, who had reproached D'Angelo for his role in bringing *Doctort Zhivago* abroad.[454] When Zveteremich visited Moscow in October of 1957, "as part of an Italian delegation hosted by the Union of Soviet Writers," he was told that the Italian publication of *Doctor Zhivago* must not occur. As he later put it, "[a] brawl, I can truly say, broke out."[455] Fearing for his safety, Pasternak did not meet Zveteremich, but instead gave Ol'ga Ivinskaia a note to give to Feltrinelli, which said not to pay any heed to Soviet efforts to stop the publication, "even though they have threatened to reduce him [Pasternak] to starvation."

On November 15, 1957 *Doctor Zhivago* was first printed in the West in Italian translation.[456] Editions in numerous other Western languages soon followed.[457] The novel was extremely popular in the West, and its printing became associated with the concept of *tamizdat* (from the word *tam* – "there"), which referred to the publication of controversial literature

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[452] Joshua L. Cherniss and Steven B. Smith, *The Cambridge Companion to Isaiah Berlin (Cambridge Companions to Philosophy)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, October 4, 2018), 123.
[453] Finn and Couvée, *The Zhivago Affair*, 95.
[454] Ibid., 101.
[455] Ibid., 110-111.
[456] Ibid., 113.
[457] The the fascinating story of the 1950s publications of *Doctor Zhivago* in the West, with the history of the English-language translation including CIA involvement, is detailed at length in Finn and Couvée's *The Zhivago Affair*.

abroad.[458] While the publication history of *Doctor Zhivago* in the West involved many fascinating and convoluted twists and turns, Peredelkino can rightly be seen as the location of the beginnings of the publication history of *Doctor Zhivago*.

In September, 1958, Pasternak finally received an official rejection of the novel from the editors at *Novyi mir*, in a lengthy letter criticizing the novel for its attitudes towards the Russian revolution, stating that "The general tenor of your novel is that the October Revolution, the Civil War and the social transformation involved did not give the people anything but suffering, and destroyed the Russian intelligentsia, either physically or morally."[459] Pasternak received the Nobel Prize in Literature in October, 1958. This event ignited a scandal in the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union even tried to get involved with the Italian Communist Party in efforts to halt publication. Both Pasternak and Feltrinelli were threatened.[460] After Pasternak received the Nobel Prize, *Literarturnaia gazeta* published a highly disparaging article, denouncing the novel, and characterizing Pasternak as having betrayed the Soviet Union.[461] *Pravda* then soon continued the attacks on Pasternak.[462] He was eventually forced to renounce his Nobel Prize and was persecuted by the KGB. With the constant hounding, he put up a sign at his Peredelkino dacha in English, French, and German saying that he was forbidden to receive foreign visitors, and his circle of friends became smaller and smaller. The KGB recorded the names of everyone who attended his 69th birthday party in Peredelkino.[463] Thus, what was a momentous period in

[458] Friederike Kind-Kovacs, "Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty as the 'Echo Chamber' of Tamizdat'," in *Samizdat, Tamizdat, and Beyond: Transnational Media During and After Socialism* ed. Friederike Kind-Kovacs and Jessie Labov (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 74.
[459] Ibid., 99.
[460] Ibid., 13.
[461] Ibid., 166.
[462] Ibid., 168.
[463] Ibid., 214.

Russian literary history, the publication abroad of *Doctor Zhivago* and the awarding of Pasternak with the Nobel Prize, ended up being in many ways personally disastrous for the author.

The history of the complicated publication history of *Doctor Zhivago* can be seen as beginning in Peredelkino, where Pasternak first gave D'Angelo a copy of the manuscript. Thus, Peredelkino, as the site where the author wrote much of the novel, is not only part of the artistic landscape of the novel but is also the site where the novel was first disseminated. Thus, the process of bringing *Doctor Zhivago* to its eventual audience and international readership began at Peredelkino.

Pasternak's Peredelkino Funeral and Gravesite

Boris Pasternak died on May 30, 1960, and his funeral at Peredelkino became what Zubok calls "the first sizeable demonstration of unofficial civic solidarity in Soviet Russia."[464] Andrei Voznesenskii commented on the political significance of attending the funeral in his memoir, writing that the authorities considered attendance of it to be the "main political crime of the year."[465] Pasternak's pallbearers were his two sons, and literary scholar Andrei Sinyavsky and writer and school teacher Yuli Daniel carried the coffin lid (which was screwed on the coffin prior to interment, as is the Russian tradition).[466] This role of Sinyavsky and Daniel is notable, as they were two younger underground writers, known by their pseudonyms as Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak, who admired Pasternak and would later experience a similar disapproval on the part of official critics. They later became the subject of an international scandal during their

[464] Vladislav Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 19.
[465] Andrei Voznesenskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, Vol. 7* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000-2009), 373.
[466] Barnes, *Boris Pasternak,* 373.; Peter Finn and Petra Couvée, *The Zhivago Affair*, 239.

show trial of 1965. It is undoubtable that Pasternak left a strong impression on them and their work as writers. In a way, they could be thought as continuing Pasternak's intellectual tradition and the artistic ethos of Russian modernism. As a literary scholar, Sinyavsky wrote an introduction to a Soviet edition of Pasternak's poetic work (which was replaced with a new introduction prior to his trial).[467] The June 1965 edition of the Pasternak volume of the Poet's Library (*Biblioteka poeta*), published by *Sovietskii pisatel'*, became rather famous.[468] The publication was known as the "Blue Pasternak" ("Sinii Pasternak"), due to the color of its cover, and only a limited quantity of copies were printed. Intense demand led to highly inflated prices for it, but a few months later Sinyavsky was arrested for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. The publication then, instead of being highly sought after, became a banned work, practically overnight. There are parallels between Pasternak's treatment in the Soviet press after the publication of *Doctor Zhivago* and the experiences of Sinyavsky and Daniel during their trial, and the work of these writers, like *Doctor Zhivago*, embodied a "search of fresh ways of thinking that were still out of reach for most of their educated contemporaries."[469] They were also concerned with the future and legacy of Russian literature and culture – Sinyavsky himself saw *Doctor Zhivago*, albeit a historical novel, as a work that was more about the future (and intended for it) than the past.[470] Zubok notes Sinyavsky and Daniel as two writers who went "even further in search for intellectual freedom" and viewed Pasternak as "their true teacher, in literature and values," viewing them as somewhat of a rarity among the other "Zhivago's children."

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[467] Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, *Abram Tertz and the poetics of crime* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3, 322.
[468] Ivan Tolstoi, "'Sinii' Pasternak," *Radio Svoboda*, June 1, 2015, https://www.svoboda.org/a/27102252.html
[469] Zubok, *Zhivago's Children*, 191.
[470] Edith Clowes, "Dr. Zhivago in the Post-Soviet Era: A Re-Introduction," *Doctor Zhivago: a critical companion* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 8.

Russian artists and writers of the 1960s formed a certain continuity between the art and ideals of people like Boris Pasternak and his contemporaries. As noted by Vladislav Zubok, they were "the descendants of the great cultural and moral tradition that Pasternak, his protagonist Yuri Zhivago, and his milieu embodied [, and, thus,] they were Zhivago's children in a spiritual sense."[471] Zubok also sees Pasternak's funeral at Peredelkino as very meaningful and symbolic for the generation of "Zhivago's children" within Russian intellectual history.[472] The term reflects a certain continuity between the ethos of the generation of Pasternak (and Yuri Zhivago) and artists and intellectuals who were born in the Soviet Union in the following decades, although Zubok notes that many of "Zhivago's children" in the 1960s and 1970s failed to live up to this ethos, and were often hypocritical and problematic, with the art and literature of the Thaw never attaining the significance of that of the nineteenth century or the pre-revolutionary period.[473] While the writing of these authors was quite different artistically and stylistically from that of Pasternak, their ethos and commitment to their own vision as writers as critics was certainly inspired by him.

While Pasternak's funeral at Peredelkino was a momentous event, with a large number of attendees who paid their respects, Soviet media noted his passing only obliquely. *Literaturnaia gazeta* wrote a very short obituary, referring to Pasternak as a "member of the Litfond." This remark drew attention to the fact that he was not a member of the Writers' Union and had been expelled, due to the perceived anti-Soviet nature of *Doctor Zhivago*, from being a full Soviet writer in good standing. Aleksandr Galich noted as much in his poem "In the Memory of

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[471] Joshua Rubenstein, "Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia (review)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 3 (January 2010): 171-173.; Finn and Couvée, *The Zhivago Affair*, 65.; Zubok, *Zhivago's Children*, 20.
[472] Zubok, *Zhivago's Children*, 19.
[473] Zubok, *Zhivago's Children*, 190-191; 360.

Pasternak" ("Pamiati Pasternaka"), which criticizes the official effort to minimize his literary significance and place in cultural memory.[474] Galich's performance of this poem at the Novosibirsk Akademgorodok in 1968 at the Under the Integral Café (*Pod integralom*), during the "Bard 68" festival of Soviet "bard" music, ignited a scandal in the post-Thaw-era Soviet Union.[475] Galich's song, sung from the perspective of Soviet authorities, discusses the reaction to Pasternak's death, including the line, "How proud we are of ourselves that he died in his own bed!"[476] Galich notes in his memoir that after he sang the song, there was a long period of silence at Under the Integral, where none of the two thousand attendees wanted to be the first to applaud.[477] The next month the newspaper *Vechernii Novosibirsk* published an article "A Song is a Weapon" ("Pesnia – eto oruzhie"), denouncing Galich's performance.[478] Soon after the uproar surrounding the festival, the Under the Integral Café closed. Interestingly, years later a memorial plaque was put on the side of the building where Under the Integral had been, to commemorate Galich's only public performance in the Soviet Union.[479] Thus the site of Galich's performance in Siberia that commented on the Thaw-era official memory of Pasternak, has itself become a minor "site of memory" in its own right.

Andrei Voznesenskii's elegiac poem "Crowns and Roots" ("Krony i korni") written in memory of Pasternak after his death in 1960 demonstrates the younger poet's reverence to his

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[474] Iulii Zyslin, Aleksandr Galich: "Pasternak budet zhit' vechno," *Russkaia Amerika*, no. 342 (2005): https://www.rusamny.com/archives/342/t04(342).htm.
[475] *Razzakov Fedor, Skandaly sovetskoi epokhi* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2008), 196.
[476] "Как гордимся мы, современники, что он умер в своей постели." Aleksandr Galich, "Pamiati Borisa Leonidovich Pasternaka," *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Lokid", 1999), vol. 1, 147.
[477] Aleksandr Galich, *General'naia repetitsiia* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1991), 372.
[478] It should be noted, however, that the author, Meisak, was most offended by the poem "Oshibka," seeing it as insulting to Soviet World War II veterans. Nikolai Meisak, "Pesnia – eto oruzhie," *Vechernii Novosibirsk*, April 18, 1968. Otkrytyi arkhiv SO RAN, http://odasib.ru/OpenArchive/Portrait.cshtml?id=Xu1_pavl_636603446169856450_9007.
[479] Nikolai Gladkhikh, "Memorial'naia doska Galichu na byvshem klube «Pod integralom »," Livejournal, September 2, 2008, http://gladkeeh.livejournal.com/100945.html.

mentor and a resounding conviction of the importance of Pasternak to Russia and Russian literature:[480]

They were carrying him way—
But not to bury him:
They were carrying him away
To a coronation.

Grayer than granite,
Yet gleaming like bronze, and smoking
like a locomotive this artist lived,
a tousled life… To him, shovels
were more divine
than the lights lit
in front of icons.
[…]

Now his house
Is a yawn of emptiness…
Desolate floors,
no one enters
the dining room.
In Russia
there is not a soul.

The artists take leave,
Bareheaded, enter
The humming fields and forests
Of birch and oak, like a church.

Their escape is their victory.
Their departure
a sunrise,
On meadow-glens, planets
Gilded with tinsel.

The forests are losing
Their leafy crowns.

But under the soil,
The roots are

[480] The following published translation into English makes use of indentations for artistic purposes in a manner different from the original.

Twisting and turning:
five
gnarled fingers[481]

This poem was first published in an edition of *Literaturnaia Rossiia* dedicated to Tolstoy.

Voznesenskii, feigning naivete, submitted the poem, and it ended up being printed in the edition.

According to Voznesenskii, the editor, whether or not he knew the true addressee of the poem,

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[481] Andrei Voznesensky, "Crowns and roots," in *Selected poems of Andrei Voznesensky*, trans. and ed. Anselm Hollo (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 39-41.

Несли не хоронить,
несли короновать.

Седее, чем гранит,
как бронза —красноват,
дымясь локомотивом,
художник жил, лохмат,
ему лопаты были
божественней лампад!

Его сирень томилась...
Как звездопад, в поту,
его спина дымилась
буханкой на поду!..

Зияет дом его. Пустые этажи.
На даче никого.
В России — ни души.

Художники уходят
без шапок, будто в храм,
в гудящие угодья
к березам и дубам.

Побеги их — победы.
Уход их — как восход
к полянам и планетам
отложных позолот.

Леса роняют кроны.
Но мощно под землей
ворочаются корни
корявой пятерней.

Andrei Voznesenskii, *Stikhi, Poemy, Perevody, Esse* (Ekaterinburg: U-Faktoriia, 1999), 257

was troubled only by the lines: “I run into his house./ Empty floors./ There’s no one on the dacha./ In Russia there is not a soul.”[482] This poem about Pasternak’s funeral also had the subtitle “To the Memory of Tolstoy” (“Pamiati Tolstogo”) in the edition of it printed abroad by Feltrinelli (the same publisher involved with *Dr. Zhivago*), in order to protect Voznesenskii. In Ol’ga Ivinskaia’s memoir, the chapter about Pasternak’s funeral is titled with the first line of Voznesenskii’s poem.[483] As “Crowns and Roots” demonstrates, honoring the memory of Pasternak was important to Voznesenskii.

Several years later in 1963 Voznesenskii was called to a tribune at the Kremlin where he was publicly rebuked by Nikita Khrushchev, particularly for his comments at an interview in Poland where he had praised Pasternak and equated his significance in Russian literature with that of Lermontov. Voznesenskii had been asked about how he related to the previous generation of Russian writers, to which he replied that he did not view literature as a horizonal generational progression, but rather views it “vertically,” seeing all great Russian writers as being interconnected.[484] As Voznesenskii tried to defend his opinion, Khrushchev yelled at the young poet, telling him to leave the country and declared, “We invited this little Pasternak to this hall so that he would leave the country. Do you want your passport tomorrow? We can give it to you today. Leave! Leave, damn it!”[485] These proceedings are viewed by many historians as an early signal of the end of cultural Thaw in the Soviet Union, dampening hopes for an era of freedom of expression and political thought.[486] The fact that Voznesenskii’s statements on Pasternak played

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[482] “Вбегаю в дом его./ Пустые этажи./ На даче никого./ В России – ни души.” The first line of this stanza was changed from the original in the above published version of the poem.
[483] Andrei Voznesenskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, Vol. 7* (Mocow: Vagrius, 2000-2009), 373-376.
[484] Andrei Voznesenskii,Na virtual'nom vetru (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998), 79-80.
[485] Emily Johnson, "Nikita Khrushchev, Andrei Voznesensky, and the Cold Spring of 1963: Documenting the End of the Post-Stalin Thaw," *World Literature Today* 75, no. 1 (2001): 38.
[486] Ibid., 31-32.

an important role in the tribunal, and that he was denounced by Khrushchev as a "little Pasternak" demonstrate that by 1963 official opinion about Pasternak had changed little, and there was little intimation that less than 30 years later the role of Pasternak would be rethought in mainstream Soviet literature during the period of *glasnost'*.

Accounts of the funeral at Peredelkino demonstrate how public opinion diverged from official opinion that downplayed the significance of Pasternak's work. Novelist and prolific memoirist, Lidia Chukovskaia, described her experience in detail. Her friend Fridochka (F. A. Vigdorova) tells her that day before the funeral, at the Kiev Station, a handwritten notice with information about the funeral appeared, with the phrase, "Citizens! Yesterday the great Russian poet Boris Pasternak passed away." The notice was destroyed but a new one appeared soon afterwards. The story highlighted the difference between how people viewed Pasternak to be a "a great Russian poet," and the official obituary, which referred to him only as a "member of the Litfond." Chukovskaia notes that at the funeral she herself heard a voice behind her say, "The last great Russian poet has died," to which she heard someone else respond, "No, one more remains. Anna Akhmatova."[487] This exchange is significant as it signals that during the early Thaw period, Pasternak and Akhmatova, in spite of descriptions of them in the official press, were considered to be the greatest living Russian poets, and the most important bridges to the modernist past. It is interesting and telling, then, that the site of Pasternak's dacha in Peredelkino became a place of memory associated with him, and that Komarovo, where Akhmatova had a dacha, became a site of memory associated with her.

[487] "Нет, ещё один остался. […] Анна Ахматова." Lidiia Chukovskaia, *Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoi 1952-1962, Tom 2* (Moscow: Soglasie, 1997), 399.

Barnes' biography notes that Pasternak's grave in Peredelkino became a place of pilgrimage, where each May 30 poetry would be recited.[488] The poet Bakhyt Kenzheyev describes pilgrimages to Peredelkino in the 1970s, as "a place to pay homage 'to all hunted and tormented poets'."[489] Writer and literary critic Dmitrii Bykov sees a strong similarity between "pilgrimages" made to Peredelkino for Pasternak and those to Tolstoy's Yasnaia Polyana by intellectuals and truth seekers.[490] This parallel between Pasternak and Tolstoy brings insight to the publication history of Voznesenskii's "Crowns and Roots" – perhaps it is not surprising that, given official opinion on Pasternak in the early 1960s, the poem was initially published in a journal dedicated to Tolstoy.

Voznesenskii writes in his memoir that Pasternak's funeral has "continue[d] for forty years," with "nightingales and students" returning every June to Peredelkino to read his poems.[491] Voznesenskii's comments point to the importance of Peredelkino as a place of memory, and he notes that "through the efforts of Natal'ia Pasternak that dacha has been transformed into a museum."[492]

The Pasternak Museum

The creation of a museum at Peredelkino was a long process that took over several decades.[493] Zinaida Pasternak took care to maintain the dacha in the 1960s. She died in 1966, and her son Leonid Borisovich and his wife, Natal'ia Anisimovna (who later became the museum director)

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[488] Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, 373.
[489] Finn and Couvée, *The Zhivago Affair*, 265, 323.
[490] Dmitrii Bykov, *Boris Pasternak, Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh liudei* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 695.
[491] Voznesenskii, 375.
[492] Ibid.
[493] Peredelkino, p 384.

continued to take care of the dacha. Talk of turning the dacha into a museum went on during the 1960s amongst Pasternak's family members and many writers. The leading *shestidesiatniki* Evgenii Evtushenko and Andrei Voznesenskii wrote letters to leaders such as Brezhnev requesting the creation of a museum to Pasternak.[494] However, these requests were initially ignored. A 1982 letter written by the Head of the Department of Culture of the Central Committee (*zaveduiushchii Otdelom kul'tury TsK KPSS*), Vasilii Shauro, expressed opposition to the creation of a Pasternak museum in Peredelkino because other important writers, such as Fadeev, Fedin, Tikhonov, and others all also lived there.[495] In the opinion of the cultural authorities of the time, there were essentially two barriers to the creation of a museum to Pasternak in Peredelkino. The fact that efforts were being made to create a Pasternak museum, and not ones to honor some of the other writers who lived at Peredelkino was problematic, in their eyes. Also, the dacha being the property of the Litfond formed another obstacle to the creation of the museum.[496]

In 1984, Pasternak's daughter-in-law, Natal'ia Anisimovna, came home to find movers taking everything out of the dacha — she was being made to move out. Efforts were made to carefully save all the things that were being taken out. For the next six years the house remained completely empty. On April 30, 1985 a group of prominent Soviet writers and artists, including Evtushenko, Tarkovskii, and Rozhdestvenskii, sent a letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, urging the creation of a museum in Peredelkino.[497] In the letter they noted that: "After the death of

[494] Peredelkino, 384.
[495] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'ieva, *Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke*, (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 384.
[496] Ibid., 385.
[497] Ibid., 397.

Pasternak in 1960, the house of the poet in Peredelkino, where he lived and worked, as well as his grave, have become a place of constant pilgrimage for Soviet and foreign readers."[498]

In 1988 the decision was made to establish a house museum to Pasternak at Peredelkino. Boris Leonidovich's son, Evgenii Pasternak, and grandsons provided consultation regarding the interior.[499] In 1988 American president Ronald Reagan visited Moscow for a summit with Gorbachev. During this visit, his wife Nancy visited Peredelkino.[500] At Peredelkino, Mrs. Reagan had lunch with Andrei Voznesenskii's family at their dacha, and then visited Pasternak's grave. Voznesenskii was quoted by the *Los Angeles Times* as saying: "I think, for the American leader's wife to come to our country, to visit the grave of Pasternak, this is very important."[501] Voznesenskii's memoirs also describe a dinner that he had with Ronald and Nancy Reagan, Gorbachev, and other Soviet and American leaders during the summit, during which, to Voznesenskii's astonishment, Gorbachev displayed knowledge of Pasternak's poetry. In Reagan's speech to Moscow State University students, he cited lines from *Doctor Zhivago*.[502] The inclusion of Nancy Reagan's visit to Peredelkino (and "pilgrimage" to Pasternak's grave) during the schedule of the 1988 Moscow Summit shows how completely Pasternak's value as a poet had been reassessed by Soviet authorities. It is highly notable that late 1980s mainstream opinion regarding Peredelkino as a site of memory associated with Pasternak was so widespread

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[498] "После смерти Пастернака в 1960 году дом поэта в Переделкине, где он жил и работал, и также его могила стали местом постоянного паломничества советских и зарубежных читателей." Ibid., 397.
[499] E. D. Mikhailova, K istorii sozdaniia muzeia Pasternaka v Peredelkino, *Vestnik kul'turologii*, no. 3 (2013): 154.
[500] Ibid., "Americanizing Moscow: Nancy Goes to Class, but Flunks Vocabulary," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 31st, 1988. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-05-31-vw-3660-story.html.
[501] Ibid.
[502] Ronald Reagan. "Address at Moscow State University," May 31m 1988, Moscow, Russia, in *Famous Presidential Speeches*, The University of Virginia Miller Center. https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/may-31-1988-address-moscow-state-university.

(and so much less controversial that it had been twenty years earlier) that the Reagans' trip to Moscow included in Nancy Reagan's visit to Peredelkino.

In 1990 the Pasternak museum was opened to the public, and the same year UNESCO announced as the "Year of Pasternak" in honor of the 100th anniversary of his birth.[503] The museum tries to keep the interior much the same as it was when Pasternak lived in the dacha when he was writing his poetry and *Doctor Zhivago*.[504] Evoking the atmosphere of the Soviet Union during the Thaw era, replete with a tiny early-Soviet television set and a clunky ZIL refrigerator, the Pasternak house museum, like many other literary house museums, incorporates material culture of the period with objects belonging to the writer, creating an environment that merges reverence to the author with the atmosphere of the time period during which he lived in the house.[505] The museum hosts readings of Pasternak's and others' poetry. Until his death in 2010, Andrei Vozensenskii, who also lived and worked in Peredelkino, would lead readings of Pasternak's poetry twice a year.[506]

It should also be mentioned Peredelkino serves as a museum location and site of memory for other writers besides Pasternak – notably some associated with Russian modernism (the children's writer Kornei Chukovsky) and the shestidesiatnik era (the poets Bulat Okudzhava and Yevgenii Yevtushenko). The Chukovsky and Okudzhava museums parallel the Pasternak museum in that all were created on the initiative of the family and close friends of the authors.

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[503] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'ieva, *Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke*, (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 384.
[504] Ibid,, 398.
[505] Ibid., 398; Han A. Salzman, *Reading Historic Sites: Interpretive Strategies at Literary House-Museums* (M.S. thesis, The University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 2.
[506] "Nevestka Pasternaka rasskazala o ego druzhbe s Andreem Voznesenskim," *RIA Novosti*, February 6, 2010. https://ria.ru/20100602/241566472.html

Widespread admiration played a role, as well, in their establishment.[507] The history of the Chukovsky museum in Peredelkino in particular has some parallels to that of the Pasternak museum, as plans for its creation existed decades prior to its actual creation – after Kornei Ivanovich's death in 1969, Lidiia wanted to maintain the dacha as a place of pilgrimage, and she essentially made an unofficial museum, taking care to keep the interior as it was. Many guests came to visit, and the dacha became a notable site in Peredelkino for visitors. Museum expert Aleksandr Zinov'ievich Krein later noted that the Chukovsky house museum in Peredelkino was once of the richest museums in the country, due to the sheer number of well-preserved documents, including a letter from Lev Tolstoy to Chukovsky. However, the authorities learned of Chukovskaia's activity in Peredelkino with regards to the museum. In 1973 Yuri Andropov (who later became the General Secretary of the Communist Party and President of the USSR from 1982 to 1984, succeeding Brezhnev) wrote a damning letter to the Central Committee about Chukovskaia. She was accused of anti-Soviet activity, including transmitting various documents to the West and offering Solzhenitsyn a room at the dacha during the winter. Andropov wrote that her efforts regarding the creation of the museum in Peredelkino "must be rejected."[508] Soon afterwards, Lidiia Korneevna was expelled from the Writers' Union.[509] On February 2, 1994, the Russian minister of culture E. Iu. Sidorov issued an order "On the Creation of the K. I. Chukovsky Musuem – A Filial of the State Literary Museum" ("O sozdanii muzeia K. I. Chukovskogo – filiala Gosudarstvennogo literaturnogo muzeia").[510] In the 21st century, a

[507] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'ieva, *Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke*, (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 388.
[508] Ibid., 392-393.; Irina Tosunian, "Dom, kotoryi s"el Barmalei" *Literaturnaia gazeta* (1994). http://www.chukfamily.ru/elena/intervyu/teksty/dom-kotoryj-sel-barmalej.
[509] This experience is described in detail in her memoir, *Protsess iskliucheniia*.
[510] Lev Lobov and Kira Vasil'ieva, *Peredelkino: Skazanie o pisatel'skom gorodke*, (Moscow: Boslen, 2011), 395.

museum for shestidesiatnik author, Evgeni Evtushenko was established. It opened on July 17, 2010 and includes his typewriter and many of his books.[511] It is striking that author who was so outspoken about the creation of the Boris Pasternak museum in Peredelkino in the 1980s, would, himself have a museum established for himself in the same village. The Evtushenko and Okudzhava museums give further evidence of Peredelkino's significance in 1960s Soviet literary culture, among "Zhivago's children." While the Pasternak house remains the most recognizable site in Peredelkino, these other museums are testament to the interlaced, multi-faceted history of writers in Peredelkino during the 20th century. Thus, as a site of memory, the "writers' village" (*pisatel'skii gorodok*) today holds numerous layers, with memory to Pasternak interlaced with memory to other writers.

Conclusion

The significance of Peredelkino in twentieth-century Russian literary history extends over its entire history as a community for writers. The presence of many historically important writers shaped its history and role in cultural memory. As a site of memory, however, Peredelkino is most significantly associated with Boris Pasternak. During the 1960s and 1970s efforts were made to remember Pasternak at Peredelkino. While his work, most significantly *Doctor Zhivago*, was officially denounced in the Soviet press, pilgrimages to Peredelkino made by writers and admirers of Pasternak's work were part of an underground culture that eventually became mainstream in the 1980s with the creation of the Boris Pasternak House Museum. This cultural dynamic of the years following his death shows how opposing ideologies related to

[511] Ibid., 517.

cultural memory and literary creation can coexist in one space. Although Peredelkino was purportedly founded at the request of Stalin as a place for Soviet writers to produce socialist realist works, the dacha settlement came to be most remembered for its associations with a writer, of whom most of his literary work was unabashedly unique and did not make concessions to official ideology. For his adherence to his own literary vision in the 1940s and 1950s, Pasternak paid severely, and attempts were made to downplay his literary-historical significance when he died. However, several decades after his death, cultural memory to Pasternak has an undeniable place in Russian culture, as is evidenced by the sites of memory at Peredelkino.

Pasternak's work from this period, imbued with and inspired by Peredelkino scenery. connects the poet to this place. His poetry in the "Peredelkino" cycle in *On Early Trains* weaves subjective emotions with the Russian natural environment. Several of the poems with *On Early Trains* form a continuity with poems and sections of *Doctor Zhivago* as well. This settlement was also the location where the publication history of *Doctor Zhivago* can be seen as beginning, with the meeting between Pasternak and Sergio D'Angelo ocurring in 1956. *Doctor Zhivago* itself is interwoven with the site of memory, being part of its story, and the setting in which the novel was written influenced its poetics, particularly with regard to nature.

It is notable that attendance at Pasternak's funeral at Peredelkino was considered to be a form of political protest, through which attendees demonstrated their views, contrary to the mainstream press, of the cultural significance of the writer. Subsequent "pilgrimages" to Peredelkino in the 1970s demonstrates how memory practices were maintained, prior to the establishment of Pasternak House Museum in 1990. Poems in the 1960s by Aleksandr Galich and Andrei Voznesenskii comment on the memory of Pasternak, proclaiming the importance of his work in Russian literature. Voznesenskii was also significantly influenced by Pasternak

artistically, and time spent with Pasternak at Peredelkino was very important for this younger writer, whose work is infused with a Pasternakian feeling, as noted by Bykov.

As a site of memory relating to Boris Pasternak, Peredelkino is important both in terms of how it is reflected in literary output of the author, as well as its place Pasternak's biography and in the publication history of *Doctor Zhivago*. Peredelkino also served as a meeting place where Pasternak met with artists and writers from several generations, and notably the younger writer Andrei Voznesenskii. The following section examines how Anna Akhmatova's dacha in Komarovo functions as a site of memory, and also served as a place where she mentored a group of young poets. While the dacha environment is less reflected in her creative work than Peredelkino is in that of Pasternak, the importance of her dacha as a meeting place with this specific group of writers deserves more attention than it has received to date.

The transformation of the cultural environment in which the mainstream press remembered Pasternak dismissively as only a "member of the Litfond" in 1960 to the current day where he is viewed as a major part of the *genius loci* of Peredelkino and his memory is honored demonstrates the role of social and ideological context in the formation of cultural memory. This transformation also indicates the role of underground, unofficial memory practices influencing the development of sites of memory. It is historically significant that the most challenged novel in the Soviet Union in the 1950s has a historical relationship with a state writers' community founded by Gorky and Stalin, where much of it was written. The political climate and reaction to Pasternak's work in the 1950s Soviet Union would not have led one to predict that the writers' community would later become a site of memory associated with the author of *Doctor Zhivago*.

IV. Akhmatova's Place of Memory in Komarovo

Although Anna Akhmatova lived in Komarovo only toward the end of her life, in the 1950s and 1960s, it soon became associated with her name. Komarovo is relevant to my discussion about links between the Russian modernist past and the generation of younger poets during the Thaw era, as her dacha (which she, likely with a certain ironic fondness, called her "shack" (*budka*)) became an important meeting place for writers wanting to visit with Akhmatova. It became especially important for visits to her from a group of talented young poets – Joseph Brodsky, Evgenii Rein, Anatolii Naiman, and Dmitrii Bobyshev. She called this group her "Avvakumites," referring to the followers of a persecuted seventeenth-century religious rebel and leader of the Old Believers, the Archpriest Avvakum. Through a poem by Bobyshev this group also became known as "Akhmatova's orphans." After Akhmatova's death, Komarovo became a site of memory associated with her, mainly through her gravesite at the Komarovo cemetery. As we will see, her gravesite features a structure that symbolizes her memory and that of other victims of the Stalinist repressions (Fig. 3). This monument is germane to a discussion of Akhmatova's legacy and poetry, as she had declared in her famous cycle, "Requiem," that if a monument were to be built in her memory, it should be linked to the memory of those who suffered during the mass arrests of the 1930s. Pilgrimages to Komarovo by her admirers, both while she was alive and after her death are crucial for understanding the importance of Akhmatova in Soviet-era and post-Soviet culture. Additionally, discussions and legal decisions about the role of her "shack" in Komarovo as a potential museum space in the 21st century cement Komarovo as a significant place in Akhmatova's cultural legacy. Even more importantly, a discussion of monuments to Akhmatova involves the role of literature as a monument, in and of itself, especially her poem

"Requiem." Thus, while physical monuments to Akhmatova have been constructed, they have an intertextual relationship with her poetry, which also functions as a monument in its own right, in the tradition of Russian *Exegi monumentum* poems.[512]

The fact that Komarovo, as a location associated with Soviet-era literary culture in the post-war period, also became associated with 1960s dissident writers (particularly Brodsky and others) and anti-Stalinist writers (namely, Akhmatova), and was a place where they worked together and visited with each other, shows the multilayered ambiguity of spaces officially devoted to writers in 1960s Soviet-era literary history. This discussion shows Komarovo as a memory space that bears some similarities to, as well as differences from Koktebel. While both were locations of Litfond Writers' Houses where many prominent writers lived and worked, Koktebel was a much-mythologized vacation destination linked to the history of Voloshin's salon and his created legend. In contrast, Komarovo was a place where one of the leading poets of Russian modernism was still living and working in the 1960s. In this way, Komarovo offered the younger generation of Leningrad poets a chance to connect with the modernist literary past in an extraordinary way. In distinction to Koktebel, which was associated with the pre-Soviet literary salon and myth creation of one cultural figure, Komarovo was an ex-urban dacha space where many important early twentieth-century Russian artists and writers lived and worked. The following discussion shows how Komarovo became a site of memory associated with Akhmatova in the post-Stalin era– as the location of her gravesite and dacha, as well as a place where she mentored some of the most famous poets of the 1960s literary generation, collaborating with them and building intergenerational connections and memories. In this way,

[512] "Exegi monumentum" is Latin for "I have erected a monument," and is the first line of a famous ode by Horace about poetry functioning as a monument.

Komarovo as one of Akhmatova's *lieux de memoire* influenced the trajectory of twentieth-century Russian literature.

Prelude to Komarovo in Akhmatova's Life

Komarovo became a place for remembering and keeping the modernist Russian literary legacy alive through the contact that younger poets developed with Anna Akhmatova. Akhmatova had been denounced in the Soviet press in the 1940s, but was starting to be publicly active, and, if not fully rehabilitated, then at least supported, during the Thaw period. It was during this period that it became commonplace for young poets to make pilgrimages to visit the luminaries of Russian modernism, particularly Akhmatova and Pasternak.[513] In August 1961, Joseph Brodsky was introduced to Anna Akhmatova by Evgenii Rein at her cabin in Komarovo.[514]

Before examining this relationship, it will be helpful to summarize relevant parts of Akhmatova's biography that have to do with her relationship to place before moving to Komarovo. Against this context, the young poets' visits to Komarovo make more sense. As with previous sites of memory, this section traces the evolution of Komarovo as a site of memory to Akhmatova. It particularly examines her own and other poetic works inscribing her in this landscape, followed by the monument at her gravesite, which connects to her renowned poetic cycle "Requiem."

The Thaw era marked the end of Akhmatova's post-war enforced silence and a period of an official reassessment of Akhmatova's work. She had been a beloved poet for decades and was a literary celebrity since her rise to fame in the pre-revolutionary modernist era. From about

[513] Lev Losev, *Solzhenitsyn i Brodskii kak sosedi* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha, 2010), 106.
[514] Ibid.

1925 on and through to World War II her work had been suppressed. The publication of some of her poems in a few journals during and shortly after World War II was met with harsh denunciation at the highest levels. One of Stalin's close associates, Andrei Zhdanov, the organizer in the Soviet Writers' Union and ideologue of socialist realism, attacked her work (along with that of Mikhail Zoshchenko) in a 1946 review. He viewed her as being immoral, gloomy, and decidedly anti-Soviet. Anatoly Naiman notes that August 14, 1946, was a historically memorable day for many Soviet citizens who loved literature, as this was the day when the Central Committee issued Zhdanov's denunciation of the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* for publishing works by Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko.[515] According to Zhdanov's speech, Akhmatova was merely an obsolete "representative of [the] empty reactionary literary bog [of modernism]."[516] While citing other writers, such as Andrei Belyi, Zinaida Gippius, and Fyodor Sologub, he reserves most of his vitriol for Akhmatova and focuses his speech on her:

> The contents of Akhmatova's poetry are personal through and through. The scope of her poetry is wretchedly limited, it is the poetry of a lady foaming at the mouth, and constantly dashing from drawing-room to chapel. [..][517]

Zhdanov's attention on the juxtaposition of both the religious and personal aspects of Akhmatova's work was a major aspect of his denunciation, and he would even state that she "is either a nun or a whore, or rather whore and nun who combines depravity with prayer."[518] The

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[515] Antoly Naiman, *Remembering Anna Akhmatova*, trans. Wendy Rosslyn (London: Peter Halban, 1991), 8.
[516] Ibid., 233. "Анна Ахматова является одним из представителей этого безидейного реакционного литературного болота." A. Zhdanov, *Doklad o zhurnalakh "Zvezda" i "Leningrad"* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1952), 9.
[517] Ibid., 233. "Тематика Ахматовой насквозь индивидуалистическая. До убожества ограничен диапазон ее поэзии,— поэзии взбесившейся барыньки, мечущейся между будуаром и моленной." Zhdanov, *Doklad o zhurnalakh "Zvezda" i "Leningrad"*, 9.
[518] Solomon Volkov, *The Magical Chorus: A History of Russian Culture from Tolstoy to Solzhenitsyn*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (New York: Vintage Books, 2009),164.

lack of adequate class consciousness in her poetry was another focus of Zhdanov's condemnation:

> Akhmatova's poetry is remote from the people. It is the poetry of the ten thousand members of the upper class, the condemned ones who had nothing else left but to sigh, remembering 'the good old times.'[…]
>
> What can there be in common between such poetry and the interests of our people and our state? Nothing at all. The work of Akhmatova belongs to the long-forgotten past. It is totally alien to the contemporary life of the Soviet people and cannot be tolerated in the pages of our journals.[519]

However, with the somewhat more open environment of the Thaw, Akhmatova became more politically acceptable, and public expressions of reverence for her were not as dangerous. Thus, it was within this freer cultural-political environment that interest in her work became reinvigorated, and her "shack" in Komarovo developed into a gathering place for the generation of young Leningrad poets.

One of the younger writers of the 1960s generation who was particularly interested in Akhmatova's work was Anatoly Naiman. Naiman's memoir about Akhmatova, which is noted by Isaiah Berlin as being one of the two most important memoirs about Akhmatova (the other being Lidiia Chukovskaia's multi-volume work), describes how Soviet media discourse about Akhmatova in the 1940s influenced Naiman as he was growing up. Naiman notes the unintended impression that Zhdanov's speech had had on him as a teenager in the 1940s. Rather than being persuaded by Zhdanov's denunciation, Naiman was intrigued by the poetry, even in the context

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[519] Naiman, *Remembering Anna Akhmatova*, 234-235. "Ахматовская поэзия совершенно далека от народа. Это — поэзия десяти тысяч верхних старой дворянской России, обреченных, которым ничего уже не оставалось, как только вздыхать по «доброму старому времени»." Zhdanov, *Doklad o zhurnalakh "Zvezda" i "Leningrad"*, 10. "Что обшего между этой поэзией, интересами нашего народа и государства? Ровным счетом ничего. Творчество Ахматовой — дело далекого прошлого; оно чуждо современной советской действительности и не может быть терпимо на страницах наших журналов." Zhdanov, *Doklad o zhurnalakh "Zvezda" i "Leningrad"*, 12.

of it being distorted for ideological purposes: "I began reading the newspaper, and even in that highly idiosyncratic rendering of her poems, I caught their charm and, as I would now put it, their dramatic quality, and therefore also their truth."[520]

Naiman later felt a personal calling to visit Akhmatova, first meeting her in 1959 at her apartment in Leningrad, and later in Komarovo. Joseph Brodsky first met Akhmatova on August 7, 1961, when he was brought to her cabin in Komarovo by Evgenii Rein. After this initial meeting, they became good friends, and a poetic mentorship took shape, with Brodsky constantly visiting her in Leningrad and its environs.[521]

Komarovo as Akhmatova's Home and a Place of Work in the 1950s and 1960s

Akhmatova's dacha in Komarovo was both her first "home" that was hers alone (although it technically belonged to the Litfond) and a gathering place for her meetings with friends and other poets. According to Naiman, Akhmatova preferred to stay and work at her cabin, as the "House of Creativity" (*Dom tvorchestva*) on the premises had its own specific schedule, and it was difficult to have any privacy there. Naiman relates how she was once slightly annoyed by a guest at the House of Creativity, who complained to her about how a talented writer friend only received a two-room cottage at Maleevka, while the Union secretary got one with five rooms. Naiman writes, "When the door closed behind her, Akhmatova asked, 'Why did she tell me that? I've written every one of my poems on a windowsill or the edge of something or other.'"[522] Her dacha was very small – one of her acquaintances noted it was "one and half rooms and a

[520] Naiman, *Remembering Anna Akhmatova*, 8.
[521] Ibid., 106-107.
[522] Ibid., 157.

kitchen."[523] The significance of Komarovo for the later years of Akhmatova's life may seem somewhat unexpected, and was rather circumstantial, as the reason she ended up living there was that the Litfond gave her a place to live. The dacha at Komarovo became the first living space that was hers alone in her life.[524]

Akhmatova's relationship to the idea of "home" was rather complicated during most of her life, with her life after the revolution marked by the lack of a sense of a real home.[525] After the revolution, in 1918 she moved to the "The Fountain House" (*Fontannyi dom*), with her second husband, the Assyriologist V. K. Shileiko. In the crowded living quarters, she helped him transcribe the translation of a volume of an Assyrian-Babylonian epic. Shileiko's room became known as the "Sumerian coffee house" (*Shumeriiskaia kofeinia*), due to the constant smell of coffee and the clay tablets with cuneiform strewn around the room.[526] The Fountain House was a palace that had belonged to the aristocratic Sheremet'ev family. In 1917, the Sheremet'evs fled from Petrograd. Sergei Dmitrievich Sheremet'ev, concerned with the preservation of the palace, contacted the Commissar of Enlightenment, A. B. Lunacharsky, about the importance of preserving the palace for its historical and cultural significance. Lunacharsky agreed, and the Fountain House became the first official historical-cultural site of the city

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[523] Ol'ga Rubinchik, "'No gde moi dom…' Tema doma u Akhmatovoi," *Toronto Slavic Quarterly* 20 (2007): http://sites.utoronto.ca/tsq/20/rubinchik20.shtml.
[524] M. I. Tsvetaeva and A. A. Akhmatova, *Akhmatova i Tsvetaeva* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "AST", 2016), 222.
[525] Ol'ga Rubinchik notes parallels between the "homelessness" (бездомье) in Akhmatova's life after the revolution with that of Marina Tsvetaeva. Rubinchik, "'No gde moi dom…'," http://sites.utoronto.ca/tsq/20/rubinchik20.shtml.
[526] M. V. Chernysheva, "Fontannyi dom v zhizni Anny Akhmatovoi," *Etiudy kul'tury –2007 Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii Chast' I: Muzeologiia i kul'turnoe nasledstvo* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2007), 16.

endorsed by the People's Commissariat for Education.[527] Importantly for Akhmatova, many of its annexes functioned as apartments.

Akhmatova left the Fountain House in 1921 when she and Shileiko separated (they received an official divorce in 1926). However, she returned back to the Fountain House again in 1922, when she began to live with Nikolai Punin. Not including the period of her evacuation in Tashkent during World War II, Akhmatova lived in the Fountain House until 1952 when she and other residents moved out of it in order to make space for The Center of the Arctic and Antarctic. At this time, she moved into a new apartment on Krasnaia Konnitsa Street, a crowded communal apartment that she considered to be a "terrible place," yet nonetheless was where she composed a large number of poems.[528]

The wooden cabin at Komarovo that Irina Punina helped Akhmatova acquire in 1955 through the Litfond was the only living space in Akhmatova's life that "belonged" to her alone, though it was technically still the property of the Litfond.[529] Rubinchik notes the importance of the motif of "wooden houses" and trees in Akhmatova's poetry, and remarks that Akhmatova's Komarovo "shack" was also a wooden house at the "heart of many poems, filled with the Komarovo Russo-Finnish atmosphere."[530] Akhmatova was certainly well aware of the fact that Komarovo and much of the Karelian isthmus was not historically Russian territory, as it had been since 1809 part of the autonomous area of the Grand Duchy of Finland within the Russian Empire prior to the revolution. Naiman interprets her 1964 poem "This land, though not my

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[527] B. M. Matveev i A. V. Krasko, *Fontannyi dom* (St. Petersburg: BELOE I ChERNOE, 1996), 119-120.
[528] Ibid., 5; Elena Danilevich, "Adresa Akhmatovoi. Kak Peterburg stal osobym mestom v sud'be velikogo poeta," *Argumenty i fakty*, June 21, 2019. https://spb.aif.ru/culture/person/adresa_ahmatovoy_kak_peterburg_stal_osobym_mestom_v_sudbe_velikogo_poeta.
[529] Rubinchik, "'No gde moi dom…'," http://sites.utoronto.ca/tsq/20/rubinchik20.shtml.
[530] Ibid.

native land…" ("Zemlia khotia i ne rodnaia") as a paean to this northern, Finnish land, which was although not native to her, "gave her shelter at the end of her life beneath the Komarovo pine-trees, and laid her ashes to rest beneath them."[531] According to Elena Soini, it is also possible that this poem, which she notes as one of the greatest later poems by Akhmatova, was influenced by Akhmatova's 1964 trip to Vyborg. In any case, Akhmatova's poetic imagery of this northern region is imbued with a sense of awe and reverence of nature.[532] The poem also contains a certain mystical quality as well:

This land, although not my native one,
Is forever unforgettable to me,
As well as the tenderly icy sea
And the saltless water

In its depths the sand is whiter than chalk,
And the air is drunk, like wine,
And the pink body of the pine trees
Is uncovered at the hour of sunset

And the sunset itself, in the waves of the ether,
Is such, that I can't figure out
If it's the end of the day, or the end of the world,
Or the mystery of mysteries within me again.[533]

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[531] Naiman, *Remembering Anna Akhmatova*, 137.
[532] Elena Soini, *Vzaimoproniknovenie russkoi i finskoi literatury v pervoi polovine KhKh veka* (Moscow: IaSK, 2017), 204-5.
[533] "Земля хотя и не родная,
Но памятная навсегда,
И в море нежно-ледяная
И несоленая вода.

На дне песок белее мела,
А воздух пьяный, как вино,
И сосен розовое тело
В закатный час обнажено.

А сам закат в волнах эфира
Такой, что мне не разобрать,
Конец ли дня, конец ли мира,
Иль тайна тайн во мне опять."

It is clear that, although the northern Komarovo area was certainly distinct from the city surroundings that Akhmatova had lived in for the majority of her life, she found personal meaning in her environs there.

Akhmatova's Cabin in Komarovo and the "Avvakumites"

Akhmatova's cabin in Komarovo became one of the places that Akhmatova met with four younger poets, who are sometimes referred to as "the magical choir" (*volshebnyi khor*) or "Akhmatova's orphans" (*Akhmatovskie siroty*), though her term "Avvakumites" may best encapsulate her relationship with them.[534] Alluding to the Archpriest Avvakum, the seventeenth-century leader of the Old Believers who opposed official church reforms, she was implying that these were underground writers were valiantly resisting the mainstream Soviet culture.[535] Because Akhmatova saw these younger writers as independent creative talents, the term "Avvakumites" is clearly complimentary. Akhmatova also considered these four poets as being part of a renaissance in Russian poetry, which is reflected in the term "magical choir" (*volshebnyi khor*), which she would sometimes use to refer to them. The group met at Komarovo, as well as in Leningrad and Moscow.[536] It was not until the 1970s that the group became known as "Akhmatova's orphans," a phrase from Bobyshev's 1971 poem, "All Four of Them" ("Vse chetvero").[537] This phrase alludes to the fact that for the group Akhmatova was a poetic mentor

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Anna Andreevna Akhmatova, *Ne tainy i ne pechali – stikhotvoreniia* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo literatury i iskusstva imeni Gafura Guliama, 1988), 442.

[534] Margot Shohl Rosen, *The Independent Turn in Soviet-Era Russian Poetry: How Dmitry Bobyshev, Joseph Brodskii, Anatoly Naiman and Evgeny Rein Became the "Avvakumites" of Leningrad* (Ph.d. diss., Columbia University, 2011), 11-12.

[535] Ibid., 160.

[536] Valentina Iakovenko, "Koroleva-brodiaga i ee volshebnyi khor (A.Akhmatova)," Munitsipal'noe obrazovanie poselok Komarovo, accessed October 15, 2020. http://www.komarovo.spb.ru/?page_id=552

[537] Rosen, *The Independent Turn in Soviet-Era Russian Poetry*, 160, 240.

and mother figure, and her loss rendered them orphaned in a sense for Bobyshev, as he makes clear from lines in the poem "in a procession of losses/ come Osya, Tolya, Zhenya, Dima / Akhmatova's orphans in a row."[538]

In his autobiography, Evgenii Rein writes about day trips from Leningrad to Komarovo – there were "messengers" who would let Akhmatova know beforehand when people were planning to visit. Rein describes one time when he brought his friend Valerii Tur to Komarovo to meet Akhmatova for the first time. When the conversation became stilted, Rein brought up the history of old Terijoki and Kuokkala and their early twentieth-century artistic and literary history, and Akhmatova animatedly continued the conversation, turning the discussion to Finland and her trip to Helsingfors with Nikolai Gumilev.[539] The meetings with Rein, Naiman, Brodsky, and Bobyshev at Komarovo, Moscow, and Leningrad held special significance for Akhmatova. She believed that this group embodied a new age in Russian poetry and that a new "Silver Age" was underway.[540]

Depictions of nature and the atmosphere of Komarovo during time spent with Akhmatova became the material for several works by the poets who visited her. Joseph Brodsky's "Morning Letter for A. A. Akhmatova from the Town of Sestroretsk [a resort town on the Karelian isthmus not far from Komarovo]" (Utrenniaia pochta dlia A. A. Akhmatovoi iz goroda Sestroretska) is a striking example:

In the bushes of immortal Finland
Where the pine trees sternly reign
I am filled with immeasurable joy,

[538] "в череду утрат/ заходят Ося, Толя, Женя, Дима/ ахматовскими сиротами в ряд." Dmitrii Bobyshev, *Ziianiia* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1979), 59.
[539] Evgenii Rein, *Mne skuchno bez Dovlatova* (St. Petersburg: Limbus Press, 1997), 69-72.
[540] Iakovenko, "Koroleva-brodiaga i ee volshebnyi khor (A.Akhmatova)," http://www.komarovo.spb.ru/?page_id=552

When the gulf and Komarovo
Are illuminated by the wonderful sunrise,
Are shaded by carefree greenery,
And by your love – every hour,
And by your kindness – eternally.[541]

The importance of time spent with Akhmatova for Brodsky is reflected in the lines about Akhmatova's kindness. He associates these meetings with the northern scenery of the area. In his 1962 poem "The Roosters Will Begin to Crow And Bustle About" ("Zakrichat i zakhlopochut petukhi"), which was composed on a train en route to a visit to Akhmatova at Komarovo, Brodsky alludes to Akhmatova and her great importance not just for this group of poets but for the whole nation.[542] The poem is also dedicated to her, and he presented it to her with on her birthday on June 24, 1962.[543] Later stanzas in the poem seem to refer to Akhmatova's dacha and her relationship to the "Avvakumites":

I didn't see, I won't see your tears
I won't hear the rustling of wheels
Taking you away to the gulf, to the trees,
Along the Fatherland that is without a monument to you

In the warm room, as I recall, without books,
Without fans, but also not for them,
Leaning your temple on your palm,
You will write about us slantwise[544]

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[541] "В кустах Финляндии бессмертной,
где сосны царствуют сурово,
я полон радости несметной,
когда залив и Комарово
освещены зарей прекрасной,
осенены листвой беспечной,
любовью Вашей – ежечасной
и Вашей добротою -- вечной."
Iosif Brodskii, *Sochineniia Iosifa Brodskogo Vol. I* (St. Petersburg: Pushkinskii fond, 1998), 211

[542] Rosen, *The Independent Turn in Soviet-Era Russian Poetry,* 216.

[543] Iakov Klots, "Kak izdavali pervuiu knigu Iosifa Brodskogo," Muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, accessed October 20, 2020. https://m-tsvetaeva.org/Раздел/НОВОСТИ/СОБЫТИЯ-и-архив/Как-издавали-первую-книгу-Иосифа-Бродского.html.

[544] "Я не видел, не увижу Ваших слез,
не услышу я шуршания колес,

Brodsky's comment about the lack of a monument to Akhmatova in the line "Along the Fatherland that is without a monument to you" ("po otechestvu bez pamiatnika Vam") is important, as it indicates Brodsky's dismay at how Akhmatova was viewed in mainstream Soviet culture. It is plausible to suggest that Brodsky viewed his poetry as memorializing Akhmatova in a way that was possible in the 1960s. Interestingly, he does so while incorporating depictions of the Komarovo landscape. One could argue that all of the "Avvakumites," through their poetry and memoir writing were all involved in the task of memorializing Akhmatova. Several lines of "The Roosters Will Begin to Crow And Bustle About" ("Zakrichat i zakhlopochut petukhi") are specifically focused on Akhmatova bringing the past of Russian modernism to the new generation; Margot Rosen notes that "the present moment of Brodsky's poetic 'I' thus become intertwined with events in the past via the figure of Akhmatova, as Brodsky incorporates her history into his poetic world."[545] Thus, Brodsky, while decrying the lack of a monument to Akhmatova, in essence creates one through his identification with her.

Other poems by Brodsky and the other "Avvakumites" also serve as textual monuments to Akhmatova, and arguably, so does Naiman's later memoir to her. Additionally, references to Akhmatova's poetic cycle "Requiem" appear in "The Roosters Will Begin to Crow and Bustle About" in the lines about the "rumbling of boots" and "the death of contemporaries."[546] As

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уносящих Вас к заливу, к деревам,
по отечеству без памятника Вам.

В теплой комнате, как помнится, без книг,
без поклонников, но также не для них,
опирая на ладонь свою висок,
Вы напишите о нас наискосок"
Iosef Brodsky, *Sochineniia Iosifa Brodskogo, v. 1* (Sankt-Peterburg: Pushkinskii fond, 2001), 178-9.

[545] Rosen, *The Independent Turn in Soviet-Era Russian Poetry*, 219.

[546] Ibid., 218.

"Requiem" is a poem that explores memory and memorialization (see following subsection), it is interesting that Brodsky's poem directly references the lack of a monuments to Akhmatova, as well as indirectly references her poetry that discusses monuments and memory.

The above-mentioned poems by Brodsky about Akhmatova were written during Akhmatova's lifetime, while she was in poetic dialogue with them. Brodsky's line about writing "slantwise" in "The Roosters Will Begin to Crow and Bustle about" ("Zakrichat i zakhlopochut petukhi") refers to how Akhmatova tended to not stay on the same line as she would write, with her handwriting moving upward. Akhmatova would later use this line "You will write about us slantwise" as an epigraph to her poem "The Last Rose" ("Posledniaia roza"), which was dedicated to Brodsky.[547] After the 1964 show trial in which Brodsky was convicted of "social parasitism," this poem was only published in the Soviet Union without the epigraph.[548] Nonetheless, even without the epigraph there are allusions to Brodsky:

> Morozova and I must bow down
> And dance with Herod's stepdaughter;
> Fly away from Dido's fire with smoke,
> To go back onto the fire with Joan.
>
> Lord! You see, I am tired
> To resurrect, and die, and live.
> Take everything, but let me
> Feel the crispness of this red rose one more time.
>
> 1962 Komarovo[549]

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[547] "Вы напишите о нас наискосок" Maksim D. Šraer, "Dva stichotvorenija na smert' Achmatovoj: dialogi, častnye kody i mif ob achmatovskich sirotach," Wiener Slawistischer Almanach 40, (1997): 133.
[548] Vadim Baevskii, *Istoriia russkoi literatury XX veka* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2003), 361.
[549] "Мне с Морозовою класть поклоны,
С падчерицей Ирода плясать,
С дымом улетать с костра Дидоны,
Чтобы с Жанной на костер опять.
Господи! Ты видишь, я устала
Воскресать, и умирать, и жить.
Все возьми, но этой розы алой
Дай мне свежесть снова ощутить.

The reference to Boyarina Morozova, the seventeenth-century Old Believer and supporter of Archpriest Avvakum, who defied Tsar Aleksei and is memorialized in Surikov's famous painting (Fig. 2), indicates that Akhmatova had her own "Avvakumites" in mind while composing this poem, and viewed herself as a Morozova figure, leading them in a way.[550]

Figure 2. Vassilii Surikov, *Boiarina Morozova*,
(Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:Vasily Surikov - Боярыня Морозова - Google Art Project.jpg," Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vasily_Surikov_-_Боярыня_Морозова_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg.)

With regards to landscape, both of Brodsky's poems about Akhmatova "Morning Mail for A. A. Akhmatova from the Town of Sestroretsk" and "The Rooster will Begin to Crow and Bustle About" ("Zakrichat i zakhlopochut petukhi") convey the spirit of the Komarovo area with the Gulf of Finland and pine trees. "The Rooster will Begin to Crow and Bustle About" creates an

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1962
Комарово"
Anna Andreevna Akhmatova, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1977), 418.
[550] Rosen, *The Independent Turn in Soviet-Era Russian Poetry*, 253.

intimate, personal tone by picturing places associated with Akhmatova.[551] Additionally, Brodsky's 1962 poem "To Anna Andreevna Akhmatova. (When he goes to the headboard…)" ("A. A. A. (Kogda podoidet k izgolov'iu...)") makes use of nature imagery associated with the Komarovo area. Brodsky mentions pine trees, bushes, and "long Finnish sleds in the snowdrifts under your [Akhmatova's] window."[552] All of this poetic imagery of the Komarovo area in Brodsky's poetry about Akhmatova shows the semantic associations he held for it as a place linked with Akhmatova. For Brodsky, Komarovo is a location where the Russian literary past, to which he feels a great connection, comes to him through Akhmatova. This area held an important meaning for Brodsky, and at one point, he even rented a dacha in Komarovo in order to be able to meet more often with Akhmatova.[553]

According to Lev Losev, allusions to Akhmatova can be found in twelve different poems by Brodsky, in addition to several poems expressly dedicated to her.[554] Brodsky's time spent with Akhmatova at Komarovo remained important to him his whole life; for him, it was a life-changing place. His poem "Sandy hills" ("Peschannye kholmy"), written years later, when he was already living in the United States, expresses his desire to be buried in Komarovo.[555] For Brodsky, Naiman, and other writers of the 1960s, Komarovo and Akhmatova's dacha there were important places that connected them to a leading literary figure of the pre-Soviet generation,

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[551] Henrik Christensen, *Rosor för det XXI:a århundradet*
En intertextuell analys av Iosif Brodskijs "Zakričat i zachlopočut petuchi..." och Anna Achmatovas "Poslednjaja roza" (B.A. thesis, the University of Stockholm, 2013), 29-30. http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:623249/FULLTEXT01.pdf.
[552] "длинные финские сани в сугробах под Вашим окном" Ibid.
[553] Rosen, *The Independent Turn in Soviet-Era Russian Poetry*, 215.
[554] Losev, *Solzhenitsyn i Brodskii kak sosedi,* 105
[555] In the last stanza of the poem, he writes "Когда умру, пускай меня сюда перенесут, Я никому вреда причиню, в песке прибережном лежа." Iosef Brodsky, *Izbrannye stikhi 1962-1989* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990), 228. Brodsky's actual burial site in Venice had lilies of the valley from Komarovo placed on it. Nataliia Kurchatova, "Komarovo: Ot kramol'nogo berega k zapovedniku intelligentsii," *Vremia Kul'tury. Peterburg*, no. 2 (2013): 69-70.

who had not only been a major poet in St. Petersburg literary life of the 1910s, but also a writer who had survived the Russian revolution and the Stalinist purges, and given a voice to the experiences of Soviet citizens who lived through treacherous periods in Russian history.

"Requiem" as a Monument and Its Relationship to Komarovo

A discussion of remembering Akhmatova and pilgrimage to her gravesite in Komarovo is inherently related to a discussion of the role of monuments in Akhmatova's work as well as memorials to her. This section examines Akhmatova's self-memorialization in the poem "Requiem" in relation to the memory of the 1937 Great Terror, memorialization of Akhmatova in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet era, and how Komarovo as a place of memory for her can, in part, be examined in this context.

When Akhmatova died in 1966, Brodsky was instrumental in helping arrange her funeral. Writer and friend of Akhmatova, Mikhail Ardov, and Brodsky were tasked with finding a site for her burial. At first, they looked for a place at the Pavlovskoe cemetery. After leaving Pavlovskoe, Ardov and Brodsky suddenly remembered the last lines to Akhmatova's "Sonnet by the Sea" ("Primorskii sonnet"):

> And it seems so easy,
> As it turns white in an emerald thicket,
> The road to where I will not say,
> There, between the tree trunks it is even brighter
> And everything resembles the path
> By the pond at Tsarskoe Selo[556]

[556] "И кажется такой нетрудной,
Белея в чаще изумрудной,
Дорога не скажу куда…
Там средь стволов еще светлее,
И все похоже на аллею
У царскосельского пруда."

Brodsky and Ardov interpreted these lines as referring to the cemetery at Komarovo and they rushed to it immediately. There they saw a wide road next to a fence, and behind it was an entire forest of pine trees, and they realized that this was the place.[557] The role of pines in Akhmatova's later poetry (as opposed to willow, poplar, and maple trees, which are more characteristic of her earlier work) has been noted, and her later poems, such as "Pines" ("Sosny"), "Ravings" ("Bredy"), and "On Christmas Eve" ("V sochel'nik"), feature depictions of Komarovo pine trees.[558]

Figure 3. Akhmatova's gravesite in Komarovo. (*Anna Akhamtova's Grave near Sankt Petersburg*. Aleksandr Evgenievich Bravo, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anna_Ahmatova%27s_grave.jpg.)

Akhmatova's son, Lev Gumilev, a historian and exponent of "Eurasianism," also played an important part in the establishment of Akhmatova's gravesite monument in Komarovo. While Brodsky secured the plot, the monument was created under Gumilev's initiative. Because in the Soviet Union it would have been impossible for a monument to Akhmatova to be built at Kresty prison (and the cycle "Requiem" would not be published until decades after it was written), a symbolic link to Kresty was put at her gravesite – the stone wall.[559] Rather than a pyramid-shape that was typical

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Anna Andreevna Akhmatova, *Stikhotvoreniya. Poemy*. (Moscow: Eksmo, 2013), 440.

[557] Pavel Fokin, *Akhmatova bez gliantsa* (Sankt-Peterburg: Amfora, 2008), 439-440.
[558] G.P. Kozubovskaia, E.V. Malysheva, "'Vostochnye perevody' A. Akhmatovoi," *Kul'tura i tekst*, no. 3 (1998): 62-77.
[559] Naum Sindalovskii, *Peterburgskii fol'klor s finsko-shvedskim aktsentom, ili Pochem funt likha v Severnoi stolitse* (St. Petersburg: Tsentrpoligraf, 2016), 148.

in the USSR, this stone structure had an opening that symbolized a prison window, which was later filled in with a bas-relief portrait of Akhmatova (Fig. 3). Gumilev was dedicated to erecting the monument at the gravesite. For a period of time, he even lived in a small house near the site, and he personally carried and placed the stones.[560] The wall holds a symbolic link with the stone wall at Kresty Prison, mentioned in Akhmatova's "Requiem" (see below for further discussion of "Requiem" and memorialization):

> I don't pray for myself alone
> But for everyone,
> Who stood there with me
> In the bitter cold
> And the scorching July heat
> Under the red stone wall…[561]

Later Gumilev ended up spending the majority of his inheritance on the monument at the gravesite.[562] In 1969 he travelled to Pskov, where he met with Vsevelod Smirnov, a master blacksmith artist, who forged the cross that was put on the gravesite.[563] Gumilev also ordered a bas-relief from the sculptor Aleksandr Ignatiev, which was later placed in a niche in the wall. Ignatiev gifted a copy of the bas-relief to Gumiliv, and it is now in the Lev Gumilev Memorial

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[560] "Nezadolgo do iubileia Anny Akhmatovoi vokrug ee mogily nachalis' raboty po «blagoustroistvu» znamenitogo kladbishcha," Munitsipal'noe obrazovanie poselok Komarovo, accessed October 15, 2020. http://www.komarovo.spb.ru/?p=293.;"Podkop pod Akhmatovu," Munitsipal'noe obrazovanie poselok Komarovo, accessed October 15, 2020. http://www.komarovo.spb.ru/?p=309

[561] "И я молюсь не о себе одной
А обо всех,
Кто там стоял со мной…
И в лютый холод,
И в июльский зной
Под красной каменной стеной…"

Anna Akhmatova, *Rekviem* (New York: Tovarishchestvo Zarubezhnykh Pisatelei, 1969), 19.

[562] Marta Izmailova, "Kak tebe, synok, v tiur'mu nochi belye gliadeli..." *Rodina*, December 1, 2016. https://rg.ru/2016/12/06/rodina-anna-ahmatova.html.

[563] Savva Iamshchikov, *Moi Pskov* (Pskov: Pskovskaia oblastnaia tipografiia, 2003), 147

Museum.[564] Akhmatova's gravesite with the sculpture and cross, as well the gravesite of several other cultural figures at Komarovo, was decreed a national heritage site in 2001.[565]

The fact that Akhmatova's gravesite in Komarovo initially had a symbol of the Kresty prison on it, the wall for which Lev Gumilev personally collected the rocks in Komarovo, is important in regard to a discussion of monuments to Akhmatova.[566] The wall as a symbol of Kresty prison is particularly significant because of the suppression of "Requiem" in the Soviet Union. The cycle's status as a verbal monument to sufferers of the Great Terror did not reach its intended audience until it was finally published in the USSR in 1987.[567] Thus, through the structure at her gravesite there is an allusion to her poetry about the remembrance of this victims of the Stalinist repressions.

The idea of literature functioning as a monument was important to Akhmatova. In a 1961 essay on Pushkin, she wrote, "'It is in vain that people think that dozens of physical monuments made by human hands can stand in place for one not-wrought-by-hand *aere perennius* ["longer lasting than bronze", i.e., literary work]."[568] The idea of literature functioning as monument is

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[564] The museum additionally holds a forged rose given to Gumiliev by Smirnov. Zoia Desiatova, "V Komarovo za vdokhnoveniem!", Dom Pisatelia Sankt-Peterburg, September 28, 2015. http://dompisatel.ru/?p=1987.

[565] "Nezadolgo do iubileia Anny Akhmatovoi vokrug ee mogily nachalis' raboty po «blagoustroistvu» znamenitogo kladbishcha," Munitsipal'noe obrazovanie poselok Komarovo, accessed October 15, 2020. http://www.komarovo.spb.ru/?p=293.; Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva RF ot 10 iiulia 2001 g. N 527 "O perechne ob"ektov istoricheskogo i kul'turnogo naslediia federal'nogo (obshcherossiiskogo) znacheniia, nakhodiashchikhsia v g.Sankt-Peterburge", June 10, 2021. http://base.garant.ru/1586044/.

[566] Marta Izmailova, "Kak tebe, synok, v tiur'mu nochi belye gliadeli..." *Rodina*, December 1, 2016. https://rg.ru/2016/12/06/rodina-anna-ahmatova.html.

[567] Martin Puchner, *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Third ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 568.

[568] "И напрасно люди думают, что десятки рукотворных памятников могут заменить тот один нерукотворный aere perennius."Aleksandr Zholkovskii, "Mezhdu mogiloi i pamiatnikom: zametki o finale akhmatovskogo «rekviema» (1940)," Ochnye stavki s vlastitelem, accessed November 8, 2020. https://dornsife.usc.edu/alik/rus/ess/bib228.htm; Anna Akhmatova, "Slovo o Pushkine," Звезда, no. 2 (1962): 171–172.

central to "Requiem," which ends with a discussion potential future monument to herself. More importantly, this thought alludes to the cycle itself serving as an indestructible monument.

While Akhmatova's poetry is associated with literary modernism of the 1910s and various related movements, her underground poetry from the Stalin-era and the Thaw is at least as important, if not more so, and is highly relevant to understanding literary monuments in Russia. The "Requiem" poetic cycle is about the experience of people, particularly women, during Stalin's Great Terror of 1937-38, when millions of Soviet citizens were killed and imprisoned on trumped-up charges. In Russian, this period is often known as the "Yezhovshchina," meaning "the terrible times under the administration of [OGPU leader Nikolai] Yezhov." Yezhov was a Soviet official close to Stalin, who is known for his role in carrying out politically motivated mass killings and incarcerations from 1936-1938 in the Soviet Union, which are known in historiography as "The Great Terror." "Yezhovshchina" is the term Akhmatova uses in the foreword to the cycle.[569]

In the cycle, Akhmatova, though a famous poet at the time, stresses her role as an ordinary citizen during the Great Terror. Her son, Lev Gumilev, was imprisoned and her ex-husband Nikolai Punin was imprisoned twice and ended up dying in a forced labor camp in the 1950s. She sees her experiences as parallel to the experiences of many other people in the Soviet Union during the Great Terror. While much of "Requiem" focuses on the experience of ordinary people during the Great Terror, the final section of "Requiem" addresses Akhmatova's desire for a future monument to be made to her:

> If sometime [in the future] in this country
> They will decide to put up a monument to me
>
> I will gladly agree to it,

[569] This section is actually called "Instead of a Foreward" ("Вместо предисловия") in the poem, though functioning structurally as a foreward.

But with one condition – don't put it

By the sea, where I was born:
My last tie with the sea is broken

Not in the Tsars' Garden by the sacred tree stump
Where an inconsolable shadow is looking for me

But here, where I stood for three hundred hours
And where they would not open the bolted doors

Because, I am afraid that in blissful death I will
Forget the rumbling of the black cars that came to arrest people

Forget how the terrible door slammed
And how the old woman howled like a wounded animal […][570]

Akhmatova asserts that she wants to be remembered for giving a voice through her poetry to the experiences of people during the Great Terror. It is also implied in this poem that the very poem "Requiem" itself functions as a monument to her, as well as to fellow citizens who suffered

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[570] "А если когда-нибудь в этой стране
Воздвигнуть задумают памятник мне,

Согласье на это даю торжество,
Но только с условьем — не ставить его

Ни около моря, где я родилась:
Последняя с морем разорвана связь,

Ни в царском саду у заветного пня,
Где тень безутешная ищет меня,

А здесь, где стояла я триста часов
И где для меня не открыли засов.

Затем, что и в смерти блаженной боюсь
Забыть громыхание черных марусь,

Забыть, как постылая хлопала дверь
И выла старуха, как раненый зверь.[…]"

Anna Akhmatova, *Rekviem* (New York: Tovarishchestvo Zarubezhnykh Pisatelei, 1969), 20-21.

through the Great Terror as well. She alludes to Pushkin's poem "I made a monument to myself, not built by hand" ("Ia pamiatnik sebe vozdvig nerukotvornyi"), which is Pushkin's verbal monument to himself and to literary art. She makes this allusion direct in the lines about Tsarskoe Selo, where Pushkin spent much of his youth. Pushkin's poem is the best-known Russian poem in the tradition of *exegi monumentum* poems, which date back to Roman writer Horace. Horace's poem "*Exegi monumentum aere perennius"* ("I have erected a monument longer-lasting than bronze") explores Horace's own perception of the poems that he wrote as functioning as monuments to himself in an ekphrastic manner, that is, in which the texts themselves represent a visual object. In fact, with literature, words sometimes may go a step further beyond representation, and "incarnate" a physical object, such as an actual "monument" in the case of Pushkin's poems.[571] Akhmatova performs precisely this embodiment, although, as Susan Amert notes, she "turns the topos on its head," by referring not only to her poetry as a monument, but to an actual future physical monument to her that, rather than being "aere perennius," is actually made of bronze, as she refers to its "bronze eyelids" ("bronzovykh vek").[572]

There are, thus, noteworthy distinctions between the approach to memory and monumentalization in Pushkin's "I made a monument to myself, not built by human hand" and Akhmatova's "Requiem." According to Pyatkevich, through "emphasi[zing] the intangibility of the "nerukotvornyi" (not-wrought-by-human-hand) monument, Pushkin uses ekphrasis and the suggestion of iconicity to imply that the poet creates something real and tangible," as opposed to eighteenth-century Russian writers, such as Lomonosov and Derzhavin, who wrote of the

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[571] Rebecca Pyatkevich. "Erecting Monuments, Real and Imagined: Brodskii's Monuments to Pushkin Within the Context of Soviet Culture," *Ulbandus Review* 12, (2009/2010): 163.
[572]Susan Amert, *In a Shattered Mirror: The Later Poetry of Anna Akhmatova* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 58

symbolic nature of literary monuments. [573] Pushkin in his poem directly views his work itself as a literal, tangible monument to himself:

> I made a monument to myself, not built by human hand.
> It['s location] won't be overcrowded with people
> It has attained greater heights
> Than the Alexander Column [at the Winter Palace][574]

While Akhmatova implies her wish for an actual physical monument being put up for her (and victims of the Great Terror), while alluding to Pushkin's *Exegi momentum* poem, it is also clear that the cycle "Requiem" itself is meant to function as a textual monument not only for her own experiences, but also to the other Soviet people to whom she wanted to give a voice. This desire is expressed in the introduction to "Requiem," in which the following lines are given as an epigraph:

> Not under a foreign sky
> And not under the protection of foreign wings
> I was with my people then,
> There, where my people, unhappily, were.[575]

By repeating the phrase "my people" ("moi narod"), Akhmatova ties remembrance of herself to remembrance of the victims of the 1930s repressions and positions her experience as parallel to that of the experiences of other people living in the Soviet Union. Her poem, using a wide

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[573] Ibid., 164.

[574] "Я памятник себе воздвиг нерукотворный,
К нему не зарастет народная тропа,
Вознесся выше он главою непокорной
Александрийского столпа."

A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh, 10 vols.* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1967), vol. 3, 340.

[575] "Нет, и не под чуждым небосводом,
И не под защитой чуждых крыл,
Я была тогда с моим народом,
Там, где мой народ, к несчастью, был."

Anna Akhmatova, *Rekviem* (New York: Tovarishchestvo Zarubezhnykh Pisatelei, 1969), 5.

variety of allusions and literary motifs, describes both her experience, and the experience of other women, waiting outside of Kresty prison where their family members were imprisoned on ideological grounds.

Lidiia Chukovskaia, one of Akhmatova's closest friends and author of a three-volume memoir of Akhmatova, notes parallels between Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* (*Arkhipelag GULag*) and Akhmatova's "Requiem" in her memoir *The Process of Expulsion* (*Protsess iskliucheniia*), which focuses on Chukovskaia's own experiences of expulsion from the Writers Union in the 1970s. Chukovskaia writes that at the 22nd Party Congress (in October, 1961), the idea to create a monument to victims of the mass arrests of the 1930s came up. However, this idea was set aside in 1965, and, at the time that Chukovskaia was writing in 1974, there were no physical monuments to the victims of the mass arrests. Nonetheless, she writes that, "For the time being, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is the only one who has made a monument to the deceased, through his great book, *The Gulag Archipelago*."[576] Immediately after her comment about *The Gulag Archipelago*, Chukovskaia notes that the "powerful 'Requiem,' the lament of Anna Akhmatova about the ruined lives, to this day has not been published in our motherland."[577] Chukovskaia reflects on how remembrance of the past can influence present reality, noting Aleksandr Gerzen's thought: "that which one does not dare to say, exists only halfway."[578] In another memoir, *The House of the Poet* (*Dom poeta*), Chukovskaia, writing in the mid-1970s laments that even "after the 22nd Congress, at the height of destalinization, at the time of the publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, "Requiem" was not published, and was

[576] "Памятник погибшим воздвиг пока что один А. Солженицын великой книгой «Архипелаг ГУЛаг»." Lidiia Chukovskaia, *Protsess iskliucheniia* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1979), 19-21.
[577] "Могучий «Реквием», плач Анны Ахматовой по загубленным жизням, до сих пор не прозвучал у нас на родине." Ibid.
[578] "То, о чём не осмеливаешься сказать, существует лишь на половину." Ibid.

only circulated from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth."[579] Chukovskaia was referring to legal publication of "Requiem" in the Soviet Union. While the lines above from Chukovskaia's memoirs refer to *samizdat*, it should also be noted that "Requiem" was also published abroad, through *tamizdat*.

In 1962 there was talk of "Requiem" being published in *Novyi mir*, and Akhmatova strongly wished for it to appear in the USSR, but the Thaw did not fully deliver what some had seen to be greater promises for freedom of expression, and it was not published.[580] After its rejection from *Novyi mir*, "Requiem" continued to pass from hand to hand. It was published abroad in Munich in 1963 and in New York as a dual language book with Marie Under's translation into Estonian in 1967.[581] The publication abroad was due in part to the work of Gleb Struve and Iulian Oksman. Iulian Oksman was a friend of Akhmatova and Pushkin scholar and editor who had been sent to a prison camp in Kolyma for 10 years for the "crime" of not getting all of the volumes of Pushkin's work ready in time (only five out of the sixteen volumes were completed) for the much-heralded Pushkin jubilee of 1937.[582] The typewritten document of "Requiem" made its way abroad on July 7, 1963, when Oksman gave it to American Slavic studies scholar, Kathryn Beliveau Feuer, who had been in the Soviet Union researching in the

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[579] "И даже тогда, после XXII Съезда, в пору опубликования «Одного дня Ивана Денисовича», «Реквием» не был опубликован и передавался только из рук в рук, из уст в уста." Lidiia Chukovskaia, *Dom poeta* (Moscow: Vremia, 2012), 127-8.
[580] Gleb Struve, "Kak byl vpervye izdan «Rekviem»" afterward to *Rekviem* (Tovarishchestvo Zarubezhnykh Pisatelei, 1969), 23-23.; Iakov Klots «Rekviem» Akhmatovoi v tamizdate. 56 pisem, Colta, June 24, 2019. https://www.colta.ru/articles/literature/21637-rekviem-ahmatovoy-v-tamizdate-56-pisem.
[581] Ibid.
[582] Jonathan Brooks Platt, *Greetings, Pushkin! Stalinist Cultural Politics and the Russian National Bard*, (Pittsburgh, PA: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016),132

Tolstoy archives, and she, in turn, delivered the document to Gleb Struve, who sought its publication outside the USSR.[583]

Decades later, during the period of glasnost', 1987 was a watershed year in which "Requiem", as well as many other major twentieth-century Russian works, were published in the Soviet Union for the first time.[584] Finally, "Requiem" was able to function as a public *exigi monumentum* poem to Akhmatova and other victims of the Great Terror. In understanding monuments and sites of memory linked to Akhmatova, it is important to not only consider the interrelationships between physical structures, but also their relationship with her poetry as well.

Conclusion and Connection to St. Petersburg Memorials

As a location, Komarovo is tied to the memory of Anna Akhmatova in several ways. While Koktebel as Voloshin's site of memory was precisely constructed by him and embellished by others in different ways, Akhmatova's ties to Komarovo (as Pasternak's to Peredelkino) were mainly circumstantial. The Litfond assigned her a cottage in which to live. Much more importantly, Akhmatova's life at Komarovo influenced the history of post-Stalin Russian literature, as a major group of young poets, including Joseph Brodsky and Anatoly Naiman, frequently visited her in Komarovo. In the 1960s, her "shack" at Komarovo was an important meeting place where Akhmatova shared her experiences, bridging literary eras and fostering the creation of high-quality poetry. Symbolically, Komarovo became a place strongly associated with Akhmatova, as well as the persistence of modernist poetry into the Thaw era, in spite of Soviet cultural politics.

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[583] O. B. Vasilevskaia, "'…Pod zvon tiuremnykh kliuchei' Akhmatovskii 'Rekviem': iz istorii sozdaniia i izdaniia," *Nashe nasedie*, no. 102 (2012): http://www.nasledie-rus.ru/podshivka/10214.php

[584] Nataliia Rostova, "1987 god: Glasnost'," *Рождение российских СМИ*, accessed November 20, 2020. http://gorbymedia.com/post/1987-review

In the decades after Akhmatova's death, many different writers and poets lived in her "shack," which was still Litfond property.[585] Nonetheless, the idea of it being Akhmatova's cabin was not forgotten, and the status of her dacha at Komarovo as an important place of memory in Russian culture was asserted in 2019, when it officially became property of the city of St. Petersburg.[586] There had been a debate for several years about auctioning it off, along with other Litfond dachas in Komarovo.[587] A 2019 article in *Rossiiskaia gazeta* cites historian Iakov Gordin, who believes that a museum at Akhmatova's "shack" should have opened years ago.[588] In the years to come, it is possible that a museum to Akhmatova may be established at Komarovo, in addition to the one that already exists at the Fountain House in St. Petersburg, just as a museum was established at Pasternak's dacha in Peredelkino.[589] Members of Petersburg literary circles, including Anatoly Naiman, have sought to establish a museum there since the early 2000s; however, this initiative has met with resistance. In fact, a 2005 article in *Kommersant vlast'* notes that some of the arguments against establishing a museum at Akhmatova's "shack" bear a strong resemblance to the initial arguments against the establishment of a museum at Pasternak's dacha in Peredelkino (see discussion of Peredelkino in prior section).[590] Interestingly, this article also quotes Vasily Aksyonov, who briefly visited Rein, Akhmatova, and others at Komarovo in the 1960s. Aksyonov is quoted as saying that he believes that a museum should be built at Komarovo, and goes on to say that the best museum that he has

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[585] Aleksei Akhmatov, "Dvazhdy Akhmatovskaia budka", *Zinziver* 81, No. 1 (2016): http://reading-hall.ru/publication.php?id=1523.
[586] Evgeniia Tsinkler, "Otstoiali "budku", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, June 24, 2019.https://rg.ru/2019/06/24/reg-szfo/dachu-anny-ahmatovoj-peredadut-v-sobstvennost-sankt-peterburga.html
[587] Ibid.
[588] Ibid.
[589] Ibid.
[590] Grigorii Revzin, "Izbistaia [sic] tema," *Kommersant" Vlast'*, February 28, 2005. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/550666.

been to is the Voloshin museum at Koktebel. The references to Koktebel and Peredelkino in this article about Komarovo (all places where Litfond Writers' Houses and dachas existed in the Soviet period) indicate an important connection and similarities between these spaces.

It should also be noted, that while debate has surrounded the establishment of a museum at Akhmatova's dacha in Kamarovo, memorialization to her has been quite pronounced in the post-Soviet period, which has seen a significant public reassessment of Akhmatova's work and her place in Russian culture. A museum to Akhmatova was established at the Fountain House in St. Petersburg in 1989.[591] It has become a vital site of memory for Akhmatova in St. Petersburg. The museum has also linked memory to Akhmatova to victims of the repressions, and programs and exhibitions involve her poetry, including "Requiem."[592]

In 2000 the first Moscow monument to Akhmatova was erected at Bolshaia Ordynka Street, where she lived with the Ardov family when she was in Moscow from 1938 to 1966 — this apartment was essentially the Moscow counterpart to the Fountain House in St. Petersburg.[593] In 2004 a monument to Akhmatova was constructed which faces the Kresty prison, as anticipated in "Requiem." The sculptor of the monument, Galina Dodonova, already renowned for her Pushkin statue at Mikhailovskoe, won a contest for designing a monument to Akhmatova opposite Kresty, facing the prison across the Neva River.[594] Dodonova noted the sources of inspiration for her work, which included parallels between Akhmatova and Dante.[595]

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[591] "Istoriia muzeia," Muzei Anny Akhmatovoi v Fontannom Dome, accessed Novermber 14, 2020. https://akhmatova.spb.ru/about/.
[592] Nina Popova, Kategoriia prostranstva v ekspozitsionnom reshenii muzeia Anny Akhmatovoi v Fontannom Dome, *Russian Literature* 30, No. 3 (1991): 385-390.
[593] Ivan Ivanov, "Usad'ba Kumaninykh" Uznai Moskvu, accessed November 16, 2020. https://um.mos.ru/houses/usadba_kumaninykh/.
[594] T. Iur'eva, Zakovannaia v formu strast', *Neva*, no. 10 (October 2006): 267-269.
[595] It should also be noted that Dante's work was important to Akhmatova, and she refers to him in her poem "The Muse."

Dodonova also found inspiration in Akhmatova's poem "Lot's Wife" ("Lotova zhena"), in which Akhmatova expresses pity for the woman who was turned into a pillar of salt for sneaking one last glimpse back at the burning city. (Fig. 4)[596]

Figure 4. Akhmatova statue by Galina Dodonova facing the Neva River and Kresty prison, which is visisble in picture across the river. (Photograph by Josie Brody.)

According to Sergei Nosov, this monument functions as part of a "complex" with another one in St. Petersburg – that is, the Memorial to Victims of the Political [Stalin-era] Repressions (*Pamiatnik zhertvam politicheskikh repressii*). Built in 1995, this monument takes the form of two sphinxes, and it also faces the Kresty prison across the Neva River, positioned between the monument to Akhmatova and the river. Nosov also brings attention to Egyptian motifs in the

[596] Ibid., 268-9.

ensemble of monuments – he cites Dodonova's statement that the sculpture is "associated with Isis, walking along the Nile in search of her son and husband."[597] Svetlana Boym also notes that the pedestal of the monument with the sphinxes is covered with quotations—from Akhmatova, as well as Mandel'stam, Brodsky, Solzhenitsyn, and other famous writers. Boym also draws attention to the proximity of these monuments and Kresty prison to the KGB's "Big House" (Bol'shoi dom), where victims were interrogated and tortured in the basement, and where water, pink with blood, flowed into the Neva.[598]

Thus, this monument to Akhmatova, as well as the Shemiakin sculpture near it, converges in a discussion of monuments to the victims of politically-motivated persecution during the Soviet period that are found in post-Soviet space. The Sakharov Center's online map of such monuments includes information about 1,258 monuments to victims of politically-motivated persecution in the USSR, and the monument to Akhmatova in St. Petersburg is included with several pictures of it (Fig. 5).[599]

[597] Sergei Nosov, *Konspiratsiia, ili Tainaia zhizn' peterburgskikh pamiatnikov* (St. Petersburg: Lambus Press, 2015), 104-119.
[598] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 144.
[599] A. Gagarinova, "Pamiatnik Anne Andreevne Akhmatovoi, naprotiv tiur'my «Kresty»," Pamiatniki zhertvam politicheskikh repressii, ustanovlennye na territorii byvshego SSSR. https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/pam/?t=pam&id=1201.

Figure 5. The monument to Anna Akhmatova across the river from Kresty prison. (Image from Sakharov Center's website on monuments to victims of the repressions. https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/pam/?t=pam&id=1201.)

The monument to Akhmatova is one point in the larger assemblage of sites, events, and phenomena commemorating politically-motivated persecution in the USSR. In 1988, during the era of glasnost' and perestroika, commissions were formed for the commemoration and memory of victims of the repressions.[600] In the 1990s and 2000s many new monuments were established in memory of the victims, and educational programs were put in place to help preserve memory of the repressions.[601] One can understand, from a historical perspective, why the monument to Akhmatova across from Kresty Prison was established in this post-Soviet era of open

[600] E. G. Putilova, "Problema uvekovecheniia pamiati zhertv politicheskikh repressii v Rossii (II polovina 1980-kh – nachalo 2000-ch gg.," *Vestnik TGPU*, no. 9 (2010): https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/problema-uvekovecheniya-pamyati-zhertv-politicheskih-repressiy-v-rossii-ii-polovina-1980-h-nachalo-2000-h-gg (data obrashcheniia: 20.05.2021).
[601] Ibid.

memorialization of the victims of repressions. The wall that Lev Gumilev built at Akhmatova's gravesite at Komarovo, symbolizing Kresty, was a very personal structure that was intertextually associated with lines from her "Requiem." The Akhmatova monument across from Kresty holds this intertextual relationship, as well. While they are monuments to Akhmatova, they are also monuments to what she wanted to be remembered for (as stated in "Requiem")–giving a voice to the experiences of people who suffered during the "Yezhovshchina." Thus, while a museum does not exist at Akhmatova's dacha in Komarovo, memorialization to her, particularly in St. Petersburg, has played a significant role in post-Soviet Russian cultural memory.

The ongoing debate about the future of Akhmatova's "shack" highlights the importance of this specific space in Russian cultural history. An analysis of Komarovo as an area and place of memory associated with Akhmatova also invites discussion not only of other museums and monuments to Akhmatova, but also to some of her literary work, particularly "Requiem," While "Requiem" functions as an *exegi monumentum* poem, it was not published in the Soviet Union until 1987, and an actual monument to her near the prison was not constructed until 2004. The window symbolizing Kresty at her gravesite that Lev Gumilev had constructed in the 1960s represented how Akhmatova wished to be remembered. With the advent of greater freedom of expression with regard to Stalin-era crimes in the late 1980s, Akhmatova's collected works were been published, and her "Requiem" could finally fully function as the *exegi monumentum*, both to herself and to other victims of the Great Terror, that she intended it to be.

V. Chapter Conclusion

Literary communities that were associated with the Soviet Litfond and Writers' Union historically did not only function as destinations and dacha locations for ideologically compliant writers to live and work. In the 1960s three important literary communities established for Soviet writers also developed into sites of memory for three modernist writers whose work not only did not fit into the Soviet socialist realist paradigm of ideological literary production, but in some cases were a direct rebuke of Soviet leaders and policies. The linking of spaces that were directly tied to Soviet creative organizations with ideologically un-Soviet modernist writers demonstrates the influence of modernist writers on literary culture even during the Soviet period. Additionally, the embedding of these dacha and non-urban destinations in various works of literature indicates the existence of specific spatial texts associated with these locations, and what can be considered, per Antsiferov's concept, the presence of palpable *genii loci* that are specifically connected to these independent writers.

Although Akhmatova, Pasternak, and Voloshin were not ideologically Soviet writers, the sustained importance of locations associated with them for many people in the Soviet Union, suggests how collective cultural memory attached to memory spaces can resist dominant political power and ideology. In a broader discussion of monuments and the establishment of literary house museums, the Pasternak museum and the Voloshin museum in particular are unique as they were established while Peredelkino and Koktebel still functioned as places where writers lived and worked, creating literary history in the process, which distinguishes them from the majority of literary house museums. Significantly, the Pasternak House Museum and the

Voloshin House Museum, played a symbolic role during glasnost', asserting the importance of these writers in Russian cultural history.

While the Anna Akhmatova House Museum is located in St. Petersburg at the Fountain House, Komarovo is still an important memory space associated with Akhmatova, which can be viewed in relation to memory spaces for her in St. Petersburg. The wall structure at her gravesite constructed by Lev Gumiliev has an important relationship with other monuments to her and the poem "Requiem." Additionally, her dacha is remembered for its role in intergenerational literary contact during the 1960s when the "Avvakumites" visited and learned from her. This function of her dacha is reflected in both her poetry and that of her followers, particularly Joseph Brodsky. The significance of intergenerational contact in maintaining cultural memory is also apparent in considering Koktebel, in terms of interactions of Maria Stepanovna with visitors (as we find in Ulitskaia's *The Green Tent*, where the characters go on a "pilgrimage" trip to Koktebel and meet and talk with Mariia Stepanovna), as well as in Peredelkino with Boris Leonidovich's readings to visitors on the second floor of the dacha.

The places examined in this chapter can be viewed in relation to Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire*, though in a qualified sense. That is, they developed as literary history itself was unfolding in these literary communities. Of crucial importance, Nora's *lieux de mémoire* project centers on ideas of patriotism and state-endorsed collective cultural importance. The debate and decades-long difficulties in establishing the house museums demonstrates that underground efforts of memorialization, though not supported by state interests and ideology, can have a long-term cultural influence.

The interrelationship of the landscapes of these places with literary works is also significant. Voloshin's mythologization of the Koktebel' landscape, including his home,

occupies an important place in Russian cultural memory. Peredelkino landscapes are embedded both in Pasternak's poetry in *On Early Trains*, as well as in parts of *Doctor Zhivago*. Komarovo is represented in both Akhmatova's late poetry and that of her legacy with independent poets, the "Avvakumites," who describe the personal significance of visits to her dacha in their lives.

In summary, several writers' communities associated with the Soviet Litfond and Writers' Union during the Soviet period were not only places for members of the Soviet Writers' Union to live and produce their work. These locations were both unofficial and official sites of memory, whose establishment and culture of remembrance intersect with the preservation and promotion of a literary past that differs greatly from the officially enforced literature of socialist realism. The cultural significance of these locations lives on in the sites of memory and the literary texts in which they are embedded.

Conclusion

Remembering and Reimagining the Locations of Writers' Communities in Post-Soviet Literature and Memoirs

This dissertation set out to examine how the physical sites of Soviet writers' communities and retreats shaped literary life and production, as well as influenced cultural memory, in the Soviet era and after. It has demonstrated that these communities for writers, controlled by the Litfond and the Writers' Union, were unique places where official ideology coexisted with quasi-dissident creative initiatives. These locations influenced the output of creative work in the Soviet Union as well as cultural memory, quite notably with regard to the establishment of modernist poets' museums in Koktebel and Peredelkino and a famous gravesite and monument in Komarovo. Some of these places also, although thoroughly embedded in Soviet creative culture, show indications of a continuum with cultural life in the pre-revolutionary era, and are to this day associated with major Russian artists and writers. For example, Maksimilian Voloshin's house in Koktebel, which was the location of his famous literary salon in the 1910s and 1920s, was incorporated into the Litfond and became the site of one of the Writers' Houses of Creativity. While part of the system of official Soviet socialist realist writing culture, many of these places also held ties to pre-revolutionary writing culture.

The phenomenon of writers' and artists' colonies in the Soviet Union was very different from their counterparts in the West in numerous respects. Not only were Komarovo, Peredelkino, and Koktebel places where writers in the Soviet Union lived and worked, but they also became places of memory associated with poets who did not fully support Communist Party ideology and cannot be considered mainline socialist realist authors. The close, yet complicated

relationship that officials who administered many of these places had with independent writers whose work was not mainstream socialist realist, shows that these places functioned to a degree as microcosms of the debate over literary aesthetics and cultural memory that emerged in the USSR.

While writers' and artists' colonies in the West have an important place in cultural history, their lack of a connection to state ideology and embeddedness into an official organizational structure for creative professions is a crucial difference between them and communities for writers and artists in the USSR. Perhaps there are inherent particularities in the kinds of writers' and artists' colonies or communities that emerge in differing socio-political circumstances. The role of state-centralization with regard to the culture and development of communities for creative professions is a further avenue for research. Soviet-era communities for writers also reflected changes in Soviet culture as a whole (the trajectory of which, was, of course, very different from literary cultures in the West). They also were environments where sometimes contradictory cultural attitudes and opinions clashed with one another, so it is not possible to define them as wholly "socialist realist" or as "quasi-dissident."

Certain Soviet-era writers' colonies have enjoyed a remarkable afterlife in post-Soviet fiction and memoirs. This continued remembrance indicates the enduring cultural significance of literary communities that functioned as centers of Soviet literature in the USSR, but are, as this dissertation has shown, more historically complex. While some locations contain museums or other sites of memory, others are only remembered in memoir and historical and literary accounts.

While the buildings of many of the original Writers' Houses no longer exist, some are still remembered today in significant memoir works. A notable example is Maleevka and the

large collection of reminiscences and essays published in 2001, *Maleevka, Dear to my Heart* (*Milaia serdtsu Maleevka*), which includes recollections of many writers, including dissidents, who stayed at the Soviet Writers' House (see Chapter 2).

Additionally, many of the writers' retreats in places traditionally considered Russian tourist destinations are, of course, still tourism centers. However, the post-Soviet continuation of some writers' retreats as creative destinations outside of Russia and as sites of memory has faced challenges. A particularly controversial debate surrounded the future of the Writers' House in Dubulti, Latvia in 1991, when Vasily Aksyonov requested that the space be maintained as an international site for writers in newly created post-Soviet Latvia. As after the collapse of the Soviet Union into separate states, prior Soviet institutional property now belonged to newly established countries, Vasily Aksyonov was very concerned with the future of the Writers' House in Dubulti (which he viewed as a "Northern Koktebel" and perceived of as having great significance as a cultural site). In 1992 he wrote an article in *The Washington Post* in favor of maintaining the space: "The place was dear to me, for it was used not only by the well-fed cows of the Socialist Realism, but by a bunch of us—the stray dogs of the post-Stalin avant garde. Thirty years ago, I wrote my first novels at Dubulti."[602] However, his article also connected his concern about the future of Dubulti to Russian-Latvian politics and the problem of inter-ethnic distrust in post-Soviet Latvia, also expressing concern for the future of ethnic Russians in post-Soviet Latvia. This led to a heated argument between Aksyonov and Latvian-American economist George Viksnins. Viksnins' December 12, 1992 article in *The Washington Post*, "Russian Chauvinism, Loud and Clear," sees Aksyonov's concern for the future of the Dubulti Writers' House as an extension of "Russian chauvinism," and he connects these concerns to

[602] Vasily Aksyonov, "Riga's Last Resort: A Russian Writer Finds No Welcome for Former Dissidents in Latvia," *The Washington Post*, Sunday November 29, 1992, C2.

regional politics and economics, noting past mistreatment by the Soviet elite to the Latvian majority, and that the vast majority of business equity was (as of 1992) in non-Latvian hands.[603] Aksyonov discussed this exchange in detail in his essay "How I was Branded a Russian Chauvinist" ("Kak menia zapisali v russkie shovinisty").[604] In the end, Aksyonov's wish to maintain a writers' retreat in Dubulti was unrealized. Thus, the break-up of the USSR brought about an end of era with regard to all-union creative retreats in specific places. This was also the case in Abkhazia (which was a major destination for creative tourism during the Soviet period), where a war broke out between Georgia and Abkhaz separatists following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The economy in the tourism sector in Abkhazia suffered for many years following the 1992-1993 War in Abkhazia; however, since 2005 it has seen some significant renewal.[605] Some former buildings for Soviet writers' retreats in Abkhazia now function as hotels for tourists.[606]

This dissertation particularly examined Koktebel, Peredelkino, and Komarovo as significant locations as Soviet writers' retreats and communities in the history of Soviet-era Russian literature. These sites have also remained relevant in the post-Soviet world in a cultural sense, and this has been manifested in several works of 21st century Russian literature.

Peredelkino had a dual Soviet-era role as both a writers' colony for major official Soviet writers and as site of memory for certain major and more ideologically-independent writers. Allegedly established at the behest of Stalin and Gorky, it was meant to be a colony for strictly

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[603] "Russian Chauvinism, Loud and Clear," George Viksnins, The Washington Post, December 12, 1992, A23.
[604] Aksenov, "Kak menia zapisali v russkie shovinisty," *Odno sploshnoe Karuzo* (Moscow: Eskmo, 2014).
[605] Kristina Lakerbaia and Boris Ermakov, "Osnovnye etapy razvitiia i sovremennoe sostoianie sfery turizma i rekreatsii v Respublike Abkhaziia," *Izvestiia Sochinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 35, no. 2 (2015): 77.
[606] "O dome otdykha," Midel'-Gagra, http://midelgagra.com/about-us/.

Soviet socialist realist writers. Nonetheless, it became a place of memory associated primarily with Boris Pasternak and his *Doctor Zhivago*, as well as other writers who were not strict Soviet socialist realist idealogues.

Reflections of Peredelkino abound in *Doctor Zhivago* and many poems by Pasternak (as well as other Soviet-era work, such as Bella Akhmadulina's 1973 poem "Dacha romance" ("Dachnyi roman")).[607] More rececently, in the 21st century, Peredelkino is featured in Iurii Poliakov's 2003 novel *Kid in Milk* (*Kozlenok v moloke*). Poliakov, who lives in Peredelkino, has suggested the creation of a "Literary Peredelkino" museum in the old corpus of the Writers' House of Creativity, as well as Westerners' and Slavophiles' Museum on the site of the adjacent Samarin estate.[608] At any rate, the current Pasternak, Okudzhava, Chukovsky, and Evtushenko museums in Peredelkino see new visitors every year, and it is clear that the village is firmly cemented as an important literary locale in the Russian cultural consciousness.

The Komarovo/Repino area on the Karelian isthmus was associated with Russian and writers from the pre-revolutionary area in the Grand Duchy of Finland when the towns were known as Kellomäki and Kuokkala. Repin's *Penaty* estate was a renowned cultural center, which drew many writers and artists. After the revolution, the area along the Karelian isthmus became part of Finland until the conclusion of the Winter War, when it was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Kuokkala was renamed Repino, while Kellomäki was renamed Komarovo, and Soviet writers' retreats were established in both towns (a Writers' House of Creativity was established in Komarovo and a Composers' House of Creativity was established in Repino). Komarovo held an important cultural significance during the Thaw-era as the location of Anna Akhmatova's

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[607] See chapter 3.
[608] Mariia Raevskaia, "Iurii Poliakov: Peredelkino dolzhno stat' mestom edineniia," *Novye okruga*, November 5, 2015. http://newokruga.ru/yuriy-polyakov-peredelkino-dolzhno-stat-mestom-edineniya/.

dacha, where a younger generation of writers', her so-called "Avvakumites" visited her. Poems by Joseph Brodsky present the nature of the Komarovo area in conjunction with allusions and references to Akhmatova. The importance of Komarovo as a meeting place for Akhmatova and the "Avvakumites" is embedded in several poems and memoirs.

In the 21st century, the Komarovo/Repino area continues to be remembered as a location important to cultural history. This is particularly the case in Natalia Galkina's remarkable 2003 novel *Villa Renault* (*Villa Reno*), which depicts the history of Komarovo/Kellomäki in the context of a fantasy/science fiction plot. A film crew from St. Petersburg goes to Komarovo in the early 1990s for a project and awaken ghosts of the past in Villa Renault (also known as the "Borman dacha"), a residence of a well-known intelligentsia family, and they experience the area's past as a community in the years following the revolution. Galkina weaves science fiction/fantasy with the local history of the area. She refers to Soviet "Houses of Creativity" in the area in numerous places in the novel, depicting them as a part of the 20th century cultural history of the area.[609] Her novel clearly demonstrates the continued significance of Komarovo in different eras in post-Soviet literary cultural memory.

The role of Koktebel and Voloshin in the 21st century Russian culture has seen a remarkable post-Soviet afterlife. Marianna Landa's scholarship has revealed a resurgence of interest in Voloshin in the post-Soviet period, demonstrating his significance as a writer well into the 21st century. In particular, Voloshin's vision of Russia has proved to have resonance with a new generation of Russians from many different walks of life, who find inspiration in his works and worldview.[610] Koktebel is also depicted in literary works by major early 21st century writers.

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[609] Natal'ia Galkina, *Villa Reno* (Moscow: Tekst, 2004), 188-191.
[610] Marianna Landa, *Maximilian Voloshin's Poetic Legacy and the Post-Soviet Russian Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 192.

Koktebel of the 1960s is notably represented in works by Vasily Aksyonov and Liudmila Ulitskaia. Dmitrii Bykov's 2010 novel *Ostromov, or the Student of the Sorcerer* (*Ostromov, ili Uchennik charodeia*), presents Voloshin-era Koktebel in vivid descriptions.

Ostromov, or the Student of the Sorcerer depicts Maksimilian Voloshin (with the stand-in name of "Valerian Kirienko") and Koktebel (Sudak) in the context of a fantastical novel based on historical events. Bykov in fact consulted the Voloshin House Museum in Koktebel while working on the novel.[611] This novel centers itself around the "Case of the Leningrad Freemasons" of 1926, when freemasons were persecuted, and many characters in the novel have real people as their prototypes.[612] The hero of the novel, a friend of "Valerian," is "Daniil Galitsky," who is based primarily on the writer Daniil Zhukovsky.[613] Zhukovsky was arrested and imprisoned in 1935 for "keeping counterrevolutionary poems by Voloshin," and was killed in 1938.[614] Bykov's novel is certainly testament to Landa's observations on the renewed interest in Voloshin in the 21st century. While Koktebel is replaced with "Sudak" in the novel (Sudak is an ancient town to the immediate west of Koktebel), Bykov depicts Voloshin's home in a way that corresponds to historical accounts of Koktebel as well as Voloshin's own depiction of his home.[615]

With regard to depictions of Koktebel in the 1960s and Thaw era, the writings of Liudmila Ulitskaia and Vasily Aksyonov are particularly notable. Ulitskaia's *The Green Tent* depicts 1960s Koktebel through the eyes of Soviet students, while Aksyonov's memoir-based *Mysterious Passion* presents Koktebel as a key location in the lives of Soviet writers. Other prior

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[611] Dmitrii Bykov, *Ostromov, ili Uchenik charodeia. Posobie po levitatsii* (Moscow: Prozaik, 2010), 6.
[612] Ibid., 5.
[613] Ibid.
[614] T. N. Zhukovskaia, "Daniil Zhukovskii (1909-1938)," *Pogibshie poety – zhertvy kommunisticheskikh repressii*, ed. Viktor Kishinevskii, 2007. http://vcisch2.narod.ru/ZHUKOVSKY/Zhukovsky.htm.
[615] Bykov, *Ostromov, ili Uchenik charodeia. Posobie po levitatsii*, 550-553.

works by Aksyonov, such as the essay "Karadag-68," feature Koktebel during the Soviet era. Additionally, Aksyonov's 1979 novel *The Island of Crimea* is an alternative history that presents Crimea as having developed separately from the Soviet Union, and detailed descriptions of Koktebel in connection to Voloshin are found in it.

The significance of Koktebel in Russian culture has expanded to a point that has taken on a mythic resonance that is not necessarily tied to the Voloshin in the minds of some. The 2003 film *Roads to Koktebel* (*Koktebel'*) depicts a father and son's perilous journey to the town, which takes up epic properties in the boy's consciousness. However, when the boy finally arrives there, the film depicts Koktebel as being overtaken by capitalist consumer-fueled tourism, thoroughly at odds with the boy's vision. This film depicts post-Soviet Koktebel as a renowned, mythic resort destination, but whose cultural significance is lost to many in a newly capitalist world.[616]

While for some Koktebel may have a mythic quality that is dissociated from its cultural-historical past, the memory of Voloshin in Koktebel is nonetheless thoroughly maintained. While Koktebel is primarily remembered both historical ties to Voloshin and its circle, the era of Koktebel as a Soviet Writers' House is also important in Russian cultural memory. Today the annual International Voloshin Readings take place in Koktebel, as does the awards ceremony for the Voloshin International Literary Competition, as well as the Voloshin Literary Festival.[617]

Providing retreats to writers to live and work is relevant to more than the history of the Soviet Writers' Union and Litfond. Writers' retreats and their geographical premises are, in fact, embedded in Soviet-era literature itself. As noted, many locations have become so culturally significant that they resonate in Russian culture to this day. In the case of Koktebel and

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[616] Liliia Likhacheva, *Nravy kak sotsial'no-kul'turnyi fenomen: problema modernizatsii v sovremennoi Rossii* (Ekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo universiteta, 2010), 162.
[617] Landa, *Maximilian Voloshin's Poetic Legacy and the Post-Soviet Russian Identity*, 1.

Komarovo, the continuum of pre-revolutionary cultural history through the Soviet period, where writers' retreats and communities were maintained in these locations, has influenced the perceptions and cultural significance of these areas. This continuum is very prominent with regard to Koktebel, where Voloshin's archive and the memory of his home during the 1910s and 1920s was maintained during the Soviet era, particularly by Maria Stepanovna Voloshina and Vladimir Kupchenko. Koktebel was a highly distinctive location in Soviet-era culture, and, as Landa notes, "Koktebel [during the Soviet era] provided a continuity between the disjointed antagonistic epochs of the pre-and post- revolutionary Russia."[618]

The pre-revolutionary history linked to some of the writers' communities (including their past histories as country estates, dacha settlements, and tourist destinations) influenced their development as writers' communities. This history is significant in that it shows that there was a continuum between the culture of pre-revolutionary writers' and artists' communities and those that existed in the USSR. Literary and artistic culture in the Soviet Union, did not exist in a vacuum removed from the historical past, and both place-related and cultural particularities of pre-revolutionary writing culture are discernible in an examination of these communities. Nonetheless, these places were heavily influenced by the prevailing culture of socialist realism, which had an effect on their culture as well. Much doctrinaire socialist realist writing was produced in these places, and many hardline ideological writers lived and worked at them.

However, the writers' communities remembered for their cultural significance in the 21st century are not celebrated for their history as centers for Soviet socialist realism and hardline Soviet ideology. On the contrary, today they tend to be particularly remembered for their association with specific writers (such as Boris Pasternak, Maksimilian Voloshin, and Anna

[618] Landa, *Maximilian Voloshin's Poetic Legacy and the Post-Soviet Russian Identity*, 191.

Akhmatova, who were ideologically independent writers that were controversial during the Soviet period), now functioning in part as places of memory for them. These cultural centers of the Soviet past were unique, historically novel centers, which were intended to foster Soviet socialist realism. Nevertheless, even in the context of state centralization and intended oversight of creative work, new and divergent modes of art and writing emerged in places that they were not intended for and indelibly impacted Russian literary and cultural history.

The degree to which official creative retreats are reflected in Soviet-era literature and memoir was unanticipated finding over the course of research for this project. It seems that majority of well-known Soviet writers spent time in these places, which are mentioned overtly in numerous literary works. An interesting avenue for further research could be to examine how some of these places are embedded in Soviet-era literary works in a less explicit manner. For example, the idea for Strugatsky brothers' 1972 science fiction novel *Roadside Picnic* (*Piknik na obochine*) came to them when they encountered an abandoned picnic during a walk they were taking while staying at the writers' retreat in Komarovo.[619] It is likely that certain aspects of the scenery and landscape, as well as the cultural atmosphere, of writers' retreats and communities find their way, between the lines, into many literary works composed in the Soviet Union.

The history of writers retreats and communities (or writers' colonies as they are sometimes referred to as) is inherently embedded into cultural and ideological contexts in which they emerged. Soviet writers' retreats and communities were unique places that were entrenched in the Soviet literary system of control and reward, yet they also had strong links to other literary cultures and contexts. As a whole, in terms of their cultural role, Soviet writers' communities

[619] Arkadii and Boris Strugatskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v odinnadtsati tomakh: Dopolnitel'nyi* (Donetsk: Stalker; St. Petersburg: Terra Fantastica, 2000-2004), 570.

and retreats played an important part in the history of both officially Soviet and independent Soviet-era literature. In some cases, they were tied to the pre-revolutionary past, and in others, they facilitated links between different generations of independent writers. They were also centers of Soviet socialist realism, where a large quantity of stridently ideologically Soviet literature was composed. While some of them are remembered only in literature and memoir today, others endure as important sites of memory in the post-Soviet era. They are embedded into the very fabric of the literary history of the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia.

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