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## SHAKESPEAREAN ALLUSIONS IN B. PASTERNAK'S POETRY

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#### Abstract

The article focuses on the research of the creative reception of explicit Shakeaspearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry. The authors analyze and group Shakespearean codes and literary devices, and focus on the way they are actualized in Shakespearean allusions in the poetic works of B. Pasternak. In doing so they introduce the concept of the idea-marker. In the article the authors consistently prove their hypothesis that the idea-marker of the creative perception of explicit Shakeaspearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry lies in the duality of the dramaturgical imagery used in the poems. The authors believe that the keynotes of Shakespearean codes are seen and realized in the twin-like images of the narrator: Hamlet and a tragedian from W. Shakespeare's play. Other literary (Pushkin, Bryusov) and musical (Chopin) personalities that appear in the poems also work as doubles of W, Shakespeare in these allusions. Drama Shekspirova ("Shakespearean drama") and the drama of life are brought together in B. Pasternak's creative perception.

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#### 1. Introduction

In 2020 the world celebrated the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the renowned Russian Silver Age poet Boris Leonidovich Pasternak, who became a Literature Nobel Prize laureate in 1958. The following poetic works of B. Pasternak formed *the basis for our research*: *Desyatiletie Presni* ("Presnya's Decade") (1915), *Marburg* ("Marburg") (1916, 1928), *Uroki Angliiskogo* ("English Lessons") (1917), *Elene* ("To Elena") (1917), *Shekspir* ("Shakespeare") (1919), *Bryusovu* ("To Brusov") (1923), *Gamlet* ("Hamlet") (1946), alongside with a series of poems titled *Son v lenuju noch* ("A Midsummer Night's Dream") (1918-1922).

To date in modern research there exist certain well-established approaches and trends in studying B. Pasternak's poetic works, in particular, his original perception of W. Shakespeare's literary heritage, who was indisputably a greatest English dramatist and poet.

First and foremost, it is worth considering the comprehensive studies of B. Pasternak's poetics (Broitman, 2019; Zholkovskii, 2011), researches devoted to the role of W. Shakespeare's works in B. Pasternak's poetry (Sukhanova, 2004), writings on the significance of Shakespearean images in certain poems by B. Pasternak (Akimova, 2018; Sergeeva-Klyatis, 2015), the studies of Shakespearean allusions, ideologemes and codes in the creative works of the Russian writer (Dolinin, 2006; Panova, 2013; Shatin, 2005). Undoubtedly, in all the research papers the studies are carried out in close relation to B. Pasternak's own translations of W. Shakespeare's works.

#### 2. Problem Statement

*The problem statement* of the research lies in defining, studying and analyzing the ways in which explicit Shakespearean allusions function in B. Pasternak's poetry.

The subject matter proper accounts for the research rationale, as it focuses on selecting and analyzing the author's references to the well-known facts from W. Shakespeare's creative works, where these items operate as cultural codes in equal measure. Therefore, *the subject matter* of the research is contained in putting forward the concept of *the idea-marker* of Shakespearean allusions.

Let us now consider two related terms which are widely used by the researchers of Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's literary heritage. The first term is *ideologeme*, which was introduced by M. Bakhtin in the meaning of an ideological worldview which is objectified in the text, and in a broader meaning in the discourse, by language units of different levels and signs of other semiotic systems (Malysheva, 2002. Lada Panova (2013) uses this term in her work "*Uroki anglijskogo*", *ili Liebestod popasternakovski* ("English Lessons", or "Liebestod a la Pasternak") where she makes B. Pasternak's poem *Uroki Angliiskogo* ("English Lessons") the subject of  $\phi$  thorough study. In our view, the term *ideologeme* comes from and is widely used in the fields of political science and cultural linguistics while in literature it is connected with the writer's ideological views. However, in our research we focus on the conceptual aspects of Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetic works rather than their methodological (futuristic, symbolic) facets. The other term under consideration, namely *a cultural code*, appears in the works of Shatin (2005), who sees it not as a mere quotation but understands it as a constructible image borrowed from a different language and culture and enriched by the writer's personal experience and worldview. By introducing the concept of the idea-marker of Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetic works we aim at bringing together and integrating the notions of the *ideologeme* and the *cultural* 

code which results in their acquiring a new meaning. The idea-marker implies that there exists an entire complex of explicit allusions which are cultural codes and which are marked as Shakespearean in B. Pasternak's creative perception. By the Shakespearean code we understand a set of core images of W. Shakespeare's works which (the images) are constituent parts of the allusion.

#### 3. Research Questions

The research question includes:

defining and substantiating the main idea-marker on the conceptual level in the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry;

marshalling and grouping the codes within the main idea-marker on the conceptual level in the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study lies in analyzing and researching the main idea-marker in the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry; and therefore, getting insights into the nature of B. Pasternak's perception of the works by the English dramatist.

In the first stage of the research we try to marshal and group the conceptual level allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry. The second stage deals with defining the main idea-marker for the chosen level of analysis. The third stage focuses on the subject matter and classification of the codes within the main idea-marker in the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry. In the fourth, and final stage of the research we make conclusions and describe the nature of B. Pasternak's perception of W. Shakespeare's works.

#### 5. Research Methods

While studying the main idea-marker of intertextual allusions in a work of fiction it is important to take into account two different groups of research methods, that is linguoculturological and literary ones. The group of modern linguoculturological methods includes the conceptual approach (Chupryna et al., 2018) and the semiometrical approach (Vikulova et al., 2020). However, in our research we are using a combination of literary methods including methods of comparative and perception analysis (to define the subject matter and the importance of the idea-marker within intertextual allusions), and structural analysis (to group the codes). By the creative perception we understand the special character or way in which the works of an author are perceived by another writer and are then reflected and displayed in the works of the latter.

### 6. Findings

# 6.1. Defining and substantiating the main idea-marker on the conceptual level in the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry

Shalamatova (2017) writes about three types of explicit Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry. First, the allusion is realized in the characters from W. Shakespeare's works (*Desyatiletie Presni* ("Presnya's Decade"), *Uroki anglijskogo* ("English Lessons"), *Elene* ("To Elena"), *Bryusovu* ("To

Brusov"), *Gamlet* ("Hamlet"). Then, in some of the poems W. Shakespeare becomes a character and his texts act as cultural codes (*Desyatiletie Presni* ("Presnya's Decade")", *Marburg* ("Marburg"), *Shekspir* ("Shakespeare"). And finally, B. Pasternak names a cycle of poems *Son v lenuju noch* ("A Midsummer Night's Dream") after W. Shakespeare's comedy. Undoubtedly, in all the works the dramaturgical element remains the dominant one.

On marshalling and grouping the subject matter on the conceptual level we arrived at the conclusion that the main idea-marker is contained in the *duality character of the dramatic imagery and images*. Let us now take a close look at the codes contained in this idea and study the allusions in B. Pasternak's poems.

The idea-marker of the dual character of dramatic images in B. Pasternak's creative perception first appears long before the time when the writer started making translations of W. Shakespeare's works which include "Hamlet", "Romeo and Juliet", "Othello", "Antony and Cleopatra", "Henry IV" (Parts 1 and 2), "Macbeth", and "King Lear" (from 1940 to 1949). In one of his early poems *Desyatiletie Presni* ("Presnya's Decade") (an excerpt, 1915) B. Pasternak within one quatrain uses two explicit allusions to W. Shakespeare's tragedies "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" creating the opposition of the future and the now (implying the past):

Tomu gryadushhemu, byť emu

Ili ne byt' emu?

No mednykh makbetovykh ve'm v dymu -

Vidimo-nevidimo.

(Pasternak, 1989)

Is bæt future something to be

or not to be?

But the brazen Macbethean witches enveloped in smoke -

Umpteen of them.

(our translation)

The poem was part of the book of verses entitled *Poverkh baryerov* ("Over the Barriers") written in 1914-1916 and published in 1917. Around the same time (1914-1915) B. Pasternak started learning the English language himself (Akimova, 2018).

When looking at the overall picture of Shakespearean allusions, one cannot but notice the versatility of the dramatic imagery used by B. Pasternak.

The poet creates multiple pairs of oppositions: Hamlet – Macbeth, reason – blind passion, illusory future – real past and present at the times of war (*mednykh*, *v dymu* ("brazen", "enveloped in smoke"); rhetorical question – statement), text – literary image (word for word quotation from Hamlet's soliloquy *byt' emu / Ili ne byt' emu?* ("To be or not or be?") and *makbetovykh ved'm* ("Macbethean witches"), singleness of the future – hyperbolized multiplicity of the now with reference to the past (*Vidimo-nevidimo* ("umpteen of them")).

At the same time one can observe certain similarities in these oppositions, for instance, Hamlet's and Macbeth's reflections, or created metaphors (Hamlet's reality and existence – non-existent future and memories of "Macbethean witches enveloped in smoke" which is a reference to the armed uprising in

Moscow in 1905). Moreover, there is a juxtaposition of sublime images and colloquialisms (*Tomu* ("þæt") – *Vidimo-nevidimo* ("umpteen of them")).

In the same book of poems, we find another explicit allusion to W. Shakespeare's tragedy, and that is in the poem *Marburg* ("Marburg"). The poem addresses B. Pasternak's personal tragedy, when in June 1912 while in Marburg he confessed his love for Ida Vysotskaya, but the lady rejected him and refused his proposal of marriage. However, the dual character of the dramatic imagery is shown here differently. The poet compares the narrator to a tragedian rehearsing W. Shakespeare's drama:

V tot den' vsyu tebya, ot grebyonok do nog, Kak tragik v provincii dramu Shekspirovu, Nosil ya s soboyu i znal nazubok, Shatalsya po gorodu i repetiroval.

On that day I carried you all, knew you by heart,
From the comb in your hair to the foot in your shoe
Like a rep tragedian clutching his part,
I roved and roamed the city rehearsing you.
(our translation)

Consequently, the author creates a twin-character for the narrator and the idea-marker in the imagery of Shakespearean allusions takes on a new meaning of duality. In its turn, *drama Shekspirova* ("Shakespearean drama") becomes a common code for the allusions in this volume of poems.

In another poem *Uroki anglijskogo* ("English Lessons") B. Pasternak again turns to W. Shakespeare's imagery in the tragedies "Othello" and 'Hamlet". The poem is part of the cycle entitled *Razvlecheniya Lubimoi* ("My beloved's pastime") in the volume *Sestra moya - zhizn* ("My Sister – Life"). The verse was inspired by Elena Vinograd, and here the plot revolves around the characters od Desdemona and Ophelia.

*Uroki anglijskogo* ("English Lessons") is one of the well and widely studied works by B. Pasternak (Akimova, 2018; Broitman, 2019; Dolinin, 2006; Panova, 2013; Sergeeva-Klyatis, 2015), therefore we chose to leave out its detailed analysis, but focus on the way the idea-marker of duality is being realized in the allusions to Shakespeare's characters. These allusions appear in the first four quatrains of the poem.

Parallelism of the initial lines in the first four quatrains: Kogda sluchilos' pet' Dezdemone ("When Desdemona came a-singing") / Kogda sluchilos' pet' Ofelii ("When Ophelia came a-singing") is later strengthened by the repetition of a second set of parallel constructions in the first and third quatrain: Kogda sluchilos' pet' Dezdemone ("When Desdemona came a-singing") / A zhit' tak malo ostavalos' ("And she didn't have that long to live") - Kogda sluchilos' pet' Ofelii ("When Ophelia came a-singing") / A zhit' tak malo ostavalos' ("And she didn't have that long to live") (Pasternak, 1989). These stylistic devices together with the affinity between the characters suffering tragic and fateful love, their last songs, floral symbols (Desdemona's willow, Ophelia's celandine) give us a possibility to look upon Desdemona and Ophelia as dual or twinned characters in this poem (dual sisters of the narrator). We can interpret the title of the poem as "English lessons on the duality of architypes". Furthermore, the images of the tempest and passion start

being associated with the female characters in B. Pasternak's poetry. Moreover, these images turn into recurring codes in his creative perception of W. Shakespeare's drama.

New meanings to the dual character of the idea-marker are seen in the allusion used in the poem titled *Elene* ("To Elena") which belongs to the eponymously named cycle of verses in the volume *Sestra moya - zhizn* (My Sister – Life) (Pasternak, 1989).

The poem deals with the problem of choice, which is shown by using a Shakespearean allusion and enhancing it with the image of Faust. Stylistically the created image is further sharpened by the repetition of the conjunctions li ("whether") and ili ("or"), coupled with assonance, that is a play on u (sounds i and i:) in the rhyme. The narrator of the poem can choose a mask he wishes to wear, a certain dual image: Fausta, shto li, Gamleta li ("whether a Faust or a Hamlet"), just like the camomile covering the meadow or a string of pearls caressing Ophelia's shoulder. As a result, the dual images are depicted poetically by means of the used comparisons with a chamomile and pearls, both of which symbolize innocence, purity and spiritual wisdom. The image of Ophelia, Hamlet's beloved, is twinned and juxtaposed with the narrator's sweetheart, Elena. The complicated scheme of the dual images in this poem can be presented in the following way (See Figure 1).

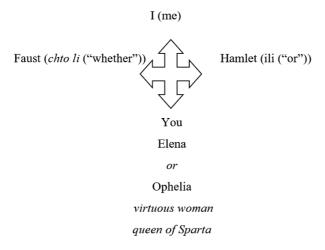


Figure 01. Dual images in B. Pasternak's poem Elene ("To Elena")

The poem *Shekspir* ("Shakespeare") (1919) belongs to the cycle *Pyat povestei* ("Five Stories") in the volume of poetry called *Temy i variatsii*. 1916-1922 ("Themes and Variations. 1916-1922"). It marked a new stage in B. Pasternak's creative perception of Shakespearean allusions. Here the idea-marker of duality is realized in the dialogue between W. Shakespeare and the ghost of his sonnet, with both of them being characters of a play. The reader becomes part of the audience watching a *Drama Shekspirova* ("Shakespearean drama") set around the themes of art and creative work. The poem itself is an extended allusion to W. Shakespeare, and it is here that the image of a ghost appears for the first time. The ghost of the sonnet is simultaneously a realized Shakespearean code and a character of the poem taking part in a conversation. The dialogue is nothing more than just a figment of W. Shakespeare-the character's imagination. Therefore, the ghost of the sonnet turns into a dual image of Shakespeare-the character (in a broader sense: of the Poet). This idea is further enhanced by the ghost's address to its creator as its father (*otets moi*, "my father") and in the following expressions: *moi sketitsizm sinoviy* ("your son's skepticism"),

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vashi ptentsi ("your hatchlings"). The sonnet calls its creator as genii i master ("a genius and a master)", it describes itself Ves' v molniyu ya, to est' vyshe po kaste / Chem ludi ("I am just like a lightning, I am of a higher caste/ Than people"), Ya obdayu/ Ognem ("I breathe out/ Fire", mne hochetsya shiri ("What I want is vastness") (Pasternak, 1989). In due course, the idea-marker of duality is represented in the poem by means of a new code: W. Shakespeare – the ghost of the sonnet (in a broader sense: the Poet – the sonnet). The poetics of duality is also emphasized by another added range of oppositions in the poem's imagery. The first of them is between W. Shakespeare and the ghost of the sonnet on the one side and pleshschushcaya chern' ("the splashing rabble") on the other, which in a broader sense constitutes the Poet and the crowd. The second one is the opposition between London and the snow, and here each member of the opposition contains a number of elements. For instance, the image of London is not homogeneous, as on the one hand it comprises izvozchii dvor ("a lively stable"), uzkiye ulitsi ("narrow streets"), steni kak khmel ("walls like hedges of hops"), traktir ("a pub"), while on the other hand it has prestupniy i pasmurnyi Tauer ("the flagitious and gloomy Tower") and prostuzhennii zvon Vestminstera ("the chilly chimes of Westminster"). The adversary to London is the image of snow, which slowly and dreamily spirals down blanketing the sleepy wasteland. Just like the future in Desyatiletie Presni ("Presnya's Decade"), the universe in *Uroki Angliiskogo* ("English Lessons"), so the snow in *Shekspir* ("Shakespeare") enters the circle of cosmic images showing the ambivalence of the world and the creative work. London and snow, too, become dual images of Shakespeare. And in so doing the writer calls attention to the co-existence in the Poet (in Creative Work) of the mundane and the sublime, the ethnic and cosmic.

The next volume of poetry *Neskuchny sad* ("Neskuchny Garden") (1917-1922) includes the cycle of poems titled *Son v lenuju noch (Pyat' stikhotvorenij)* ("A Midsummer Night's Dream (Five Poems)") which is an allusion to W. Shakespeare's comedy. Considering this, we can speak about the nominative approach in the study of the dual character of the idea-marker. In the light of the titles in this cycle of poems, there is one whose name directly refers us to the same title verse by A. Pushkin, which is *Zimnee utro* ("Winter Morning"). Like in other poems, the Shakespearean allusion here is based on a two-level opposition: the seasons (winter and summer) – literary genres (lyric poetry and drama). Thus, one can observe a literary parallel between the two geniuses of Russian and English literature. Later, in 1943 B. Pasternak will write about the importance of this code in his creative perception, saying that English literature is still predominantly Shakespearean, and by the same token, Russian literature is Pushkinean. (Pasternak, 1990).

In the five poems of the *Son v letnyuyu noch (Pyat' stikhotvorenij)* cycle ("A Midsummer Night's Dream (Five Poems)") the writer mentions the name of F. Chopin, the greatest Polish composer and pianist, whom A. Rubinstein dubbed "the music of the piano's soul". It is enough to quote the following lines which are allusions to F. Chopin's music in the cycle: *sploshnoj potok shopenovskih etyudov* ("a continuous flow of Chopin's etudes") in the opening poem, *Opyat' depesheyu Shopen / K ballade strazhdushhej otozvan* ("Chopin is again dispatched to the see the ballad in distress") in the second poem (Pasternak, 1989). There seems to be a kind of spiritual liaison between the images of summer, the dream from W. Shakespeare's comedy and F. Chopin's preludes, which (the liaison) becomes visible in the second stanza of the second poem. Furthermore, the pianist turns into a recurring image in this cycle.

Eventually, the literary parallel Pushkin – Shakespeare grows into a unique triad, bringing out a three-part image of the Poet: Pushkin – Shakespeare – Chopin. The Poet's creative work is characterized by Pushkin's lyricism, Shakespeare's dramatism, and Chopin's musicality and virtuosity. On top of that, each of the geniuses possesses all the mentioned elements of poetic mastery.

Another literary parallel containing a Shakespearean allusion within the imagery of the poetic cycle is seen in the poem *Bryusovu* ("To Brusov") (1923), which was dedicated to V.Y. Bryusov's fiftieth anniversary. The allusions to W. Shakespeare's texts are seen in the ninth and tenth quatrains, where the literary opposition Bryusov – Shakespeare is completed with the three-part image of the Shakespearean allusion: Shakespeare – Hamlet – the ghost.

B. Pasternak brings together two things: the mastery of the scene of Hamlet's conversation with his father's ghost and Bryusov's simplification of the form and content of civic poetry. Naturalness becomes an essential part of mastery as a counterbalance of theatricality. In this poem the dual character of the ideamarker is represented by the following oppositions: Shakespeare – Bryusov, Shakespeare – "Hamlet", Hamlet – the ghost. These three are complemented by two new oppositions: the narrator – the ghost, Bryusov – the ghost.

Here again B. Pasternak turns to the image of ghost in the Shakespearean allusion he uses. However, unlike the imaginary ghost-sonnet in *Shekspir* ("Shakespeare"), the ghost of Hamlet's father is a real character from the eponymous play (the conversation takes place in Scene 5, Act 1). It is highly important for B. Pasternak's narrator to address the ghost and wish V. Bruysov, the birthday person, to discover a new aim in life, like Hamlet.

According to Tarasenkov, since 1936 B. Pasternak kept saying that they were living in Shakespearean times (as cited in Bykov, 2018). In 1938 B. Pasternak started working on the translation of W. Shakespeare's "Hamlet", a project commissioned by V. Meyerhold. Bykov (2018) believes that for W. Shakespeare the key issue is the conflict and clash between the personality and the drama raging around them, but at the same time separated from them. This idea is well-realized in the poem "Hamlet".

It is the first poem in the cycle called *Stihotvoreniya Yuriya Zhivago*. 1946-1953 ("Poems of Yury Zhivago. 1946-1953"), and it turned out to be the climax and the pinnacle in B. Pasternak's creative perception of the works by W. Shakespeare.

The poem brings together and sums up all the meanings ascribed to the dominant oppositions in the B. Pasternak's works. Therefore, it fully explores and develops the idea-marker of duality in the imagery of Shakespearean allusions. These dominant oppositions turn into Shakespearean codes in B. Pasternak's poetry. The codes comprise two narrators, those of Hamlet and the actor, playing the part of Hamlet, and *drygaya drama* ("another drama") in the narrator's life who is "Hamlet".

## 6.2. Marshalling and grouping the codes within the main idea-marker on the conceptual level in the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry

The results and findings of our research are summarized and presented in the comprehensive chart of Shakespearean codes (see Table 1), which proves the hypothesis that the duality of dramatic imagery is the leading idea-marker in Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry.

Table 01. Idea-marker of the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry

Duality of dramatic images		
Shakespearean code	Literary device	A poem by B. Pasternak
"Hamlet" – "Macbeth"		
"To be or not to be?" - Macbethean	opposition,	Desyatiletie Presni ("Presnya's
witches	similarity in opposition	Decade") (excerpt, 1915)
Hamlet's reflections – Macbeth's		
reflections		
Narrator – tragedian from Drama	comparison,	Marburg
Shekspirova ("Shakespearean	dual images	("Marburg")
drama")		(1916, 1928)
"Othello" – "Hamlet"	parallelism,	Uroki Angliiskogo
Desdemona – Ophelia	dual images	("English Lessons")
Desdemona, Ophelia – narrator's		(1917)
sisters		
Narrator – Hamlet (Faust)	poetics of choosing a dual	Elene
Narrator's beloved – Ophelia	character,	("To Elena")
	dual characters within the	(1917)
	system of dual characters	
Shakespeare as a character –ghost	dramatic dialogue	Shekspir
of the sonnet	dual images	("Shakespeare")
Shakespeare – sonnet		(1919)
Pushkin – Shakespeare	parallelism,	the title of the cycle
Shakespeare – Chopin	images of literary twins	Son v lenuju noch (Pyat'
		stikhotvorenij)
		("A Midsummer Night's Dream"
		(Five Poems)") (1918-1922)
Shakespeare – "Hamlet"	parallelism,	Bryusovu
Hamlet – the ghost	dual images,	("To Bryusov")
Shakespeare – Bryusov	images of literary twins	(1923)
narrator – Hamlet		
narrator – actor playing the role of	dual images	Gamlet
Hamlet		("Hamlet")
drugaya drama ("another drama")		(1946)
of the narrator's life – "Hamlet"		

#### 6.3. Discussion

Table 1 shows that the suggestion of making "a dramatic image" part of the main idea-marker of the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry is predetermined by the characters and titles of the plays written by W. Shakespeare. Moreover, the "dramatic image" is also included into the allusion *drama Shekspirova* ("Shakespearean drama") – *drugaya drama* ("another drama"), both of which frame the whole set of Shakespearean codes in B. Pasternak's poetry.

#### 7. Conclusion

Starting with the opposition of Hamlet and Macbeth in his Shakespearean allusions, B. Pasternak arrives at the idea of duality realized in numerous codes, where the dual images of the narrator become the leading ones: Hamlet and the tragedian of W. Shakespeare's play.

Literary and musical personalities in B. Pasternak's poems (A. Pushkin, V. Bryusov, F. Chopin) and Shakespearean allusions work as doubles of the playwright. Drama Shekspirova ("Shakespearean drama") and the drama of life are brought together in B. Pasternak's creative perception.

We can take the dual character of the dramatic images for the leading idea which can be traced in the whole range of codes within the Shakespearean allusions in B. Pasternak's poetry.

On the one hand, the concept of the idea-marker comprises the peculiarities of B. Pasternak's creative mindset and outlook on life. On the other hand, it also includes a range of images form W. Shakespeare's plays. And it is these images that form the core of Shakespearean codes in B. Pasternak's poetic poetry.

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