

TSVETAIEVA'S INTERPRETATION OF PUSHKIN'S LIFE AND WORK

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PhD THESIS

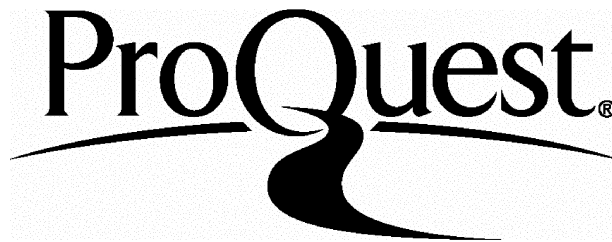
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ABSTRACT

The research examines how Tsvetaeva translated Pushkin's work into the language of the avant-garde and created a Pushkin myth, modelling her own creative biography on his life and writings.

Chapter 1 analyses seven of Tsvetaeva's translations into French of Pushkin's poems, containing vivid examples of Tsvetaeva's poetics and revealing her perception of them as the "open work".

Chapter 2 focuses on Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model of a poet's life which, in her view, always repeats the Orpheus tragedy. Her 1913 poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" and 1931 cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" provide the insight into her artistic methods and views of the period. This chapter argues that Tsvetaeva's poetic outlook strongly resembled that of European Baroque culture and was partly influenced by the Eurasian movement.

Chapter 3 discusses Tsvetaeva's treatment of the Cnidus myth (based on the belief in the interference of evil force into human relationships: often as a statue or being statue-like). It appeared in several of Pushkin's works and in Tsvetaeva's play "Kamennyi angel", shaping her interpretation of Pushkin's love for Natal'ia Goncharova.

Chapter 4 examines the essays "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" and "Nezdeshnii vecher". New ground is broken with a clear demonstration of the existentialistic aspects of Tsvetaeva's outlook.

Chapter 5 outlines the Baroque-style rhetorical figures in "Moi Pushkin" and demonstrates how Tsvetaeva treats Pushkin's "K moriu" as an open work re-enacting the situation therein.

Chapter 6 investigates Tsvetaeva's preoccupation with myth-making in the essay "Pushkin i Pugachev" in the light of its biographical background.

The research produces new methods for the treatment of Tsvetaeva's texts which promote better understanding of avant-garde poetics in general. It opens a new path for investigation into further links between avant-garde writings and Baroque culture, and into the shape of the Pushkin myth in twentieth century Russian literature.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

used for major sources repeatedly cited

PAT — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Pis'ma k Anne Teskvoi*, Prague, 1969.

Neizdannoe — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Neizdannoe. Stikhi. Teatr. Proza.*, Paris, 1976.

IP — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Izbrannala proza v dvukh tomakh*, edited and compiled by A. Sumerkin, New York, 1979.

S84 — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh*, edited and compiled by Anna Saaklants, Moscow, 1984.

S88 — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh*, edited and compiled by Anna Saaklants, Moscow, 1988.

P — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Proza*, edited and compiled by A. A. Saaklants, Moscow, 1989.

Tsvetaeva 1990 — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, edited and compiled by E. B. Korkina, Leningrad, 1990.

Pushkin — A. S. Pushkin, *Sochineniia v trekh tomakh*, Moscow, 1986.

INTRODUCTION

One of the main features of avant-garde poetics is the presence of the idea of the eternal repetition of events which leads to a tendency in avant-garde writings to resurrect events, characters and situations from the past. This is due to the fact that the avant-garde produced what I. Smirnov called secondary poetic systems. According to Smirnov, primary poetic systems aim to create a model corresponding to the world, perceiving language as a reference to objective reality. By contrast, secondary poetic systems "отождествляют фактическую реальность с семантическим универсумом, т.е. сообщают ей черты текста, членят ее на план выражения и план содержания, на наблюдаемую и умопостигаемую области...". In other words, they perceive the world as language.¹ Other scholars link these systems with understanding literature as a collection of archetypal images, genres, and symbols. Thus, N. Frye claims that the organizing principle in art is "recurrence, which is called rhythm when it is temporal and pattern when it is spatial" and that "an image is not merely a verbal replica of an external object, but any unit of a verbal structure seen as part of a total pattern or rhythm".²

Tsvetaeva's poetic system is highly archetypal. It can also be described as Dionysiac. This type of culture is "based on a tense exposure of the prophetic mind to epiphany".³ In this respect Tsvetaeva's writings on Pushkin are of particular interest. Firstly, it is fascinating to see how Tsvetaeva used Pushkin's life to model her creative biography, highlighting the most tragic and rebellious aspects of his life. In her writings (especially of the 1930s) Tsvetaeva presented her life as a collection of recurrent situations from Pushkin's works and life. Secondly, it is rewarding

¹ J. R. Döring-Smirnova, I. Smirnov, *Ocherki po istoricheskoi tipologii kul'tury: ...→ realizm → (...) → Postsimvolizm (Avangard) → ...*, NRL — Almanach, Sonderband. Salzburg, 1982, p.9.

² Northrop Frye, *Fables of Identity. Studies in Poetic Mythology*, San Diego, 1984, p.14.

³ Ibid., p.17.

to research into the motifs and myths exploited both by Pushkin and Tsvetaeva in order to establish a parallel in their outlook and creative tasks. Thirdly, Tsvetaeva's interest in Pushkin coincides with the important period in her life when her poetic evolution came to its end. Therefore, her meditations on Pushkin's themes provide us with invaluable insight into her own artistic method and views. Apart from the points mentioned above, it is particularly important to establish significant differences between Pushkin and Tsvetaeva. The latter, in spite of her belief in an affinity with Pushkin, proves in the course of the analysis of this work to be a true avant-garde writer. Her perception of Pushkin and experience of his writings were very much influenced by Symbolist culture. Even when Tsvetaeva used Pushkin's name in her arguments with the émigré Russian cultural establishment in the 1930s in order to promote her own views and taste, one strongly feels that Tsvetaeva's isolation was largely due on the one hand to her lingering attraction towards the culture of Russian Symbolism. On the other hand, she was ahead of her time in her poetic achievements: she successfully developed the line of the Russian Futurists in exploiting the potential of the Russian language in order to create a new poetic language (especially on the syntactical level).

Tsvetaeva's writings provide a wealth of material on Pushkin. This includes her poems about Pushkin, essays on Pushkin and his works, references to Pushkin's texts in her own works and letters, and finally her translations of Pushkin's poems into French. It seems that she was the first Russian poet after Briusov who showed such a persistent interest in Pushkin's work. However, this might be due once again to Tsvetaeva's attempt to challenge the authority of Russian Symbolism: puzzlingly, Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin" shares the title of Briusov's book (a collection of 22 articles) on Pushkin.⁴

Tsvetaeva's poetics can be defined as neo-Baroque. The idea of mirroring (or reflecting others) forms one of the essential principles of her method. Tsvetaeva herself indicated it very clearly by exploiting the origin of her Christian name Marina. In spite of the establishment of direct links between the lyric persona in Tsvetaeva's works and the water element,⁵

⁴ Valerii Briusov, *Moi Pushkin*, Moscow, 1929.

⁵ See, for example, Jerzy Faryno, *Mifologizm i teologizm Tsvetaevoi*, *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband*, 18, Vienna, 1985, pp.393-95.

scholars have failed to discover the functional meaning of Tsvetaeva's model. One of the functions of water images in European art is to reflect and act as a mirror. Such a function makes Tsvetaeva's lyric persona very flexible and helps her to interact with other poetic systems. It is no coincidence that Akhmatova, in the poem "Pozdnii otvet" (1940), called Tsvetaeva "a double" and "a mocking bird".⁶

The other important feature of avant-garde poetics (and of Tsvetaeva's method, in particular) is the orientation towards the "open work" (as it was described by Umberto Eco⁷). Open works suggest polysemy. The polysemantic approach is strongly felt in Tsvetaeva's attitude to Pushkin, especially in her essay "Moi Pushkin" (discussed in chapter 5 below). This becomes evident in the course of the analysis of how Tsvetaeva exploited the most suggestive elements of Pushkin's writings and used them for her translation of Pushkin's poetic code into the language of the avant-garde. This can be seen by a close look at Tsvetaeva's translations of Pushkin's poems into French (undertaken in chapter 1 below).

Tsvetaeva's attitude to Pushkin differs from the scholarly approach to Pushkin's work of Briusov, Khodasevich and Akhmatova. In contrast to their goal of objectivity, Tsvetaeva created a personal myth about her kinship with Pushkin. In other words, she put biographical details of Pushkin's life into her own cultural and biographical context. Thus, Tsvetaeva created a model of her life supposedly pre-destined, in her view, from the beginning. She claimed, for example in the first sentence of the essay "Mat' i muzyka", that her mother hoped for a son, Alexander, while pregnant with Marina:

Когда вместо желанного, предрешенного, почти
приказанного сына Александра родилась только всего я,
мать самолюбиво проглотив вздох, сказала: „По крайней
мере, будет музыкантша“. (P, p.58).

One of Tsvetaeva's letters to A.Berg also illustrates that Tsvetaeva created a myth about kinship with Pushkin:

⁶ Anna Akhmatova, *V 5 knigakh*, [4], *Posle vsego*, Compiled and edited by R.D.Timenchik and K.M.Pollivanov, with an afterword by R.D.Timenchik, Moscow, 1989, pp.204-05.

⁷ Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, London, 1989, pp.1-23.

Моя мать хотела сына Александра, родилась — я, но с душой (да и головой!) сына Александра.⁸

In Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin" this myth is linked more clearly to the tragic course of Pushkin's life. In other words, Tsvetaeva created her own mythological model of a poet's fate based on Pushkin's life and applied it directly to herself (as will be shown in chapter 5 below).

Another interesting aspect of Tsvetaeva's attitude to Pushkin is revealed in the way she used allusions to Pushkin's life and poems in her own writings. Very often they act as coded signals which indicate either the theme of a tragic life or motifs of rebellion, or — as in the poem "Rel'sy" — they are identified with elemental forces (see chapter 2 below). Occasionally Tsvetaeva linked Pushkinian motifs to her Dionysiac themes and prophecies. Thus, Tsvetaeva claimed in the letter to Berg quoted above that her poem "Andrei Shen'e" (1918) was highly prophetic, and for her it turned out to be true in 1938. (Tsvetaeva's interest in the French poet was influenced by Pushkin's treatment of his name in association with the themes of rebellion and the Decembrist movement.) It is interesting to outline in Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's life and personality her determination to present Pushkin's tragic death as a desired dénouement. She saw in Pushkin a man with will power who, in her view, had conquered elemental forces by following his destiny. This is the most crucial point of Tsvetaeva's understanding of Pushkin, which will be highlighted in chapters 2 and 3.

Tsvetaeva's manifestation of kinship with Pushkin can be detected as early as 1913 — in the poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym". Pushkin, as one of the characters of the poem, is presented by Tsvetaeva in the context of the Orphic myth (this point is discussed in more detail in chapter 2). Also, Tsvetaeva's setting of the meeting with Pushkin was markedly inspired by Pushkin's poem "Tavrida", in which he claimed that after death his spirit would reappear in that part of the Crimea. Moreover, one should not overlook the significance of Pushkin's poem used by Tsvetaeva as a subtext in her essays about Voloshin and Mandel'shtam. The elegiac note borrowed by Tsvetaeva from "Tavrida" forms an important background for Tsvetaeva's necrological essays. It is in this very poem that Pushkin created a personal myth about the Crimea as a land of dead souls (to some extent Pushkin's myth derived from ancient Greek belief). Tsvetaeva's allusions to "Tavrida"

⁸ *Pis'ma Mariny Tsvetaevoi k Ariadne Berg, 1934-1939*, Paris, 1990, p.62.

are analysed in chapter 2 below.

Tsvetaeva's writings on Pushkin (and the rest of her work of the 1930s) are strongly marked with an outlook based on existentialist philosophy. In this respect Tsvetaeva stood close to the views of the Russian existentialist philosopher Lev Shestov (who was a personal friend of hers in Paris at the time). Tsvetaeva often applied to Pushkin's texts the existential projection (to use Frye's definition).⁹ From this point of view, Tsvetaeva's interpretation of the poem "K moriu" is a good example. Thus she invented a new meaning for Pushkin's word "вотще" (in the line "Вотще рвалась душа моя") which means "in vain" in Old Slavonic. Instead of the original meaning of the word, Tsvetaeva inserted (in her essay "Moi Pushkin") her own interpretation of the word as "over there" (having in mind the existence of the desired world where things are different from the real one). In her essay "Istoriia odnogo posviashcheniia" she claimed that to reach God is the final goal of any artist, although it is done through rejection of the mundane world (P, p.285). In this existential projection Tsvetaeva, in her view, could prove to be the boy Alexander. It is also not a coincidence that Tsvetaeva invented a ritual (in "Moi Pushkin") in the course of which she identified herself directly with Pushkin by allowing herself to put his would-be signature under the quotation from the poem "K moriu" (see chapter 5).

Tsvetaeva's myth about her kinship with Pushkin extended to her behavioural patterns, too. For instance, on her return to Moscow in 1939 Tsvetaeva liked to compare herself to a blackamoor. This gesture was quite significant from the semiotic point of view: in the context of Russian culture this remark could have been applied only to one famous Russian known for his negritude — to Pushkin. Moreover, in Tsvetaeva's works negritude and darkness of skin symbolise rebelliousness and displacement (this point is discussed in particular in chapters 2 and 5). Occasionally, Pushkin's characters were also employed by Tsvetaeva in her own mythological vein or were used as semiotic stereotypes for moulding her self-image. This is

⁹ "The introduction of an omen or portent, or the device of making a whole story the fulfilment of a prophecy given at the beginning [...]. Such a device suggests, in its existentialist projection, a conception of ineluctable fate or hidden omnipotent will." — Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays*, Princeton, 1973, p.139. In addition see: *ibid.*, pp.63-65, 211.

especially true about Pushkin's Tat'iana and personages from the play "Pir vo vremia chumy" (this point is dealt with in chapters 4 and 5). In addition, one should point out that in the essay "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva outlined certain rhetorical figures (in the style of Baroque poetics) from Pushkin's life and writings seen by her as one text, as will be analysed further.

One of the most interesting recreations of Tsvetaeva from Pushkin's works is the image of a sacral guide based on the character from his story "Kapitanskaja dochka" — "Vozhatyj". In Tsvetaeva's poetics this image is merged with a figure from Greek mythology — Charon. Thus, in the essay "Nezdesnii vecher" Tsvetaeva depicts its central character — Kuzmin — in the same manner as Vozhatyj appeared in Pushkin's story. She recreates the atmosphere of the snow-storm from "Kapitanskaja dochka", too. In the context of the elegiac note in which the narration is presented together with the existentialist title, allusion to Pushkin stands out as a symbol of Tsvetaeva's own fate. In "Nezdesnii vecher" Tsvetaeva merges two mythological models from Pushkin's work, seeing them as an embodiment of the same elemental forces: a snowstorm (from the story "Kapitanskaja dochka") and a plague (from the play "Pir vo vremia chumy"). It is interesting that the same identification takes place in Tsvetaeva's translation into French of Pushkin's song from the play "Pir vo vremia chumy". Tsvetaeva linked this motif to the course of history, and more specifically to the October revolution which brought chaos and elemental forces into life. Tsvetaeva concludes in "Nezdesnii vecher" that all Russian poets were crushed by these elemental forces:

О, как мы скоро потом — все ушли! В ту самую вьюгу, нас
грозно и верно стережущую. (Р, р.273)

Tsvetaeva took up Pushkin's writings because they contained the same sort of problems which she had to face in her own times. They can be identified as follows: "the artist and history", "the artist and the elements", "the tragedy of the artist's fate", "art and its links with folk tradition", "innovation in poetic language" and as a consequence — "the poet's conflict with established taste and tradition".

To Tsvetaeva (and to some Russian Symbolists, including Blok) Pushkin himself became a symbol of rebelliousness and freedom. That is why Tsvetaeva focused her attention on Pushkin's relationship with the political

regime of his time, reducing it to the conflict of "a poet and the tsar". (See chapters 2 and 3 on this point.) However, Tsvetaeva's own political views were rather complicated and in many ways controversial. It seems that her views experienced an evolution: from complete rejection of the revolution to understanding its historical necessity in her later life. Thus, in the poem "Petru" (written in 1920) Tsvetaeva condemns Peter the Great for his reforms which led, in her view, to the events of 1917:

Родоначальник — ты — развалин,
Тобой — скиты горят!
Твоею же рукой провален
Твой баснословный град...

Соль высолил, измылил мыльце —
Ты, государь-кустарь!
Державного однофамильца
Кровь на тебе, бунтарь! (Tsvetaeva 1990, p.182)¹⁰

By contrast, her cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" (1931) contains a different portrait of Peter the Great, who is juxtaposed to Tsar Nicholas the First in the poem "Petr i Pushkin". Tsvetaeva depicted a would-be admiring relationship between Pushkin and Peter the Great, claiming that he would have allowed Pushkin to maintain his freedom of writing. (See the analysis of this cycle in chapter 2). It seems that at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s Tsvetaeva was to some extent under the influence of the Eurasian movement (chapters 5 and 6 deal with this aspect of Tsvetaeva's outlook), which approved the course of Russian history as inevitable. Tsvetaeva went even further by praising the achievements of Soviet literature. In her article "O novoi russkoi detskoj knige" (1931) Tsvetaeva claimed that Russian children's literature was the best

¹⁰ Tsvetaeva's poem undoubtedly echoes the historicism of Voloshin who influenced Tsvetaeva's views at the time and expressed a similar attitude to Peter the Great, who is blamed by the poet for the shooting of the tsarist family:

Всё кончено. Петровский замкнут круг.
Великий Петр был первый большевик, —

M. Voloshin, "Rossiia. Fragmenty neokonchennoi poemy", *Stikhotvorenija i poemy v dvukh tomakh*, volume 1, Paris, 1982, p.344.

in the world due to its highly developed poetic language. Tsvetaeva juxtaposed it in this article to the poetic language of émigré authors, whom she criticised for its pseudo-fantastic elements:

Читаешь, восхищаешься, я: кто это пишет? Никто.
Безымянный. Имя, ничего не говорящее. Пишет высокая
культура стиха. (S88, 2, p.352)

Tsvetaeva even felt that her main readership was in Soviet Russia.¹¹ This attitude provides a clue to Tsvetaeva's nostalgic feelings towards Russia, which have puzzled many scholars.¹² Also, to the annoyance of the émigré establishment, Tsvetaeva openly praised Malakovskii and Pasternak. However, Tsvetaeva held strong views about the monarchy and the White army movement. She was notorious for being fond of the text books on history written by her step-grandfather Ilovaiskii, who was a loyal monarchist. Tsvetaeva's long poem about the tsarist family was, in her opinion, a continuation of Ilovaiskii's historical writings.

Moreover, Tsvetaeva believed that she was not only a poet but also a historian. To a much greater extent this can be said about Pushkin. Although Tsvetaeva did not, like Pushkin, have a chance to work with archives, she tried to undertake a significant amount of research for her long poems "Perekop" and "Poema o tsarskoi sem'e". This alone proves that she was not oblivious to historical events and politics as some scholars claimed her to be. Tsvetaeva wrote about herself as follows:

¹¹ Tsvetaeva felt that she did not receive adequate recognition in the Parisian cultural milieu, especially from editors. She wrote in a letter to Vadim Rudnev, one of the editors of the most influential journal *Sovremennye zapiski*: "За эти годы я объелась и опилась горечью. Печатаюсь я с 1910г. (моя первая книга имеется в Тургеневской библиотеке), а ныне — 1933г., и меня все еще здесь считают либо начинающим, либо любителем, — каким-то гастролером. Говорю здесь, ибо в России мои стихи имеются в хрестоматиях, как образцы образной краткой речи, — сама держала в руках и радовалась, ибо ничего для такого признания не сделала, а, кажется, всё — против..." — Quoted from Viktoriia Shveitser, *Byt i bytie Mariny Tsvetaevoi*, Paris, 1988, p.409.

¹² In particular, Shveitser draws attention to this controversial issue in a section of her book "Toska po Rodine": *ibid.*, pp.426-57.

Во мне вечно и страстно борются поэт и историк. Знаю
это по своей огромной (неоконченной) вещи о Царской
Семье, где историк поэта - загнал. (NP, p.434)

Unfortunately, we do not have enough evidence to support Tsvetaeva's statement: only fragments of the text of her poem about the tsarist family survive. In spite of Tsvetaeva's statement, one can certainly draw a line between Pushkin's and Tsvetaeva's treatment of history.

Mention was made above that Pushkin's poetic code was a part of the primary poetic system. According to Tynianov, Pushkin's evolution involved a development towards historical, documentary or even scientific texts.¹³ In other words realism, with its tendency to treat a text as referring to reality, prevailed in Pushkin's writings. Undoubtedly, this aspect of Pushkin's work was of great interest to Tsvetaeva. It is especially felt in "Pushkin i Pugachev", her last essay on Pushkin. However, Tsvetaeva did not see the facts of real life as her priority. Her poetic code derived from avant-garde tradition. Therefore, Tsvetaeva perceived the world as language (using Smirnov's words cited above). She applied the logic of the work of art to reality. Even in her essay "Pushkin i Pugachev" Tsvetaeva presented facts in a distorted way. For example, she made her readers believe that Pushkin created "Kapitanskaya dochka" after writing the historical account "Istoriya Pugachevskogo bunta". In fact, Tsvetaeva displayed her conviction of the priority of text over reality. Her Pushkin in this essay is the exact image of Tsvetaeva herself, who depicted reality in mythological and mythopoetical terms. (Chapter 6 provides an analysis of this point.) What especially makes one think in this way is Tsvetaeva's statement about an autobiographical element in her writings. Thus, in a letter to Iashchenko she wrote: "Я свою автобиографию пишу через других, т.е. как другие себя, могу любить исключительно другого."¹⁴ Therefore, one can assume that Pushkin is used by Tsvetaeva as an excuse to talk about herself.

Another interesting aspect of Tsvetaeva's vision of Pushkin is her

¹³ Tynianov convincingly shows in his analysis of Pushkin's writings that Pushkin's experience of working with archive documents led him to introduce the methods of scientific writing into fiction. — Iu.N. Tynianov, *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki*, Moscow, 1969, p.164.

¹⁴ *Russkii Berlin 1921-1923*, ed. L. Fleishman, R. Hughes and O. Raevskaya-Hughes, Paris, 1983, p.158.

interest in Pushkin's duel. In Tsvetaeva's view, it was equivalent to suicide. (This point is discussed in more detail in chapters 3 and 4.) The act of suicide was always on Tsvetaeva's mind. In particular, after the Bolshevik revolution, Tsvetaeva praised Stakhovich (who hanged himself) for his courage in expressing protest against the course of history in this way. Later, Tsvetaeva wrote poems in memory of Esenin and Malakovskii, seeing poetical motifs in their suicides (this is particularly evident in poem 6 of the cycle "Malakovskomu"). It is also interesting to observe how Tsvetaeva endowed Pushkin with the same destiny and fate which she wanted to outline in her own creative biography. Thus, in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" (discussed in chapter 3 below) she interpreted Pushkin's life in teleological terms, linking it to the Greek concept of Moirae. Tsvetaeva retold Pushkin's life in a way which imitated the legend about the three daughters of Zeus who were spinning the threads of human life:

Смерть Пушкина [...] вернулась к месту своего исхождения:
на первом ткацком станке Абрама Гончара ткалась смерть
Пушкина. (S88, 2, p.65)

Moreover, Tsvetaeva saw the roots of Pushkin's death in his rebellious background:

Больше скажу: Вольтер жил в нем, и в каком-то смысле (не
женитьба на Гончаровой, — а... "Гавриилиады" хотя бы) в
переводе на французский вернувшейся в свою колыбель;
смерть Пушкина — рукой Дантэса — самоубийство. Дантэс —
ancien régime? Да, Дантэс, смеющийся в лицо умирающему,
пуще, чем вольтерьянец, смеющийся в лицо только своей.
[...] Оскал Дантэса — вот расплата за собственный смехок.
(Ibid.)

By comparing Tsvetaeva's descriptions of Pushkin to her portrayal of Malakovskii, it becomes possible to adumbrate Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model applied to both. Firstly, Tsvetaeva traced the same rebellious aspects of Malakovskii (in the cycle "Malakovskomu", which followed her essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" and preceded the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu") as she outlined in Pushkin under the influence of Voltaire.

Tsvetaeva's description, quoted above, of Pushkin as "вольтерьянец" (which was a synonym for a free-thinker in Pushkin's times) points to her

vision of the poet not only as a radical, but also as a person of great will power (as mentioned above). Tsvetaeva (always interested in etymology) revived the link between the Russian word "вольный" ("free") and the word "воля" (will). In Tsvetaeva's poetic code Pushkin is presented as not only Voltairean but also volitive. In other words, Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model is based around the Latin stem "volo" meaning "I wish". This brings us closer to understanding why Tsvetaeva gave her own interpretation of Pushkin's death in theomachistic terms. In her own poetry the theomachistic motif is one of the dominant elements. It usually appears against an ancient Greek mythological background. Thus, in chapter 8 of the long poem "Poema gory", Tsvetaeva states that the gods take revenge on their doubles. In the case of Pushkin, Tsvetaeva brings out this particular element while describing his life in "Moi Pushkin" and "Natal'ia Goncharova". In Tsvetaeva's poetic code Pushkin's wife is a metonymy for Helen of Troy. Tsvetaeva's plays (on classical themes) were intended to be compiled under the title "Gnev Afrodity". The same mode is applied by Tsvetaeva to Malakovskii, linking his suicide to a woman who (as in Pushkin's case) is presented as Helen of Troy:

Молодец! Не прошибся!
А женщины ради — что ж!
И Елену паршивкой
— Подумаешь — назовешь. (Tsvetaeva 1990, p.408)

It is important to point out that Tsvetaeva's treatment of classical themes and antiquity in general is not just provoked by her perception of literature as myth: it is also inspired by her interest in the ethical values of the past.

Tsvetaeva's perception of antiquity was influenced by Nietzsche whose book *The Birth of Tragedy* she knew very well. The trace of this influence is felt in the main motif of Tsvetaeva's works: it was defined by Mirskii as a renaissance of the heroic.¹⁵ Antiquity from this point of view seemed to Tsvetaeva and her contemporaries to be an example of heroic deeds. Thus, Akhmatova commented on Pushkin's preoccupation with Cleopatra in the following way:

¹⁵ D. Mirskii, "Veianila smerti v predrevolutsionnoi literature", *Versty*, Paris, 2, 1927, p.253.

Эта повесть с стихотворными пушкинскими вставками по жанру очень близка произведению, носящему условное заглавие 'Мы проводили вечер...'; там тоже пушкинская стихотворная вставка и та же тема смерти мужественной, добровольной, и та же античность (самоубийство) [...] ¹⁶

Tsvetaeva's attempt to present Pushkin's death as a suicide (discussed above) is moulded in the same manner. In other words, both Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva experienced the influence of Nietzsche and, in the case of Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin, the heroic nature of his character is particularly highlighted. In a letter to Ivask (in 1935) Tsvetaeva wrote about Pushkin and herself in truly Nietzschean terms:

Все настоящие знали себе цену — с Пушкина начиная (До Пушкина! Или м.б. — кончая, ибо я первая после Пушкина кто так радовался своей силе, так открыто, так — бескорыстно, так — непреубедимо!). Цену своей силе. [...]

Нельзя не знать своей силы. Можно только не знать ее пределов. Нельзя не знать. [...]

Вся наша жизнь — сплошное снисхождение (человека в нас, а может быть — божества) к малым сим. ¹⁷

Tsvetaeva's cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" bears a strong mark of this deity-like character. (This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.) However, Tsvetaeva's understanding of Pushkin as heroic is not unique. In 1906 Merezhkovskii, for whom Tsvetaeva held a high regard, published a book on Pushkin in which he claimed that Pushkin's poetry was permeated with what he called "aristocratic spirit". In Merezhkovskii's opinion, there is no difference between a hero and a poet:

Какая разница между героем и поэтом? По существу — никакой; разница во внешних проявлениях: герой — поэт действия, поэт — герой созерцания. Оба разрушают старую жизнь, создают новую, оба рождаются из одной стихии. ¹⁸

¹⁶ Anna Akhmatova, *O Pushkine*, Leningrad, 1977, pp.202-03.

¹⁷ "Pis'ma M.I. Tsvetaevoi Iu.P. Ivasku (1933-1937 gg.)", *Russkii literaturnyi arkhiv*, New York, 1956, p.221.

¹⁸ D. Merezhkovskii, *Vechnye sputniki. Pushkin*, St. Petersburg, 1906, p.54.

This attitude is shared by Tsvetaeva. In her poetic code, heroic and poetic aspects are entwined. That is why Merezhkovskii's characterisation of Napoleon and Byron as spiritual brothers (whose fate and sufferings were similar), extracted from Pushkin's "K moriu", contains a key element of Tsvetaeva's poetic code. Tsvetaeva praised heroes and poets equally, perceiving their exceptional qualities as a gift from God. In Merezhkovskii's view, Pushkin sought heroic elements in every path of life — even in Christian compassion. Merezhkovskii argued that Pushkin saw the same source of inspiration in heroism and Christian acts of mercy: an intention to surpass one's human nature. If we look more closely at Tsvetaeva's writings, we may notice that her perception of the poetic elements of life is strikingly similar to Merezhkovskii's interpretation of Pushkin's poetry. In this vein, Tsvetaeva created a parallel between Pushkin and Del'vig and her Eurasian friends in the poem "Novogodniia (I)", and between Pushkin and Pugachev in the essay "Pushkin i Pugachev". This attitude led Tsvetaeva to defend her own husband after he was accused of murdering a Russian diplomat. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that Tsvetaeva kept defending her myth about her husband, whom she presented in her poetry as a hero and even as St George (see the cycle of poems "Georgii").

Another interesting aspect of the topic "Tsvetaeva and Pushkin" emerges from investigation of the motifs and myths exploited by both poets. In this respect the investigation of the treatment of the Cnidus myth by both Pushkin and Tsvetaeva is particularly revealing. Moreover, the analysis of this aspect in chapter 3 of this work leads to a conclusion about Tsvetaeva's awareness of the significance of the Cnidus myth for Pushkin. In brief, this myth is based on the belief that some forces interfere with human love in a very destructive manner. It is possible to suggest that Tsvetaeva consciously developed the aspect of research into Pushkin's mythology which was undertaken by Khodasevich in his early book on Russian poetry.¹⁹ Tsvetaeva knew Khodasevich well, and in Prague she regularly met not only him but his friend Roman Jakobson too. All of them can be grouped as authorities on Pushkin who were interested in Pushkin's

¹⁹ V. F. Khodasevich, "Peterburgskie povesti Pushkina", in his *Stat'i o russkoi poezii*, Petrograd, 1922.

mythology. Jakobson's research on the role of the sculptural myth in Pushkin's work²⁰ reflects, perhaps, the interest in myth and the mythological aspects of Russian poetry on the part of authors who form the post-Symbolist school of thought. The sculptural myth was exploited by Tsvetaeva in her own poetry and in her works on Pushkin, as will be illustrated further in chapter 3.

The other myth which appears both in Pushkin's and Tsvetaeva's works is the shade myth. This myth suggests an encounter with a dead beloved or poet. Senderovich has provided a very exhaustive study of this myth in Pushkin's poetry (especially in relation to Ovid and Del'vig).²¹ In this respect Tsvetaeva's poetry contains a definite analogy with Pushkin's writings. The shade myth plays a highly significant role in her own works – especially when it is applied to the theme of encountering poets. Thus, Tsvetaeva's very first poem about Pushkin, "Vstrecha s Pushkinym", is a good example. Also the same motif is very dominant in her cycle "Stikhi k Bloku" and in the long poem "Novogodnee" (written on Rilke's death). Chapter 3 will investigate this aspect of Tsvetaeva's poetry against the background of Pushkin's poetry. The way in which Tsvetaeva exploited Pushkin's imagery from the play "Kamennyi gost'" in her own writings will also be discussed.

To summarise all the points mentioned above, one can outline a strong feature of Tsvetaeva's treatment of Pushkin's work and life: she most definitely translated Pushkin's poetic code into the language of the avant-garde. Moreover, she presented it in the light of her own poetics, which is in many ways Dionysiac and rooted in the concepts introduced into European art by Nietzsche. Eve Malleret's description of Tsvetaeva's style can be transferred to Tsvetaeva's image of Pushkin:

A côté de l'humour, de la pose d'enfance, on trouve chez elle
une métaphysique matérialiste un peu à la manière de

²⁰ R. Jakobson, *Pushkin and His Sculptural Myth*, The Hague, 1975. (An early version of this work appeared in 1937 in Prague.)

²¹ S. Senderovich, "On Pushkin's mythology: the shade-myth", *Alexander Pushkin. Symposium II*, Columbus, Ohio, 1980, pp.103-15.

Nietzsche, dont elle est si proche par sa conception dionysiaque de l'art, entre autre.²²

²² E. Malleret, "Le statut du discours chez Tsvetaeva — une esthétique du courage", in *Marina Tsvetaeva. Actes du 1er colloque international (Lausanne, 30.vi - 3.vii 1982)*, *Slavica Helvetica*, 26, Bern, 1991, p.305.

CHAPTER 1

An endeavour of fidelity? Tsvetaeva's French translations of Pushkin's poems in the light of her poetics.

One of the most important stages in the study of Tsvetaeva's attitude to Pushkin is analysis of her translations of Pushkin's poems into French. This will shed some light on Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin and provide an insight into her poetics. It becomes evident in the course of the analysis of these translations that Tsvetaeva also attempted another kind of translation: she translated Pushkin's texts into the language of post-Symbolism. This assessment of Tsvetaeva's vision of Pushkin starts with the analysis of these translations in order to establish the difference in the poetics of two poets and to outline those aspects of Pushkin's works on which Tsvetaeva focused her attention.

It is necessary to look at Tsvetaeva's translations in the context of her creative evolution in order to highlight the significance of their role in her poetic development. She undertook these translations in 1936, with a view to their publication in the Belgian and French press, in order to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Pushkin's death (in 1937). By this time Tsvetaeva had written the essential body of her poetry, prose and essays. Assessing Tsvetaeva's work of the 1930s, it is possible to isolate a dominant theme which links them together. It can be called "the poet: his art and poetic fate". Tsvetaeva's discourse on the essence of poetic art (in works such as "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti", "Poety s istoriei i bez istorii", and "Epos i lirika sovremennoi Rossii") precedes her French translations of Pushkin. Therefore, one can assume that in 1936 Tsvetaeva had a clear picture of her own poetics and its relation to avant-garde art. Furthermore, analysis of Tsvetaeva's translations helps us to understand Tsvetaeva's urge to write such works as "Moi Pushkin" and "Pushkin i Pugachev", in which the features of the mythopoetry and myth-creating techniques of her art are reinforced even more strongly.

In a letter to Anna Tesková (26.01.1937) Tsvetaeva wrote:

И есть, наконец, французские переводы вещей: Песня из

Пира во время Чумы, Пророк, К няне, Для берегов отчизны дальней, К морю, Заклинание, Приметы — и еще целый ряд, которых никак и никуда не могу пристроить. Всюду — стена: „У нас уже есть переводы“. (Прозой — и ужасные). Вчера на французском чествовании в Сорбонне, по отрывкам читали *бог знает что*. Переводили — „очень милая барышня“ или „такой-то господин с женой“ — частные лица, никакого отношения к поэзии не имеющие. Слоним мои переводы предложил проф. Мазону [...] — так он: — Mais nous avons déjà des très bonnes traductions des poèmes de Pouchkin, un de mes amis les a traduites avec sa femme...

И это — профессор, и даже, кажется — светило. (РАТ, pp.150-51)

The letter quoted above contains key elements of Tsvetaeva's approach to translation. First of all, Tsvetaeva was categorically against prosaic translations of Pushkin. Usually, twentieth-century French translators of Russian poetry employed *free verse* which was neglected by Tsvetaeva in her own poetic experiments: she believed in the resurrection of poetry's archaic, magical and ritualistic functions, with an emphasis on rhythm, rhymes and repetitions. (This point will be discussed in detail below.) Tsvetaeva's preservation of the rigorous form of Pushkin's verse (with its system of alternation of feminine and masculine rhymes) therefore contradicted the established tradition in contemporary French literature. Secondly, Tsvetaeva ruled out all translation work carried out by non-poets. This was due to her belief in the existence of a poetic prototype or of an archetypal form of poetry which, in her view, could be reproduced only by the "initiated".¹

¹ In her essay "Zhivoe o zhivom" Tsvetaeva claimed that all poems have the same source: "[...] все стихи, бывшие, сущие и будущие, написаны одной женщиной — безымянной". (Р, p.208)

Tsvetaeva regarded poetry as being of *mythos*² or ritual which could be played out again and again. That is why she was convinced that she held a special right to reproduce Pushkin's texts in French: "Знаю, что так не переведет никто" (PAT, p.142). It is important to bear in mind that Tsvetaeva translated her favourite Pushkin poems (as she pointed out in one of her letters to Tesková), and therefore one can assume that these poems appealed to her own view of the world and of poetry. Some of her French translations discussed below will be approached in this vein.

It is known that Tsvetaeva translated at least 14 of Pushkin's poems into French, among them: "Svobody selatel' pustynnyi", "K moriu", "Prorok", "Poet", "Vospominanie", "Niane", "Primety", "Poetu", "Zaklinanie", "Dlia beregov otchizny dal'nei", "Besy", "Khvala chume" (from "Pir vo vremia chumy").³ Tsvetaeva intended some of these translations to be published in a Belgian collection of works in honour of Pushkin, and a poem ("Besy") appeared in the Parisian pamphlet *Pushkin* which was prepared for publication by Professor N. Kul'man. In recent years some of these translations have been published in Russia, Vienna and Paris. For this analysis I have chosen five translations published by Efim Etkind (in *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband, 3*) and two poems ("Besy" and "Khvala

² In this study, the term *mythos* is used in the sense applied by N. Frye: "The narrative of a work of literature, considered as the grammar or order of words (literal narrative), plot or "argument" (descriptive narrative), secondary imitation of action (formal narrative), imitation of generic and recurrent action or ritual (archetypal narrative), or imitation of an omnipotent god or human society (anagogic narrative)". — Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton, 1973, pp.366-67.

³ Aleksandr Sumerkin refers to another poem which, in his view, was also translated by Tsvetaeva. He claims, quoting the programme of the concert, that Tsvetaeva recited Pushkin's poem "Ja vas liubil" in her French translation at the concert organised to commemorate the centenary of Pushkin's death in Paris on 8 June 1937. — Marina Tsvetaeva, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy v platf tomakh*, vol.3, New York, 1983, p.502.

chume") published by V.V.Ivanov in *Masterstvo perevoda* 1966.⁴ They reflect very well Tsvetaeva's tendency to present Pushkin's poems as avant-garde writings. The themes raised by Pushkin in these works also coincided with topics which were of great interest to Tsvetaeva herself. Subsequently, this will help to reveal some alterations made to the original texts, done to preserve Tsvetaeva's own stylistic preferences. As will be seen below, the analysis of the seven translations will provide a picture of Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's poetry and of how they articulated her mythopoetic approach. Most of the poems translated by Tsvetaeva relate to the theme highlighted above: "the poet: his art and his fate". This problem was at the centre of Tsvetaeva's attention in the 1930s, and it is very fruitful to talk about these translations using her essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" as a background. It is also important to bear in mind that Tsvetaeva was mostly attracted to Pushkin's work of the 1830s, the most disturbing and philosophical period in Pushkin's evolution. Tsvetaeva herself described Pushkin in the 1830s (in the above-mentioned essay) as "Пушкин вальсингамовой задумчивости".

Some of the poems can be grouped in accordance with their theme, and some of them contain analogies with Tsvetaeva's own work. Thus Pushkin's poem "Besy" in Tsvetaeva's translation appears to be an extension of the *devilry myth* which permeated Russian literature of the twentieth century. (This point will be discussed further.) All in all Tsvetaeva established a strong parallel between Pushkin's experience (expressed in the lyrical pieces she selected for translation) and her own life. This is largely due to the fact that Tsvetaeva saw in Pushkin an archetypal kind of poet reproducing aspects of his life in his poems as in a ritual or myth. In the poem "Zaklinanie", for example, she reinforced the archaic, magical function of words, fully extending its incantatory aspect. Some of the translations represent what might be called versions of Pushkin's text. Thus, in the translation of "Khvala chume", Tsvetaeva inserted the motif of a disappearing generation (this motif was already formulated in works of her own, for example "Nezdeshnii vecher", "Stikhi k synu", "Strakhovka zhizni").

⁴ Efim Etkind, 'Marina Cvetaeva. Französische Texte', in *Marina Tsvetaeva. Studien und Materialien, Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband 3*, Vienna, 1981, pp.195-205; also Vlach. Vs. Ivanov, 'O tsvetaevskikh perevodakh pesni iz Pira vo vremia chumy i Besov Pushkina', *Masterstvo perevoda* 1966, Moscow, 1968, pp.389-412.

Tsvetaeva's expressed her approach to translating poetry as:

Переводчик к двум данным (ему поэтом) основным:
поэтовым богоданным строкам — ищет — находит две
заданные, ищет в арсенале *возможного*, направляемый
роковой необходимостью рифмы — к тем, первым, господом
(поэтом) данных, являющихся — императивом.

Рифмы — к тем же вещам — на разных языках —
разные.

Уточнение: Рифма всюду может быть заменена
фляжкой (стиха). Так, например, я строку, кончающуюся
amour и рифмующуюся с *toujours*, не непременно —
переведу: любовь — и кровь, но работу я найду с лучших
основных строк двустипшия и, дав их адекватно, то есть
абсолютно — к моей, русской, их транскрипции, буду искать
— уже в моем, русском арсенале, пытаясь дать — второй
(посильный) абсолют." (S84, p.502)

Tsvetaeva's words about translation represent a treatment of the works of others which matches the avant-garde perception of any text as an open work. The same view was prevalent in Baroque art, and Tsvetaeva's poetics can be classified as neo-Baroque. This is particularly evident in her desire to preserve the rigid structural form of poems (in most of her translations she retained the alternation of rhymes, and where possible she tried to reproduce the rhythmical pattern of the original). At the same time she used some elements within the suggested structure to produce the new meaning (potentially concealed in the text). Such a technique can be defined as 'poetic collage'. The new features brought by Tsvetaeva into the texts include a reinforcement of rhymes (especially inner rhymes) and alliteration, as well as her own intonation and syntax (based on an abundance of dashes).

It is worth mentioning that Tsvetaeva's preservation of a syllabo-tonic system and rhyming in her French translations is in line with the tradition established in Russian poetry. Thus, Pushkin's French verses were written in accordance with Russian poetic tradition: see, for instance, such poems as "Stances", "Mon portrait", "Couplets", "Tien et mien, — dit Lafontaine". Pushkin's usage of French had a functional meaning: his French verses were of playful context, they represented a love joke. However,

Tsvetaeva's intention to follow Russian tradition could have been perceived by a French audience as writing in a lyric genre. Tsvetaeva's orientation towards French lyric tradition may have been intentional - firstly, because her own poetry was largely based on Russian folk lyric tradition; and secondly, because before undertaking the translation of Pushkin, Tsvetaeva translated into French some Russian folk and revolutionary songs, and some Soviet songs. (They are kept, together with her translations of Pushkin, in the Central State Archive in Moscow, which is closed until 2001.) Tsvetaeva's preoccupation with the lyric genre will be particularly evident in the course of analysis of her translation of "Khvala chume" (below).

To clarify this analysis it is useful to outline three groups of translations, according to their thematical structure. The first group can be defined as poems on "the Poet and poetry", the second as "Love lyrics", and the third one is subordinated to the theme "Man and the elements".

The first group of poems includes "Le Poète", "Le Prophète" and "Indices".

"Le Prophète" is the most important of the translations of the first group because it provides us with Tsvetaeva's image of the archetypal poet.

ПРОРОК

- 1 Духовной жаждою томим,
- 2 В пустыне мрачной я влачился,
- 3 И шестикрылый серафим
- 4 На перепутье мне явился;
- 5 Перстами легкими как сон
- 6 Моих зениц коснулся он:
- 7 Отверзлись вещие зеницы,
- 8 Как у испуганной орлицы.
- 9 Моих ушей коснулся он,
- 10 И их наполнил шум и звон:
- 11 И внял я неба содроганье,
- 12 И горний ангелов полет,
- 13 И гад морских подводный ход,
- 14 И дольней лозы прозябанье.
- 15 И он к устам моим приник,
- 16 И вырвал грешный мой язык,
- 17 И празднословный и лукавый,

LE PROPHÈTE

- 1 Dans le domaine de l'ardeur
- 2 Je me traînais sans fin ni cesse;
- 3 Un Séraphin dans sa splendeur
- 4 Se présenta à ma détresse.
- 5 Et, tel un baume merveilleux,
- 6 Posa ses doigts sur mes deux yeux.
- 7 Les yeux frémirent, puis - s'ouvrirent
- 8 Et, tels les yeux de l'aigle, virent.
- 9 Mes deux oreilles il toucha
- 10 Et les emplit un grand fracas.
- 11 J'ouïs des cieux le large souffle,
- 12 Des anges le sublime vol,
- 13 Le coeur du germe dans le sol,
- 14 Le cours des monstres dans leur gouffre.
- 15 Et me ployant comme un osier
- 16 Il arracha de mon gosier
- 17 Ma langue vaine, langue folle.

18 И жало мудрыя змея	18 Et de sa dextre toute en sang
19 В уста замершие мои	19 La sage langue du serpent
20 Вложил десницею кровавой.	20 Y mit, - que pèsent mes paroles.
21 И он мне грудь рассек мечом,	21 Et de son glaive me frappant
22 И сердце трепетное вынул,	22 Il m'enlèva mon coeur de sève.
23 И уголь, пылающий огнем,	23 Et un charbon incandescent
24 Во грудь отверстую водвинул.	24 Mit dans la trace de son glaive.
25 Как труп в пустыне я лежал,	25 Et je restais pareil aux morts,
26 И бога глас ко мне воззвал:	26 Et le Seigneur me dit alors:
27 «Восстань, пророк, и виждь, и внемли!	27 —Debout, Prophète! Vois, écoute!
28 Исполнишь волею моею,	28 Emplis ton être de ton Dieu!
29 И, обходя моря и земли,	29 Que ta demeure soit - la route,
30 Глаголом жги сердца людей».	30 Et que ton verbe soit - du feu.
(Pushkin, 1, p.385)	(WSA 3, p.203)

It is worth mentioning that Pushkin's "Prorok" was the most appealing of these poems for the Russian Symbolists, who used it as a model for creating their own image of the poet. In Tsvetaeva's art, the idea of poetry as prophecy was formulated in her cycles "Sivilla" and "Stikhi k Bloku". In the latter, Blok appeared to bear a strong resemblance to Pushkin's prophet. Tsvetaeva also held a belief in the magical powers of poetry, tracing it to the ancient art of prophecy and shamanism. This was clearly expressed in one of her poems, in which she applied the magic number 7 to poetry: "Семь — в основе мира, семь — в основе лиры". In line with this belief, Tsvetaeva divided Pushkin's "Prorok" into seven stanzas, seeing in it some sort of sacral text. By contrast, Pushkin's poem contains only one stanza, although Tsvetaeva's way of dividing it into seven stanzas is suggested by its rhyming structure. (This point will be examined more closely below.)

Since Tsvetaeva saw "Prorok" as a canonic poem, her translation of it preserves the same pattern of feminine and masculine rhymes. This pattern was known in Russian poetry of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century as "способ альтернанса", and was originally taken by Russians from French

poetry.⁵ Tsvetaeva's knowledge of such classical poets as Racine and Corneille helped her to reinforce the canonical elements of Pushkin's poetry in her French reproduction of it. The rhyming pattern of Tsvetaeva's translation therefore matches the original (wherever possible): the pattern *abab* is present in lines 1-2-3-4 and 21-22-23-24. (These stanzas have "cross-line" rhymes: masculine-masculine, feminine-feminine.) These stanzas are thematically linked to the idea of spiritual thirst and its satisfaction. Tsvetaeva reinforces the existing parallel on both the phonetical and the imagistic levels. Tsvetaeva's version also offers a more symbolcised image of Pushkin's desert: she calls it "le domaine de l'ardeur". Pushkin's text contains an alliteration of the sounds *d,t*: духовной жаждоу томим, в пустыне, шестикрылый, перепутье, сердце трепетное etc. Tsvetaeva's version has alliteration based on the sounds *d,t* and *s,z*: дans le дomaine дe l'аrdеur, un Сераphin дans сa сplendеur сe ресента à ma детрессe. In fact she tends to use wherever possible two types of alliteration: one is based on the affinity of vowels and is typical for the French poetic tradition, the other is brought into her French translation from Russian poetry and is based on the correspondence of consonants. The latter violates the French language, although it was inherited by Tsvetaeva from Russian Futurism with its particular liking for an abundance of alliterating consonants. It is worth mentioning that Tsvetaeva was aware of the difference between the two poetic traditions: in her Russian translation of Baudelaire's "Le Voyage" there is traditional French alliteration of vowels. All in all, the phonetical structure of Tsvetaeva's translations bears a strong influence of the experiments of the French and Russian Symbolists.

The second stanza of "Prorok" with its rhyming sequence *aabb* (сон-он, зеницы-орлицы) is somewhat self-contained, and has an important chain of inner rhymes: сон-он-звон. The inner rhymes are subordinated to the idea of the spiritual transformation of the poet into a prophet. In Pushkin's poetic code such images as "сон" and "звон" are related to the

⁵ M. L. Gasparov, talking of the eighteenth-century Russian poetic tradition, states that "...из французского стихосложения было заимствовано так называемое правило альтернанса: стихи с однородными окончаниями могут стоять рядом только если они рифмуются между собой. [...] стихотворения, в которых чередовались только мужские или только женские окончания, были невозможны". — M. L. Gasparov, *Ocherk istorii russkogo stikha. Metrika. Ritmika. Rifma. Strofik*a, Moscow, 1984, p.84.

process of poetic inspiration and creation. From this point of view, the most significant poem reflecting this state is "Stikhi, napisannye noch'iu vo vremia bessonnitsy". The same imagery appears in Tsvetaeva's poetry to signal an encounter with another reality (for instance, in the poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" or in the cycle "Stikhi k Bloku", in which the sound of the divine bell appears, in Tsvetaeva's opinion, in the very name of Blok). Tsvetaeva's translation of the stanza suprisingly omits all the suggestive semantic elements. It demonstrates the translator's intention to preserve the four-foot iambic metre of the original. This led her to make some lapses such as the unnecessary translation of "моих ушей" and "моих зениц" as "mes deux yeux" and "mes deux oreilles". Further, Tsvetaeva concentrated her attention on the verbal structures of "Prorok", leaving out very important laconic adjectives. She translated Pushkin's verb "отверзлись" as "frémirent", which is not justified from the stylistic point of view, although Tsvetaeva tried to create a powerful impression from the verb "отверзлись" by inserting into the text the rhyming verb "s'ouvrirent".

The next group of stanzas in "Prorok" (lines 9-14 and 15-20) uses the interesting rhyming sequence *aabccb*. The two first lines are not changed by Tsvetaeva, but the rest are presented in a different manner. The very last stanza of "Prorok" is divided by Tsvetaeva into three pairs of two-line and one four-line stanzas. This arrangement makes the translation more dynamic (in the vein of Tsvetaeva's own poetry) and highlights God's command. Also Tsvetaeva's exaggeratedly expressive language in the translation destroys Pushkin's pantheistic presentation of images in "Prorok" based on the neutrality of his style. Pushkin's use of conjunction throughout the poem is not only the imitation of the biblical text; it also helps him to create the union of semantically equal images – especially in lines 11-14.

Tsvetaeva's version takes us away from the harmonious union of different elements of the world, providing us instead with a conglomeration of images. Thus, Pushkin's "шум и звон" is presented as "un grand fracas"; "неба содроганье" as "des cleux le large souffle"; and "горный ангелов полет" is translated into "Des anges le sublime vol". Furthermore, the last two lines of the above extract appear to be somewhat transformed into Tsvetaeva's own poetic language.

In the translation there is a change in the sequence of events described by Pushkin: the logic of Tsvetaeva's version moves us from the

image of a grain in the soil to the sea. This change seems to be consistent with Tsvetaeva's understanding of the evolution of the spirit. In such poems as "Sivilla", "Peshchera" and "Naklon" there is a certain pattern of images reflecting the logic of the evolution of the spirit from the sky to the sea. The water element is essential in Tsvetaeva's poetic code as a place of birth and rebirth (the whole poetic system of Tsvetaeva is based on the acting out of her own Christian name which is related to water). It seems that Tsvetaeva tries to highlight the analogy between the elements of air and water by using the approximate rhyme "souffle - gouffre". We have another indication of Tsvetaeva's concentration on spiritual rebirth in the poem: her image of "le coeur du germe" is a direct reference to her own essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" which contains a chapter called "Zerno zerna". In Tsvetaeva's interpretation this is related to the poet's ability to embrace the whole world in his art:

Не-поэт, над-поэт, больше, чем поэт, не только поэт
— но где же и что же поэт во всем этом? Der Kern des
Kernes, зерно зерна.

Поэт есть ответ.

От низшей степени простого рефлекса до высшей —
гетевского ответственного — поэт есть определенный и
неизменный душевно-художественный рефлекс [...] (S88, 2,
p.395)

In lines 9-14 Tsvetaeva's translation matches the original phonetically. It has the alliterating sounds / and d,t: *le sublime vol, le large souffle, du ... dans le sol*. (Compare with Pushkin's lines: подводный ход, дольней дозы, ангелов полет etc.) Tsvetaeva also tries to preserve some archaic words. However, in Pushkin's poem archaisms appear for two reasons: his "Prorok" imitates biblical language; and Old Slavonic vocabulary was used by Russian poets to create a solemn style. In Tsvetaeva's version only the second factor could be relevant, because unlike the Russian, the French Bible was translated into modern French as early as the seventeenth century. A few examples serve to illustrate Tsvetaeva's attempt to create the effect of solemnity in the vein of Russian poetic tradition: *dextre, gosier*; and verbs in the Past Historic - *frémirent, posa, toucha, emplît, arracha, enleva*, etc. (This tendency occurs in Tsvetaeva's own poems, especially those devoted to

the theme of poetic craft.) Meanwhile, Tsvetaeva's treatment of Pushkin's images shows a deep understanding of his poetic code.

In this way Tsvetaeva makes more explicit the image of the willow tree which was used by Pushkin as a suggestive analogy for the poet. It is interesting that Tsvetaeva does not use it in the stanza of the original, but links it to the sacral action of the seraph: "Et me ployant comme un osier". It is notable that she translates "лoза" as "osier" but not as "saule". In fact in Russian "лoза" stands for both. However, the second meaning (a thin twig, withe) is more common. Tsvetaeva explicitly manifests the hidden analogy between a withe and a dying person who is about to receive new life. Such a transformation focuses attention on the poet's willingness to be manipulated by God's power, although Tsvetaeva's expressiveness leads to a distortion of Pushkin's powerful dynamism based on the use of verbs. It is also noteworthy that Tsvetaeva omits Pushkin's adjectives "лукавыѣ" and "грешныѣ" (in relation to the hero's tongue). This is due to her understanding of sin through a passionate or rebellious lifestyle as a necessary stage in a poet's life which leads to death and rebirth. (See, for instance, such poems as "Karmen", "Pamiati Beranzhe", "Ale", "Stikhi k Pushkinu", "Skazavshii vsem strastiam: prosti...")

The last stanza, as pointed out above, is divided in the translation into a group of two-line stanzas. This feature resembles the structure of many Russian folk songs. Pushkin's dynamism is expressed here in line with Tsvetaeva's own preference for metrical and rhyming sequence. (The same pattern appears, for example, in poem 1 of her cycle, "Skifskie"). Tsvetaeva's own style is strongly evident in the very last stanza, in which she reinforces divine order by rearranging the syntactical structure of the original.

Tsvetaeva's version is similar to her own poems which are usually full of exclamation marks and dashes. Another of Tsvetaeva's own features introduced into this translation is a strongly expressed command. In some ways the ending of her translation from the rhetorical point of view reminds us of such poems as "Razgovor s Geniem", "Ja esm'...", "Da, drug nevidannyi...", and "Stikhi k synu". The images of the poetic path and of fire in the last stanza are signals of Tsvetaeva's own poetic code. She has left out the motif of Christian love present in Pushkin's "Prorok", inserting instead her own interpretation. Tsvetaeva's idea of poetic craft was closely linked to the image of a phoenix. In her opinion, the poet's way of life was

full of deaths and resurrections, and the passionate nature of the poetic craft should "burn out". (Tsvetaeva's understanding of the nature of the poetic word stood close to the pre-Christian tradition of its use in magical rituals, as pointed out above.)⁶ Moreover, she tried to play out the same principle in real life, although it seemed to be modelled partly on Pushkin's life pattern. (See further discussion of this point in chapter 5.) Thus, Dmitrii Shakhovskoi characterised Tsvetaeva's personality in the following way:

Такая „обнаженность души“, какая была у ней, требовала ограждения себя чистыми силами духа. Марина Ивановна вряд ли отдавала себе в этом отчет. Во многом она была еще (со всей своей предельной честностью душевной) в плену у „душевных“, „дионисийческих“ сил. Думаю, в этом заключалась ее основная трудность жизни. (NP, p.340)

Therefore, Tsvetaeva's translation of Pushkin's "Prorok" demonstrates her desire to interpret it in accordance with her own mythopoetical model, based on the idea of death and rebirth through poetic craft.

Another interesting aspect, which it is impossible to omit in our discussion of Tsvetaeva's translation, is the metrical pattern of "Le Prophète". In "Prorok" we find the four-foot iambic metre with pyrrhic first and third foot (although not regular). However, Tsvetaeva's own verse often contains *dol'nik*. Some scholars call it "Tsvetaeva's *dol'nik*", and some prefer to define it as logaoedic metre.⁷ Gasparov, for example,

⁶ See, for example, her poem "P. Antokol'skomu":

Чтоб голову свою, в шальных кудрях,
Как пенный кубок возносил в пространство,
Чтоб обратило в огонь — и в пепел — и в прах
Тебя твоё железное спартанство. (S84, 1, p.123)

⁷ Especially interesting works on this subject were produced by G. Smith and M. Gasparov: G. S. Smith, 'Compound meters in the poetry of Marina Cvetaeva', *Russian Literature*, 8, 1980, pp.103-23; G. S. Smith, 'Logaoedic metres in Tsvetayeva's lyrics', *SEER*, vol. LIII, №132, July 1975, pp.332-54. Gripping observations on Tsvetaeva's verse can be found in M. L. Gasparov's book: M. L. Gasparov, *Ocherk istorii russkogo stikha: Metrika. Ritmika. Rifma. Strofika*, Moscow, 1984.

established a link between logaoedic metre and songs. Tsvetaeva's orientation towards a song genre is also felt in her French translations of Pushkin, though on the phonetical rather than metrical level.

Pushkin's four-foot iambic metre in "Prorok" is related to the solemn atmosphere created in the poem. Its usage is rooted in the eighteenth-century tradition of employing this metre in the genre of ode. In spite of the fact that Tsvetaeva's poetic craft was shaped by Russian Modernism and that she was mainly preoccupied with intonation, in "Le Prophète" Tsvetaeva attempts (wherever possible) to recreate Pushkin's metre as a canon. This might be explained by her intention to preserve the tradition of employing iamb for solemn occasions. Let us look, for example, at the first stanza:

Духовной жаждою томим,	Dans le domaine de l'ardeur
В пустыне мрачной я влился,	Je me traînais sans fin ni cesse;
И шестикрылый серафим	Un Séraphin dans sa splendeur
На перепутье мне явился.	Se présenta à ma détresse.

Pushkin's stanza contains four-foot iambic metre with pyrrhic first and third feet. Tsvetaeva's metric pattern attempts to recreate her impression from the original. Robin Kemball's analysis of this poem suggests that the stresses fall on the fourth and eighth syllable throughout the whole stanza, and the second line corresponds to Pushkin's "В пустыне мрачной я влился" in which the sixth syllable "я" could also be stressed.⁸

However, some of the lines in Tsvetaeva's poem have additional stresses, especially at the beginning – for instance, the line "Et, tel un baume merveilleux" and "Et, tels les yeux de l'aigle, virent". Surprisingly the fact of the pause suggested by the syntactic structure of these lines is overlooked by Kemball. One could also argue that Tsvetaeva intended to stress "que" in the last line in the poem since she created a rhyme linking the beginning and the end of the line: "et que" – "du feu". The stress on "que" would be in line with Pushkin's "Глаголом жгя сердца людей", in which we see the four-foot iambic metre. Bearing in mind the established link between four-foot iambic metre and the ode in Pushkin's time, it is interesting to observe that the last stanza of Tsvetaeva's translation could be called the most "canonic". This is probably because the translator

⁸ Robin Kemball, "Puškin en Français les poèmes traduits par Marina Cvetaeva. Essai d'analyse métrique", *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, XXXII (2), avril-juin 1991, p.228.

intended to emphasise the importance and solemnity of God's appeal.

The other interesting example of Tsvetaeva's faithfulness to Pushkin is her poem "Le Poète".

ПОЭТ

1 Пока не требует поэта
2 К священной жертве Аполлон,
3 В заботах суетного света
4 Он малодушно погружен;
5 Молчит его святая лира;
6 Душа вкушает хладный сон,
7 И меж детей ничтожных мира,
8 Быть может, всех ничтожней он.

9 Но лишь божественный глагол
10 До слуха чуткого коснется,
11 Душа поэта вострепнется,
12 Как пробудившийся орел.
13 Тоскует он в забавах мира,
14 Людской чуждается молвы,
15 К ногам народного кумира
16 Не клонит гордой головы;
17 Бежит он, дикий и суровый,
18 И звуков и смятенья полн,
19 На берега пустынных волн,
20 В широкошумные дубровы...

(Ibid., p.402)

LE POÈTE

1 Aussi longtemps que le poète
2 Est oublié du dieu vivant,
3 Dans les soucis et dans la fête
4 Il est plongé piteusement.
5 Se rouille sa divine lyre,
6 Son âme goûte un lent venin,
7 Et parmi tous ces tristes sires
8 C'est lui, peut-être, le plus vain.

9 Mais dès que le divin appel
10 Alerte sa profonde fibre,
11 Son âme vit, son âme vibre,
12 Tel l'aigle regagnant le ciel.

13 Il fuit les dires du vulgaire,
14 S'écarte du commun sentier;
15 Devant l'idole populaire
16 N'incline pas son front altier.

17 S'en va sans aviser qui vive
18 Empli de songes et de voix
19 A l'ombre des antiques bois,
20 Au large des désertes rives.

(Ibid., p.202)

Etkind characterises its metre as iambic with first and third pyrrhic feet.⁹ However, to support his point Etkind chose only one stanza from the poem. The rest of the poem reveals Tsvetaeva's tendency to stress a second syllable, too. It is especially felt in such lines as "Se rouille sa divine lyre", "Alerte sa profonde fibre", "Empli de songes et de voix", etc. Taking into account Tsvetaeva's mannerism in her own verse, it would not be a big exaggeration to suggest that such words as "dans" (in the line "Dans le souci et dans la fête") and "est" (in the line "Il est plongé piteusement") would have been also stressed in Tsvetaeva's own recital of her translation. It is beyond the boundaries of this research to examine this matter. However, such a possibility should not be overruled, because in Tsvetaeva's own poetry we come across her tendency to emphasise (sometimes to a large extent) semantically insignificant words, parts of words and prepositions. Just a few examples will clarify my point: "[...] Ибо в призрачном доме/ Сем —

⁹ Etkind, op.cit., pp.204-05.

призрак ты [...] ("Evridika — Orfeiu"), "Что же мне делать, певцу и первенцу [...]" ("Poet"), "Это — правая педаль" ("Pedal'"), "Ка — ра — улыный/ На посту разлук" ("Prazhskii rytsar'"), "От нас? Нет — по нас" ("Krik stantsii"). However, one also cannot rule out that Tsvetaeva in her attempt to translate Pushkin as a classical poet tried occasionally to imitate Racine, whom she admired. Her play "Fedra" (1927) and her cycle of poems "Fedra" (1923) certainly reproduce the tension and dramatism of Racine's plays. We observe in his drama how the tensions in situation and in character are transmuted into aesthetic balance by the dramatist's sense of unity between word, gesture and rhythm. To some extent Tsvetaeva's translation of Pushkin's "широкошумные дубровы" as "des antiques bois" indicates the presence in the background of "Le poète" of Racine's tragedies in which characters lose their reason. Pushkin's description of poet's madness certainly suggests such an analogy. Tsvetaeva's distortion of Pushkin's "neutral" style is strongly felt in her excessive alliteration, inner rhyming and in creating her own symmetrical patterns (all these features are typical for Racine, too). Her mannerism provokes her to break Pushkin's narrative into fragments. Perhaps, in order to overcome such fragmentation, Tsvetaeva tries to bind her fragments by the rigid iambic structure? In places she managed to match almost perfectly the rhythmical pattern of the original. For instance the line "Aussi longtemps que le poète" rhythmically and metrically matches "Пока не требует поэта", and another line "S'en va sans aviser qui vive" is a reproduction of "Бежит он, дикий и суровый" (although the caesura in Tsvetaeva's version is different): the same can be said about the lines "Il est plongé piteusement" ("Он малодушно погружен") and "Devant l'idole populaire" ("К ногам народного кумира"). This Russian touch in the sound of Tsvetaeva's translations had a strong appeal among Russian audiences in Paris.¹⁰

It is worth mentioning also that Tsvetaeva's tendency to reproduce the iambic metre of the original is justified by the fact that metre plays an important role in the whole structure of Pushkin's "Poet". Eleven lines of the poem typically represent in Pushkin's poetry what is known as "неполноударная форма четырехстопного ямба"; meanwhile, the last line of

¹⁰ Thus, for instance, one of the Russian reviewers in Paris claimed that Tsvetaeva's translations of Pushkin into French were outstanding: A. Damanskaia, 'Syn Pamiatnika Pushkina. Na vechere Mariny Tsvetaevoi o velikom poete. (Pis'mo iz Parizha)', *Segodnia*, Riga, 1937, №65, 6 March, p.3.

the first stanza "Быть может, всех ничтожней он" is an example of the fully stressed four-foot iambic metre. In Pushkin's poetry it is used as an expressive device to break monotony and to attract special attention to the semantic aspect of lines with fully stressed four-foot iambic metre. The stanza from the poem "Poet" discussed above also contains an inversion as well as repetition of the word "ничтожный". All this adds a powerful effect to Pushkin's comparison of the poet's place in the world with others'. Tsvetaeva introduces her own interpretation of this aspect by splitting the meaning of the word "ничтожный" into: "tristes" and "plus vain". Her understanding of Pushkin's statement is more explicitly expressed in the concluding words of the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti":

Быть человеком важнее, потому что нужнее. Врач и священник нужнее поэта, потому что они у смертного одра, а не мы. Врач и священник человечески-важнее, все остальные общественно-важнее. [...] За исключением дармоедов, во всех их разновидностях — все важнее нас.

И зная это, в полном разуме и твердой памяти расписавшись в этом, [...] утверждаю, что ни на какое другое дело своего не променяла бы. Зная бóльшее, творю меньшее. Посему мне прощенья нет. Только с таких, как я, на Страшном суде совести и спросится. Но если есть Страшный суд слова — на нем я чиста. (S88, 2, p.407)

What we see here is the conflict of two cultural paradigms. Pushkin's poem contains an illustration of the so-called realistic paradigm. I. Nagy characterises it in the following way:

Реалистическая парадигма констатирует и фиксирует противоречие между человеком и художником, биографией и текстом [...] она признаёт и утверждает *равноценность* слова и дела ("слова поэта суть уже его дела"— Пушкин). В этой модели поэзия — не ремесло и не профессия, а *миссия*, которую поэт должен "делом оправдать", таким образом утверждая соответствие Слова и Жизни. Для неё характерно *сакральное отношение к слову*, взятому в широком культурном смысле и восходящему своими

корнями в русскую христианскую, православную культуру.¹¹

The attitude described above was conveyed in Pushkin's poems "Prorok" and "Poet". In "Poet" this theme is based on such images as "Apollo" and "sacred sacrifice". However, Tsvetaeva deleted them in her translation. Her image of a poet was more archetypal and closer to singers of the Dionysian type:

S'en va sans aviser qui vive
Empli de songes et de voix
A l'ombre des antiques bois,
Au large des désertes rives. (WSA 3, p.202)

Pushkin's motif of confusion, perturbation ("и звуков и смятенья полн") is absent in the translation. This indicates that Tsvetaeva's image derives from a different cultural paradigm. If in Pushkin's version we see a duality in the poet's behaviour due to a different understanding of the writer's character, in Tsvetaeva's case there is no conflict between the writer's art and personality. The difference in the attitude towards the poet's life and writings is felt in Tsvetaeva's way of editing Pushkin's poem while translating it into French.

Thus, in Pushkin's case, we feel that the poet's art is a sacred sacrifice, that it has to fulfil moral tasks and duties. This moral aspect was prevalent in nineteenth century Russian literature as a whole:

[...] русский XIX-ый век воспринимает писателя как нравственное лицо и предполагает реальную, обоюдную связь между нравственным поведением писателя как человека и эстетическими ценностями его произведения.¹²

The attitude discussed above survived to some extent in the writings of the Symbolists and post-Symbolists including Tsvetaeva. However, she strongly argued against this view in the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti". In Tsvetaeva's poetics the cultural paradigm of the avant-garde holds a very eminent place. It is characterised in the following way:

¹¹ I. Nagy, 'BIOGRAFIA — KUL'TURA — TEKST (O "sdvige" v russkoi kul'turnoi paradigme)', *Studia Russica Budapestinensia*, 1, Budapest, 1991, p.233.

¹² Ibid., p.235.

[...] в 20-30-годы художественные и научные тексты воспринимаются современниками как *событие*, как *поступок* в истории личной жизни и возводятся в ранг "*события-бытия*" [...] Творчество как поступок приобретает онтологический статус. [...]

Что касается художественной практики, первое, что очевидным образом обращает на себя внимание, это обилие *самоописывающих* текстов с сознательно обнажёнными приёмами. Пишутся романы — по Белому — "наполовину биографические, наполовину исторические". [...] В этих *книгах о биографиях* историческая судьба предшественников, их историческое поведение является для современного писателя "удобной" моделью осмыслить *свою* судьбу и разработать *свою* позицию.¹³

In other words, we notice a shift from the emphasis on what could be called life-creating to the priority of the text: the text is perceived as a second reality. The presence of this aspect in Tsvetaeva's translation makes her "Le Poète" remarkably different from Pushkin's "Poet". Her lyrical hero does not face the dilemma of duality as does Pushkin's character, he is preoccupied with his own gift. This is particularly felt in the following lines: "S'en va sans aviser qui vive / Empli de songes et de voix", "Son âme vit, son âme vibre / Tel l'aigle regagnant le ciel", "... le divin appel / Alerte sa profonde fibre". The other important key word in Tsvetaeva's description of her poet is the word "front". Usually, it signifies in her poetry spirituality and rebelliousness.¹⁴ However, Tsvetaeva brought out an important aspect of the poet's conflict with the crowd which was more distinctly spelt out in Pushkin's poem "Poet i tolpa". In some ways not only do Tsvetaeva's poems and essays about Pushkin give us a clue about her own position, but even her translations of Pushkin are marked by her intention to regard working with his poetry as an experience of the same situation ("*событие-бытие*", as Nagy puts it).

Another example of such personalisation is Tsvetaeva's translation of "Primety". The very title of her version — "Indices" — suggests that her

¹³ Ibid., pp.238-39.

¹⁴ See analysis of this point in my article: A. Smith, 'Tsvetaeva and Pasternak: depicting people in poetry', *Essays in Poetics*, Keele, 15, 1990, 2, pp.94-101.

perception of the poem was in line with the poetics of Symbolism. As we see below, Tsvetaeva left out Pushkin's self-irony in connection with the poetical imagery of Romanticism and translated this poem into the language of Symbolism.

ПРИМЕТЫ

- 1 Я ехал к вам: живые сны
- 2 За мной вились толпой игривой,
- 3 И месяц с правой стороны
- 4 Сопровождал мой бег ретивый.
- 5 Я ехал прочь: лные сны...
- 6 Душе влюбленной грустно было,
- 7 И месяц с левой стороны
- 8 Сопровождал меня уныло.
- 9 Мечтанью вечному в тиши
- 10 Так предаемся мы, поэты;
- 11 Так суеверные приметы
- 12 Согласно с чувствами души.

(Pushkin, 1, p.443)

INDICES

- J'allais vers vous. Mes vœux secrets
M'accompagnaient en folle danse.
C'est à ma droite que courait
La lune — pronostic de chance.
Je m'en venais. Soupîrs, regrets
Sulvaient — telle une noire traîne.
C'est à ma gauche que courait
La lune — pronostic de peine.
Poète suis et rien n'y puis,
Tout m'est transport, tout m'est supplice
Ainsi le moindre des indices
Est maître de mes jours et nuits.

(WSA, p.204)

Tsvetaeva's understanding of "Primety" as a myth which can be directly applied to her own life is revealed in the last stanza of "Indices": she replaces Pushkin's personal pronoun "we" (which suggests some sort of universal aspect of the situation described in his poem) by the melodramatic "I".

Pushkin's poem "Primety", like other writings of 1828-29, is marked by the tendency of deromanticisation: it articulates a certain irony towards the style of Romanticism. In the same vein Pushkin scattered ironic remarks in such poems of this period as "Pod'ezzhala pod Izhory...", "Kalmychke" and in numerous epigrams ("Literaturnoe izvestie", "Poet-igrok", "O Beverlei-Goratsii..." etc.)

Pushkin's ironic style in "Primety" can be detected on the semantic level. Thus, in the first stanza dreams are compared to a "playful crowd" ("вились толпой игривой"), and even the choice of the verb "виться" suggests some frivolous sense applied to the situation. Pushkin's description of his journey as "мой бег ретивый" is also a comical metonymy which

indicates that the hero was on the one hand riding a horse, and on the other hand impatient to see his girl-friend. (The adjective "петивый" is usually applied to a horse, not a person.) Other expressions in the poem - "И месяц с левой стороны / Сопровождал меня уныло" and "Мечтанью вечному в тиши / Так предаемся мы, поэты" - imitate elegiac clichés. In chapter 4 of *Evgenii Onegin*, which precedes "Primety", Pushkin appealed to poets to depart from romantic elegies and to embark upon epic genres (including odes). Even Pushkin's analogy between the state of nature and the poet's mood recalls a common device of romantic elegies. Thus, the end of his poem - "Так суеверные приметы / Согласны с чувствами души." - recalls the typical parallels of Iazykov's elegies. In his poem "Elegiia" (1824) there is the following ending:

И глупость страсти роковой
В душе исчезла молодой...
Так с пробудившейся поляны
Слетают темные туманы;
Так, слыша выстрел, кулики
На воздух мечутся с реки.¹⁵

Unlike the original, Tsvetaeva's translation bears every mark of a highly romanticised and symbolist style. The whole situation of Pushkin's poem, which contained very realistic details including a common belief about omens related to the moon being on the left or right of the person looking at it (in other words, it can be understood as the rising and setting of the moon), was transformed by Tsvetaeva into myth. She overlooked the significance of horse-riding (which helps to carry the idea of playfulness throughout the poem's structure), replacing it by "J'allais vers vous" and "Je m'en venais". Other images are transformed into exaggeratedly romanticised versions: Pushkin's image of dreams as a merry crowd is replaced by "M'accompagnaient en folle danse", and in the second stanza there is an image of "une noire traîne" formed by "soupirs, regrets". By contrast, Pushkin's language is more economic and far from being melodramatic (unlike Tsvetaeva's "La lune — pronostic de peine."):

Я ехал прочь: иные сны...
Душе влюбленной грустно было,
И месяц с левой стороны

¹⁵ N. M. Iazykov, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, Leningrad, 1988, p.120.

Сопровождал меня уныло. (Pushkin, 1, p.443)

The language of Pushkin's poem resembles the everyday language of light conversation; Tsvetaeva's translation, however, is of a more abstract character.

In this respect, it is worth pointing out that the word "indices" used by Tsvetaeva for the title is not very common in French. It occurs more often in mathematical or financial vocabulary. It would be more appropriate to use such French words as "signes", "marques" or "augures". It seems that it was more important for Tsvetaeva to bring about the symbolic nature of the poem as well as to preserve the rhyme "supplice - indices" in the final stanza. This rhyme reveals a very important mythological model created by Tsvetaeva in relation to Pushkin. It concerns her concept of tragic fate which, in her view, was inevitable in a poet's life. Thus, in "Moi Pushkin" she claims:

Какой поэт из бывших и сущих не негр, и какого поэта —
не убили? (P, p.19)

Tsvetaeva herself was looking for indications of tragic fate in her own life, presenting them in her writings as a repetition of Pushkin's fate. (This tendency was typical not only for Tsvetaeva; it was one of the main features of the poetics of writers of the so-called Silver Age.¹⁶)

As for other structural characteristics (including metre, rhyming patterns, etc), Tsvetaeva's translation was based on "dol'nik na dvuslozhnoi osnove". However, as in the previously mentioned translations, she reproduced some of the four-foot iambic lines of the original. It seems important on the metrical level for Tsvetaeva to have used it as a quotation. Thus, Pushkin's beginning "Я ехал к вам: живые сны" is virtually transplanted to her French translation: "J'allais vers vous. Mes vœux secrets". The rhyming pattern once again is unchanged. In spite of such loyalty to the original, Tsvetaeva's version has an altogether different sound, due not only to the peculiarities of the French language, but largely to her intention to create many inner rhymes and alliterating sounds. (See, for

¹⁶ See, for example, discussion of this point in: Irina Paperno, "Dvoinichestvo i ljubovnyi treugol'nik: poeticheskiy mif Kuzmina i ego pushkinskaya proektsiya", *Studies in the Life and Works of Mixail Kuzmin. Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband, 24*, Vienna, 1989, pp.57-83.

example, the inner rhyme "suis - puis" and the approximate rhyme "vers vous - mes vœux".) This tendency appears in all of her translations, and can be explained by an experimental treatment of poetic language typical of works by Andrei Belyi and the Russian Futurists (including Tsvetaeva herself). It seems that Tsvetaeva intended to reproduce the melody in Pushkin's poem. She herself was highly praised by Belyi for promoting "the melody of the whole". He called Tsvetaeva "поэтесса - певица", and outlined in her poems a melodic gesture:

В чем же сила?

В порывистом жесте, в порыве. [...] Порыв изумителен жестикуюляционной пластичностью, переходящей в мелодику целого; и хорямб (-у у-) (великолепно владеет Марина Цветаева им) есть послушное выражение порыва: и как в 5-ой симфонии у Бетховена хорямбическими ударами бьется сердце, так здесь подымается хорямбический лейтмотив, ставший явственным мелодическим жестом, просящимся через различные ритмы.¹⁷

Tsvetaeva's technique, which was characterised by Belyi as melodic gesture, is particularly evident in her translations of Pushkin's poems "Zaklinanie" and "Dlia beregov otchizny dal'nei".

ЗАКЛИНАНИЕ

INCANTATION

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 О, если правда, что в ночи, | Oh s'il, est vrai que dans la nuit, |
| 2 Когда покоятся живые | Tandis que les vivants sommeillent |
| 3 И с неба лунные лучи | Et Dame-Lune seule veille |
| 4 Скользят на камни гробовые, | Sur le sépulcre qui reluit; |
| 5 О, если правда, что тогда | Bravant grillages et gardiens |
| 6 Пустеют тихие могилы,— | Se vident les demeures sombres. |
| 7 Я тень зову, я жду Лейлы: | Je jette un nom, j'attends un ombre |
| 8 Ко мне, мой друг, сюда, сюда! | - A moi, mon coeur! Reviens, reviens! |
| 9 Явись, возлюбленная тень, | Apparais-moi, fantôme cher, |
| 10 Как ты была перед разлукой, | Comme tu fuis quand nous nous dîmes |

¹⁷ Andrei Belyi, "Poetessa - pevitsa", *Golos Rossii*, Berlin, №971, 21 May 1922, p.3.

- 11 Бледна, хладна, как зимний день, Adieu; plus pâle que l'hiver
12 Искажена последней мукой. En proie aux affres de l'abîme.
13 Приди, как дальная звезда, Ou comme un souffle aérien
14 Как легкий звук иль дуновенье, Ou comme un son, vivante, morte,
15 Иль как ужасное виденье, Epouvantable – que m'importe!
16 Мне все равно: сюда, сюда!.. A moi, mon coeur, reviens, reviens!
17 Зову тебя не для того, Déverserai-je mon courroux
18 Чтоб укорять людей, чья злоба Sur le bourreau de mon amie,
19 Убила друга моего, Implorerais-je à deux genoux
20 Иль чтоб изведать тайны гроба, De m'éclairer sur l'autre vie,

21 Не для того, что иногда Quémenderai-je ton soutien?
22 Сомненьем мучусь ... но, тоскуя, Non, non, mon coeur, – c'est pour te dire
23 Хочу сказать, что все люблю я, Qu'encore, toujours, – jusqu'au délire
24 Что все я твой: сюда, сюда! T'aime et te veux. Reviens, reviens!

(Pushkin, 1, pp.482-83)

(WSA, pp.202-203)

Both poems were written by Pushkin in 1830 in memory of A. Riznich. They were devoted to the love of a lady who died far away from the poet: according to different sources, Riznich was taken away from Odessa by her husband and later died in Italy. In some ways these poems continue the popular topos of the Romantics of faithfulness after death. In Pushkin's case they were marked by a touch of Byronism. In "Zaklinanie", Pushkin used for his beloved a name taken from Byron's tale *The Giaour*. In this fragment from a Turkish tale Byron depicted a girl of outstanding beauty – Leila. She dies mysteriously, trapped in a love triangle. The Giaour kills his enemy Hassan, and later in the story he is portrayed as being overwhelmed by grief over the loss of one he hated and one he loved. In fact, some of the parts of the tale seem to provide a source of inspiration for Pushkin's poem "Zaklinanie". Thus, the Giaour is convinced that Leila is not dead, and his love for her seems to overcome death's barriers:

Despair is stronger than my will.
Waste not thine orison, despair
Is mightier than thy pious prayer [...]
'Twas then, I tell thee, father! then
I saw her; yes, she lived again;

And shining in her white symar,
As through yon pale gray cloud the star
Which now I gaze on, as on her,
Who look'd and looks far lovelier;
Dimly I view its trembling spark;
To-morrow's night shall be more dark
[...]

I saw her, friar! and I rose
Forgetful of our former woes;
And rushing from my couch, I dart,
And clasp her to my desperate heart;
I clasp — what is it that I clasp?
No breathing form within my grasp,
No heart that beats reply to mine —
Yet, Leila! yet the form is thine! ¹⁸

In Pushkin's poem "Zaklinanie" the strength of passion is just as powerful. The reference to Byron's tale adds to its emotional tension, pointing to Pushkin's ability to replace the lengthy descriptions of Byron with economical use of profound detail. Pushkin's descriptions of Leila such as "тень", "дальная звезда", "легкий звук иль дуновение" were borrowed from Byron's poem. However, Pushkin achieved a more powerful effect by replacing the narrative structure with the form of incantation.

This fact made "Zaklinanie" particularly appealing for Tsvetaeva, who overlooked its close links with Byron's poem. The name "Leila" was omitted in Tsvetaeva's translation altogether. Her main attention focused on the ritual character of the poem which fitted Tsvetaeva's own myth about the perpetual separation of people in love because of their fate. That is why Tsvetaeva allowed herself to introduce some changes in the structure of the poem, perceiving it as an extension of the myth. Thus she created six stanzas (which contradicted the original) and changed the rhyming pattern in some parts (which was not the case in the translations discussed earlier). It appears important for Tsvetaeva to have created a syntactical pattern for each stanza: her translation therefore emphasizes the ritual aspect of the poem. The most "canonic" phrases of Pushkin's text have their adequate rhythmical equivalents in Tsvetaeva's version: "Oh, s'il est vrai que dans la

¹⁸ Byron, *Poetical works*, Oxford, 1987, p.263.

nuit" stands for "О, если правда, что в ночи" (four-foot iamb with additional stress on the first syllable) and the appeal "- A moi, mon coeur, reviens, reviens!" (compare this with Pushkin's four-foot iambic line "Ко мне, мой друг, сюда, сюда!"). The very ending of the original (which represents four-foot iambic metre with one stress missing) is also reproduced by Tsvetaeva with remarkable accuracy (from the point of view of both metre and intonation): "T'aime et te veux. Reviens, reviens!" stands for "Что весь я твой: сюда, сюда!".

Tsvetaeva's translation of "Zaklinanie" can be generally characterised as *four-foot iambic*. However, one should note particularly Pushkin's line quoted above ("Что весь я твой: сюда, сюда!"). This type of four-foot iambic metre, with the omission of the stress on the first foot (known in Russian as "неполноударный ямб"), is quite different from the iambic pattern used by Tsvetaeva in the fifth stanza of "Incantation":

Déverserai-je mon courroux
Sur le bourreau de mon amie,
Implorerai-je à deux genoux
De m'éclairer sur l'autre vie [...]

Here we come across another version of four-foot iambic metre with the stress only on the fourth and eighth feet. It appears in almost all the translations of Pushkin undertaken by Tsvetaeva, and it stands out as a mark of the poetics of post-Symbolism. This metric pattern was in particular favoured by Belyi, Tsvetaeva and Pasternak.¹⁹

Tsvetaeva's translation is rich in alliterations and inner rhymes. Although such a tendency was suggested in Pushkin's poem (for example, in the lines "лунные лучи", "возлюбленная тень", "дальная звезда"), Tsvetaeva went further and extended rhyming to the beginning of the stanza and created occasionally visual rather than phonetic rhymes (both factors form part of the innovative character of twentieth-century Russian poetry). There are several examples of visual rhymes (their phonetic expression is different):

¹⁹ See Viacheslav Vs. Ivanov, 'O vozdеistvii "esteticheskogo eksperimenta" Andreia Belogo', *Andrei Belyi. Problemy tvorchestva. Stat'i. Vospominaniia. Publikatsii*, Moscow, 1988, pp.358-63.

Ou comme un souffle aérien

Ou comme un son, [...]

Also in such phrases as "moi, mon...", "ton - non" Tsvetaeva inserts in her translation even rhyming phrases (which is completely alien to the nature of Pushkin's poetics):

Je jette un nom, j'attends un ombre.²⁰

Another interesting point in Tsvetaeva's translation is her usage of the phrase "Je jette un nom" which sounds unusual in French, and can be perceived as a neologism. However, it seems appropriate if one takes into account Tsvetaeva's interpretation of the poem as a ritual. This makes it possible to suggest a vision of a name as some sort of magnet or anchor which attracts magical forces. The fact that Tsvetaeva omitted the name used in "Zaklinanie" points to her understanding of the poem in terms of a universal ritual which can be performed by others. To summarise the points discussed above, it is important to outline the difference between the original and the translation.

Thus, Pushkin's "Zaklinanie" can be called a romantic poem marked by the touch of Byron's influence on his art. Tsvetaeva however included it in her own myth about the eternal separation of people in love. Moreover, in accordance with Tsvetaeva's poetics, death is understood as a desirable act which leads to the true spiritual reunion of people. (This point is discussed more thoroughly in chapter 3). It is also clear that Tsvetaeva translated Pushkin's text into the language of the avant-garde, bringing out the ritualistic aspects. It also has traces of Symbolist poetics. Thus, for instance, Pushkin's simple comparison used to describe his beloved "Бледна, хладна, как зимний день" is reinforced by Tsvetaeva's expression "plus pâle que l'hiver". The expression "Dame-Lune" seems borrowed not from Pushkin's poetic language but from the vocabulary of the French Symbolists.

Tsvetaeva's links with Symbolism come across even more strongly in her translation of Pushkin's poem "Dlia beregov otchizny dal'noi":

²⁰ In Tsvetaeva's own poetry such a rhyme could have been emphasised with enjambement or with the use of a dash (which is not justified syntactically) - as in the following examples: Спал разонравившийся моряк / и капала кровь на мя - / тую наволоку ("Poslednii moriak"); Спо / - койных глаз Взлет. - Можно до дому? В по / - следний раз! ("Поэма kontsa").

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Для берегов отчизны дальной | Pour ton pays aux belles fables |
| 2 Ты покидала край чужой; | Tu reprenais la vaste mer. |
| 3 В час незабвенный, в час печальный | Peine indicible, Inénarrable, |
| 4 Я долго плакал пред тобой. | J'ai tant pleuré, j'ai souffert! |
| 5 Мои хладеющие руки | Mes mains, raidies de torture, |
| 6 Тебя старались удержать; | Se cramponnaient en vain à toi. |
| 7 Томленье страшное разлуки | Mon seul désir était — que dure |
| 8 Мой стон молил не прерывать. | Mon mal aussi longtemps que moi. |
| 9 Но ты от горького лобзанья | Mais du baiser plein d'amertume |
| 10 Свои уста оторвала; | Tu arrachas ta lèvre en pleurs, |
| 11 Из края мрачного изгнанья | Tu me parlais d'un ciel sans brume, |
| 12 Ты в край иной меня звала. | Bien loin de ce pays de fleurs. |
| 13 Ты говорила: «В день свиданья | Tu me disais: — Demain, cher ange, |
| 14 Под небом вечно голубым, | Là-bas, au bout de l'horizon, |
| 15 В тени олив, любви лобзанья | Sous l'oranger chargé d'oranges |
| 16 Мы вновь, мой друг, соединим». | Nos coeurs et lèvres se joindront. |
| 17 Но там, увы, где неба своды | Mais là, où sous l'immense cloche |
| 18 Сияют в блеске голубом, | D'azur, au bienveillant soleil |
| 19 Где тень олив легла на воды, | Les ondes dorment sous les roches, |
| 20 Заснула ты последним сном. | Tu t'endormis du grand sommeil. |
| 21 Твоя краса, твои страданья | S'en sont allés comme l'écume |
| 22 Исчезли в урне гробовой — | Ta jeune grâce et tes émois, |
| 23 А с ними поцелуй свиданья ... | Et ce baiser qui me consume ... |
| 24 Но жду его; он за тобой ... | Mais je l'attends, tu me le dois ... |

(P., 1, pp.489-90)

(WSA 3, p.203)

As in the other translations discussed earlier, Tsvetaeva preserved Pushkin's stanzas and rhyming patterns; ^{slightly} rhythmically it looks different, ~~Although~~ she reproduces the ~~metre~~ ^{metre} of the original. (Pushkin uses four-foot iambic metre). As for the imagery of Pushkin's text, the significant transformations undertaken by Tsvetaeva must be stressed. Her poetic language used in this translation (she did not, incidentally, translate the title of the poem) refers to the poetics of Symbolism — in particular to Blok and Baudelaire (Tsvetaeva knew the latter very well, he was one of her favourite poets, and she brilliantly translated "L'invitation au voyage" into Russian — S88, 1, pp.608-12). Due to Tsvetaeva's originality in interpreting this poem, it would be interesting to draw attention to the imagery of her French version.

First of all, Pushkin's image of the distant motherland of his beloved was given a very symbolic status. In Tsvetaeva's poem there is a "pays aux belles fables" which is more in line with the poems of Blok. In this case his poem "Neznakomka" is especially worth mentioning. Tsvetaeva's metaphor, used in her French translation, strongly recalls the poetic language of "Neznakomka" with its motif of enchantment:

И веют древними поверьями
Ее упругие шелка,
И шляпа с траурными перьями,
И в кольцах узкая рука.

И странной близостью закованный,
Смотрю за темную вуаль,
И вижу берег очарованный
И очарованную даль.²¹

In some ways Tsvetaeva's translation suggests an ambiguous interpretation of the land to which the heroine of the poem has returned: it is her real motherland and also it is the motherland of her spirit (a land of death, which is a desirable place for the freedom of one's spirit, in the terms of Tsvetaeva's poetic code). This is particularly indicated by the introduction of the image of the sea (which is not mentioned in the original):

Pour ton pays aux belles fables
Tu reprenais la vaste mer.

In Tsvetaeva's poetic system, "the sea" represents a special location for the transformation of her lyric heroine, for death and rebirth, for return to the origin of life. Just a few examples from her poetry could easily illustrate this point:

В круженье вальса, под нежный вздох
Забить не могу тоски я.
Мечты иные мне подал Бог:
Морские они, морские! (S88, 1, p.42)

Милый друг, ушедший дальше, чем за море!
— Вот вам розы, — протянитесь на них! —
Милый друг, унесший самое, самое

²¹ Aleksandr Blok, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, Tashkent, 1986, p.182.

Дорогое из сокровищ земных!

[...]

Милый друг, ушедший в вечное плавание,
— Свежий холмик меж других бугорков, —
Помолитесь обо мне в райской гавани, —
Чтобы не было других моряков. (ibid, p.54)

Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin's poem is reduced, therefore, to her own poetic code rooted in Symbolism. This comes across in her description of a desired land of possible reunion understood once again in terms of Tsvetaeva's own imagery. Compare Pushkin's text with Tsvetaeva's translation in order to establish the difference:

9	Но ты от горького лобзанья	Mais du baiser plein d'amertume
10	Своя уста оторвала;	Tu arrachas ta lèvre en pleurs,
11	Из края мрачного изгнанья	Tu me parlais d'un ciel sans brume,
12	Ты в край иной меня звала.	Bien loin de ce pays de fleurs.
13	Ты говорила: «В день свиданья	Tu me disais: — Demain, cher ange,
14	Под небом вечно голубым,	Là-bas, au bout de l'horizon,
15	В тени олив, любви лобзанья	Sous l'oranger chargé d'oranges
16	Мы вновь, мой друг, соединим».	Nos coeurs et lèvres se joindront.

Tsvetaeva's description of a paradise with orange trees is highly symbolic; it also uses techniques developed by the post-Symbolists: the colour itself (reinforced by Tsvetaeva's mention of an orange tree and its fruit in line 15) acts as a signal of ardent love. Exotic imagery also fits the model exploited by the French Symbolists, especially Baudelaire.²² Also it matches Tsvetaeva's image used in "Le Prophète" — "le domaine de l'ardeur".

Another interesting feature in Tsvetaeva's translation is the device of

²² For example, in the poem "L'invitation au voyage", Baudelaire conveys a dream-location for loving and dying together with his beloved:

Des meubles luisants,
Polis par les ans,
Décoreraient notre chambre;

Les plus rares fleurs
Mêlant leurs odeurs
Aux vagues senteurs de l'ambre,

Les riches plafonds,
Les miroirs profonds, (Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*,
La splendeur orientale [...] London, 1982, p.236)

what one may call "a psychological gesture" based on alliterating sounds pronouncing which involves effort. This device was much favoured by Russian post-Symbolists such as Pasternak and Malakovskii. Thus, Pushkin's poem contains a longing for a promised kiss from his beloved in spite of their separation; it is not named but suggested. It is particularly evident on the syntactical level:

Твоя краса, твои страданья
Исчезли в урне гробовой —
А с ними поцелуй свиданья...
Но жду его; он за тобой... (Pushkin, 1, p.490)

In Tsvetaeva's translation the effect of longing for a kiss is reinforced by the alliteration of the sound "m": this activates the movement of lips and creates, therefore, a verbal expression of the physico-psychological gesture. Just a few examples from the stanza clarify this point: mais, l'immense, dorment, endormis, sommell, comme l'écume, tes émois, me consume etc.

Tsvetaeva's device is not suggested by the original, it is an innovative feature of avant-garde poetry prevalent in the work of Pasternak and in her own work. In chapter 2, for example, the same principle will be observed in her cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu", in which Tsvetaeva introduced an image of what she described as "Pushkin's muscle" — "мускул полёта, бега, борьбы". Tsvetaeva uses phonetic effects in order to reproduce an impression of effort and struggle. Tsvetaeva perceives the poet's life (and Pushkin's in particular) as a struggle with chaos, fate and the evil forces interfering with human affairs.

The motif of struggle between an artist, who represents in Tsvetaeva's view harmonic forces, and chaotic, evil forces forms one of the most important themes in her art. It is especially pronounced in her long poems "Poema lestnitsy", "Poema kontsa" and in the cycle "Dvoe", in which Tsvetaeva strongly defends the harmonious foundation of the world:

Елена. Ахиллес.
Звук назови созвучней.
Да, хаосу вразрез
Построен на созвучьях

Мир, и, разъединен,
Мстит (на согласиях строен!),
Неверностями жен
Мстит — и горящей Троей! (S88, p.245)

The motif of evil forces and man's struggle with them dominated Pushkin's art (chapter 3 of this work has a more detailed analysis of this point). That is why his poem "Besy" was picked up by Dostoevskii and by the Symbolists as the most profound example of Pushkin's art. Tsvetaeva's choice of this poem for translation into French proves its importance for twentieth-century literature. Further, Tsvetaeva's translation of "Besy" is strikingly emotional.

In the poem "Rel'sy" (1923) Tsvetaeva juxtaposed the tragic state of the modern world to the fairy-like agony depicted by Pushkin:

Пушкинское: сколько их, куда их
Гонят! (Миновало — не поют!)
Это уезжают-покидают,
Это остывают-отстают. (Tsvetaeva 1990, p.351)

The same sense of extensive distortion is felt in Tsvetaeva's translation of "Besy", already analysed by V.V.Ivanov.²³ It would be useful, therefore, to draw our attention to those aspects of Tsvetaeva's translation which he overlooked.

Thus, Tsvetaeva's special interest in the poem was influenced by her interest in the so-called "devilry myth" which was very prominent in Russian twentieth-century literature (this point is discussed in more detail in chapter 4). The sense of chaos, and broken relationships and the feeling of instability in general was much evoked by the changes brought by the October revolution. Tsvetaeva's poem "Rel'sy" quoted above was included in her book *Posle Rossii* which had a very apocalyptic meaning. Symbolically Tsvetaeva alluded to Pushkin's poem "Besy" linking it to the myth of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (depicted in Genesis²⁴):

²³ V.V.Ivanov, "O tsvetaevskikh perevodakh pesni iz 'Pira vo vremia chumy' i 'Besov' Pushkina, *Masterstvo perevoda* 1966, Moscow, 1968, pp.389-412.

²⁴ Gen. 19:1-28.

Это — остаются. Боль как нота
Высящаяся... Поверх любви
Высящаяся... Женою Лота
Насыпью застывшие столбы... (Ibid.)

The trace of this myth can be also found in Tsvetaeva's translation of "Besy" in which the state of paralysis is emphasised even more by the replaying of the situation suggested by Pushkin. Thus, if in Pushkin's poem there is mention of immobility only in relation to horses ("Коня стали..."), Tsvetaeva took this theme further, extending it to everyone and everything:

Et voilà que tout s'arrête.
Les grelots reposent morts.
— Qu'est-ce, un tronc ou une bête?
— Lui toujours et lui encore!²⁵

Tsvetaeva also inserted a contrast between chaos and a harmonious state of the world, bringing into her "Les démons" a reference to Pushkin's poem "Zimniala doroga". She reproduces Pushkin's phrase from "Zimniala doroga" "Ни огня, ни черной хаты" in the fourth stanza of her translation: "Ni lumière, ni demeure".

Tsvetaeva decided to avoid the colloquial phrase of the coachman "Хоть убей, следа не видно" (in the second stanza of "Besy"). She wanted to recreate the plot and atmosphere of Pushkin's poem rather than the stylistic differences in the speech of a common man and the lyric hero ("барин") which form an essential part of the poetic language of "Besy". Meanwhile, Tsvetaeva's reference to "Zimniala doroga" can be perceived as a suggestive contrast between the situation in "Les démons" and the poet's dream of a reunion with his beloved in "Zimniala doroga":

Скучно, грустно... Завтра, Нина,
Завтра, к милой возвратясь,
Я забудусь у камина,
Загляжусь не наглядясь.

Звучно стрелка часовая
Мерный круг свой совершит,
И, докучных удаляя,
Полночь нас не разлучит. (Pushkin 1, p.388)

²⁵ Ivanov, op.cit., p.405.

Tsvetaeva's translation is permeated with the theme of the absolute impossibility of any union or links with the world. Pushkin's poem "Besy", in spite of its tragic motif, is enriched by its folkloric style and imagery. Thus there is a suggestion of a witch's wedding and the mention of a spirit who looks after houses ("домовой") which even preserves a humorous folk intonation:

Сколько их! куда их гонят?
Что так жалобно поют?
Домового ли хоронят?
Ведьму замуж выдают? (ibid., p.476)

Tsvetaeva's translation contains a hyperbolised, grotesque version of the situation described in "Besy". Somehow it omits the remarkable sense of unity between the lyric hero and the mentality of what can be called folklore or humble people, which is prevalent in Pushkin's "Besy" and was earlier proclaimed in "Zimniala doroga":

Что-то слышится родное
В долгих песнях ямщика:
То разгулье удалое,
То сердечная тоска... (ibid., p.387)

However, Tsvetaeva's translation demonstrates her philologically sound knowledge of Russian folkloric culture and Slav mythological traditions, as pointed out by V.V.Ivanov.²⁶ It seems that she was preoccupied with identifying an original or archetype; this intention determined Tsvetaeva's choice of imagery and vocabulary. Thus she identifies the demon more specifically than Pushkin as a wolf with fiery eyes – "Le démon [...] c'est un loup aux yeux-flambeaux" – which is in line with ancient Slav mythology. Another point made by Ivanov justifies Tsvetaeva's translation of the word "домовой" as "ancêtre" tracing it back to pre-Christian Russian cults.

One feels that Tsvetaeva's reinforcement of the individual's protest against fatal forces and the universal law of necessity in the last stanza is more in the vein of Lev Shestov's philosophy of existentialism (he was a personal friend of Tsvetaeva) than with Pushkin's original:

²⁶ Ibid., pp.410-11.

Survolant la blanche plaine
Gelignent, hurlent les malins,
De leurs plaintes surhumaines
Déchirant mon coeur humain.²⁷

Later — in 1939 — Tsvetaeva's protest reached its apogee in the cycle "Stikhi k Chekhii":

Отказываюсь — быть.
В Бедламе нелюдей
Отказываюсь — жить.
С волками площадей

Отказываюсь — выть.
С акулами равнин
Отказываюсь плыть —
Вниз — по теченью спин. (S88, 1, p.327)

Tsvetaeva's vision of the world undoubtedly has a kinship with the existentialist philosophy of Shestov. Berdiaev's characterisation of the main philosophical concern of Shestov can be applied to Tsvetaeva:

Это есть страстный порыв к раю, к вольной райской жизни.
Но рай достигается через обострение конфликта, через
дисгармонию и безнадежность. [...] Человеческая личность
есть жертва необходимых истин, закона разума и морали,
жертва универсального и общеобязательного.²⁸

Tsvetaeva's views influenced her translation of "Besy", reflecting her own vision of the world, in accordance with which she emphasised in her translation the horrors of what Berdiaev called the "universal" and "compulsory".

Another important aspect of Tsvetaeva's poetic system is the motif of a dying generation. (This will be discussed in chapter 4). In Tsvetaeva's translation of Pushkin's song from the play "Pir vo vremia chumy", there is a trace of this motif. Thus, Tsvetaeva inserted a line which does not exist in Pushkin's text about people who are last aboard:

²⁷ Ibid., p.405.

²⁸ Nikolai Berdiaev, "Tipy religioznoi mysli v Rossii", in his *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3, Paris, 1989, pp.408-09.

Chantons l'ivresse du combat,
Du précipice sous nos pas,
De l'Océan qui nous charrie
En pleine nuit, derniers à bord [...] ²⁹

The grammatical structures of Pushkin's text ("Есть упоение в бою...") suggest a more impersonal situation. Meanwhile, Tsvetaeva applied it to herself and those people of her generation who were aristocrats in spirit. She characterises them in the following way:

Поколенью с сиренью
И с Пасхой в Кремле,
Мой привет поколенью
По колено в земле
[...]

Только душу и спасшим
Из фамильных богатств —
Современникам старшим,
Вам, без равенств и братств —

Руку веры и дружбы
[...]

Поколение, где краше
Был — кто жарче страдал!
Поколение! Я — ваша!
Продолженье зеркал.
[...]

Вам, в одном небывалом
Умудрившимся — *быть*,
Вам средь шумного бала
Так умевшим — любить! (Tsvetaeva 1990, pp. 445-46)

Кто — *мы*? Потонул в медведях
Тот край, потонул в полозьях.
Кто — *мы* ? Не из тех, что ездят, —
Вот — *мы* ! А из тех, что возят[...]

²⁹ Ivanov, op.cit., p.392.

Доктора узнают нас в морге

По не в меру большим сердцам. (S88,1, pp. 259-60)

It is also interesting to point out one aspect of Tsvetaeva's translation which was overlooked by V. V. Ivanov (whose analysis is otherwise quite exhaustive). If in Pushkin's poem we come across an assertion about pleasures achieved through danger, Tsvetaeva inserted her own doubts about it, a minor correction by changing Pushkin's phrase into a question:

Ivresse de la perdition,

Es-tu, peut-être — qu'en sait-on? —

D'une immortalité — promesse?³⁰

Pushkin's statement reflects the way Byron influenced his art and Russian culture in general. As the poet Viacheslav Ivanov puts it, the issue of freedom introduced into Russian culture by Byron was understood as an idea of self-asserting the being and of freedom of choice.³¹ In the article "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" Tsvetaeva explains her doubts about Pushkin's belief in immortality. She interprets Pushkin's use of a song in the play as an attempt to escape the destruction inflicted upon people by the elements (S88, 2, pp.380-81). Tsvetaeva's belief in the harmonious principle expressed in poetry helps understand why her translation of "Khvala chume" is particularly poetic. It bears the strong mark of Tsvetaeva's craft and of her attempt to make it especially musical. V. V. Ivanov compares it to the translation undertaken by Aragon and concludes that Tsvetaeva's version grasps the very essence of Pushkin's poetic code.³²

To conclude the above observations, one can outline Tsvetaeva's intention to recreate Pushkin's texts in French in a manner which was described by one scholar as "un dialogue de poète à poète".³³ Tsvetaeva's

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Viacheslav Ivanov, "Baironism kak sobytie v zhizni russkogo dukha", *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4, Brussels, 1987, pp. 294-95.

³² V. V. Ivanov, op.cit., p.402.

³³ J.-Cl. Lanne, "M. Cvetaeva traductrice de Puskin", *Marina Tsvetaeva. Actes du 1er colloque international (Lausanne, 30.VI. — 3. VII. 1982)*, Bern, 1991, p.436.

strategy as a translator derives from the method introduced to Russian poetry by Briusov. His method of translating was suggested in his article "Fialki v tigele" (published in 1905):

Разложить фиалку в тигеле на основные элементы и потом из этих элементов создать вновь фиалку: вот задача того, кто задумал переводить стихи. Тайна того впечатления, какое производит создание поэзии не только в идеях, в чувствах, в образах, но раньше того в языке [...] ³⁴

Briusov's method became dominant in avant-garde poetry. Tsvetaeva's translations of Pushkin demonstrate the same attempt to recreate the impression of a miracle produced by the main structural elements of a poem. That is why Tsvetaeva always felt that poetic translations should be undertaken only by poets. In a letter to Valéry of 1937 she wrote:

Мне твердят: Пушкин неперево́дим. Как может быть неперево́дим уже переве́денный, переложи́вший на свой (общечеловеческий) язы́к несказа́нное и несказа́нное? Но перево́дить такого поэ́та должен поэ́т. ³⁵

Briusov's definition of the poet's interest in translating helps us to understand Tsvetaeva's determination to create the poetic equivalent of Pushkin's verse in French:

Поэтов, при переводе стихов, увлекает чисто художественная задача: воссоздать на своем языке то, что их пленило на чужом, увлекает желание — "чужое вмиг почувствовать своим" [...] Прекрасные стихи — как бы вызов поэтам других народов: показать, что и их язык способен вместить тот же творческий замысел. ³⁶

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Tsvetaeva had the same artistic goal in mind when she created her cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu". In her own words, it was an expression of her protest to the hypocrites of all

³⁴ V.Ia.Briusov, *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh, Tom vtoroi.*, Moscow, 1987, p.97.

³⁵ Russian translation in: A.Efron, A.Saaklants, "Marina Tsvetaeva — perevodchik", *Don*, 1966, №2, p.178.

³⁶ Briusov, op. cit., p.98.

times. (See chapter 2 on this subject.) Tsvetaeva (being a Futurist at heart) attempted to break the French poetic tradition. Moreover, her French translations of Pushkin were something of a lesson in poetic craft aimed at contemporary French writers. Tsvetaeva tried to exploit the potential of the French language in the same way as she experimented with her native one.

CHAPTER 2

Tsvetaeva's poems about Pushkin and references to his poetry.

Tsvetaeva's poems about Pushkin and her references to his poetry not only reveal her vision of Pushkin's personality and his works, but also provide us with invaluable insight into Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model of a poet's fate. They bear the strong mark of avant-garde poetics and demonstrate the functional role of Pushkin's texts in Tsvetaeva's poetic code.

The very first of Tsvetaeva's poems dedicated to Pushkin was written in 1913. Its title — "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" — suggests a development of Pushkin's shade myth. It contains an encounter with the shade of a dead poet. This myth was particularly exploited by Pushkin in regard to Ovid, to whom the young poet paid homage while in exile in Moldavia (see such poems as "Baratynskomu", "Iz Bessarabii" and "K Ovidiu").¹ In some ways Tsvetaeva's poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" contains a similar situation: her lyric heroine rediscovers the magic beauty of the Crimea which had been immortalised in poetry by her predecessor. In the poems devoted to Ovid, Pushkin identified himself with the exiled poet, outlining the political similarities of their fates. In Tsvetaeva's case, the biographical context is different. Tsvetaeva brought into play the similarity in age and infatuation with Byron and Napoleon. Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model of the encounter with the poet derives from Pushkin's poem "Tavrida", in which he symbolically identified the Crimea with his youth and called Gurzuf his spiritual birthplace.

Close examination of Tsvetaeva's poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" will help us to trace some images from Pushkin's "Tavrida". Comparing the two poems makes it easier to outline those features of Tsvetaeva's poetic code which derived from Pushkin's poem. Thus, Pushkin's epigraph from Goethe's *Faust* ("Return me my youth!") suggests a subtext related to identification of

¹ This aspect of Pushkin's poetry has been extensively examined by Boris Gasparov: Boris Gasparov, "Encounter of two poets in the desert: Puškin's myth", *Myth in Literature, New York University Slavic Papers Volume V*, Columbus, Ohio, 1985, pp.124-53.

the Crimea with the poet's youth. Therefore, Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical vision of the encounter with the young Pushkin derives directly from his poem. Moreover, Tsvetaeva's lyric heroine in "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" appears to be quite mystical and, perhaps, symbolizes Pushkin's youth itself:

Пушкин! — Ты знал бы по первому взору,
Кто у тебя на пути.
И просиял бы, и под руку в гору
Не предложил мне идти. (Neizdannoe, p.17)

Tsvetaeva also uses Pushkin's description of Gurzuf for the background of her own poem, which makes her choice for the encounter with Pushkin well justified:

Так, если удаляться можно
Оттоль, где вечный свет горит,
Где счастье вечно, непреложно,
Мой дух к Юрзуфу прилетит.
Счастливым край, где блещут воды,
Лаская пышные брега,
И светлой роскошью природы
Озарены холма, луга [...] (Pushkin, 1, pp.276-77)

However, Tsvetaeva's work represents the poetics of the avant-garde, which belongs to the secondary poetic system (as mentioned in the introduction). Thus, if in Pushkin's poem we can see the traces of the primary poetic system with its direct correspondence to reality, in Tsvetaeva's case the landscape itself forms a part of a reality perceived as text or language. In other words, Tsvetaeva's description does not correspond to the world around her; it refers to Pushkin's vision of Tavrida. Moreover, Pushkin himself stands out in Tsvetaeva's narration as an enchanter or a wizard. (This image reflects Tsvetaeva's preoccupation with the early links of poetry and magic rituals and witchcraft).—

Слева — крутая спина Аю-Дага,
Снятая бездна — окрест.
Я вспоминаю курчавого мага
Этих лирических мест.
[...]

Запах — из детства — какого-то дыма

Или каких-то племен...

Очарование прежнего Крыма

Пушкинских милых времен. (Neizdannoe, p.17)

The very last reference to Pushkin's times reflects the tendency not only of Tsvetaeva but of Russian modernists in general to mythologize Pushkin's epoch. (This tendency was particularly evident among Tsvetaeva's generation of poets.²) As Gasparov has pointed out, writers of the Silver Age dealt not with the real historical figure but rather with the "Pushkin principle" which was omnipresent in the artistic world created by them: "Not only did Silver Age man incarnate in himself, in his work, and in the facts of his life a certain aspect of the Pushkin principle, but he also constantly recognized incarnations of that same omnipresent entelechy in his environment."³

What makes Tsvetaeva's poem quite remarkable and original is the fact that unlike Annenskii and Akhmatova, who promoted the cult of Tsarskoe selo in relation to the Pushkin myth, Tsvetaeva sought inspiration outside Moscow and Petersburg — in the Crimea. The location chosen by Tsvetaeva allowed her to highlight the Romantic landmarks in Pushkin's biography as well as to widen the mythological interactions of the context of her poem. Tavrida was perceived by Russian writers — both historically and mythologically — as part of the Greek tradition. This was particularly visible in the work of Voloshin. Tsvetaeva's poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym"

² Boris Gasparov has described this aspect of Russian modernism: "The totality ascribed by Modernism to the Pushkin myth necessitated the expansion of the myth's borders beyond the confines of a single poet's personality. The myth about Pushkin naturally grew into a myth of the *Pushkin epoch* [....] Those of Pushkin's contemporaries who had been personally and creatively associated with him became an organic part of the myth, as did the literary institutions of Pushkin's age (the salons, the circles, the periodicals) and the historical figures of his era." — B. Gasparov, "Introduction: The 'Golden Age' and its Role in the Cultural Mythology of Russian Modernism", *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism. From the Golden Age to the Silver Age, California Slavic Studies XV*, Berkeley, 1992, p.9.

³ Ibid., p.8.

was written while she was staying with Voloshin at his house in Koktebel', and she was very much under his influence. Tsvetaeva herself admitted this in her essay "Zhivoe o zhivom", in which she displayed her interest in myth and mythopoetry inspired by Voloshin:

Макс с мифом был связан и через коктебельскую землю — киммерийскую, родину амазонок. [...]

Киммерия. Земля входа в Аид Орфея. Когда Макс, полдневными походами, рассказывал мне о земле, по которой мы идем, мне казалось, что рядом со мной идет — даже не Геродот, ибо Геродот рассказывал по слухам, шедший же рядом повествовал, как свой о своем.

Тайновидчество поэта есть прежде всего очевидчество: внутренним оком — всех времен. Очевидец всех времен есть тайновидец. (Р, pp. 233-34)⁴

This vision of the simultaneity of different temporal and spatial dimensions was expressed by Tsvetaeva as early as 1913 in "Vstrecha s Pushkinym". This feature makes her poem stand out as a fine example of avant-garde writing. Thus, the vision of Pushkin in this poem merges not only with the elements of the Orphic and Dionysian myths but also with the imagery from several of Pushkin's writings ("Tavrida", "Tsygany", "Poltava" and "K moriu"):

Вижу его на дороге и в гроте...
Смутную руку у лба...
[...]

⁴ It is interesting to compare Tsvetaeva's description of the Crimean landscape with Voloshin's portrayal of it (in the article on Bogaevskii published in *Apollon* in 1912) in order to establish a similarity in their mythopoetical outlook: "Широкие каменные лестницы посреди скалистых ущелий, с двух сторон ограниченные пропастями, кажется, подпираются невидимыми ступнями Эвридики. И хребты, осыпавшиеся как бы от землетрясения, и долины, подобные Иосафатовой в день Суда, и поляны [...] и ступени, ведущие в Аид, — все это тесно и беспорядочно жмется друг к другу." — Maksimilian Voloshin, *Liki tvorchestva*, Leningrad, 1988, p.316.

Как я люблю имена и знамена,
Волосы и голоса,
Старые вина и старые троны,
— Каждого встречного пса! —
[...]
Комедиантов и звон тамбурина,
Золото и серебро,
Неповторимое имя: Марина,
Байрона и болеро,
[...]
Эти слова: никогда и навеки,
За колесом — колею...
Смуглые руки и синие реки,
— Ах, — Мариулу твою! — (Neizdannoe, pp.17-18)

The poets of post-Symbolist formation were particularly aware of the coexistence of several historical epochs in their artistic experience. This is due to their perception of cultural tradition as myth which is based on the ritualistic approach to life. Such belief allowed them to replay and experience different situations from the past. Thus, Belyi wrote in his profound article "Emblematika smysla" (1910) that he and his contemporaries lived through the experience of the past: "[...] Индия, Персия, Египет, как и Греция, как и средневековье, — оживают, проносятся мимо нас, как проносятся мимо нас эпохи, нам более близкие [...]".⁵ Tsvetaeva's poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" is a remarkable illustration of Bely's point: it is not just an encounter with the poet, but, to a much greater extent, an experience of the poet, of what it would be like to be Pushkin. It is no coincidence that Tsvetaeva's poetic narration is focused on the mirror and the reflected lyric persona, presented in the terms of Pushkin's times. In the essay "Moi Pushkin" written in 1936 (analysed in chapter 5) Tsvetaeva gave this phenomenon a more precise definition: "Пушкин не воспоминание, а состояние, Пушкин — всегда и отовсегда" (P, p.19). In other words, Tsvetaeva herself admitted that she was interested in the Pushkinian principle or Pushkin as a myth rather than as a real historical figure. In this respect it is especially revealing to observe in "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" how Tsvetaeva's neo-Baroque principle of mirroring

⁵ A. Belyi, *Simvolizm*, Moscow, 1910, p.50.

(discussed in more detail in chapter 5) was manifested so strongly. It seems that this poem produced the very embryo of Tsvetaeva's poetical model based on the semantics of her Christian name Marina. Moreover, by proclaiming the unique character of her name she thereby suggested only one function for her lyric persona: to reflect others. In other words, there is a certain metonymical aspect in the poem, brought about by Tsvetaeva's use of the mirror image.

It is also surprising to see how "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" includes all the main connotations of the Pushkin myth developed by the Russian Symbolists and especially the post-Symbolists. First of all Tsvetaeva mentions the parallel between Pushkin's times and the beginning of the twentieth century, a parallel symbolically manifested in terms of the colours gold and silver. Tsvetaeva's contemporaries defined Pushkin's times as a "Golden Age" of Russian culture, and their own epoch as a "Silver Age". As Gasparov has pointed out, the widespread play on the parallel images of "gold" and "silver" was an important device in the poetics of Kuzmin and the Acmeists.⁶ It is difficult to apply the same principle to the whole of Tsvetaeva's work, but her early poetry does seem to follow the same pattern. The other important element of the Pushkin myth exploited by Tsvetaeva is the gypsy and skin darkness imagery. Irina Paperno's study of the role of Pushkin's image in the everyday life of the Silver Age artist concludes that darkness of the skin and gypsy-Egyptian imagery are the most important part of the identification with Pushkin.⁷ In my view, Tsvetaeva created her own mythological aspect of this imagery and linked it to the motifs of rebelliousness and displacement. (This point is discussed in chapter 5.)

Beyond these connotations of the Pushkin myth exploited by Tsvetaeva in the poem, it can be seen that the idea of Pushkin being a companion or escort is also used —

Мы рассмеялись бы и побежали
За руку вниз по горе. (Neizdannoe, p.19)

— and derives from the title of Merezhkovskii's book on Pushkin — *Vechnye*

⁶ B. Gasparov, op. cit., p.11.

⁷ Irina Paperno, "Pushkin v zhizni cheloveka Serebriannogo veka", *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism*, op. cit., pp. 34-37.

sputniki. The image of Pushkin as a life-companion or a fellow-traveller had a very symbolic meaning for Tsvetaeva, who later developed a personal myth about having her fate in common with Pushkin. (The Russian word "sputnik" is often used metaphorically in the phrase relating to a life-companion — "sputnik zhizni"). It is also significant that Tsvetaeva's encounter with Pushkin takes place on a mountain, and the two poets climb up and walk down together. The act of ascending a mountain forms a very important motif of Tsvetaeva's poetry, and it is especially expressive in her long poem "Poema gory". Therefore, the significance of Tsvetaeva's encounter with a Pushkin depicted as ascending should not be overlooked. It has its analogies with Greek and Christian mythologies, in which Mount Olympus and Mount Sinai respectively play an important role. For instance, Moses ascended Mount Sinai and received from God the two tablets of stone on which the Commandments were written. Taking into account such analogies suggested by Tsvetaeva's text, one can assume that the encounter with Pushkin contained elements of ritual and included some sort of blessing from God, factors which were of great importance for Tsvetaeva's creative biography. (Images in the poem of the mirror and the tambourine evoke a ritualistic atmosphere too.)

Another image pointing to the highly spiritual meaning of the encounter with the poet is Tsvetaeva's reference (quoted above) to blue rivers. In Tsvetaeva's poetic code, the colour blue personifies the most spiritual of realms. In the long poem "Na krasnom kone", the horse-rider, used to symbolise Tsvetaeva's genius, takes the lyric heroine into the blue sphere (the kingdom of pure spirituality, eternity).⁸ It is possible to develop the suggestion that there may be links between the symbolic system of colours of Voloshin and of Tsvetaeva. This question needs further investigation. However, Voloshin's article on Russian icons can shed some light on Tsvetaeva's usage of the colour blue in relation to Pushkin in "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" and in the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" (which will be analysed below). Voloshin provided the following explanation for the meaning of the colour blue in art:

У красок есть свой определенный символизм, покоящийся

⁸ The functional and semantic significance of the colour blue has been studied by L. V. Zubova: L. V. Zubova, *Poezija Mariny Tsvetaevoy. Lingvisticheskiy aspekt*, Leningrad, 1989, pp.131-34.

на вполне реальных основах. Возьмем три основных тона: желтый, красный и синий. Из них образуется для нас все видимое: красный соответствует цвету земли, синий — воздуха, желтый — солнечному свету. Переведем это в символы. Красный будет обозначать глину, из которой создано тело человека — плоть, кровь, страсть. Синий — воздух и дух, мысль, бесконечность, неведомое. Желтый — солнце, свет, волю, самосознание, царственность. [...] Лиловый и синий появляются всюду в те эпохи, когда преобладает религиозное и мистическое чувство. [...]

Невольно вспоминаются указания Гладстона, что греки времен Гомера не знали синего цвета и не имели в языке слов для его обозначения. [...] Синяя же краска, давно известная египтянам и употреблявшаяся греками при раскраске погребальных статуй, не проникала в живопись.⁹

Neither should one forget that Tsvetaeva's father founded the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, and apart from her access to a huge home library on art history, Marina and her sister occasionally accompanied their father on his trips in search of items to purchase for the museum (this was described in Tsvetaeva's story "Sharlottenburg"). Tsvetaeva certainly was aware of the symbolism of colours used in art, and was interested in art history all her life. Her analysis of the paintings of Goncharova proves this point, as does the fact that while Tsvetaeva lived in Paris she liked going to the Louvre museum. Moreover, in private she criticised her father's taste.¹⁰ It seems that she was aware of the Greek tradition mentioned by Voloshin (quoted above). Certainly in her own poetry she used blue colours for images

⁹ Maksimilian Voloshin, "Chemu uchat ikony?", in his *Liki tvorchestva*, op. cit., pp. 292-93.

¹⁰ This fact was mentioned to V. Lossky by N. Khardzhiev. According to him, Tsvetaeva was very interested in a book on Flemish art: "Она очень ценила книгу Карпель фон Мандера, историка 16-17 века, о фламандских художниках, которая вышла в 40-м году. А об Иване Владимировиче Цветаеве она говорила, что он был совершенно лишен вкуса." — Véronique Lossky, *Marina Tsvetaeva v zhizni. Neizdannyye vospominaniya sovremennikov*, Tenaflly, 1989, p.241.

related to highly spiritual notions and to death (seeing in the latter the liberation of the spirit from the body). The system of colours applied by Tsvetaeva to Pushkin's image corresponds to the description given by Voloshin (quoted above). The image of blue rivers is present, and in the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" Tsvetaeva characterizes Pushkin's forehead as being more blue than olives. Pushkin was therefore perceived by Tsvetaeva as the ideal poet, one chosen by God and marked by this blue. As for Pushkin's brown skin, mentioned several times in Tsvetaeva's poem, in Russian the word "smuglyi" is semantically related to the group of words with the meaning "dark" as well as "heat" and "fire", and it corresponds to the English stem "smok". In Tsvetaeva's poetic code, it personifies fire, passion and is also related to the motif of smoke. In Tsvetaeva's opinion, the poet's life has a parallel with the mythological Phoenix. (This point is discussed in chapters 1 and 5.)

The theme of the poet's love and passion was reinforced by Tsvetaeva even more explicitly in her next poem about Pushkin — "Schastie ili grust'..." (1916). Although the device exploited in the poem is unusual, it may be called a suggested antithesis. In the poem Tsvetaeva created a portrait of Pushkin's wife using characteristics which in Tsvetaeva's poetic code denote the most negative and philistine categories; these are juxtaposed to the positive image of the poet. Goncharova represents the complete opposite of Pushkin: whatever categories are applied to her image cannot possibly be used in relation to Pushkin. Thus, in contrast to the passionate image of Pushkin (which was reinforced in the culture of Symbolism and post-Symbolism), Goncharova is portrayed in the poem as an apathetic, mediocre person who cared only for her second husband Lanskoi (who was of the same mould, in Tsvetaeva's view):

Счастье или грусть —
Ничего не знать наизусть,
В пышной тальме катать бобровой,
Сердце Пушкина теребить в руках,
И прослыть в веках —
Длиннобровой,
Ни к кому не суровой —
Гончаровой.

Сон или смертный грех —
Быть как шелк, как пух, как мех,

И, не слыша стиха литого,
Процветать себе без морщин на лбу.
Если грустно — кусать губу
И потом, в гробу,
Вспоминать — Ланского. (S84, 1, p.93)

Tsvetaeva's portrait of Goncharova is biased, and most probably derives from the article written by Briusov in 1903 "Iz zhizni Pushkina".¹¹ Briusov was particularly anxious to depict Pushkin as a passionate rebel and real blackamoor who broke all the philistine categories of socially acceptable behaviour and standards of morality. However, recent biographical studies on Pushkin contradict the myth about Pushkin's wife which was promoted by the Symbolists and post-Symbolists. Today, scholars have enough evidence to support a different view showing Goncharova as a caring wife and devout Christian.¹²

Meanwhile, in terms of Tsvetaeva's own mythology, Goncharova's image in the poem is already associated with an Undine-like appearance. Such images as long eyebrows, fur and an apathetic look do, in Tsvetaeva's poetic code, indicate a fatal evil attraction, a sort of witchcraft. Thus, in a poem from the cycle "Marina", Marina Mnishchik's portrait is also reduced to an ideogram, although this time it is not eyebrows but eyelashes which personify evil beauty. (It is interesting to point out that when Tsvetaeva was concerned with expressing spirituality, she chose to use eyes as an ideogram.) Thus in this cycle Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model contains an element of sacrifice: one has to pay with one's life for the privilege of enjoying beauty:

— Чем заплачу за щедроты:
Темен, негромок, непризнан...
Из-под ресничного взлету
Что-то ответило: — Жизнью! (S84, p.156)

In the poem about Goncharova (quoted above) the same aspect of fatal attraction is conveyed in the line "Сердце Пушкина теребить в руках". The mythopoetical model presented in both of the poems derives from Pushkin's

¹¹ Valerii Briusov, "Iz zhizni Pushkina", *Novyi put'*, 1903, 6. It was included in Briusov's book *Moi Pushkin*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1929, pp.9-24.

¹² M. A. Dement'ev, I. M. Obodovskaia, *N. N. Pushkina*, Moscow, 1985.

portrayal of Cleopatra in "Egipetskie nochi": she would ask her admirers to pay for a night with her with their lives. Pushkin's image was very popular among the Russian Symbolists, as was particularly highlighted in Briusov's writings.¹³

In another of Tsvetaeva's poems related to Pushkin and Goncharova – "Punsh i polnoch'. Punsh i – Pushkin..." (1920) – Goncharova is portrayed as Psyche. However, she appears in the poem as an illusion, the poet's hallucination. The very imagery of the poem focused on the mirror, while the use of smoke and punch suggests the theme of oblivion and daydreaming. It is difficult to agree with Saakiant's analysis of this poem, which argues that it reveals Tsvetaeva's condemnation of Goncharova:

Это – о Пушкине и его Психее – не любимой
Цветаевой Наталье Николаевне. Авторское отношение к
ней, с проблесками иронии ("платья бального пустая пена")
выражено в звуковой игре: подборе слов, почти в каждом
из которых наличествует звук "п".¹⁴

Rather, it is more a poem about a poet and his Muse than a reference to any particular biographical context. The mythopoetical tone of the poem is indicated by the repetitive usage of elements borrowed from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Russian poetry. Thus, such images as "палевый халат", "пунш", pipe and smoke are borrowed from the poetic tradition of what nowadays is called Pushkin's epoch. Biographical details are greatly distorted for the sake of mythopoetry.

According to the etiquette of Pushkin's times it was necessary for a married lady attending a ball to be accompanied by her husband. By contrast, in Tsvetaeva's poem, Goncharova leaves for the ball with an old lady (supposedly her aunt Zagriazhskaya, who sometimes accompanied Goncharova to the theatre). Pushkin himself did occasionally complain about his duty to attend numerous balls with his wife. In one of his letters to Nashchokin (in 1832) he wrote:

Нет у меня досуга, вольной холостой жизни, необходимой

¹³ The myth of Cleopatra in the culture of Russian Modernism is discussed in I. Paperno's article: *op.cit.*, pp.36-39.

¹⁴ A. A. Saakiant, *Marina Tsvetaeva: Stranitsy zhizni i tvorchestva. (1910 – 1922)*, Moscow, 1986, p.224.

для писателя. Кружусь в свете, жена моя в большой моде
— все это требует денег, деньги достаются мне через
труды, а труды требуют уединения.¹⁵

However, Tsvetaeva's focus on the opposition of passion and indifference (expressed in the lines "Не прожег ли ей перчатку / Пылкий поцелуй арапа") is based on reality. There was already a tendency among Pushkin's contemporaries to perceive Goncharova as the personification of melancholy as well as of poetic beauty. She was characterised most expressively by D.F.Fikel'mon:

1832. 21 ноября. Самой красивой вчера была, однако ж,
Пушкина, которую мы прозвали поэтической, как из-за ее
мужа, так и из-за ее небесной и несравненной красоты. Это
— образ, перед которым можно оставаться часами, как
перед совершеннейшим созданием творца. ("Из дневника")¹⁶

In this respect Tsvetaeva's poem represents the same attitude, although it is linked to the motif of Dionysian enjoyment of life and oblivion (upon which Tsvetaeva focused her attention again in relation to Pushkin's poetry in 1931, in her essay "Nezdeshnii vecher").

To a great extent the theme of escapism from life into art, used by Tsvetaeva in "Punsh i polnoch'. Punsh i — Pushkin...", was suggested by Pushkin's own poetry. Images such as "pipe", "punch", "insomnia" appear in Pushkin's poetry of the 1810s and 1820s in relation to dreaming, escapism and the tragic vision of his own life. In the poem "Sleza" (written in 1815) the imagery described above signals an elegiac mood:

Вчера за чашей пуншевою
С гусаром я сидел
И молча с мрачною душою
На дальний путь глядел. (Pushkin, 1, p.99)

Pushkin's later poetry is permeated with the elegiacally conveyed theme of feast and celebration, which has a very specific connection with the anniversary of the Lycée in Tsarskoe Selo and with Pushkin's

¹⁵ *Zhizn' Pushkina rasskazannaia im samim i ego sovremennikami. V dvukh tomakh*, ed. V.V.Kunin, volume 2, Moscow, 1987, p.457.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

schoolfriends. One has especially to bear in mind such poems as "Pirulushchie studenty", "Vospominanie", "V krugu semel, v pirakh schastlivykh...", and "Chem chashche prazduet Litsei...". However, only in one poem representing this theme is the lyric hero drinking alone. It is "19 oktiabria", written in 1825 when Pushkin was in exile. This poem contains a meditation on the fate of his friends and a vision of the poet's own death in the near future.

Nevertheless, Tsvetaeva's poem has the strong stamp of her own self-portrait supposedly applied to Pushkin. In this respect her usage of the mirror image is highly suggestive. As mentioned earlier, Tsvetaeva based her own poetical model around the idea of mirroring and reflecting. Moreover it is Tsvetaeva, not Pushkin, who appeared in her poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" examining the reflection in the mirror ("Сердце свое я свое отражение / В зеркале... — Как я люблю..."). Reflection in mirror or water plays a significant role in some other poems of Tsvetaeva. Thus, in poem 15 from the cycle "Podruga" (Neizdannoe, p. 75), Tsvetaeva's lyric heroine is trying to discern the future by looking in a mirror (a common fortune-telling procedure in Russian folklore):

Хочу у зеркала, где муть
И сон туманящий,
Я выпытать — куда вам путь,
И где — пристанище. (Neizdannoe, p.75)

Meanwhile, in poem 9 from the cycle "Stikhi k Akhmatovoi", the reflection in the brook has an omnipotent aspect:

Ты, зеленоводный лесной ручей,
Расскажи, как сегодня ночью
Я взглянула в тебя — и чей
Лик узрела в тебе воочью. (Tsvetaeva 1990, p.121)

One should also take into account the moment when Tsvetaeva wrote her poem "Punsh i polnoch'. Punsh i — Pushkin...". It is her first poem after the death of her younger daughter Irina in February, when Alla was very ill too. Events preceding the poem brought Tsvetaeva to the despair expressed in her letter to Zviagintseva and Erofeev. It is interesting that in this letter Tsvetaeva defined art and writing as pleasure and luxury: "[...] единственная для меня роскошь — ремесло, то, для чего я родилась" (S88. 2, p.469). All the romantic notions in Tsvetaeva's poetry written after the October

revolution signify this attitude. The motif of escapism seems to be particularly forceful when taken in conjunction with the poems of Tsvetaeva's book *Lebedinyi stan*, written at the same time as her romantic plays. Pushkin's image was presented against the background of Tsvetaeva's political writings of this period (*Lebedinyi stan*, "Iz dnevnika", "Smert' Stakhovicha", "Zemnye primety", "Moi sluzhby", etc.); it personifies, therefore, the 'Golden Age' of Russian poetry (described in Tsvetaeva's poem as a period of "пушкинских милых времен") and the idea of the soul and poetry possessing immortality regardless of the political regime imposed on the poet.

Another interesting feature of Tsvetaeva's poem "Punsh i polnoch'." "Punsh i — Pushkin..." is the usage of a semiotically important element: the inner portrait of the real Goncharova is revealed by mentioning the dance in which she will take part — the polonaise. This ideogram indicates once again (as in the poem "Shchastie ili grust'...") the very conventional character of Goncharova who, in Tsvetaeva's view, matched the slowness of the formal processional dance. The same type of ideogram appeared earlier in the poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym", in which Pushkin and Byron rhyme in Tsvetaeva's poetic code with the more adventurous and passionate bolero. Meanwhile, it is interesting to point out that Tsvetaeva identified her own character with the mazurka (in the poem "Uedesh' v dal'nie kraia..." written in 1918):

Кто бросил розы на снегу?
Ах, это шкурка мандарина...
И крутится в твоём мозгу:
Мазурка — море — смерть — Марина... (S88, 1, p.93)

The mazurka, a lively dance, is close to the bolero, and in Tsvetaeva's poetic code is contrasted to the polonaise.

Tsvetaeva's biased attitude towards Goncharova flew in the face of some facts. In the poem "Shchastie ili grust'..." Tsvetaeva claimed that Goncharova would remember Lanskoi in her posthumous dreams. Yet Goncharova did not erase Pushkin's name from her memory, and she kept Pushkin's archive and passed it to the poet's eldest son Aleksandr. Thanks to Goncharova's care of the archive, the Annenkov brothers were able to edit

the complete collection of Pushkin's works and prepare Pushkin's biography for publication.¹⁷ It is also known that Goncharova and her son Aleksandr devoted their Saturdays to the memory of Pushkin. Her son learnt from her a great deal about his famous father.¹⁸ One can find numerous facts to contrast with Tsvetaeva's version of Pushkin's life. It is clear that Tsvetaeva's distortion of the factual background of Pushkin's life was quite deliberate: she was preoccupied with a mythopoetical model based on the poet's life, not with real events. As mentioned earlier (in the introduction and chapter 1), Tsvetaeva's poetics belongs to a secondary system, and here is further proof that Tsvetaeva focused her attention on Pushkin's texts and the legends about him. It is a definite variation on Pushkinian themes. In the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" (1929) Tsvetaeva produced a clear statement justifying her approach to Pushkin:

Влияние всего Пушкина целиком? О, да. Но каким же оно может быть, кроме освободительного? Приказ Пушкина 1829 года нам, людям 1929 года, только контр-пушкиннианский. Лучший пример „Темы и Варьяция“ Пастернака, дань любви к Пушкину и полной свободы от него. Исполнение пушкинского желания. (S88, 2, p.97)

Tsvetaeva's words reveal the character of her poetic outlook, indicating that her poetic method was neo-Baroque. Avant-garde art and Baroque cultural tradition share a belief in the possibility of imitation and the reproduction of poetic systems and *œuvres*. They have an orientation not towards originality but rather towards the imitation of what has been produced before. Tsvetaeva formulated this principle in the same essay:

Что такое человеческое творчество? Ответный удар, больше ничего. Вещь в меня ударяет, а я отвечаю, отдаю. Либо вещь меня спрашивает, а я отвечаю. [...] Всегда диалог, поединок, схватка, борьба, взаимодействие. Вещь задает загадку. Ну — синее, ну — чистое, ну — соленое, — в чем тайна? Под кистью — ответ. Ответ или

¹⁷ P. V. Annenkov, *Sochineniia Pushkina. I. Materialy dlia biografii Aleksandra Sergeevicha Pushkina*, St. Petersburg, 1855; and P. Annenkov, *A. S. Pushkin v Aleksandrovskaia epokhu, 1799-1826*, St. Petersburg, 1874.

¹⁸ *Zhizn' Pushkina*, op. cit., p.464.

ПОИСКИ ОТВЕТА, ТРЕТЬЕ, НОВОЕ, ВОЗНИКШЕЕ ИЗ МОРЕЯ И Я.
Отраженный удар, а не вещь. (ibid., p.81)

The same principle was applied by Tsvetaeva to Pushkin's life and personality. Even her image of Pushkin in the mirror (in the poem discussed above) arouses the feeling of a mystery to be solved. This is particularly so if one recalls the mirrors used in Russian culture for fortune-telling and prediction.

However, Tsvetaeva's approach to Pushkin is by no means unique. It had already been promoted by Briusov, who as early as 1901 formulated the main task confronting his contemporaries: the divination of Pushkin and the spirit of his works.¹⁹ In the article "Iz zhizni Pushkina" (see reference 11) written in 1903, Briusov created a very unorthodox image of Pushkin, heavily emphasising the negative features of Pushkin's personality. Briusov set out to expose Pushkin's demeanour, eccentricity, ugly features, womanizing, pre-marriage passion for debauch and the poet's early delusion about being a politically significant figure. It was Briusov who created a myth about Goncharova too. While portraying Pushkin as arrogant and unfit for polite society, Briusov described Goncharova as shallow, cold, capricious, uncultured and slovenly. This is felt throughout his book *Moi Pushkin* published in 1929, which was a compilation of his early articles on Pushkin (including works on Pushkin written before 1911). To a great extent Briusov tried to make Pushkin into a Decadent at odds with society. Briusov strongly defended Pushkin's right to be free from the moral and æsthetic limitations of his time, and called for the publication of "Gavriliada". It seems it was no coincidence that Tsvetaeva's views on both art and Pushkin echoed Briusov's outlook. Her mythopoetical model of Pushkin's life was undoubtedly influenced by Briusov's perception of it, and her cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" is the best illustration of this point.

Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin's life and personality — as with Briusov — seems to be fully consistent with the Symbolist-Decadent model of the poet (this will be discussed below in conjunction with the specific analysis of the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu"). One can distinguish a trend in Pushkin studies started by Annenkov which focused on how the life of a

¹⁹ V. Briusov, "Pushkin i Baratynskii", in *Russkii Arkhiv*, 1901, 1.

poet moulds his artistic personality. Annenkov's book *Materialy dlia biografii Aleksandra Sergeevicha Pushkina* had a profound impact on Briusov.²⁰ Tsvetaeva knew this book very well, and she even brought it with her to Moscow in 1939. It is not clear why this fact has been overlooked by scholars, who have greatly emphasised Tsvetaeva's dependence on Shchegolev's and Veresaev's books while working on her essays on Pushkin.²¹ Saakiant's also sees an incongruity between Tsvetaeva's interest in biographies and her claim that one should not investigate the biographical subtext at all. Saakiant's gives a very interesting quotation from Tsvetaeva's draft version of her essay on Mandel'shtam:

Не знаю, нужны ли вообще бытовые подстрочки к стихам: кто — когда — с кем — где — при каких обстоятельствах итд. — жил. Стихи быт перемололи и отбросили [...] Нужно ли нам знать, что Пушкину, чтобы написать Русалку, пришлось соблазнить — затем бросить — крепостную девушку? Не дана ли вся тоска ее — в Русалке? Все раскаянье Пушкина — в князе? Воссоздавать реальную атмосферу поэзии — [...] уничтожать всю предварительную работу по созданию.

Сколько Пушкину пришлось забыть и отбросить, от сколького очистить, чтобы дать Русалку, а его биограф — опять с дрызгами и грязью. К чему? Приблизить к нам

²⁰ This aspect of Briusov's life is analysed in an article by J. Grossman: Joan Delaney Grossman, "Moi Pushkin: Briusov's Search for the Real Aleksandr Sergeevich", *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism*, op.cit., pp.73-87.

²¹ Anna Saakiant's, in her assessment of Tsvetaeva's archive in Moscow, provides a list of books which Tsvetaeva possessed on her return to Moscow. This list includes two books about Pushkin by P.E. Shchegolev and P.V. Annenkov's *Materialy dlia biografii A.S. Pushkina*; see A. Saakiant's, "Vstrecha s knigoi dlia menia radost'. M.I. Tsvetaeva", in *Oni pitali molu muzu. Knigi v zhizni i tvorchestve pisatelei*, Moscow, 1986, p.217. Also in this article Saakiant's claims that Tsvetaeva possessed and used for her work on Pushkin P.E. Shchegolev's book *Duel' i smert' Pushkina* (Petersburg, 1917), as well as V.V. Veresaev's *Pushkin v zhizni* (Saakiant's is not sure whether it is the edition of 1926 or of 1928). — Ibid., p.213.

живого Пушкина? Да разве он, биограф, не знает, что поэт
— в стихах живой! ²²

This image of Pushkin alive (expressed, in Tsvetaeva's view, in Pushkin's poetry) is strongly felt in Tsvetaeva's cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu".

The cycle was written by Tsvetaeva in 1931. In her letter to Tesková Tsvetaeva characterised it thus:

Стихи к Пушкину [...] совершенно не представляю себе, чтобы кто-нибудь осмелился читать, кроме меня. Страшно-резкие, страшно-вольные, ничего общего с канонизированным Пушкиным не имеющие, и всё имеющие — обратное канону. Опасные стихи [...] Они внутренне — революционны

[...] внутренне — мятежные, с вызовом каждой строки [...] они мой, поэта, единоличный вызов — лицемерам тогда и теперь [...] Написаны они в Медоне в 1931 г., летом — я как раз тогда читала Щеголева: "Дуэль и смерть Пушкина" и задыхалась от негодования. (PAT, pp.149-50)

Although Tsvetaeva claimed that Shchegolev's book was the main source of inspiration for her cycle, Saakiantz notes that it is factually dependent on Veresaev's *Pushkin v zhizni* (S88, 1, p.652). According to Tsvetaeva's letter to Bunin's wife Vera Muromtseva (4 May 1928), she had read the book in 1928 (Marina Tsvetaeva, *Neizdannye pis'ma*, Paris, 1972, p.399).

It is worth mentioning Veresaev's and Shchegolev's link with Symbolist and post-Symbolist culture in order to understand their intention to project Pushkin's image in accordance with the established taste and views of contemporary literature. Their vision of Pushkin was not completely independent and objective, and they may have had some appeal for Tsvetaeva precisely because of their cultural orientation towards Symbolism. (This aspect has so far been totally ignored by Tsvetaeva scholars.) Veresaev (V.V. Smidovich, 1867-1945) was very much involved in Symbolist discussions, and in common with his contemporaries he turned to antiquity. He was a translator of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which gives advice for living a life of honest work: Hesiod inveighs in turn against dishonesty and idleness by

²² Ibid., pp. 213-14.

using myths (including the Prometheus myth and the so-called Five World Ages myth). The didactic tendency of Hesiod's poem had an impact on the work on Pushkin by Veresaev, who based it on the collection of documents describing the poet's life compiled by N.O. Lerner in 1903 and titled (in Hesiod's style) *Trudy i dni Pushkina*. (Incidentally, all later editions of Lerner's work contain better biographical data on Pushkin. It seems that the factual aspect was not Veresaev's priority.) Veresaev identified Pushkin's epoch with Hellenism, seeing some Homeric features in Pushkin's outlook and personality. However, in 1929 Veresaev reconsidered his attitudes, and in the book *V dvukh planakh*²³ he denied the existence of harmony between Pushkin's art and life and claimed that the artistic and human aspects of the poet's life were separate. Veresaev's book *Pushkin v zhizni* created, in his view, an image of the living Pushkin bereft of references to his poetry. This attitude was severely condemned by Khodasevich who stamped Veresaev's approach as "biographical formalism".²⁴

It has not been suggested so far by Tsvetaeva scholars that her polemical approach in the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" was much triggered by the discussion started by Khodasevich. Khodasevich argued against the attempts by all leading authorities on Pushkin to separate the poet's art from his life (and vice versa). In Khodasevich's view, Pushkin's creativity and everyday life were entwined in a harmonious way. Moreover, he claimed that Pushkin's personality was as perfect as his work:

Пушкин [...] прекрасен не только в творчестве, но и во всей полноте своей личности, даже и в недостатках [...] мы до сих пор не примирились со смертью Пушкина: читая его вечно живые слова, все еще упрямо хотим видеть живым его самого.²⁵

Tsvetaeva's words in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" (1929) echo to some extent Khodasevich's statement quoted above; she claimed that Pushkin's marriage was just as outstanding as his life and death ("[...] так же

²³ V. Veresaev, *V dvukh planakh*, Moscow, 1929.

²⁴ V. Khodasevich, "Pushkin v zhizni (Po povodu knigi V. V. Veresaeva)", in *Poslednie novosti*, Paris, 13 January 1927.

²⁵ Id., "V sporakh o Pushkine", *Sovremennye zapiski*, 37, Paris, 1928, p.275.

гениальна, как его жизнь и его смерть" — S88, 2, p.58).

However, the main difference between the two approaches lies in the fact that Khodasevich perceived Pushkin's life in the light of Christian concepts of the divine and human nature of God, while Tsvetaeva's vision of the poet was largely based on a paganism rooted in the ideas of Nietzsche. Although Tsvetaeva aimed her polemic at many scholars and critics both inside and outside Russia, her approach was not exactly unique or original if one takes into account only the philosophical or ideological aspect of the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu". Throughout the whole cycle one can feel that Tsvetaeva was mainly influenced by Gogol', Dostoevskii and Merezhkovskii.

Thus, in one of the seven stanzas which Tsvetaeva added to the first poem of the cycle in 1935 (the main body of the cycle was published in *Sovremennye zapiski*, 63, Paris, 1937),²⁶ there is a reference to Dostoevskii's 1880 speech about Pushkin.²⁷ In this speech Dostoevskii talked about the all-embracing nature of Pushkin's poetry and the fact that Tat'iana personified the true Slav soul (in Dostoevskii's view, Tat'iana is the main character in Pushkin's verse novel *Evgenii Onegin*):

Сей, глядевший во все страны —
В роля собственной Татьяны? (S88, 1, p.274)

This allusion is again felt in the following stanza:

К пушкинскому юбилею
Тоже речь произнесем:
Всех румяней и смуглее
До сих пор на свете всем[...] (ibid.)

The third line represents a paraphrase from Pushkin's tale "Skazka o mertvoi

²⁶ Only two Tsvetaeva specialists regard as definitive the version of poem 1 of the cycle published in *Sovremennye zapiski*. In all the editions of Tsvetaeva's poetry, except the latest one edited by Korkina (Tsvetaeva 1990), the poem "Bich zhandarmov, bog studentov..." includes more stanzas than the original version. On this point see Korkina's commentaries (Tsvetaeva 1990, p.744) and Shveitser's discussion of this issue in: Viktoriia Shveitser, *Byt i bytie Mariny Tsvetaevoi*, Paris, 1988, pp.524-25.

²⁷ F.M. Dostoevskii, "Pushkin. Ocherk", in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, 10, Moscow, 1958.

tsarevne i semi bogatyriakh": instead of "belee" Tsvetaeva inserted "smuglee". As discussed above (in the analysis of "Vstrecha s Pushkinym"), dark skin was an essential element of Tsvetaeva's ideogram of the poet (symbolising rebelliousness and displacement).

The most interesting feature of poem 1 of Tsvetaeva's cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" is the presence of what is called in Russian *skaz* (this is frequent in Russian prose of the 1920s but also in Leskov's writings, for example). In poetry this device (free indirect narrative) was not exploited as widely as in the ornamental prose of the 1920s and 1930s.²⁸ Khodasevich admired its usage in Tsvetaeva's poem, although he observed that remarks (expressing different perceptions of the poet) had prevailed over the very image of Pushkin:

[...] быть может, слишком много полемики с почитателями Пушкина и слишком мало сказано о самом Пушкине, хотя самый "сказ" превосходен.²⁹

Khodasevich's remark reflects his interest in Pushkin's poetic personality. In Khodasevich's view, Pushkin's life was that of a professional poet and its tragic course was determined by Pushkin's work:

Решительный перелом произведен Пушкиным, который первым явился последовательным индивидуалистом в русской литературе, как и первым романтиком. Он первый связал неразрывно трагедию своей человеческой личности с

²⁸ I refer to the term "free indirect narrative" featured in the dictionary compiled by Dupriez: "Dropping the main verb of expression ('he/she said', for example) produces *free indirect* narrative, which repeats an utterance almost *verbatim*, retaining even exclamations and intonation, but modifying two markers: the pronouns and tenses. [...] Free indirect style (free, that is, from the introductory syntagm) possesses a flexibility that almost confuses it with the direct discourse, but its form reveals the presence of a narrator 'behind' the character. In the interior monologue, or in dialogue, the narrator disappears." — Bernard Dupriez, *A Dictionary Of Literary Devices*, Toronto, 1991, p.296.

²⁹ V. Khodasevich, "Knigi i liudi", *Vozrozhdenie*, Paris, №4078, 15 May 1937, p.9.

личностью художника, поставив свою судьбу в зависимость от поэтических переживаний. Это его привело к своеобразной биографии, [...] в которой жизнь органически слита с творчеством. [...] Он первый прожил жизнь, как поэт — и только, как поэт, и за то погиб.³⁰

Tsvetaeva's argument against biographical data (discussed above) was based on the same conviction that Pushkin's life was determined by his writings. Moreover, Tsvetaeva extracted the most revolutionary aspects of his life and work in order to create her model of the poet. In the cycle, she illustrated her vision of Pushkin's life as a poet and extended it to herself. In the stanzas which were added to the cycle in 1935 Tsvetaeva compared Pushkin to a gun:

То-то к пушкинским избушкам
Лепитесь, что сами — хлам!
Как из душа! Как из пушки —
Пушкиным — по соловьям

Слова, соколам полета!
— Пушкин — в роли пулемета! (S88, 1, p. 274)

In writing the stanza quoted above, Tsvetaeva most probably had in mind the enemies of Symbolism and post-Symbolism, and to a large extent the mentality of official Soviet literature which made a Socialist Realist out of Pushkin by emphasising the anti-bourgeois elements in his poetry. Even in Shchegolev's book *Duel' i smert' Pushkina* Tsvetaeva may have noticed a tendency to interpret Pushkin's life in socio-political terms. Shchegolev was an avowed Marxist and at the beginning of the century formulated a principle which was developed in all his works on Russian literature. This principle was based on the belief that the writer's biography is the most essential evidence of the socio-political climate of his epoch.³¹ Shchegolev studied Russian literature in relation to the liberal movement in Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, being interested in the links of Pushkin and Griboedov with the Decembrists. In respect to Pushkin's biography, Shchegolev focused on the intention of Tsar Nicholas the First to

³⁰ Id., "Pamiati Gogolia", *Izbrannaja proza*, New York, 1982, pp.72-73.

³¹ See, for example, P. Shchegolev's review of the bibliographical dictionary edited by S. A. Vengerov — *Mir Bozhii*, St Petersburg, 1904, 10, pp.1022-24.

suppress the revolutionary spirit of Pushkin's poetry (which, in the Tsar's opinion, influenced the Decembrist movement).³²

Poem 5 of the cycle illustrates Shchegolev's point very well. Its title "Poet i tsar/" formulates the confrontation between poet and censor in such a way that it can be perceived as a myth or, in terms of Baroque culture, a rhetorical figure. It is especially felt in the following stanzas:

Столь величавый
В золоте барм.
— Пушкинской славы
Жалкий жандарм. [...]

Зорче взглядыся!
Не забывай:
Певцоубийца
Царь Николай
Первый. (S88, 1, p. 280)

The enjambment in the last stanza semantically emphasises the significance of the word 'first', bringing to life the possibility of the second meaning: Nicholas the First is the first censor of Russian poetry. Tsvetaeva's neologism "pevtsoublitsa" denotes her vision of what was called by Pushkin "chern/" (this point in relation to her essay "Moi Pushkin" is discussed in chapter 5). In Tsvetaeva's cycle the Tsar (Nicholas the First) stands out as a symbol of the philistine attitude to art. In this respect, the third poem of the cycle is linked to the last (six and seventh) poems, in which Pushkin is identified with his own work:

[...]
Не обрекать на последний мрак,
Полную глухонѣмость —
Телу, обкарнанного и так
Ножницами — в поэмах. (S88, 1, p. 281)

³² Besides Schegolev's book on Pushkin's duel, mentioned above, such a view was expressed in the following works: P.E. Shchegolev, "Imperator Nikolai I i Pushkin v 1826 godu.", in *Russkaja mysl'*, St Petersburg, 1910, 6; Id., "Pushkin v politicheskom protsesse 1826-1828 gg.", *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki*, St Petersburg, 1909, XI, pp. 1-51.

In the last (seventh) poem the situation taken from Pushkin's life receives the status of a myth which can be repeatedly experienced. This is particularly evident in the following lines:

[...]

Не поручать палачам похорон
Жертв, цензорам — погребенья
Пушкинных. [...] (Ibid.)

The enjambment in these stanzas is rather suggestive, as is the pluralisation of the name Pushkin. Tsvetaeva's poem therefore creates an image of those Russian poets who have a tragic fate in common with Pushkin. (In poems 2 and 3 Tsvetaeva openly proclaims her kinship with Pushkin.) The mythological status of the situation is reinforced by Tsvetaeva's use of enjambment, which is used in her poetry as the condition for the coexistence of different spatial dimensions (most often for inserting a viewpoint from the future into a situation which has taken place in the past).³³

The situation from Pushkin's life which Tsvetaeva exposed in this cycle can be easily translated into her own life. The accusations which Tsvetaeva levelled in "Stikhi k Pushkinu" against the philistine approach to literature were addressed both to the official guards of Soviet literature who suppressed freedom of speech and to the Parisian critics who were intolerant of Tsvetaeva's poetic experiments and of her political inclinations. Tsvetaeva's article "O novoi russkoi detskoi knige" (S88, 2, pp.352-360) sheds light on the circumstances of her life in 1931 (the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" was written in the summer of 1931). The article was a response to the increasingly aggressive attacks of RAPP on Soviet writers who did not toe the party line on literature imposed by the official watchdogs. As Irma Kudrova has pointed out, in February 1931 Tsvetaeva read an article in *Poslednie novosti* (reprinted from *Pravda*) about the 9 February all-Union conference on Soviet literature for children. This conference was an attempt to expose the "enemies of the people" among the authors writing for

³³ This aspect of Tsvetaeva's enjambment has been brilliantly analysed by L. Losev: L. Losev, "Znachenie perenosov u Tsvetaevoy", *Marina Tsvetaeva: Actes du 1er colloque international (Lausanne, 30.VI- 3.VII 1982)*, ed. Robin Kemball, *Slavica Helvetica*, Volume 26, Bern, 1991, pp.272-83.

children. The "class enemy" was labelled "chukovshchina" and pre-school literature as the most stagnating.³⁴ Tsvetaeva's article openly argued against the official Soviet point of view that Soviet books for pre-school age children are the best in the world. (S88, 2, p.356). Tsvetaeva was overwhelmed by the professionalism and imagination of such writers as Polonskaia, Marshak and Shvarts. In spite of Tsvetaeva's polemical tone, her article was received with suspicion and rejected by *Poslednie novosti*. This was also due to her criticism of émigré literature for children which, in Tsvetaeva's view, was highly pretentious and rather second-rate by comparison with the Soviet talents.³⁵ However, later her article appeared in a left periodical *Volia Rossii*³⁶, although the polemical tone was lost due to its late appearance.

Meanwhile, Tsvetaeva's admiration for Malakovskii, Pasternak and Marshak among others, and the involvement of her husband and daughter with the pro-Soviet organisation "Soiuz vozvrashcheniia", made Tsvetaeva unpopular with many émigrés in Paris. Nevertheless, Tsvetaeva herself did not want to return to Russia. Her article "Poet i vremia" (also written in 1931) demonstrates her awareness of political intervention in art and

³⁴ Irma Kudrova discussed this fact in the context of other political developments in literature: official watchdogs (mostly represented by RAPP) exposed, for example, a harmful influence among playwrights by stamping it "bulgakovshchina", and Tomashevskii's textbook on literary theory was called "a poisonous product".— Irma Kudrova, *Versty, dall.... Marina Tsvetaeva: 1922-1939*, Moscow, 1991, pp.232-35.

³⁵ In her letter to Salomeia Andronnikova-Gal'pern of 3 March 1931, Tsvetaeva complained: "Высылаю Вам Новую газету — увы, без своей статьи, и очевидно без своего сотрудничества впредь. Как поэта мне предпочли — Ладинского, как „статиста“ (от „статья“) — всех. Статья была самая невинная — О новой русской детской книге. Ни разу слово „советская“, и равняла я современную по *своему* детству, т.е. противопоставляла эпоху эпохе. Политики — никакой. Но имела неосторожность упомянуть и „нашу“ (эмигрантскую) детскую литературу, привести несколько перлов [...]". (S88, 2, p.596)

³⁶ Marina Tsvetaeva, "O novoi russkoi detskoj knige", *Volia Rossii*, Paris, 1931, 5-6. It also was published in S88, 2, pp.352-56.

literature in Soviet Russia. Her remarks about Dem'ian Bednyi and Esenin reveal her conviction of the necessity of preserving the cultural heritage; this point once again contains an argument with the Soviet officials who insisted on creating new art, free from the past (S88, 2, pp.360-61). As Kudrova has pointed out, Tsvetaeva's letters of 1931-32 are full of bitter remarks on the tragedy of her situation: "Всё меня выталкивает в Россию, в которую — я ехать не могу. Здесь я не нужна. Там я невозможна"; "Там меня [...] — упекут. Я там не уцелею, ибо негодование — моя страсть, а есть на что ...", "Там мне не только заткнут рот непечтанием моих вещей — там мне и писать их не дадут"; etc.³⁷ In the light of Tsvetaeva's political concerns at the beginning of the 1930s, it becomes clearer why she turned to Pushkin.

As predicted by Khodasevich in 1921,³⁸ the second eclipse of Pushkin had taken place in post-revolutionary Russia, where Pushkin's legacy became institutionalized. Tsvetaeva felt that Pushkin's name and poetry in general had been politicized — both among émigrés and in Soviet Russia. Her poem "Dvukh stanov ne boets..." written in 1935 contains a reference to Pushkin's statement (from the poem "Poetu") about a poet's political independence:

— Ты царь: живи один...
(Но у царей —наложниц
Минуты.) Бог — один.
Тот — в пустоте небес. (S88, 1, p.313)

In Tsvetaeva's view, Pushkin symbolized spirituality itself. Therefore, he was God or the mystical expression of God. This is particularly felt in her essay "Moi Pushkin" (discussed in chapter 5) as well as in the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu". Thus, in the first poem of the cycle Tsvetaeva compares Pushkin's forehead to blue olives:

Что вы делаете, карлы,
Этот — голубей олив —
Самый вольный, самый крайний
Лоб — навеки заклеив

³⁷ Kudrova, op. cit., p.235.

³⁸ Khodasevich's lecture at Pushkin's house in 1921 was included in his book a year later. See V. Khodasevich, "Koleblemyi trenochnik", in his *Stat'i o russkoi poezii*, Petersburg, 1922.

Низостью двуединой

Золота и середины? (S88, 1, pp.274-75)

As discussed above (in relation to Tsvetaeva's poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym"), in Tsvetaeva's poetic code the colour blue had connotations of spirituality. Her vision of the poet was rooted in the culture of Symbolism, in which poetic craft was linked to divine powers. In the article "Poet i vremia" (1931) Tsvetaeva compares the poet to a spiritual émigré trapped in a mundane life:

[...] Всякий поэт по существу эмигрант

[...] Эмигрант Царства Небесного и земного рая природы.

[...] Эмигрант из Бессмертья в время, невозвращенец в свое небо. (S88, 2, pp.363-64)

In poem 4 of the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" Tsvetaeva depicts his life as the struggle of the divine and the mundane:

[...]

Пушкин, с монарших

Рук руководством

Бившийся так же

Нáсмерть — как бьется

(Мощь — прибывала,

Сила — росла)

С мускулом вала

Мускул весла.

Кто-то, на фуру

Несший: „Атлета

Мускулатура,

А не поэта!"

То — серафима

Сила — была:

Несокрушимый

Мускул — крыла. (S88, 1, p.279)

Tsvetaeva's comparison of Pushkin to a Seraph (cited above) suggests the highest expression of divine nature. Thus, in accordance with the *De Hierarchia Celesti*, Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones formed the first hierarchy of angels, surrounding God in perpetual adoration. (Also

traditionally, the Seraph is depicted in art with a head only and one, two or three pairs of wings.)³⁹ Moreover, in Christian tradition angels were not just the messengers of God or agents of divine will, but occasionally they could be the mystic personification of God himself. The Old Testament contains a reference to one such case, in which Jacob is depicted wrestling with an angel.⁴⁰ Jacob's encounter with God himself has been interpreted at many levels in terms of religion and of myth and folklore. In early Christian art Jacob's antagonist was God himself but he later came to be portrayed as an angel. Their fight symbolizes the Christian spiritual struggle on earth.⁴¹ Thus Tsvetaeva uses a fact mentioned in Veresaev's book *Pushkin v zhizni*⁴² and adds a mythological dimension to it.

Another important image which contains two connotations indicating spirituality and freedom is the comparison in poem 1: "голубей олив [...] лоб" (S88, 1, p.274). This comparison represents an almost exact quotation from Pasternak's cycle "Tema s variatsiiami" ("Variatsii", poem 4), although it appears there in a different context. Pasternak recreates the atmosphere of Pushkin's long poem "Tsygany" and compares Aleko's and Zemfira's foreheads to olives:

Задраны к небу оглобли.
Лбы голубее олив.
Табор глядят исподлобья,
В звезды монистра вперив.⁴³

In Pasternak's poem the gypsy appearance of Pushkin's characters is expressed with the help of hyperbolised metaphor. In Tsvetaeva's case this

³⁹ James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, London, 1974, p.165.

⁴⁰ Genesis, 32, 22-32, *The Holy Bible*, Catholic edition, London, 1966, p.28.

⁴¹ James Hall, op. cit., p.165.

⁴² "А. О. Россет перекладывал тело Пушкина в гроб... Мне припоминалось, какого крепкого, мускулистого был он сложения, как развивал он свои силы ходьбою", in V. V. Veresaev, *Pushkin v zhizni*, part IV, Moscow, 1928, p.153. It is interesting to point out that Tsvetaeva herself liked walking, and emphasised it in her letters, essays and poems. One of her long poems is an ode to walking — "Oda peshemu khodu" (S88, 1, pp.281-84).

⁴³ Boris Pasternak, *Stikhotvorenia i poemy*, Leningrad, 1977, p.194.

metaphor is applied to Pushkin. Such "readdressing" of the qualities of the character to the author derives from Tsvetaeva's avant-garde poetics. First of all, Tsvetaeva herself identifies Pushkin with his writings. Secondly, Pasternak's metaphor used by Tsvetaeva in the cycle on Pushkin underlines the mark of an outcast or stranger. Tsvetaeva's model of the poet is based primarily on Pushkin's "foreign-ness": as pointed out above, dark skin became a symbol of freedom in Tsvetaeva's poetic code. Spiritual character is another important connotation of Tsvetaeva's portrait of Pushkin (reduced to the ideogram mentioned above). Bearing in mind Tsvetaeva's vision of Pushkin as Seraph (at the end of poem 1), the occurrence of olives in the poem can be interpreted in terms of Christian mythology, in which the olive branch was perceived as an ancient symbol of peace. Thus, for instance, the sprig of olive brought back to the ark by the dove symbolizes to Christians the making of God's peace with man.⁴⁴ It would not be an exaggeration to conclude, therefore, that Tsvetaeva sought in Pushkin those aspects of an artistic outlook which could enable her to reconcile Russian literature torn apart by politics and various literary divisions.

Another point which arises with respect to Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin is a persistent reference (directly or indirectly) to Pushkin's long poem "Tsygany". In the poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" Tsvetaeva mentions her love for Pushkin's Mariula (an important character from the poem); there is a long discourse on "Tsygany" in her essay "Moi Pushkin" and in the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" we come across a reference to Pasternak's vision of it. The gypsy motif plays an important role in Tsvetaeva's own poetry. Such poems as "Tsyganskaja strast' razluki...", "Milye sputniki, delivshie s nami nochleg...", "Bohème", "Uedesh' v dal'nie kraja...", "Mirovoe nachalos' vo mgle kočev'e...", "Tsyganskaja svad'ba", "Poema kontsa" (chapter 2), and many others on the theme of travelling and displacement provide evidence that Tsvetaeva created an ideal of a group of outcasts based on Pushkin's model in "Tsygany". This is also apparent in poem 6 of the cycle (which will be discussed below). In this respect it is worth mentioning an important link between Tsvetaeva's vision of Pushkin and the article by Viacheslav Ivanov "O 'Tsyganakh' Pushkina". Close examination of Ivanov's article and Tsvetaeva's cycle on Pushkin (as well as the part of her essay "Moi Pushkin") helps to establish the influence of Ivanov's perception of Pushkin's

† ⁴⁴ James Hall, op. cit., p.228.

poem on Tsvetaeva's approach. It is surprising that so far this link has been overlooked by Tsvetaeva scholars. In 1920 Tsvetaeva highly praised Ivanov as her guru in the cycle "Vlacheslavu Ivanovu" (see chapter 4 on Ivanov's influence on Tsvetaeva's poetics). His article on Pushkin was included in his book *Po zvezdam* published in 1909.⁴⁵

First of all it is interesting to compare Tsvetaeva's preference for Mariula in her poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" with Ivanov's remarks:

Основным в цыганской стихии Пушкин воспринял именно женский тип и его же сделал носителем более или менее выявившегося в кочевой и соборной жизни индивидуального начала [...] Этот основной женский тип сочетался в фантазии поэта с глубоко женственным и музыкальным именем: Мариула.⁴⁶

Occasionally Tsvetaeva identified herself with Pushkin's heroine. Thus, for example, in the poem "Vse syznova: opiat' rukoiu robkol" (1920) there is a parallel between her own life and that of Mariula:

Всё сызно́ва: вно́вь как у царских стату́й —
Почетный караул.
(Я не томлю, — обы́чай, перенятый
У ни́щих Мариу́л!) (S88, 1, p.135)

On the behavioural level Tsvetaeva liked to make herself resemble a gypsy woman. (In this respect Tsvetaeva followed a certain literary tradition chiefly derived from Apollon Grigor'ev's poetry; the gypsy image was also very popular among the Russian Symbolists.) Her passion for silver bracelets struck many of her contemporaries.⁴⁷ It is also interesting that Maiakovskii characterised Tsvetaeva's poetry as "tsyganshchina" and advised Soviet readers

⁴⁵ Viacheslav Ivanov, "O 'Tsyganakh' Pushkina", *Po zvezdam. Stat'i i aforizmy*, St Petersburg, 1909, pp.143-88.

⁴⁶ Id., *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol 4, Brussels, 1987, p.301.

⁴⁷ See, for example: Zinaida Shakhovskaia, "Marina Tsvetaeva", in her *Otrazheniia*, Paris, 1975, p.162; Véronique Lossky, *Marina Tsvetaeva v zhizni*, Tenaflly, 1989, pp.303-06.

to go for Sel'vinskii and Aseev who wrote, in his view, in a similar gypsy vein.⁴⁸

However, the most interesting aspect of Ivanov's interpretation of Pushkin's "Tsygany" is the discussion of the main character of the poem Aleko in terms of the philosophy of individualism, spiritual quest and freedom. Ivanov's perception of Pushkin's poem seems to be in line with Tsvetaeva's own poetic model. Ivanov's commentaries help us to understand why Tsvetaeva focused her attention on the issues raised in "Tsygany":

В Алеко Пушкин отыскал и гениально отметил того несчастного скитальца в родной земле, того исторического русского страдальца, столь исторически необходимо явившегося в оторванном от народа обществе нашем.[...]

Скиталец, именно в меру своей верности идее вселенской, — она же есть идея русская, — захочет остаться скитальцем, сознавать себя бездомным гостем чужих шатров, и как бы человеком не от мира сего, равно у себя на родине или на чужбине, — она же в свете религиозной идеи — той, которая освобождает, — уже и не чужбина [...]⁴⁹

In this light, Tsvetaeva's cycle on Pushkin gives the impression that to some extent she transformed Pushkin into Aleko. Tsvetaeva's portrait of Pushkin (created from characteristics scattered here and there) puts an emphasis on his individualism. Tsvetaeva's argument with Dostoevskii (about reducing Pushkin's image to that of his heroine Tat'iana) discussed above echoes the following statement by Ivanov:

Недостаток толкования Достоевского, по нашему мнению, в том, что он выдвигает, несоответственно с намерениями Пушкина, на первый план национально-общественный вопрос и через него ищет подхода к религиозному содержанию поэмы, тогда как Пушкин прямо противопоставляет богоборству абсолютной самоутверждающейся личности идею религиозную — идею связи и правды вселенской — и в этой одной видит основу

⁴⁸ V. Malakovskii, "Podozhdem obviniat' poetov", *Krasnaja nov'*, Moscow, 1926, 4, pp.223-24.

⁴⁹ Ivanov, op.cit., pp.316-17.

истинной и цельной свободы: „птичка Божия не знает ни заботы, ни труда“... В религиозном решении проблемы индивидуализма мы и усматриваем величайшую оригинальность и смелость пушкинской мысли. [...]

На утверждение своеначалия поэт отвечает не отрицанием его („смирись“, как толкует Достоевский, как учит Шатобриан), — но уже провозглашением положительного религиозного синтеза: „Наученный горьким опытом роковых страстей и последнего изгнания, ты, кто был горд и зол, будь ныне впервые и воистину — *свободен* “. ⁵⁰

Such an understanding of freedom in Pushkin's poem was very close to Tsvetaeva's model of a poet's fate and spiritual quest. One of the references in the memoirs of her friends can illustrate this point:

У нее был пафос страдания [...], потому что она — поэт [...] Она согласна страдать и умереть за правду, но определить эту правду невозможно. Отсюда постоянная тема самосожжения и мотив костра. [...]

Она часто говорила, что поэт обреченный, она чувствовала свою связь с большими поэтами: Пушкиным, Лермонтовым, Есениным, Маяковским, но сознавала, что судьба их трагична. [...] Поэт должен погибнуть от общества, и от преследований общества она испытывала удовлетворение: „Меня грызут, но это нормально, ведь я же поэт, а поэтов ненавидят и преследуют“. И эта непреклонность у нее осталась до конца. [...] В этой жажде самосожжения проявляется русская хлыстовская стихия. Подсознательное желание быть жертвой. Для чего? Этого она не открыла, но на это положила свою жизнь. ⁵¹

Tsvetaeva's cycle creates the same portrait of Pushkin, particularly in poems 3 and 4:

Пелось как — поется И поныне — так. Знаем, как „дается“!

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.318.

⁵¹ Quoted in Véronique Lossky, op. cit., p.202.

Над тобой, „пустяк“ [...]

В битву без злодейства: Самогó — с самим! — Пушкиным не бейте!

Ибо бью вас — им! (S88, 1, p.278)

Преодоление

Косности русской —

Пушкинский гений?

Пушкинский мускул

На кашалотье

Туше судьбы —

Мускул полета,

Бега,

Борьбы. (ibid.)

Some of the ideas which Ivanov expressed in his article on "Tsygany" not only coincide with Tsvetaeva's vision of Pushkin, but also match the model of a poet's life which she applied to herself. Thus, Tsvetaeva often called a poet an émigré, and the motif of escapism from the mundane and human shape of a poet's ego forms an important part of her poetic credo. In her long poem "Poema vozdukha" Tsvetaeva depicted the spiritual evolution of the poet. Using some of Ivanov's terminology, Tsvetaeva's ideal can be characterized as anarchistic. (This aspect is discussed in more detail in chapter 6). Ivanov's analysis of Pushkin's poem sheds some light on Tsvetaeva's own philosophical and artistic views:

Только луч религиозной идеи обличает в Алеко „беглеца“, „раба, замыслившего побег“ — не от людей, а от себя самого [...] Анархическая идея в плане общественности внешней отрицает, как „отвлеченное начало“, самое себя и гибнет в лабиринте безвыходных противоречий, — если не полагает основным условием своего осуществления внутреннее освобождение личности от себя самой. Под этим освобождением мы разумеем такое очищение и высветление индивидуального сознания, при котором человеческое я отметаёт из своего самоопределения все

эгоистически-случайное и внешне обусловленное и многообразными путями „умного делания“ достигает чувствования своей глубочайшей, сверхличной воли, своего другого, сокровенного, истинного я.⁵²

Tsvetaeva's "Poema vozdukha" is an almost exact illustration of the point made by Ivanov in relation to *Tsyganu* :

[...]

Из лука — выстрелом —

Ввысь! Не в царство душ —

В полное владычество

Лба. Предел? — Осяль:

В час, когда готический

Храм нагонит шпиль

Собственный — и, вычислив

Всё, — когорты числ!

В час, когда готический

Шпиль нагонит смысл

Собственный... (S88, 1, p.447)

In Tsvetaeva's poem "Dvukh stanov ne boets..." we come across her correction of Pushkin's text; looked at in the light of Ivanov's discourse, Tsvetaeva intended to apply her own vision of anarchistic freedom to the whole body of Pushkin's works. Some of the lines from this poem also echo Tsvetaeva's depiction of Pushkin:

Вы с этой головы, уравненной — как гряды

Гор, вписанной в вершин божественный чертеж,

Вы с этой головы — что требовали? — Ряда!

Дивясь на ответ (безмолвный): обезножь.

("Dvukh stanov ne boets...", S88, 1, p.312)

Не обрекать на последний мрак,

Полную глухонéмость —

Тела, обкарнанного и так

Ножницами — в поэмах.

("Stikhi k Pushkinu", S88, 1, p.280)

⁵² Ivanov, op.cit., p.320.

It is interesting to point out that Tsvetaeva's work on Pushkin in 1931 was associated with thoughts about individual freedom. Thus, bearing in mind that she wrote "Stikhi k Pushkinu" in 1931, one can understand why Pushkin's idea of freedom was very much on Tsvetaeva's mind in the following September when she wrote to Salomeia Gal'pern:

[...] в ответ на Ваше „я совсем не чувствую себя счастливой“—

На свете счастья нет, но есть покой и воля

— воля, которую я, кстати, всегда понимала как волю волевою, а не как волю-свободу, как нужно думать, понимал сам Пушкин — и которой тоже нет.⁵³

Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin as a singer of freedom has its tradition, and can be traced back to Blok's poem "Pushkinskomu domu" (1921):

Пушкин! Тайную свободу

Пели мы вослед тебе!

Дай нам руку в непогоду,

Помоги в немой борьбе!⁵⁴

However, if Blok appealed to Pushkin for spiritual help in the dark period of the first years of the Soviet régime, Tsvetaeva claimed Pushkin to be the leader of some sort of anarchistic community.

Such an image of Pushkin comes across in the sixth poem of the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu". It is modelled on the poem of Charles Wolfe "The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna" (which was translated into Russian in 1825 by Ivan Kozlov). Once again (as in the poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym") Tsvetaeva uses a romantic allusion to Napoleon, although indirectly: the British commander Sir John Moore was killed at Corunna at 1808 in the beginning of the Peninsular War with Napoleon. The solemn and heroic atmosphere of the original is preserved by Tsvetaeva but the whole situation is depicted in a more dramatic tone as some sort of ritual. It is worth comparing the two poems in order to establish the striking differences:

⁵³ "Tsvetaeva's letters to Salomeia Gal'pern", *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniia*, 129, Paris, 1979, p.182.

⁵⁴ Aleksandr Blok, *Stikhotvoreniia, Poemy*, Tashkent, 1986, p.417.

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried. [...]

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

(Charles Wolfe) ⁵⁵

Нет, бил барабан перед смутным полком,
Когда мы вождя хоронили:
То зубы царёвы над мертвым певцом
Почетную дробь выводили.
[...]

Кого ж это так — точно воры ворá
Пристреленного — выносили?
Изменника? Нет. С проходного двора —
Умнейшего мужа России. (S88, 1, pp.280-81)

Facts taken by Tsvetaeva from Veresaev's book merge in the cycle with several poetic traditions. Thus, on one hand, the image of the chattering teeth of the Tsar has the definite imprint of Baroque poetics with its taste for anatomically revolting details and shock tactics. On the other hand, it has a trace of the Romantic tradition of a ghost who threatens the living: the Tsar in Tsvetaeva's poem is frightened of the dead poet. Taking into account the military atmosphere of poem 6, one can feel — like a shadow on the background — the suggestive presence of the situation depicted in Zhukovskii's poem "Nochnoi smotr":

В двенадцать часов по ночам
Из гроба встает барабанщик;
И ходит он взад и вперед,
И бьет он проворно тревогу.
И в темных гробах барабан
Могучую будит пехоту:
Встают молодцы егеря,

⁵⁵ *The New Oxford Book of English Verse 1250-1950*, London, 1974, pp.579-80.

Встают старики гренадеры,
Встают из-под русских снегов,
С роскошных полей итальянских,
Встают с африканских степей,
С горячих песков Палестины. [...] ⁵⁶

It is also worth mentioning that Tsvetaeva followed Pushkin's steps in bringing out an important sociological issue raised by Pushkin in "Tsygany": poverty provides a favourable condition for individual freedom. Tsvetaeva herself emphasised her poverty and expressed her condemnation for people obsessed with their goods in her poem "Khvala bogatym" (1922):

И засим, упредив заране,
Что меж мной и тобою — мила!
Что себя причисляю к рвани,
Что честно мое место в мире:

Под колесами всех излишеств:
Стол уродов, калек, горбатых...
И засим, с колокольной крыши
Объявляю: люблю богатых!
[...]

За их тайны — всегда с нарочным!
За их страсти — всегда с рассыльным!
За навязанные им ночи,
(И целуют и пьют насильно!) [...] (Tsvetaeva 1990, pp.308-09)

Tsvetaeva had a vision of a free community based on the rapport and accord of will powers, as expressed in her gypsy poems and in the story "Khlystovki" (the religious aspect is particularly highlighted in the latter: the flagellant sect lives, in Tsvetaeva's portrayal, as a naturally free society accepting God's will as its own). Taking this into account, one can be dismayed by the manner in which Peter the Great and Pushkin appear to be the closest of allies in poem 2 of the cycle.

Poem 2 has the title "Petr i Pushkin" and it emphasises the spiritual link between Peter the Great's reforms and Pushkin's work. Such kinship

⁵⁶ *Russkie poety, Antologiya v chetyrekh tomakh. Tom pervyi*, Moscow, 1965, pp.283-84.

between these two figures looks odd from the point of view of Tsvetaeva's political declarations as expressed in her early poetry. Thus in 1920 Tsvetaeva wrote a poem "Petru", in which she condemned Peter the Great as father of the October Revolution in Russia. (See the discussion of this point in chapter 6.) Yet in the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu", Peter the Great is portrayed as a remarkable patron of culture:

[...]

И дав бы ему по загривку
Курчавому (стричь не остричь!):

— Иди-ка, сынок, на побывку
В свою африканскую дичь!

Плыви — ни об чем не печалься!
Чай, есть в паруса кому дуть!
Соскучишься — так ворочайся,
А нет — хошь и дверь позабуди!

Приказ: ледяные туманы
Покинув — за пядию пядь
Обследовать жаркие страны

И виршами нам описать. — [...] (S88, 1, p.276)

Such a change in Tsvetaeva's attitude can be explained by taking into account several factors which would be responsible for the new approach to Peter the Great.

First of all, Tsvetaeva was dealing with the portrait (or set of characteristics) of Peter the Great suggested already in Pushkin's story "Arap Petra Velikogo". In this respect, one can point to an analogy between Pushkin's description of the relationship of Peter the Great and Ibragim and Tsvetaeva's presentation of Peter the Great's attitude to Pushkin. A special emphasis is put by Tsvetaeva on the spiritual kinship of the two men, as well as on their devotion to the transformation of Russia. However, Pushkin's idea had been developed in the same way in Merezhkovskii's famous essay "Pushkin".⁵⁷ (mentioned earlier in this chapter). It is important to bear in mind in this respect that Tsvetaeva claimed that Merezhkovskii had a tremendous influence on the development of Russian

⁵⁷ D. Merezhkovskii, *Vechnye sputniki. Pushkin*, St Petersburg, 1906.

literature.⁵⁸ Secondly, the stylization which Tsvetaeva used in the poem to recreate Peter the Great's speech was modelled on the novel by A.N. Tolstoi *Petr Pervyi* which Tsvetaeva read just before writing the cycle on Pushkin.⁵⁹ All these aspects need further investigation. Meanwhile, it seems more appropriate to focus analysis on an aspect which has been completely neglected in relation to this cycle.

The most striking feature of the poem "Petr i Pushkin" is the way Tsvetaeva deals with the question of the relationship between state power and literature. In spite of the fact that Tsvetaeva claimed that art should be independent from any political involvement (this point is discussed in chapters 1, 4 and 6), she portrays Peter the Great as an educated monarch. His orders to Pushkin, in Tsvetaeva's view, would not have contradicted the very essence of Pushkin's work. Moreover, Tsvetaeva claims in this poem that she inherited the same mission to transform Russian culture:

[...] Заговор равных.
И вот, не спросясь повитух,
Гигантова крестника правнук
Петров унаследовал дух.

И шаг, и светлейший из светлых
Взгляд, коим поныне светла...
Последний — посмертный — бессмертный
Подарок России — Петра. (S88, 1, p.277)

Tsvetaeva's 'genealogical tree' lies in line with the mentality formed in the Baroque culture: the idea of movement, dynamism is converted here into a principle of political anthropology. From this point of view, Eurasian ideas had some impact on Tsvetaeva, who saw the inevitability of the revolutionary process in Russia.

Moreover, one can argue that the whole cycle is permeated with ideas which were shaped in Baroque culture. It has a feeling of what can be called a guided culture due to its vividly expressed moralizing tone. Baroque

⁵⁸ Tsvetaeva wrote to Tesková in connection with the Nobel prize in 1933: "[...] Мережковский эпоха конца эпохи, и влияние его и в России и за границей несоизмеримо с Буниным [...]". (PAT, p.106)

⁵⁹ In a letter to Tesková of 1931 Tsvetaeva called Tolstoi's novel remarkable. (PAT, p.89)

literature articulated the art of living. Just as every Baroque writer considered behaviour to be the central problem, Tsvetaeva focused her attention on the rule of two Tsars: Peter the Great and Nicholas the First. She demonstrates the ability of Peter the Great to channel the force which represented human beings, rationally contrasting his way of ruling to that of a Tsar without such mathematical vision — Nicholas the first:

Уж он бы вертявого — в струнку
Не стал бы! [...]

Поняв, что ни пеной, ни пемзой —
То! Африки, — царь-грамотей
Решил бы: „Отныне я — цензор
Твоих африканских страстей“.
[...]

Уж он бы с тобою — поладил!
За непринужденный поклон
Разжалованный — Николаем,
Пожалованный бы — Петром! (S88, 1, pp.275-76)

In other words, Tsvetaeva portrays an ideal relationship between an educated monarch and a poet. Tsvetaeva introduces into the cycle a concept which she calls "a conspiracy of equals" ("zagovor ravnykh") which suggests the inclusion of Tsvetaeva herself into the pact. This precisely represents the baroque idea of dynamic guidance. As José Maravall describes in his book on Spanish baroque, individuals "had to be guided in a way that was technically adequate (according to the estimations of the seventeenth century moralist or politician".⁶⁰ Following the logic of Tsvetaeva's model, the creative impulse of Peter the Great was developed by Pushkin and through Pushkin's work — by Tsvetaeva herself. She claims that the light of Peter the Great's eyes is present in her own look ("И шаг, и светлейший из светлых / Взгляд, коим поныне светла..."— S88, 1, p.277). Tsvetaeva's depiction of Peter the Great somehow overshadows the essential fact of Baroque culture. "The art and literature of the baroque, which frequently declared themselves on the side of the artist's and writer's freedom or of freedom in the tastes of the public where the work was to be received,

⁶⁰ José Antonio Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque. Analysis of a Historical Structure*, tr. by Terry Cochran, Manchester, 1986, p.68.

nonetheless came under the influence or even the mandate of the rulers, who granted subsidies, guided appeal toward a certain taste, or (should the case arise) prohibited certain works".⁶¹ That was precisely the case with Peter the Great and his reforms, but it was also true about Tsvetaeva herself. After all, she strongly criticised Mandel'stam's book *Shum vremeni* and was opposed to the work of Adamovich, for example, who, in her view, was not a real craftsman. Even her condemnation of Briusov in the essay "Gerol truda" seems to be one-sided.

One can feel a certain incongruity in Tsvetaeva's declarations. Thus, in the poem "Dvukh stanov ne boets..." she proclaims a poet's complete independence from any political trends of the time, but in the cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" she raises the question of the favourable political atmosphere for an artist and writer. Perhaps aiming at the political regime in Soviet Russia she still believed in the possibility of a resurrection of the cultural atmosphere created by Peter the Great in the name of national rebirth? That possibility certainly should not be dismissed, taking into account Tsvetaeva's patriotic poems (such as "Cheliuskintsy!", "Stikhi k synu" or "Luchina"). Tsvetaeva certainly argued with the followers of what one can call "free" art in the aristocratic sense. The Russian aristocracy in Paris even in the 1930s was still suspicious of the concept of professionalism in literature. This issue takes us back to Peter the Great's reforms and Pushkin's struggle with the traditional aristocratic point of view that writing should be performed for pleasure not for earnings. In this respect poem 3 in Tsvetaeva's cycle — "Stanok" — can be perceived as some sort of political declaration. Tsvetaeva's letters of this period are permeated with the unwillingness to compromise with established taste. Thus, for instance, in February 1931 she characterized her situation:

Мое горе с окружающими в том, что я не дохожу. Судьба
моих книг. Всякий хочет 1. попроще 2. повеселей 3.
понарядней. (PAT, p. 87)

Nonetheless, Tsvetaeva was consciously orientated towards a certain dynamism in cultural development which would allow her works to be understood in the future. Thus, in a letter of January 1931 she expressed her conviction of being discovered later. (Ibid.)

⁶¹ Ibid., p.72.

The other interesting aspect of the cycle is the usage of Christian mythological language in relation to Pushkin. This is due to Tsvetaeva's attempt to promote the idea of holiness in the same manner as it was used by Russian tsars and especially by Peter the Great. One of the great manifestations of Baroque culture was the concept of mastering oneself which led to domination of the surrounding world: "I am master of myself as of the universe" (Corneille).⁶² Peter the Great's life is a vivid example of the realization of this principle. The whole string of images displaying his holiness is based on the analogy between the Apostle Peter and Peter the Emperor.⁶³ The idea of the holiness of Peter the Great is expressed by Tsvetaeva in the following lines:

Гигант, отпустивши пилу,
Помчал — по земле или над? (S88, 2, p.276)

Taking into account the traditional perception of Peter the Great by his contemporaries and followers in the light of the mythological meanings of the Apostle Peter, one can extract two key images in relation to his deeds. One is the "stone" linked to the meaning of the name. This is particularly evident in the writings of Feofan Prokopovich who compared Peter the Great to the Apostle Peter as the rock on which the future building will be founded.⁶⁴ In this respect it is interesting to observe how Tsvetaeva's analogy between Peter the Great and Pushkin derives from the same semiotic language: Pushkin's work is perceived by her as a rock on which the new Russian literature is founded. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that she originally gave a different title to her cycle — "Pamiatnik Pushkina".⁶⁵ Just as Peter the Great is presented in Russian culture (and in Pushkin's own writings, in particular) as the creator-demiurge, the sculptor who transformed Russia, Pushkin is portrayed by Tsvetaeva as the creator of Russian literature. To extend the suggestion to the original title analogy,

⁶² Ibid., p.60.

⁶³ This point is analysed in detail in: Ju. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii, "Echoes of the Notion "Moscow as the Third Rome" in Peter the Great's Ideology", *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1984, pp.60-63.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.62.

⁶⁵ Marina Tsvetaeva, *Moi Pushkin*, Moscow, 1967, p.203.

one can argue that Tsvetaeva's perception of the stone monument in relation to Pushkin was of a different nature: it should be perceived as a foundation, as a rock for the whole process of the "building" of Russian culture.

The second important issue concerning Peter the Great is the fact that he began to be ascribed not only historical qualities as founder and builder, but also mythological traits of protector and defender. From this point of view, it is revealing to see Tsvetaeva's "mistake" in the text of poem 2: there is a wrong reference to Pushkin's long poem "Poltava", instead of "Mednyi vsadnik". In the context of glorifying stanzas about Peter the Great, "Poltava" stands out as a code-signal of the protective and defending qualities of the Russian emperor. Furthermore, I would argue that imagery of Pushkin is subordinated on the semantic level to that of Peter the Great. There is a whole chain of images which form what can be called military lexicon: "Как из пушки — Пушкиным", "Пушкин — в роли пулемета", "Пушкин — имя Благородное — как брань [...]", etc. In the last example it is necessary to point out that Tsvetaeva revived the archaic meaning of the word *bran'* which stood for battle. Therefore, Tsvetaeva used Pushkin's name not only for highlighting the whole idea of the battle between the mundane and the spiritual (which formed an important motif of her own work), but also argued her own right as an artist to reshape the course of Russian literature as the great innovator of the poetic language. Those features related to holiness Tsvetaeva extended to the poet (in general) and to herself in particular. In this respect two images taken from the Gospel play an important role in Tsvetaeva's cycle: salt and light.

In Matthew's gospel, Christ said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men".⁶⁶ Tsvetaeva illustrated this point by applying it in a different situation to the perception of Pushkin in the twentieth century (especially in Soviet Russia, where the cult of Pushkin was promoted for political reasons):

Критик — нбѣ, нытик — вторя:

†

„Где же пушкинское (взрыд)

Чувство меры?" Чувство — моря

Позабыли о гранит

⁶⁶ "The New Testament", *The Holy Bible, Catholic Edition*, London, 1966, p.4.

Бьющегося? Тот, соленый

Пушкин — в роли лексикона? (S88, 1, p.273)

This stanza contains a near self-portrait of Tsvetaeva herself, linking her Christian name to marine themes as well as to Pushkin's poem "K moriu" (chapter 5 deals with this issue in detail). Thus, in her poem "Kto sozdan iz kamnia..." (1920) Tsvetaeva wrote about herself as follows:

[...]

Сквозь каждое сердце, сквозь каждые сети

Пробьется мое своеволие.

Меня — видишь кудри беспутные эти? —

Земною не сделаешь солью.

Дробясь о гранитные ваши колена,

Я с каждой волной — воскресаю!

Да здравствует пена — веселая пена —

Высокая пена морская! (S84, 1, p.139)

In Tsvetaeva's cycle the adjective *kurchavyi* applied to Pushkin also stands out as an ideogram denoting free spirit:

И дав бы ему по загривку

Курчавому (стричь не остричь!) [...] (S88, 1, p.276)

Taking into account Tsvetaeva's clear distinction between the spiritual (which is usually expressed in dynamic categories) and the vulgar or commonplace (which is symbolised in static notions), it is important to emphasize the difference in Tsvetaeva's usage of the words "salt" and "salty". She obviously protested in her poetry against the merging of the two different meanings of the word. Thus, in terms of Christian imagery, salt represents the spiritual essence of the world. Such usage corresponds to Tsvetaeva's poetic code. However, she clearly distinguishes it from the vulgar usage of this image in relation to something saucy: thus the English expression "spicy story" is equivalent to the Russian "solenyi anekdot".

The second image from the Bible — "light" — is particularly important in the cycle. It is emphasized by Tsvetaeva with the help of tautology: "и светлейший из светлых, / Взгляд, коим поныне светла". Tsvetaeva's device derives from the same passage in Matthew's gospel (verse 5) as well as the image "salt". Addressing his disciples, Christ told them:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.⁶⁷

Bearing in mind that the passages which follow the above Gospel extract are devoted to the idea of reconciliation, one can interpret Tsvetaeva's characterization of Pushkin as Peter the Great's last gift to Russia in terms of Christian concepts. Thus Christ advised the disciples: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift".⁶⁸ This passage offers an insight into Tsvetaeva's cycle. In line with this passage, Tsvetaeva promoted the idea of the reconciliation of two Russias (old and new) and of the literary and political camps in the émigré community in Paris. And from this point of view her reference to Pushkin's "Poltava" is extremely significant because it depicts Peter the Great as a person who forgave his enemies:

Пирует Петр. И горд, и ясен,
И славы полон взор его.
И царский пир его прекрасен.
При кликах войска своего,
В шатре своем он угощает
Своих вождей, вождей чужих,
И славных пленников ласкает,
И за учителей своих
Заздравный кубок подымает. (Pushkin, 2, p.122)

It is also important to point out that in 1931 Tsvetaeva wrote an essay which has several Christian connotations — "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti". Tsvetaeva chose the role of disciple in the sense that she wanted to remind her contemporaries about the Last Judgement and eternal spiritual values. The autobiographical element is also felt in the last poem of Tsvetaeva's cycle, in which the form of the negation (used in the passages from the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Bible mentioned above) sounds particularly powerful. Tsvetaeva's message to critics and hypocrites is: "Не обречать на последний мрак". Her sympathies for the different camps of Russian political life in Paris were overcome by the idea of merging the serving of God and Russia as implemented by Peter the Great. As Lotman and Uspenskii have observed, "Peter regarded prayer in itself in isolation from "service" as hypocrisy; he felt that the service of the state was the only true form of prayer".⁶⁹ There is a certain element of Eurasianism in Tsvetaeva's belief in such reconciliation. (It is not a coincidence, therefore, that she called her husband "sovest' Evraziistva".) In terms of literary vision, Tsvetaeva endows Pushkin with the role of peacemaker.

Finally, it is important to mention one of Tsvetaeva's last poems — "Kogda ia gliazhu na letiashchie list'ia..." (1936) — in which the theme of the poet's tragic life is highlighted once again. Its Pushkinian subtext has not been well documented. Nevertheless, the theme of autumn derives from Pushkin's poems related to the theme of death and loneliness. However, the main source of inspiration for Tsvetaeva was undoubtedly Pushkin's poem "Ia perezhil svoi zhelan'ia..." (1821), in which he meditated on the final denouement of his life. Thus the last two stanzas of Pushkin's poem read:

Под бурями судьбы жестокой
Увял цветущий мой венец;
Живу печальный, одинокий,
И жду: придет ли мой конец?

Так, поздним хладом пораженный,
Как бури слышен зимний свист,
Один на ветке обнаженной
Трепещет запоздалый лист. (Pushkin, 1, p.232)

However, allusion to Pushkin's poem is translated by Tsvetaeva into the language of post-Symbolism. Her poem "Kogda ia gliuzhu na letiashchie list'ia" is a variation on Pushkin's theme.

If in Pushkin's poem the lyrical hero was waiting for the end of his life, Tsvetaeva's narration sounds rather reassuring:

Когда я гляжу на летящие листья,
Слетающие на булыжный торец.

⁶⁹ Lotman and Uspenskii, op.cit., p.59.

Сметаемые — как художника кистью,
Картину *кончающего* наконец,
Я думаю (уж никому не по нраву
Ни стан мой, ни весь мой задумчивый вид),
Что явственно желтый, решительно ржавый
Один такой лист на вершине — забыт. (S84, 1, p.335)

The striking difference between the two poems lies in the fact that, unlike Pushkin, Tsvetaeva uses only two verbs ("гляжу" and "думаю"), replacing the verballity of Pushkin's language with an abundance of participles. This device was very common in the poetics of Symbolism and post-Symbolism, and in this particular poem by Tsvetaeva it reinforces the sense of withdrawal. In other words, the narrative space is somehow four-dimensional: there is an allusion to God as creator of life (presented here as an artist); to Pushkin's text and life from which Tsvetaeva derived her own model of the poet's life; to the society which does not accept a lyric heroine-poet any more; and to reality which is reduced metonymically to the last leaf on the tree. Also Tsvetaeva's rhyming of "горец" — "наконец" echoes Pushkin's "венец" — "конец", although her rhyme is more suggestive: it brings out the image of the poet's path (which usually symbolises his fate). Pushkin's image of the wreath evokes the laurel wreath: "цветущий мой венец", whereas Tsvetaeva's interpretation brings to mind the tragic imagery associated with Christ's crown of thorns ("терновый венец"). That is why, in the penultimate line, the adjective describing the noun "leaf" is "rusty through-and-through" ("решительно ржавый") which gives the idea of suffering as being out of time and longing for the end. This is particularly felt in the tautologically sounding line "картину *кончающего* наконец". The italicizing of the participle "konchalushchego" and the placing the word "nakonets" at the end of the stanza as a rhyme underline the significance of its semantics. However, Tsvetaeva's characterization of herself as pensive ("мой задумчивый вид") is an allusion to Pushkin's "Pir vo vremia chumy". Thus, in the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti", Tsveteva claims that there is a Dionysian Pushkin who is possessed by the elements (although Tsvetaeva defines poetry as one more element), and whom she contrasts to the Apollonian image of Pushkin created by some of her contemporaries:

[...] — Был и другой Пушкин.

— Да: Пушкин *Вальсингамовой задумчивости*. (Священник уходит. Председатель остается, погруженный в глубокую задумчивость.) (S84, 2, p.381)

Taking into account Tsvetaeva's highly symbolic usage of the word "ржавый", one can trace the link in the poem "Kogda ia gliuzhu na letlashchie list'ia..." with the theme of martyrdom. Thus, in poem 14 of the cycle "Stikhi k Bloku" Tsvetaeva characterizes the graveyard as "надежная, ржавая тишь" and links it to the forthcoming Last Judgement and the poet's immortality (S84, 1, p.78).

CHAPTER 3

The Knidos myth and Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's love for Natal'ia Goncharova.

The role of the sculptural myth in Pushkin's work has been thoroughly studied by Jakobson and by Schultz.¹ These scholars have shown how Pushkin was preoccupied with this myth, highlighted his familiarity with its many European literary versions and traced his own distinctive application of it. Although the development of this myth in twentieth-century Russian poetry as a whole has not yet been investigated, some essays on Aleksandr Blok, for example, point in this direction.² Jakobson's pioneering efforts to trace Pushkin's personal sculptural myth in the poetry of Akhmatova, Annenskii and others have led to more substantial studies of this subject in recent years.³ In particular, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of the book by Ospovat and Timenchik on the reassessment of Pushkin's image of the monument of Peter the Great in later Russian literature and art.⁴ But disappointingly little has been done

¹ R. Jakobson, *Pushkin and His Sculptural Myth*, The Hague, Paris, 1975; R. Schultz, *Puschkin und die Knidos-Sage*, Munich, 1985.

² See, for example, Z. G. Mints, "Blok i russkii simvolizm", *Aleksandr Blok. Novye materialy i issledovaniia, Kniga 1, Literaturnoe Nasledstvo*, 92, 1, Moscow, 1980, pp.98-172; V. V. Ivanov, "K issledovaniiu poetiki Bloka ('Shagl Komandora')", *Russian Poetics, Proceedings of the International Colloquium*, ed. T. Eekman et al, Columbus, Ohio, 1983, pp.169-94.

³ See, for example: Z. G. Mints, "Blok i Pushkin", *Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 306, *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii*, 21, Tartu, 1973, pp.135-296; R. D. Timenchik, "Akhmatova i Pushkin. Zametki k teme", *Uchenye zapiski Latvinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 215, *Pushkinskii sbornik*, 2, Riga, 1974, pp.32-55; E. G. Mel'nikova, M. V. Bezrodnyi, V. M. Papernyi, "Mednyi Vsadnik v kontekste skul'pturnoi simvoliki romana Andreia Belogo *Peterburg*", *Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 680, *A. Blok i ego okruzhenie, Blokovskii sbornik*, 6, Tartu, 1985, pp.85-92.

⁴ A. L. Ospovat, R. D. Timenchik, "Pechal'nu povest' sokhranit'..." *Ob avtore i chitateliakh "Mednogo vsadnika"*, Moscow, 1987.

about the other direction taken by Schultz — the pinpointing of the connection between the sculptural myth in Russian twentieth century poetry and the ancient legend of Cnidus (together with its later versions) in European literature.⁵ Moreover, this aspect of Tsvetaeva's poetry has been almost untouched by scholars.⁶ Meanwhile, the study of sculptural and demoniac imagery in Tsvetaeva's work provides evidence that she was acquainted with the Cnidus myth and was aware of its significance for Pushkin.

1. Tsvetaeva's verse play "Kamennyi angel", the Cnidus myth and Pushkin's sculptural images.

Schultz describes the myth of the separation of men from women by supernatural forces; this derives from the Cnidus legend of the evil power exerted by the statue of Venus. Schultz shows how Pushkin was preoccupied with medieval literary versions of this myth, and how the antithesis between the Virgin Mary and Eve became established in his poetry.⁷ In Tsvetaeva's poetry this antithesis predominated at the end of the 1910s and the beginning of the 1920s.⁸ In her lyrics of that time we also come across

⁵ Z.G.Mints, "O nekotorykh 'neomifologicheskikh' tekstakh v tvorchestve russkikh simvolistov", *Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 459, *Tvorchestvo A.A.Bloka i russkaya kul'tura XX veka, Blokovskii sbornik*, 3, Tartu, 1979, pp.76-120; O.Ronen, "A Functional Technique of Myth Transformation in Twentieth Century Russian Lyrical Poetry", *Myth in Literature*, Columbus, Ohio, 1985, pp.110-23.

⁶ Except in an article: Jerzy Faryno, "Iz zametok po poetike Tsvetaevoi", *Marina Cvetaeva. Studien und Materialien, Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband*, 3, Vienna, 1981, pp.29-47.

⁷ See Schultz, op.cit, pp.55-59.

⁸ See A. A. Saakiant, *Marina Tsvetaeva: Stranitsy zhizni i tvorchestva. (1910-1922)*, Moscow, 1986, pp.228-29, 292. (Though Saakiant talks about a "Psyche-Eve" juxtaposition in Tsvetaeva's lyrics, its functional and semantic role seems to recall Pushkin's antithesis). It is interesting to point out that Tsvetaeva's book *Versty II* was once titled *Mater'-Versta* (see Saakiant, p.327). Saakiant fails to mention that Tsvetaeva's depiction of the Virgin Mary as a protector of soldiers derives from the Christian medieval tradition. This function of the Virgin Mary seems to be particularly important for Tsvetaeva because her book reveals the author's sympathies with the White Army: part of *Versty II* was later included in Tsvetaeva's cycle "Lebedinyi stan" dedicated to the White Army.

a quite persistent juxtaposition, of stone figures or sculpture-like characters and a persona who is tragically in love with them.⁹ But the most obvious kinship between Tsvetaeva's sculptural imagery and late versions of the Cnidus myth can be shown by a comparison of her play "Kamennyi angel" (Neizdannoe, pp.135-201) with some related German works. This play was written in the summer of 1919 at the time of Tsvetaeva's preoccupation with Vakhtangov's theatrical group, and of her infatuation with the actress Sof'ia Gollidei. The factual background used in this play was revealed by Tsvetaeva many years later, in her "Povest' o Sonechke" written in 1936 (S88, 2, pp.120-251). In this autobiographical work she describes Sonechka's tragic love for the actor Iura Z. (Zavadskii), whose extraordinary beauty led to many broken hearts. Her portrait of Zavadskii is merciless. It is permeated with the characteristics of an idol, a statue without a soul:

Весь он был — эманация собственной красоты [...] Все-таки трагедия, когда лицо — лучшее в тебе и красота — главное в тебе [...]

Он сам был — фигура [...] все в нем было от ангела, кроме слов и поступков, слова и дела. (S88, 2, pp.167-68)

Not surprisingly, Tsvetaeva compared him with Natal'ia Goncharova when she talks about Pavel Antokol'skii's love for him (Ibid., p.166): she analyses the evil power of beauty in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" written seven years earlier. Taking this further, it would be useful to point out that in Tsvetaeva's poetic code these two characters are of the same nature. To emphasise the demoniac nature of this "stony" beauty, Tsvetaeva (in "Povest' o Sonechke") makes Zavadskii utter the word 'devil' in the most enchanting way (Ibid., p.168). She also admits that her play "Kamennyi angel" was addressed to him; therefore, while analysing it, one should not forget its biographical background, which may be of some help in understanding its mythological aspects.

The play "Kamennyi angel" was published for the first time in the collection of previously unpublished work by the poet, *Marina Tsvetaeva: Neizdannoe. Stikhi, Teatr, Proza*. (Paris, 1976). It contains a dedication to Gollidei: "Сонечке Голлидей — Женщине — Актрисе — Цветку — Героине"

⁹ See such poems as "Kto sozdan iz kamnia, kto sozdan iz gliny...", "Na bednost' brennulu moi...", "Vam odevat'sia bylo len'...", "Rytsar' angelopodobnyi...".

(Nelzdanoe, p.139). Its setting was meant to be a German town on the river Rhine in the sixteenth century. The whole orientation of this verse play can be explained by two factors: on the one hand, Tsvetaeva at the time was preoccupied with German Romantic literature (in 1919 she wrote a special essay "O Germanii", which may be taken as a homage to Novalis, Heine, Hölderlin and Goethe; the naming of Sonechka as Flower is an obvious allusion to Novalis' image of the Blue Flower); on the other hand, some structural elements of the plot used in "Kamennyi angel" are very similar to those which appear in German versions of the Cnidus myth. Schultz, talking about German Romanticism, features the Tannhäuser legend as one of the versions of the myth.¹⁰ Its most vivid embodiments were Heine's poem and Wagner's opera.¹¹ In Tsvetaeva's play, as in these German versions, Venus has been transformed into an evil goddess settled on a mountain. In the version of Achim von Arnim — in his novel *Papessa Joanna* — the usual statue of Venus is replaced by that of Apollo. Tsvetaeva uses a very similar idea in her play — the statue of an extremely handsome Angel. (The idea of the male statue used in the poetry of Pushkin and Blok was in Tsvetaeva's mind too. She was well acquainted with the legend of Don Juan, which Schultz calls the Iberian version of the Cnidus myth.¹²) Tsvetaeva combined synthetically the structural elements of several versions of the Cnidus myth. The essential elements of her play unmistakably repeat them. These elements are (with Tsvetaeva's usage):

- (a) Juxtaposition of a young innocent person (Aurora) and her protagonist (Venus);
- (b) love for a statue;
- (c) kissing a statue, giving a ring to the statue of an Angel;

¹⁰ Schultz, p.34-37.

¹¹ Heine was one of Tsvetaeva's favourite poets. The particular interest in Heine can be traced in Tsvetaeva's use of epigraphs from his works. Thus, she used Heine's words about the incompatibility of the theatre and the poet in the introduction to her play "Feniks" (see: Marina Tsvetaeva, *Teatr*, Moscow, 1988, p.360). The play was written at the same period as "Kamennyi angel". For more on Heine's influence upon Tsvetaeva's work see Simon Karlinsky, *Marina Tsvetayeva: The woman, her world, and her poetry*, Cambridge, 1985, pp.12, 27, 144-45.

¹² Schultz, op. cit., p.33.

- (d) a temptation (provocation);
- (e) a false wedding in a temple;
- (f) metamorphosis of a statue (it becomes alive);
- (g) exertion of supernatural forces over a human being;
- (h) antithesis of Venus and the Virgin Mary;
- (i) the treaty motif;
- (j) requital;
- (k) the Virgin Mary as a Protector; her Assumption into Heaven;
- (l) two meetings with the statue;
- (m) two invitations;¹³

Tsvetaeva's play contains a synthetic mixture of different versions of the Cnidus myth. Thus, for example, she uses some details which refer to Heine's *Tannhäuser*: in her play, the Virgin has imprisoned wicked Venus in the mountain for eternity — we learn the same from Heine's poem.¹⁴ In "Kamennyi angel" we also come across a mediator, Amour (Eros), who takes the side of evil Venus; while disguising himself as the Angel he wears Mercury's sandals. Schultz has pointed out some examples of early Christian legends in which an evil Mercury appears.¹⁵ Traces of the Cnidus myth can be found in works by all the major Romantics: Heine, Hoffmann, Goethe, Klinger.¹⁶ But the inspiration for Tsvetaeva's play was a performance of Maeterlinck's play staged by actors of Vakhtangov's Third Group — and in particular by Zavadskii. This fact was mentioned in A. Saakiant's book on Tsvetaeva,¹⁷ though Saakiant completely misunderstands the role of Maeterlinck's play, and of its characters, in Tsvetaeva's plot.

Saakiant claims that the idea of Tsvetaeva's play derived from "Le Miracle de St Antoine" (by Maeterlinck) and that the statue-likeness of St Antony (he hardly speaks; it is not possible to shift him by physical means) is transformed by Tsvetaeva into the stone-likeness, immobility of

¹³ Compare with Schultz's table, *ibid.*, p.31.

¹⁴ Heinrich Heine, *Der Tannhäuser, Die Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker in 60 Bänden*, 36, Munich and Vienna, 1982, p.270.

¹⁵ Schultz, *op.cit.*, p.18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.35-36.; see also on Klinger: M.P.Alekseev, *Pushkin i mirovaia literatura*, Leningrad, 1987, pp.502-42.

¹⁷ A. A. Saakiant, *op.cit.*, p.177.

the Angel.¹⁸ This explanation does not approach the essence of Tsvetaeva's plot. Nor can one agree with Saakiant's statement concerning the final words of the play spoken by the Virgin Mary to Aurora:

Тебя не оставим
Меж темных и злых,—
На облачной славе
Теперь твой жених.

О, бедные люди!
— Нет, рук не ломай! —
Он помнит, он любит,
Он ждет тебя в Рай. (Neizdannoe, p.200)

The scholar claims that the phrase quoted above contradicts Tsvetaeva's rebelliousness and theomachy and that probably is why Tsvetaeva forgot her own play; her poetic memory simply deleted the unsuccessful ending of "Kamennyi angel".¹⁹

However, Tsvetaeva's description of the play and its background in "Povest' o Sonechke" does not show that the poet forgot her play: on the contrary, it provides us with a deep insight into its plot. In the memoirs mentioned above she wrote the following about Zavadskii whom Tsvetaeva identified as the stone angel:

Ему моя пьеса (пропавшая) „Каменный Ангел“: каменный ангел на деревенской площади, из-за которого невесты бросают женихов, жены — мужей, вся любовь — всю любовь, из-за которого все топились, травились, постригались, а он стоял. Хорошо, что та тетрадь пропала, так же утопла, отравилась, постриглась — как те... Его тень в моих (и на моих!) стихах к Сонечке... (S88, 2, P.168)

Tsvetaeva's comments quoted above point to the main idea of her play: to create an image of an evil force disguised as an angel. The aim of this stone creature was to separate people in love. Tsvetaeva's claim that the very shadow of the stone angel could be felt in her poems devoted to Sonechka proves that the kernel of the Cnidus myth formed an important

¹⁸ Ibid., pp.177-78.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.181.

leitmotif of Tsvetaeva's work in general. Moreover, such a personal interpretation of a statue (mentioned above) has nothing to do with Maeterlinck's play "Le Miracle de St Antoine", in which St Antony is an active character, who could command dead Mme Ortans to resurrect. E. Etkind, in his analysis of Maeterlinck's play, discovered that its plot repeats in many ways one of Maupassant's stories. The main emphasis of Maeterlinck's play is not on the character of St Antony, but on the ugly and hypocritical relationships between people in bourgeois society. Etkind claims that this is an "anti-bourgeois satirical comedy".²⁰

Tsvetaeva's play does not have such a meaning, although it contains some satirical features, particularly concerning the protagonists Venus and Mercury. Its main idea focuses on the demoniac powers exerted over innocent Aurora by wicked Venus as well as by the statue itself. It is important to point out some further details of Tsvetaeva's concept of stone evil, taken from the memoirs about Sonechka. In the second part, titled "Volodia" and devoted to the actor Vladimir Alekseev (a friend of both Gollidei and Tsvetaeva), she unexpectedly reveals that *he* was the Stone Angel. Moreover, in her prose Tsvetaeva came to this conclusion, due to the sudden discovery that Volodia had blond hair:

В какую-то минуту, я — как завеса с глаз!
— А Ангел-то были — вы, Володечка!
[...]

Володя! Да что же это такое? Да вы же совсем не черный?
Вы же — русский! (S88, 2, pp.229-30)

All the details mentioned above (as well as receiving a ring from the Stone Angel identified by Tsvetaeva as Volodia) should not be taken out of their context: the second part of the story describes the author's parting with Sonechka, whose preference was for love given to a man rather than to a woman:

Я знала, что мы должны были расстаться. Если бы я была мужчиной — это была бы самая счастливая любовь — а так мы неизбежно должны были расстаться, ибо любовь ко мне неизбежно помешала бы ей — и уже мешала — любить

²⁰ E. G. Etkind, "Maeterlinck", *Istorija zapadnoevropejskogo teatra, 1871-1918*, 5, Moscow, 1970, pp.146-47.

другого, всегда бывшего бы тенью [...] (Ibid., p.239)

Another important twist in "Povest' o Sonechke" is Tsvetaeva's confession that her departure from Sonechka was a fulfilment of God's will in accordance with the divine plot (scenario). (S88, 2, p.239) Therefore, one can certainly see that the ending of the play "Kamennyi angel" was not a mistake (as Saaklants suggests), but that it was closely related to the poet's perception of herself as the Virgin Mary - which can be traced in her lyrics of this period.²¹ In "Povest' o Sonechke" Tsvetaeva employs the same model of the love triangle she uses in "Kamennyi angel" as well as allusions to Pushkin's little tragedy "Kamennyi gost'" (which falls into the category of works in which the Iberian version of the Cnidus myth is developed). Thus, talking to Sonechka about a fountain in front of the house in which Pushkin read his "Boris Godunov" to Nashchokin, Tsvetaeva expressed her clear preference for Don Juan. (S88, 2, p.198.)

Studying Tsvetaeva's work in another direction brings the realisation that the Cnidus myth leads us directly to related works by Pushkin. It has been noted by Karlinsky, for example, that Tsvetaeva's play "Metel'" (written at the same period as "Kamennyi angel") can be associated with Pushkin's "Pikovaia dama". As Schultz suggests in his book, this story was related to the most recent versions of the Cnidus myth in European literature - especially to *Le Diable amoureux* of Jacques Cazotte. The book was in Pushkin's library - in French and in Russian. The novel was republished in Russian in 1915 in the periodical *Severnnye zapiski*, to which Tsvetaeva contributed at the time. References to it can be found in the poetry of Kuzmin, to whom she felt some affinity at the time.²² It is also very likely that she knew Khodasevich's 1915 article on Pushkin's Petersburg tales, in which he discussed the motif of the struggle between people and demonic forces in Pushkin's work. She was also inspired by Briusov's novel *Ognennyi angel* in which he tried to imitate the atmosphere of the German Middle Ages (this brings to mind Tsvetaeva's "Kamennyi angel"). Briusov's novel dealt

²¹ See, for example, the poems "Sem' mechel pronzali serdtse" (Tsvetaeva 1990, p.169) and "Syn" (S88, 1, p.114).

²² See Kuzmin's poem "Venetsiia" (1915); he also translated poems for the publication of Cazotte's novel in *Severnnye zapiski*. On the relationship between Tsvetaeva and Kuzmin, see Karlinsky, op. cit., pp.55-57; and Tsvetaeva's essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" discussed in chapter 4 of this work.

with the demoniac exertion of power over people, and was certainly one of the factors which helped Tsvetaeva to develop a strong interest in this topic.²³ Moreover, it had become one of the major themes in her poetry. That is why she tried to interpret Pushkin's own life through those aspects which had mythological roots - especially in the Cnidus legend (to use Schultz's words).

No doubt Tsvetaeva realised the significance of demoniac sculptures and forces in Pushkin's poetry, though she does not speak about it directly. In her cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" (1931) she suggests that Pushkin cannot be perceived as a monument, and that his character is anti-sculptural. In the same cycle she makes a deliberate factual mistake when mentioning Tsar Nikolai's censorship of the poet's "Poltava": it had been mentioned in Veresaev's book (used by Tsvetaeva as a biographical source) that the Tsar was reading "Mednyi vsadnik". Obviously such an image of the evil idol was not suitable for the artistic concept of Tsvetaeva's cycle in which she established the spiritual kinship of Peter the Great and Pushkin. The role of the monument of Peter the Great in Pushkin's poem is also in one respect similar to the destructive function of Tsvetaeva's stone angel. But the closest link can certainly be traced between her play and Pushkin's "Kamennyi gost'".

As in Pushkin's play, Tsvetaeva's heroine continues to love the statue. The image of Amour in "Kamennyi angel" is of the same nature as Pushkin's Don Juan, though additionally one might see the obvious parallel between Tsvetaeva's wicked Venus and the countess in Pushkin's "Pikovaia dama", who used to be called 'la Vénus moscovite'.²⁴ This is particularly relevant when one takes into account that at the time of writing "Kamennyi angel" Tsvetaeva was interested in the idea of writing a play about playing cards - "Chervonnyi valet". Even the end of Tsvetaeva's play "Kamennyi angel" can be

²³ V. Briusov, "Ognennyi angel", *Izbrannaiia proza*, Moscow, 1986, pp. 291-94. In 1925 Tsvetaeva wrote about this novel in her essay "Gerol Truda": „Стихи Брюсова я любила с 16 л. по 17л. — страстной и краткой любовью. [...] Больше же стихов его — и эта любовь живет и поныне — его „Огненного Ангела“, тогда — и в замысле и в исполнении, нынче только в замысле, в замысле и в воспоминании, „Огненного Ангела“ — в неосуществлении.“ (Marina Tsvetaeva, *Izbrannaiia proza v dvukh tomakh*, 1, New York, 1979, p.176.)

²⁴ A. S. Pushkin, "Pikovaia dama" in: Pushkin, 3, p.189.

seen as a variant of the words spoken by the young priest about the dead countess that the Angel of Death had possessed her. There is a similar ending in Tsvetaeva's text in the final words of the Virgin Mary quoted above.

We can now summarise some of the features common to the works of Tsvetaeva and Pushkin which are related to the Cnidus myth. Both poets seem to be preoccupied with the idea of an evil force which exerts its power over people. Sometimes this evil force is embodied in sculptures; at other times it is linked to the gods' interference in human life, or people appear to suffer or even die through their involvement with god-like creatures. More often we see the motif of divine beauty related to human tragedy. Apart from the works mentioned above, we can easily find traces of this motif in the lyrical passages of both poets. The most obvious version of the Cnidus myth in Pushkin's poetry, as was pointed out by Schultz, is the poem "Zhil na svete rytsar/ bednyi"²⁵. The character depicted in the poem is obsessed by both spiritual and human love for the Virgin Mary, which makes him unable to love anyone else:

Путешествуя в Женеву,
На дороге у креста
Видел он Марию деву,
Матерь господа Христа.

С той поры, сгорев душою,
Он на женщин не смотрел,
И до гроба ни с одною
Молвить слова не хотел. (Pushkin, 1, p.447)

It is interesting that Tsvetaeva moulded the love situation in poems associated with Sergei Efron ("Na kortike svoem 'Marina'..." and in the cycle "Georgii") in the same shape.

The same aspect of love is revealed in another Pushkin poem, "Madonna": the hero proclaims his love to a portrait of the Madonna and to its human embodiment. (Pushkin, 1, p.475.) Pushkin scholars have linked this poem to Goncharova. However, the influence of different versions of the Cnidus myth and its literary derivatives on this poem has been overlooked. This can also be said about the poem "Kogda v oblatila moi...", and about

²⁵ Schultz, op. cit., pp. 59-61.

the fact that Pushkin associated his marriage with bad omens;²⁶ what is more important, soon after his marriage he wrote such tragic poems as "Besy" or "Ne dai mne Bog solti s uma...". Jakobson has also noted that most of the sculptural images in Pushkin's poetry appeared after his marriage.²⁷ This feature, of course, cannot be explained one-sidedly. Other scholars have noted that one more myth predominated in his poetry in the 1830s. It can be called the 'shade' myth. It consists of certain meetings of a lyric hero (presumably the poet himself) with the shades of dead poets such as Ovid, Dante, Byron and others. One should especially mention the shade of Pushkin's friend Del'vig, whose death had a great impact on Pushkin's artistic vision. In the poem "Chem chashche prazduet Litsei..." (1831) the poet predicted his early encounter with his dead friend:

И мнится, очередь за мной,
Зовет меня мой Дельвиг милый,
[...]
Туда, в толпу теней родных
Навек от нас утекший гений. (Pushkin, 1, p.504)

Boris Gasparov has studied the development of the 'shade' myth in Pushkin's poetry and come to the conclusion that eventually "a part of the myth of two poets has been fused with the image of an angelic, heavenly female creature, represented very frequently in Pushkin's poetry of 1826-1830 with regard to such prototypes as E. Karamzina, E. Ushakova, A. Olenina and Goncharova; hence the theme of a fatal and inspirational encounter with a female shade (and, as a branch of the same theme, with a mermaid) which influenced a substantial part of Pushkin's œuvre of the period 1826-1836."²⁸ For the first time, Gasparov has discovered the coherence of two different myths coexisting in Pushkin's poetry. Meanwhile, Marina Tsvetaeva should be

²⁶ See V. Veresaev, *Zhizn' Pushkina*, Moscow, 1936, p.121; also: *Zhizn' Pushkina. Perepiska. Vospominaniia. Dnevnik*, ed. V. V. Kunin, Moscow, 1987, volume 2, p.381.

²⁷ R. Jakobson, *Pushkin and His Sculptural myth*, Paris, 1975, pp.27-28, 44.

²⁸ B. Gasparov, "Encounter of Two Poets in the Desert: Puškin's Myth", *Myth in Literature*, ed. A. Kodjak, et al., Columbus, Ohio, 1985, p.147.

mentioned together with Khodasevich²⁹ as one of the pioneers in exploring Pushkin's mythology.

In her own poetry we can see the same motif of the fatal beauty or involvement with angel-like creatures. But more persistently she uses the patterns of myth in which gods or supernatural forces interfere with the love of human beings. For example, in the cycle "Razluka", devoted to her husband in 1921, she proclaims that "the gods are jealous of the mortal ones' love", that "Zeus' heart is insatiable"; in the cycle "Khvala Afrodite" (1921) she calls the goddess of love "a Devil-lady" and asks "Till when must one obey you, armless stone?"; in the cycle "Dvoe" (1924) she deals directly with couples from myth and world literature who have been fatally separated (she transposed this situation to her relationship with Pasternak); in the poem *Naiada* (1928) she declares that there is always a third person in between two people in love.³⁰ It is interesting that she used the water nymph as a symbol of evil: as mentioned above, the image of a mermaid appeared in Pushkin's poetry with the same function.

2. Mythological and myth-creating aspects of Tsvetaeva's essay "Natal'ia Goncharova".

The description of Pushkin's wife given by Tsvetaeva in the chapter "Dve Goncharovy" is very similar to the characterization of the stone angel in the play which we mentioned above. In the description only one feature predominates - her beauty: "молодая девушка, красавица [...], совсем из сказки", "Гончарова, как красавица — просто красавица — только, не была

²⁹ See V.F. Khodasevich, "Peterburgskie Povesti Pushkina", in his *Stat'i o russkoi poezii*, Petersburg, 1922.

³⁰ See, for example, Tsvetaeva's poem "Naiada" (S84, 1, pp287-289). It is interesting that Tsvetaeva displaced a Naiad from being a nymph of the stream or spring into being part of the ocean - like the Nereids. (Though in accordance with some traditions the Naiads were regarded as part of the race of Ocean — see, for example: Pierre Grimal, *The Dictionary Of Classical Mythology*, Oxford, 1987, p.301.) In Jerzy Faryno's article "Stikhotvorenie Tsvetaevoi 'Prokrast'sia'" (*Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, 20, Vienna, 1987, pp.89-113) there is an interesting observation that in Tsvetaeva's poetry ocean usually is contrasted to *sea* and *rivers*, in the sense that the ocean is perceived by her as a dead place, with stagnant water, unlike flowing rivers.

честолюбивой", "Гончарова за Пушкина вышла без любви, по равнодушию красавицы" (S88, 2, pp.53-55). Analysing her motive in marrying Pushkin, Tsvetaeva called it the action of a doll (ibid.). But the main explanation of this marriage as described by Tsvetaeva is related to fate. That is why she declares that people such as Goncharova are tools of fate. Moreover Tsvetaeva suggests in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" that Pushkin was aware of the fatal meaning of his choice. This situation is linked in the essay to mythological analogies. For instance, she compares the poet's wife to Helen of Troy:

„Так и останется: невинная, бессловесная — Елена — кукла,
орудие судьбы.“ (S88, 2, p. 59).

It is quite important to note that in her analysis of Pushkin's marriage Tsvetaeva exploited the same mythological pattern she had used in the poem "Nalada" (written earlier):

Узнаю тебя, гад,
Как тебя ни зови:
В море — ткань, в горе — взгляд, —
Вечный третий в любви!
[...]

Узнаю тебя, бис
[...]

Узнаю тебя, смерть,
Как тебя ни зови
[...] (S84, 1, pp.288-89)

Tsvetaeva describes Pushkin's wife in the same vein in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova":

[...] Гончарова не причина, а повод смерти Пушкина, с
колыбели предначертанной. (S 88, 2, p.58)

Гончарову, не любившую, он взял уже с Дантэсом in dem
Kauf, то есть с собственной смертью. (Ibid., p60)

In the same article Tsvetaeva explains the prediction about the poet's death which she has taken from Veresaev's book *Pushkin v zhizni* (which, together with Shchegolev's book, was Tsvetaeva's main biographical source as

pointed out in chapter 2): a gypsy fortune-teller told Pushkin that he would be killed by a blond man on a white horse. It is known that Pushkin had a fear of blond men. However, today we can see deeper motifs for the poet's phobia than a gypsy's predictions. In the above-mentioned book by Schultz and in Ospovat's article "Vliublennyi bes. Zamysel i ego transformatsiia v tvorchestve Pushkina 1821-1831 g.g.",³¹ it has already been established that Pushkin was greatly influenced in his work and everyday behaviour by Cazotte's book *Le Diable amoureux*. Though Tsvetaeva was not aware of the significance of this novel for Pushkin, she tried to analyse the poet's life in its light. This becomes particularly apparent in connection with the myth about the blond man. In the Russian translation of Cazotte's novel — *Vliublennyi bes* — one of the main characters is the devil, disguised as the beautiful woman Blondetta (i.e. transformation into Russian of blonde-tête). As shown above, the blond image of the devil appeared in Tsvetaeva's work as well. Moreover, Cazotte's devil was meant to destroy Alvar: he was transformed into a person possessed, a tool in the hands of the Devil, who used him in order to bring destruction to everything.³² We can compare this with Tsvetaeva's description of Goncharova as "a tool of Fate", "a doll". In her long poem "Poema kontsa", written in 1924, there is a similar atmosphere in which two characters are possessed by evil forces:

Ведь шахматные же пешки!

И кто-то играет в нас. (S84, 2, p. 383)

The other important aspect of Tsvetaeva's interpretation reveals her awareness of the significant role which the 'shade' myth played in the European tradition and especially in Pushkin's own poetry. As suggested by Gasparov and Senderovich³³ in their work on this subject, Pushkin's lyric hero acquires his divine power and inspiration from the encounter with the shades of poets (for example, Ovid or Derzhavin). In Tsvetaeva's own 1913 poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" her meeting with Pushkin's ghost has the same semantic and functional meaning. (This was discussed in chapter 2.) In order to

³¹ *Pushkin: Issledovaniia i materialy*, 13, Leningrad, 1989, pp.175-200.

³² J. Cazotte, "Vliublennyi bes", translated into Russian by N. Val'man, *Severnye zapiski*, 1915, 10, p.95.

³³ B. Gasparov, op.cit.; S. Senderovich, "On Pushkin's Mythology: The Shade Myth", *Alexander Pushkin. Symposium II*, Columbus, Ohio, 1980, pp.103-15.

diminish Pushkin's wife, Tsvetaeva in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" deprived Goncharova of such divine sight, calling Pushkin himself a living ghost:

„Первая романтическая красавица наших дней“ не боялась призраков. Призрак Пушкина (живого из живых, страстного из страстных — призрак арапа!) страшен. Но она его не увидела, а не увидела его, потому что Пушкин знал, что не увидит. На призрак нужны — не те очи. Мало на него самых огромных, самых нателье-гончаровских глаз. (S88, 2, p.60)

In Tsvetaeva's interpretation Goncharova's life is divided into two parts: being a goddess with Pushkin, and being an ordinary human being in her second marriage. This approach to the poet's wife was already strongly felt in Tsvetaeva's early work — in the poem "Schastie ili grust'..." (1916). Both her poem and the essay were to a large extent influenced by Shchegolev's *Duel' i smert' Pushkina*. (This point was discussed in chapter 2.)

Like Shchegolev, Tsvetaeva writes about Goncharova's refusal to move to Boldino and her indifference towards Pushkin's work. Tsvetaeva cites Goncharova's reply to a supposed suggestion by her husband to read aloud some poems: "Do go ahead, I am not listening." However, such a representation of her in Tsvetaeva's essay is biased. In V. Veresaev's *Pushkin v zhizni*, which Tsvetaeva knew well, we come across a depiction of the same fact with the difference that these words were originally addressed to Boratynskii who wanted to read his new work to Pushkin in the presence of Natal'ia Nikolaevna.³⁴ Both scholars express a very low regard for Goncharova's spiritual and human qualities. Interestingly they do not mention that she was a pious Christian.³⁵ Meanwhile, Tsvetaeva created the concept of the pagan couple in relation to Pushkin's marriage.

The characterisation of Pushkin's love for Goncharova given by Tsvetaeva fits her own mythological concept of the evil side of beauty. On the one hand it seems to recall the play "Kamennyi angel" mentioned above. On the other hand, Tsvetaeva's persistent comparison of Goncharova with

³⁴ V. Veresaev, *Pushkin v zhizni*, Moscow, 1927, 3, p.68.

³⁵ About Goncharova's deep religious feelings see: M.A. Dement'ev and I.M. Obodovskaja, *Natal'ia Nikolaevna Goncharova*, Moscow, 1987.

Helen brings new light to this mythological pattern. Calling the poet's wife an instrument of fate, Tsvetaeva recreates the same tradition which was applied to Helen in many later versions of the original myth. Thus, one tradition claims that Hera fashioned a cloud that looked exactly like Helen. Another version of this legend says that Zeus himself sent a phantom Helen to Troy to provoke a war.³⁶ This idea supports Tsvetaeva's concept of the two images of Goncharova: one is a beautiful doll, a puppet used by fate or by the gods, while the other reveals a good wife, an ordinary human being. (In Homer's *Odyssey*, which was used by Tsvetaeva as a model for her own tragedies, Helen, after returning to Sparta at Menelaus' side, was the example of all the domestic virtues.)³⁷ In the poem "Punsh i polnoch' / Punsh i — Pushkin" composed by Tsvetaeva long before the essay, a cloud-like incarnation of the poet's wife appears in the shape of the hollow foam of the ball dress in the dusty mirror.³⁸ Another metaphor used by Tsvetaeva in connection with Goncharova - "naked beauty which smites everyone like a sword" - recalls the similar effect of Helen's beauty on people. It is known, for example, that Menelaus ran at her with a raised sword, intending to kill Helen, but she displayed herself half-naked, and the sword fell from his hand. Tsvetaeva suggests that Pushkin had been smitten by such a sword. (S88, 2, p.57)

It has been pointed out by A. Kroth that in spite of the dominant antithesis of 'love/poetry', Tsvetaeva is convinced that poetry grows out of love.³⁹ So, in "Natal'ia Goncharova" we come across the statement that all personifications of Pushkin are joined into one - the poet. (Ibid.) Tsvetaeva also portrays Pushkin's marriage as a sober choice (in the sense that he was aware of his possible death by it) in the light of her own mythological

³⁶ *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, op. cit., p.186.

³⁷ See on this subject the introduction by Rose Lafoy to her translation of Tsvetaeva's "Ariadna" into French — Marina Tsvétaeva, *Ariane*, tr. Rose Lafoy, Clermont-Ferrand, 1981, pp. 194-96.

³⁸ Marina Tsvetaeva, "Punsh i polnoch' / Punsh i — Pushkin...", *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1965, pp.22-23.

³⁹ A. Kroth, "Toward a New Perspective on Marina Tsvetaeva's Poetic World", *Marina Cvetaeva, studien und materialien*, Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, 3, Vienna, 1981, p.19.

model. This model was fully expressed in her "Poema kontsa", though the female-male rôles were reversed. The message of the poem is that love's end is predestined and prescribed, for the intentions of the two partners differ: he wants to live and have a house, family, and happiness, while she loves and therefore wants to die.⁴⁰ In her thorough analysis of this situation, Kroth suggests that, for the lyric heroine, death may be "the only means of avoiding the end of love, of prolonging it and immortalizing it".⁴¹ Tsvetaeva displays the same approach in her essay characterizing Pushkin and Goncharova as a couple based on a force going in a different direction, a couple apart. It is the poet's nature and innate passion, according to another work by Tsvetaeva, "Chert", to juxtapose and to contrapose.

The story "Chert" (P., pp.84-113) contains some variants of Tsvetaeva's motif of statue-likeness and evil beauty. Thus, for example, she writes in it that a dog is an image of the devil — with statue-like motionless legs. In her childhood Tsvetaeva imagined the devil just sitting on her half-sister's bed: "There was no motion. He sat, I stood." Also in this work we come across Tsvetaeva's combination of two versions of the same motif: she admits that her French tutor asked her to replace the devil's name in the popular Russian saying (used when something is lost) "Devil, devil, stop playing [with it], now give it back to me!" with that of St Antony of Padua. This character recalls, of course, Tsvetaeva's play "Kamennyi angel". In "Povest' o Sonechke", written one year after the story "Chert", Tsvetaeva applies exactly the same words about motionlessness to Zavadskii's performance as she applies to the statue of St Antony. The other interesting aspect of this image in "Chert" is Tsvetaeva's merging of a dog, a devil and a drowned man who appeared in her dream. The dream about the drowned man who said that he would marry her was influenced by reading Pushkin's "Rusalka" and "Utoplennik"; a quotation from the latter appears in the story. One passage from Tsvetaeva's story "Chert" in which she characterises the devil as a spirit who destroyed all her happy love affairs — by instilling cold analysis and pride in her (in order to make Tsvetaeva a poet but not a loved woman) — powerfully recalls Pushkin's poem "Demon". In Tsvetaeva's work encounters with the devil were a secret from others, associated with a longing for something unknown; these meetings led to her obtaining special

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.18.

⁴¹ Ibid.

knowledge about the world and developing such qualities as pride, irony, egocentrism and the feeling of being exceptional.⁴²

Thus, Tsvetaeva's judgement of Pushkin's love for Goncharova is heavily dependent on her own mythological pattern which had deep roots in Greek mythology and the Cnidus myth. She mentions, among the different personifications of Pushkin, that he was the creator of "Gavriliada". This aspect of his personality allows Tsvetaeva to establish a certain kinship with the poet. Khodasevich, for whom Tsvetaeva had a very high regard, describes the very nature of love depicted in "Gavriliada" as highly religious despite the frivolous features of this work. In Tsvetaeva's own poetry there is to some extent an analogy to Pushkin's work — see her cycle "Magdalina" (1923). To take this point further I would like to bring a new dimension into the comparison of the poetical systems of the two poets. Both of them had a tendency to deify a chosen partner in their art, using mythological models, but also to regard their love as a sacrifice to their god or goddess. In order to support this one can refer, for example, to Tsvetaeva's attempt to recreate a Pushkinian motif from "Boris Godunov", this attempt being related to the love of Dmitrii the Imposter for Marina Mnishek, in the cycle "Marina" (1921). Tsvetaeva's description of Mnishek's eyelashes can be compared to the curtain-like eyelashes of Pushkin's wife in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova". It seems that Tsvetaeva re-creates Pushkin's mythopoetical image of the beautiful woman. She depicts Natal'ia Goncharova with almost shut eyes — with curtain-like eyelashes — creating a contrast with Pushkin who married her with wide open eyes. (S88, 2, p.56.) Such a comparison was undoubtedly taken by Tsvetaeva from Pushkin's own poetical code-system. Thus, for example, in his poems beautiful women are compared to statues or to the Madonna, or to goddesses: furthermore, their

⁴² All these can be compared to Pushkin's words:

Тогда какой-то злобный гений
Стал тайно навещать меня.
Печальны были наши встречи;
Его улыбка, чудный взгляд,
Его язвительные речи
Вливали в душу холодный яд. (Pushkin, 1, p.296)

depiction in Pushkin's poetry is part of the same motif of eternity. This was pointed out in the study by B. Gasparov and I. Paperno⁴³. These scholars also note that the significant features of the images related to this motif are the bowed head and lowered eyes. The theme of eternity is juxtaposed in Pushkin's poetry to the theme of life full of passions, emotions, changeability. (This was thoroughly analysed by the above-mentioned scholars.)

Furthermore the embodiment of eternity in Pushkin's poetical code is the *angel*, and the motif of changeable life is represented by the *demon*. This aspect fully explains the poet's preoccupation with the image of the demon in love (which appeared in his drawings as well). In the above-mentioned story "Chert", the mythopoetical model is the same: God is associated with distance and cold, the Devil with love, passion and co-existence. Gasparov and Paperno observe that images of eternity are associated in Pushkin's work with indifference, cold and distance, while demoniac features are related to storms, instant death and passion. This aspect of Pushkin's poetry was the most crucial for Tsvetaeva. She deals directly with it in her works "Moi Pushkin" and "Pushkin i Pugachev" (which are discussed in chapters 5 and 6 respectively).

On the one hand, Tsvetaeva was interested in the structural motif of Pushkin's poetry described above, using it for her approach to his life and art (in the content of this chapter — in relation to Goncharova). On the other hand, she tried to fit the image of Goncharova into her own mythopoetical code. As is known from Tsvetaeva's letters to her friends, in 1923-26 she worked intensively on her trilogy "Ariadna" — "Fedra" — "Elena". In connection with this work she studied several books of Greek mythology and read a history of the Trojan war. In a letter to A. Bakhrakh of 28.08.1923 she informs him about her intention to read about the Trojan war and Helen in a big volume of Greek mythology in German.⁴⁴ In another letter (of 28.11.1927 — to A. Tesková) Tsvetaeva mentions Helen again, giving her a description similar to the image of Natal'ia Goncharova: both of them were labelled by Tsvetaeva as dolls. (PAT, p.158) Interestingly enough,

⁴³ B. Gasparov and I. Paperno, "K opisaniiu motivnoi struktury liriki Pushkina", *Russian Romanticism. Studies in the poetic codes*, ed. N. Å. Nilsson, Stockholm, 1979, pp.9-44.

⁴⁴ Marina Tsvetaeva, "Pis'ma A. Bakhrakhu", *Mosty*, Berlin, 6, 1961, p.322.

Tsvetaeva never wrote the third part of her trilogy ("Elena"); it seems that she fully realised the image of Helen only with reference to her vision of Goncharova. M.L. Gasparov in his analysis of Tsvetaeva's "Poema vozdukha" suggests a quite capacious metaphor for Tsvetaeva's poetic universe: the structure of the world in her poetry can be visualised in the shape of a horse-shoe. Moreover, it functions like a magnet: on one pole there is the apotheosis of the spirit (represented by such characters in her works as the poet, Ippolit, Georgii etc.), while on the other pole is the apotheosis of beauty and passion (Aphrodite, Phaedra, Helen, Goncharova etc.); on top of this 'magnet' is God, in whom everything is completed and joined together. The easiest way for the two 'forces' is for them to join together on the broken part of the circle - in spite of physical separation - but this attempt ends in death and tragedy.⁴⁵ Such a mythopoetical model may be partly justified by Tsvetaeva's own description of Pushkin and Goncharova as two forces going in different directions. (The term *force* itself is not the only example in Tsvetaeva's work of an attempt to apply scientific, 'electrical' images to the description of human beings.) More important is that such dualism appears in Tsvetaeva's poetic world within an individual, too, (as mentioned by Gasparov), though such a fascinating poetic model can hardly explain Tsvetaeva's justification of a tragic union of this kind. We should not forget her claim that Pushkin's marriage was as brilliant as his life. It seems that the mythological analogies exploited by Tsvetaeva in connection with Pushkin's marriage prove her admiration for Pushkin's personal life as a piece of art, text and symbol. So her perception of his life was predetermined by the mythological background.

It is also notable that Tsvetaeva relied on the studies of Pushkin written by Veresaev, Shchegolev, Briusov and Khodasevich. However, their scope excluded the very important (especially in relation to the transformation of the Cnidus myth in Pushkin's poetry) love in his life for K. Soban'skaia. Her evil character and beauty became the object of discussion in the scholarly work of Jakobson and Akhmatova. They wrote about it later than Tsvetaeva did, and their study of Pushkin's poetic mythology all but completed work in this direction.

⁴⁵ M. L. Gasparov, "'Poema vozdukha' Mariny Tsvetaevol: opyt interpretatsii.", *Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 576, *Trudy po znakovym sistemam*, 15, Tartu, 1982, p.128.

CHAPTER 4

Myth-creating aspects of Tsvetaeva's essays "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" and "Nezdeshnii vecher".

In the essays written by Tsvetaeva in the nineteen thirties it is possible to trace a persistent attempt by the poet to create a myth about Pushkin. Her application of this myth can be found in her own convictions about aesthetics and in her life. The most essential work for understanding Tsvetaeva's approach, not only to reality but also to Pushkin, is her last prose work "Pushkin i Pugachev". In this essay she justifies the right of a poet to re-create reality in his works. Moreover, she prefers artistic truth to reality, art to document. She analyses the experience of Pushkin who knew the archive documents on Pugachev, and in spite of the facts available created a different image of the peasants' tsar in his prose. Her interpretation of Pushkin's work reveals the fact that Tsvetaeva was seriously interested in the poetics of Romanticism. Furthermore she wants to establish herself as a poet whose art has deep roots in Pushkinian tradition. Meanwhile Tsvetaeva's approach to his works is strongly influenced by the culture of Symbolism and Post-Symbolism.

The motif of a feast with friends played a significant role in Pushkin's poetry. It occurs most often in his poems dedicated to the anniversary of the lycée, which are usually dated 19 October. (The lycée was opened on this date, and its first graduates always celebrated its anniversary.) In the poem written on 19 October 1825 "19 oktiabria", the happy occasion is transformed into a gloomy event; many of the brotherhood are missing, and Pushkin himself was away from his friends, in exile. The poet meditates upon the inevitability of death:

Пируйте же, пока еще мы тут!
Увы, наш круг час от часу редет;
Кто в гробе спит, кто дальний сиротеет;
Судьба глядит, мы вянем; дни бегут;
Невидимо склоняясь и хладея,
Мы близимся к началу своему... (Pushkin, 1, p.357)

In the poem of 1827 a new aspect of this motif is brought to life in the last line. The poet wishes his friends to have God's help in the "gloomy abysses of this world". This image already anticipates Pushkin's "Pir vo vremia chumy" in which *gloomy abyss* appears again. This time it fits into the framework of a different myth.

This second myth is related to Pushkin's theomachist poetry. For example, in the poem "Gerol" and in the dramatic piece "Pir vo vremia chumy", a human being challenges God by striving to surpass himself, to overcome the fear of death, to conquer the elements. It is not a coincidence that the poem "Gerol" and the hymn in honour of the plague from Pushkin's play were translated into French by Tsvetaeva, as well as being mentioned by her in essays and letters. The central figure depicted in Pushkin's poem is Napoleon, who visited people infected with plague. The poem is written in the form of dialogue: it is an argument between a poet and a historian. The memoirist strongly denies that Napoleon cheered up dying people by overcoming his fear of death as a consequence of the visits. But artistic truth is appreciated much more by the poet:

Тьмы низких истин мне дороже
Нас возвышающий обман...
Оставь герою сердце! Что же
Он будет без него? Тиран!.. (Pushkin, 1, p.487)

This statement from Pushkin's poem is quoted twice by Tsvetaeva in her essay "Pushkin i Pugachev", in which she claims that this approach to reality is the fundamental principle of Pushkin's poetics. Tsvetaeva applies it to her analysis of Pugachev (a character from Pushkin's "Kapitanskaya dochka"). She concludes that "despite the truth" (Tsvetaeva's words) which Pushkin learnt from archive documents, he created his own noble image of the people's tsar. However, Tsvetaeva's reference to the poem appears in the essay in a slightly transformed way: in Pushkin's version the poet says "*I prefer...*" (italics mine - A.S.), while Tsvetaeva uses the more generalised form *we*. This slight correction of Pushkin's text brings a new meaning to her interpretation — Tsvetaeva gives the poet's statement the status of a universal law, the human tendency to idealise reality. (For a further discussion of this point, see the chapter on the essay "Pushkin i Pugachev".)

It has already been noted by Pushkin scholars that in the 1830s

Pushkin's image of the hero took on an increasingly humane face. The element of sacrifice for the sake of others was becoming essential for the poet's depiction of the heroic.¹

This important evolution of Pushkin's views — from a sheer fascination with heroic behaviour to praise of human sacrifice — is overshadowed in Tsvetaeva's essays by her prevailing interest in the theomachist aspects of his poetry.

Tsvetaeva shared Pushkin's fascination with Napoleon. In her teens she put a portrait of the latter in an alcove — to the dismay of her father. She was also greatly inspired by gypsy characters in Pushkin's long poem "Tsygany". In this poem the central figure Aleko thinks of himself as God; he concludes from his experience of life that every individual is able to discover freedom within himself. This theme was more explicitly expressed in the poem "Poetu" (1830), which appealed not only to Tsvetaeva but also to many Symbolists and post-Symbolists, whose interest in human freedom and heroism was very much enriched by Nietzsche's theories. Pushkin's words from the poem "Poetu"

Ты царь: живи один. Дорогою свободной
Иди, куда влечет тебя свободный ум,
Усовершенствуя плоды любимых дум,
Не требуя наград за подвиг благородный.

Они в самом тебе. Ты сам свой высший суд [...]

(Pushkin, 1, p.474)

were obviously on her mind when she wrote the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti". Thus she claims that every poet is a servant of ideas or the elements. Occasionally, in Tsvetaeva's view, Russian literature was dominated by ideological and moral issues. This tendency led to misunderstanding of Pushkin by the next generations of Russian writers:

В этом этическом подходе (требования идейности, то есть
высоты, с писателя) может быть вся разгадка
непонятого на первый взгляд предпочтения девяностых
годов Надсона — Пушкину, если не явно-безыдейному, то

¹ See, for instance: Iu. M. Lotman, *V shkole poeticheskogo slova. Pushkin. Lermontov. Gogol'*, 1988, pp.20-21.

менее явно-идейному, чем Надсон, и предпочтения поколения предыдущего Некрасова-гражданина просто Некрасову. (S88, 2, p.391)

Pushkin's artistic and personal independence from the political forces of his day (expressed in the poem "Poetu") was especially important for Tsvetaeva's own credo. In all her works related or devoted to Pushkin she strongly defends her right to be politically independent, and she uses Pushkin's name as a symbol of freedom in her arguments with political opponents. For example, in her poem of 1935 "Dvukh stanov ne boets..." (S88, 1, pp.312-13) she proclaims that she is not a soldier of either of the two political camps (in real terms she wanted to emphasise that she was neither *pro-* nor *anti-Soviet*). At the end of the poem there is a reference to Pushkin's poem "Poetu", but Tsvetaeva takes exception to Pushkin's comparison of a poet to a tsar:

— Ты царь: живи один... (Но у царей — наложниц
Минута.) Бог — один. Тот — в пустоте небес. (S88, 1, p.313)

Tsvetaeva's persistent analogy of the poet with God² contains an important clue to her artistic system. Unlike Pushkin, who could write only occasionally about the facts of reality as cultural modes, Tsvetaeva makes the poet not only the creator of his own universe but also its main component. In her poetic system, therefore, he lives in a different spatial dimension which can be called *culturologic*. The facts of his life he describes are carefully selected and arranged in the text in such a way as to create an explicit semantic paradigm. This is a feature of the poetics of Russian Symbolism as a whole, and signifies the main difference between Russian Realism of the nineteenth century and avant-garde literature.³

Thus, for example, Pushkin's art inclines towards the language of referential genres (diary, autobiography, etc), while Tsvetaeva's text is a paradigm of metamorphoses in which spatial relations are transformed into temporal ones: the fact of the poet's life is presented in the text as an analogy of a cultural archetype. From this point of view Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's image of the feast is particularly interesting and

² See such poems as "Bog", "Kogda zhe Gospodin", "Uchenik", "S moria", etc.

³ See on this point Jerzy Faryno, "Deshifrovka", *Russian Literature*, 27, 1989, pp.1-68.

illustrates well the statement mentioned above.

In the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" Tsvetaeva explains her poetics clearly for the first time. Some of the titles of the shorter chapters in her essay, such as 'Nebo poeta', 'Tochka zreniia', and 'Pravda poetov', reveal her intention to promote her analogy between God and the Poet: both are creators of their own Universe and both represent its spiritual content. Furthermore, her chapter 'Pushkin i Val'singam' again discusses the theomachistic aspect of Pushkin's poetry in the light of her own concept of the poet.

Tsvetaeva focuses her attention on two songs from Pushkin's play: one is sung by Mary, the other by Walsingham. In accordance with N.V.Iakovlev's analysis of this work, the two songs are original - they are significantly different from J.Wilson's "The City of the Plague", which inspired Pushkin's little tragedy.⁴ The names of the two lovers appearing in the first song - Jenny and Edmond - are not mentioned in Wilson's song at all. Iakovlev suggests that Pushkin took the name *Jenny* from Robert Burns' poem "The Cotters' Saturday Night". Pushkin could have read the poem either in the original or in Ivan Kozlov's Russian translation. Tsvetaeva sees in Mary's song a 'Romantic' poem about eternal love, and she thereby indicates that Pushkin was fascinated by the subject of ideal love and by the motif of fidelity after death. (One of the poems which she chose to translate into French was a poem composed by Pushkin in the same vein - "Zaklinanie".) Though Pushkin may have used Burns' poetry to create a *couleur locale* effect in his play, he intended to create *dramatic scenes* (as he called his four plays). In other words he wanted to convey in his play the universal aspects of human life. That is why he used such names as *Jenny* and *Edmond* which would sound English but would not be necessarily related to any particular archetype. In the light of this, it is interesting to refer to Tsvetaeva's recollection of the poetic tournament organised by Briusov in 1911 (see her essay "Gerol truda" written in 1925): young poets were invited to compose a poem using as theme the last two lines from Mary's song. ("Ho Эдмонда не забудет / Дженни даже в небесах.") Tsvetaeva admits that she did not even know whether Edmond was male or female. Following a different Romantic tradition (which derives from Heine's "They loved each

⁴ N.V.Iakovlev, "Ob istochnikakh «Pira vo vremia chumy»", *Pushkinskii sbornik, pamiati prof. S.A. Vengerova, Pushkinist*, 4, Moscow, 1922, pp.92-132.

other") Tsvetaeva creates an opposite situation in a poem about the tragic impossibility of a union of two people in love, even in Heaven (a theme which developed into a major motif in her poetry):

[...]

Ни здесь, ни там — нигде не надо встречи,
И не для встреч проснемся мы в раю! ⁵

Also Tsvetaeva's indifference to the sex of this character reveals her own androgynous tendencies, which have already been discussed by many scholars interested in the application of psycho-analytical skills to textual interpretation.⁶

Viacheslav Ivanov saw in Pushkin's two songs a juxtaposition of different ideologies: Christian (Mary) and -pagan (Walsingham). Tsvetaeva defined them as Love and Plague, which is close to Ivanov's point of view (she regarded him as her teacher at the beginning of her poetic career), though she considered Walsingham's hymn to be the essence of the whole play. In her own translation of Walsingham's song, its pagan aspects are especially intensified — 'Plague' is referred to as a Daughter of Hell and as Black Death, more frightening than Winter. Its image was thus transformed by Tsvetaeva into a new deity. Merezhkovskii suggested that this hymn was inspired by Dionysus.⁷

Tsvetaeva's interpretation of "Pir vo vremia chumy" continues in principle the approach taken by Merezhkovskii in his book *Vechnye sputniki* (1910). Although there is no mention in her essay of the word 'Dionysian' it is suggested by Tsvetaeva's definition of Walsingham's song as anti-Apollonian. (S88, 2, p.381.)

Tsvetaeva continues in this essay (written in autumn 1931) the same semantic paradigm which is manifested in her cycle of poems "Stikhi k Pushkinu" (summer 1931). In her approach to Pushkin one can feel an attempt

⁵ Tsvetaeva talks about the competition and cites her poem in the essay "Gerol Truda", in: Marina Tsvetaeva, *Izbrannaiia proza v dvukh tomakh*, New York, 1979, vol. 1, pp.190-92.

⁶ See, for example, Véronique Lossky, *Marina Tsvetaeva, Un Itinéraire Poétique*, Paris, 1987, pp.228-29.

⁷ D. Merezhkovskii, *Vechnye sputniki*, St Petersburg, 1910.

to translate Pushkin's writings into the language of avant-garde literature she used herself. Thus, for example, her assertion that Pushkin can be identified with Walsingham himself (because the latter appears to be a poet in the play), and that the song in honour of the plague is a slip of the tongue of the lyrical poet (Ibid.) reveals Tsvetaeva's perception of the author of "Pir vo vremia chumy" as a lyric poet. Pasternak, whom Tsvetaeva called her brother in poetry, characterised the new art in "Okhrannaia gramota" (1929) in the following way: "[...] Искусство называлось трагедией. Так и следует ему называться. Трагедия называлась „Владимир Маяковский“. Заглавье скрывало гениально простое открытие, что поэт не автор, но — предмет лирики, от первого лица обращающейся к миру."⁸

In the same vein Tsvetaeva talks about Pushkin as the subject of his own tragedy claiming that there is another Pushkin — the Pushkin of *Walsingham's pensiveness* (S88, 2, p.381). We can compare this statement to her admission in a letter to Iashchenko (July 1922): "Я свою автобиографию пишу через других [...]."⁹ Therefore, Tsvetaeva's interpretation of this play not only reveals to us her perception of Pushkin's character but also provides us with her vision of herself as a poet. She gave the situation described by Pushkin the status of a myth related to the Dionysian and Adonisian cults:

В чем кощунство песни Вальсингама? [...]

Кощунство не в том, что мы, со страха и отчаяния, во время Чумы — пируем (так дети, со страха, смеются), а в том, что мы в песне — апогее Пира — уже утратили страх, что мы из кары делаем — пир, из кары делаем дар, что не в страхе Божьем растворяемся, а в блаженстве уничтожения. (S88, 2, p.379)

This claim made by Tsvetaeva conveys her attitude to the feast: she sees it as a cult, a ritual which we perform. By using the word we she makes readers of her essay and Pushkin's text (including herself) participants in a ritual. The ritualistic elements of Pushkin's play are pinpointed by Tsvetaeva in the next paragraph, where she states that Pushkin uses the name

⁸ B. Pasternak, *Vozdushnye puti*, Moscow, 1982, p.264.

⁹ See Tsvetaeva's letter to Iashchenko of 6 July 1922 in: L. Fleishman, R. Hughes, O. Raevsky-Hughes, eds, *Russkii Berlin. 1921-1923*, Paris, 1983, p.158.

(Walsingham) throughout the whole play only three times, as if it is a sacred name from an incantation.

Ritual was at the centre of Symbolist culture because of its attempt to subordinate life and social behaviour to the text. By creating *metatext*, Symbolists and their followers regarded life in a semiotical way, and in this respect *ritual* as an established genre of social behaviour was for them an ideal model. In ritualistic behaviour we see spiritual beliefs brought into action. One of the programmatic declarations of Russian Symbolism can be found in Bal'mont's poem "Budem kak solntse" (1901)¹⁰, in which life proclaimed itself the embodiment of a dream. Tsvetaeva had a high regard for Bal'mont and in many ways imitated his eccentric *otherworldly* behaviour. In her memories of Bal'mont she describes several meetings with him as being rituals performed by them both: for example, the smoking of Bal'mont's pipe in 1919 – the horrendous year of hunger and cold winter – in his Moscow flat, – was transformed in Tsvetaeva's imagination into American Indian pipe smoking; she claims every meal with Bal'mont to be a feast. (S88, 2, p.292.) In the essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" we witness the same approach: an ordinary gathering for a poetry reading turns out to be the last feast of the old world (as Tsvetaeva puts it). Throughout her essay she persistently underlines that this feast was the *last* one to take place in the *last* year of the old civilization: "The last poems were being read on the last bearskin rugs by the last fireplaces." Tsvetaeva's comparison of this evening to Pushkin's "Pir vo vremia chumy" has several implications.

First of all, it fits into the framework of the most crucial myth of Russian literature – the Petersburg myth. This had been revived and reinforced in Symbolist culture, and there have been many studies devoted to this topic.¹¹ Its main features derive from the prediction of Avdot'ia Lopukhina "Перепугры быть пугру", and they include the apocalyptic feeling that a great catastrophe will strike the city. Nineteenth-century Slavophiles such as Konstantin Aksakov, for example, would underline the evil nature of the city

¹⁰ K. Bal'mont, *Izbrannoe*, Moscow, 1980, p.149.

¹¹ N. P. Antsiferov, *Byl' i mif Peterburga*, Petersburg, 1924; *Semiotika goroda i gorodskoi kul'tury*. Peterburg, *Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 664, *Trudy po znakovym sistemam*, 18, Tartu, 1984; L. Dolgoplov, *Na rubezhe vekov*, Leningrad, 1985, pp.150-95.; A. L. Ospovat, R. D. Timenchik, "Pechal'nu povest' sokhranit'..." *Ob avtore i chitateliakh 'Mednogo vsadnika'*, Moscow, 1985.

because of its creation by Peter the Great. They accused Peter the Great of being the anti-Christ, and saw his reforms as destructive for Russia. The echo of such beliefs can be traced in Dmitrii Merezhkovskii's novel *Antikhrisť (Petr i Alekseĭ)* (1905) which had a great impact on Russian Symbolism. Tsvetaeva herself had a high regard for Merezhkovskii; in her poem "Petru" written in 1920 the same attitude to Peter the Great is revealed:

[...]

Ты под котел кипящий этот

Сам подложил углей!

Родоначальник — ты — Советов,

Ревнитель ассамблей! (Tsvetaeva 1990, p.182)

In the light of the cycle "Lebedinyi stan", we can see in Tsvetaeva's reference to "Pir vo vremya chumy" in "Nezdeshnii vecher" her perception of the Russian revolution of 1917 as a disaster of the same nature as the Plague. In this context the location for the last poetic feast chosen by Tsvetaeva is extremely significant. Tsvetaeva's preference for the old name of the city Petersburg (which was renamed Petrograd in 1914) also indicates her orientation towards the Petersburg myth. (This myth was prevalent in Russian literary tradition going back to Karamzin, Pushkin, and Gogol' and continued its life in the work of Blok, Belyi and Akhmatova.)

The essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" is a homage to Mikhail Kuzmin, and indirectly to Anna Akhmatova, who were absent from the evening described in the essay but to whom Tsvetaeva would recite her poetry. Tsvetaeva links both names for two reasons. She wrongly considered Kuzmin to be a close friend of Akhmatova (see her letter to Anna Tesková written of March 1936 — PAT, p.137) and — what is more important — she talks at the end of her essay about the suicidal character of the poets of her generation, who included (in addition to herself) Esenin, Gumilev and Akhmatova. In the introduction to Akhmatova's book *Vecher* (which Tsvetaeva knew well), Kuzmin talks about the young generation of Symbolists such as Akhmatova, Mandel'shtam and Tsvetaeva in the light of a tradition which existed in Alexandria. He points out that there was a society in Alexandria whose members considered themselves doomed to die, in order to enjoy life in the most intense and keen way. Kuzmin makes an interesting analogy between the members of this society in Alexandria and a group of young poets such

as Mandel'shtam, Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva. Also he proclaims that poets more than anyone should have a keen memory of love and eyes opened wide to see the sweet, joyful and at the same time sad world — in order to feast their eyes upon it and drink every moment of it for the last time.¹² Tsvetaeva's description was inspired to a large extent by these words of Kuzmin. Two words — *bliss* and *last* — permeate her essay which finishes with the statement:

И как бы ни побеждали *здешние* утра и вечера, и как бы по-разному — всеисторически или бесшумно — мы, участники того *нездешнего* вечера, ни умирали — последним звучанием наших уст было и будет:

И звуков небес заменить не могли
Ея *скучные* песни земли. (S88, 2, p.119)

Therefore, the poets' gathering might have been seen by Tsvetaeva in the light of the rituals of the Alexandrian society.

Zinaida Shakhovskaia, who knew Tsvetaeva in Paris, has suggested that the poet's life had very strong ritualistic elements.¹³ Tsvetaeva was determined to create such an impression (Ariadna Efron also persistently underlines the importance of Tsvetaeva's representation of herself as *the poet* in her book *O Marine Tsvetaevoi*¹⁴), as well as to extract semiotically significant features of Pushkin's behavioural patterns, in order to reconstruct them in her own life. Thus her identification of Pushkin with the character of the play is profoundly suggestive: Walsingham performs a ritual condemned by the priest, but his song helps Pushkin to avoid self-destruction. (In accordance with Tsvetaeva's comment it is Walsingham who saved Pushkin from the Plague due to the fact that the latter escaped being a victim of elements within himself and escaped into the song). Tsvetaeva's logic which is revealed in her analysis of the play leads to a functional analogy between poetic creation (in this particular case it is a hymn) and a sermon. Tsvetaeva states that while one remains a poet there is no destruction for oneself because everything returns one into the element

¹² M. Kuzmin, "Vstuplenie", in: Anna Akhmatova, *Vecher*, St Petersburg, 1912.

¹³ Z. Shakhovskaia, *Otrazheniia*, Paris, 1975, pp.160-68.

¹⁴ A. Efron, *O Marine Tsvetaevoi*, Moscow, 1989, pp.95, 200-01.

of the elements — the word (S88, 2, p.381). Pasternak's inventive image of poetry as the *element of the elements* was entwined in Tsvetaeva's mentality with the biblical treatment of the word. (Tsvetaeva was particularly interested in the gospel of St John, who tried to bring Christian teaching into line with the Greek tradition. In his Gospel, *Word* corresponds to the Greek notion *Logos*.)

The other important aspect of Tsvetaeva's approach to this play is the fact that she perceives the feast as an event taking place in mythological time. In other words, she talks about it in terms of a cycle, claiming that Walsingham sits at the table perpetually and also that he rides a black cart perpetually. (S88, 2, p.380.) We are not provided in the play with the two latter details mentioned by Tsvetaeva. Pushkin ends his tragedy at the point when Walsingham sits at the table seized by gloomy thoughts. As for Tsvetaeva, she again develops this situation into a ritual, in which she features three phases. Northrop Frye considers myth to be the verbal imitation of ritual.¹⁵ Following his point of view, one can easily establish an analogy between Tsvetaeva's interpretation of the play and the myth of the dying god. Firstly, it becomes clear that she relates Pushkin's plot to myth by placing it in a world prior to ordinary time. Secondly, she sees in it a certain cyclical pattern: "Ноябрь. 1830. Болдино. Сто один год назад. Сто один год спустя." (S88, 2, p.380), "Анонимное: Председатель, от которого вещь приобретает жуткую современность: еще родней" (Ibid., p.379). Thirdly, she links the feast with the myth of the dying god: "Ведь после гимна Чуме никакого Бога не было." (Ibid.) If we accept the link of the feast with Dionysian myth (in line with the tradition claiming that he was the Lord of souls who introduced the belief in immortality into Greece) we can understand Tsvetaeva's persistent claims that Pushkin received immortality through the hymn. It is necessary to explain the roots of this belief held by Tsvetaeva. The opinion that Dionysus introduced belief in immortality was expressed by E. Rohde in his book *Psyche*, given to Tsvetaeva by her friend Mark Slonim; there are several references to it in her correspondence with friends. The book *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* was known to her (most probably in

¹⁵ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton, 1973, p.113.

German) as early as 1924.¹⁶ Today Rohde's point of view is considered by classicists to be unfounded. Nevertheless, among the mystics Dionysus was associated with the Nether world, especially in the doctrines of the Orphics, in which he plays a significant role. There is strong evidence that Tsvetaeva was very interested in the Orphic mysteries and that is why her daughter called one of her publications about her mother "Samofrakiiskaia pobeda".¹⁷

In the light of the Orphic tradition we can see why Tsvetaeva made such a forceful point out of the presence of a song in a play: "И — дивные дела! [...] Вальсингам Пушкина от Чумы спасает — в песню", "Пока ты поэт, тебе гибели в стихии нет [...]" (S88, 2, pp.381-81). We can feel in these comments a certain kinship with Orpheus himself, whose music had an irresistible ability to constrain the rocks and trees and to overcome the powers of darkness. Tsvetaeva's play "Krysolov" (1925) was partly composed in accordance with the same tradition. In the poem "Dvukh stanov ne boets ..." mentioned above we come across one quotation, from Pushkin's poem "Poetu", which is used in a context directly linked to the Orpheus myth, although Tsvetaeva did not identify Pushkin openly with him. It seems that this analogy is assumed because Tsvetaeva persistently established kinship between her favourite poets and Orpheus. Thus, for instance, in the cycle devoted to Blok one poem suggests the obvious comparison between Blok and Orpheus; in a letter to Tesková (of 15.01.1927) she writes that Rilke is the German Orpheus who resurrected *this time* in Germany (PAT, p.48), and in a letter to Rilke (of 12.05.1926) there is an established bond between Blok, Pushkin and Orpheus:

[...] Пушкин, Блок и — чтобы сказать разом — Орфей —
никогда не может умереть, поскольку он умирает именно
теперь (вечно!).¹⁸

In this letter to Rilke Tsvetaeva compares her conflict with some of her critics to the myth about Orpheus and animals. The image of the

¹⁶ Marina Tsvetaeva, *Izbrannye pis'ma*, Paris, 1972, p.78; Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: Seelenkult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, 2 volumes, Tübingen, 1907.

¹⁷ A.Efron, "Samofrakiiskaia pobeda", *O Marine Tsvetaevoi*, op. cit., pp.224-32.

¹⁸ "Dykhaniye liriki. Iz perepiski R.-M.Ril'ke, M.Tsvetaevoi i B.Pasternaka v 1926 godu", *Druzhba narodov*, 1987, 7, p.251.

mythological singer, exploited so often in Tsvetaeva's work, was not a central figure in Russian Symbolism and post-Symbolism, though Glück's opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* found some response in their poetry. (This matter certainly requires a special study.) However, it is most likely that here Tsvetaeva was developing some of the ideas and views of V.Ivanov.

In the cycle devoted to V.Ivanov in 1920 Tsvetaeva called him Rabbi — in the same manner Jews addressed Jesus; moreover, the situation conveyed in the cycle "Viacheslavu Ivanovu" (S88, 1, pp.114-16) imitates the story from the Gospel depicting Jesus drawing on the sandy beach of the Sea of Galilee near the boat of his disciples. The whole cycle is permeated with analogies to St John's description of Jesus as a Rabbi.¹⁹ Tsvetaeva's cycle is written in the style of the Christianised reenactment of the Jewish Passover on the night of Holy Saturday. This was the feast of the Christian redemption effected by the Passion and Resurrection of Christ in combination, viewed as a single act.²⁰ In Ivanov's system of imagery a special role was played by the cult of Dionysus, who was regarded by the poet as the god of death and resurrection. According to Ivanov's ideas, Dionysus was considered to be the prototype of Christ. Ivanov tried to combine syncretically Christian and pagan symbols and images in his work, in the same manner as did other religious Symbolists. Thus, for example, Vladimir Solov'ev promoted the cult of the Virgin Mary which in his poetry merges with the love of a woman in a Sophiological light. In the poetry of Ivanov there is a presentation of mystical love which combines a Dionysiac essence with Christian aspects. This gave a new dimension in his poetic universe to the image of Dionysus: he was perceived by Ivanov not simply as a god of wine and mystical ecstasy but also as a god of suffering and sacrifice. For example, in "Cor Ardens" we come across the transformation of sinful Dionysiac passion into Christian mystery.²¹ It is important to bear this in mind when talking about Tsvetaeva's treatment of Orpheus: she embarked upon Ivanov's path to merge Dionysiac and Christian elements in her poetic imagery.

¹⁹ "The Gospel According to John", *The Holy Bible, The New Testament*, London, 1966, pp.86-101.

²⁰ E.O.James, *Seasonal Feasts and Festivals*, London, 1961, p.208.

²¹ See on this issue P.Davidson, *The poetic imagination of Vyacheslav Ivanov. A Russian Symbolist's perception of Dante*, Cambridge, 1989, pp.100-34.

However, Ivanov's image of Dionysus is replaced in Tsvetaeva's poetic code by the figure of the suffering singer — Orpheus. She also used this image as the archetypal poet. For instance, Pushkin in the play "Pir vo vremia chumy" himself sings his hymn (see above Tsvetaeva's identification of Pushkin with Walsingham); in the cycle of poems devoted to him, one poem proclaims Pushkin to be a singing leader; Blok is presented in Tsvetaeva's poems as a singer, though she overlooks the fact that there is a strong contrast in his writings between *poet* and *singer*.²² Tsvetaeva's interest in Orpheus was originally inspired by her friend Vladimir Nlender, who published (at the time of his infatuation with Tsvetaeva in 1910) his translations of Heraclitus' *Fragments* (this book was in her possession for many years and is now in the Tsvetaeva archive together with her numerous marginalia). He was a translator of Orphic verses too. Later Tsvetaeva wrote about him in the essay "Zhivoe o zhivom":

Об Орфее я впервые, ушами души, а не головы, услышала
от человека, которого — как тогда решила — первого
любила [...] (Р, р.235)

In 1921 Tsvetaeva applied this image to Blok whom she perceived as a contemporary Orpheus. Tsvetaeva used mythological sources in order to unite Dionysian and Christian elements while working on the cycle "Stikhi k Bloku". Thus, in a letter to E.O.Voloshina Tsvetaeva's daughter Alia wrote: "Мы с Мариной читаем мифологию [...] А Орфей похож на Блока: жалобный, камни трогающий".²³

There are two important aspects of Tsvetaeva's approach to Orpheus. First of all, his image represents Tsvetaeva's poetic synthesis of Christian and pagan symbols. (As pointed out above, Tsvetaeva embarked on the experiment which V.Ivanov had begun.) In the cycle dedicated to Blok, the application of this tendency is particularly striking: in one of the poems there is an analogy between Orpheus and Blok, while in other poems themes of resurrection and Easter prevail. Secondly, she is preoccupied in her writings with the *mythological* aspect of poetry. This outlook provides her

²² I. Smirnov, *Khudozhestvennyi smysl i evoliutsiia poeticheskikh sistem*, Moscow, 1977, p.58.

²³ Quoted from: Viktoriia Shveitser, *Byt i bytie Mariny Tsvetaevoi*, Paris, 1988, p.237.

with the opportunity to create poetry independent both politically and nationally. (At least that was Tsvetaeva's firm intention — see the poem "Dvukh stanov ne boets" mentioned above). With this view it is understandable why Tsvetaeva called any poetic work *translation*. In one of her letters to Rilke she proclaims that poetic art is translation from your native language into another one and that Orpheus destroys nationality or expands it to such an extent that all poets (those who are alive and those who are dead) fit into its framework.²⁴ Her interest in Orpheus as the archetypal poet was reinforced in her work by Rilke's "Sonnets to Orpheus". However, it would be appropriate to accept I. Rakusha's point of view, which claims that Tsvetaeva was using mystical and religious images not just to stylise her favourite poets but for her own religious stylisation (*samostilizatsiia*) as well.²⁵ She wanted to promote the ideal of a poet suggested by the Symbolists as a preacher or spiritual leader. In this sense Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's play is used in the pursuit of this idea. In accordance with her artistic logic, a poet by replacing an orthodox priest in this play provides others with mystical guidance of the same kind as offered by the followers of the Orphic or Dionysian tradition. We should not forget that her discourse on Pushkin's text is the part of the essay in which Tsvetaeva proclaims poems to be prayers to all gods at once. Following Ivanov's idea that sin leads to suffering, death and resurrection, she claims that all her Russian writings are sinful, though enchantment, the conquest of the elements, and death as a payment for historical oblivion are necessary features of the poetic mode created in her works. She perceived Pushkin's play as a myth, the framework of which can be applied to the life of Tsvetaeva and of her contemporaries — see the 1936 essay "Nezdeshnii vecher".

Before analysing "Nezdeshnii vecher" it should be mentioned that Tsvetaeva persistently overlooks several political implications of Pushkin's poetry. In her own life (as already noted by Rakusha) Tsvetaeva was a brilliant analyst of the historical situation, but with a few exceptions she chose in her writings to withdraw herself from it. Unlike Pushkin, who associated himself with the historical events of his time and was interested to a great extent in Russian history (as shown in many of his poetic

²⁴ See I. Rakusha, "Nad-natsional'nost' poeta: Tsvetaeva i Ril'ke", *Odna ili dve russkikh literatury?*, Lausanne, 1981, pp.35-36.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.36.

accounts), Tsvetaeva tried to perform the role of a priest on the battle-field. This role was given by her to Rilke, whom she compares to Malakovskii in the essay "Poet i vremia" (1932) claiming that Rilke is just as essential to our time as a priest on the battle-field — to pray for some here and some there, for the enlightenment of the living and for the forgiveness of the dead. (S88, 2, p.371.) She argues that the most contemporary poems are those which contain eternal themes in addition to characterising the present. In Tsvetaeva's view, the eternal context makes them relevant at any time. To prove this point Tsvetaeva refers to Pushkin's lyric "K moriu" — with its shades of Napoleon and Byron against the eternal background of the Ocean.

Tsvetaeva's strong orientation towards myth provides her with a perspective which allows her to value only the apocalyptic aspects of the present moment. Perhaps this outlook derives partly from the fact that the *decadence* in Russian culture survived for much longer than has yet been suggested by scholars — because of the revolution which destroyed the nation's culture and social establishment. In "Novogodnee" (1927), the long poem dedicated to Rilke, Tsvetaeva describes Russia as the world of dead souls. The Nether region was located in Russia: "На Руси бывал — тот свет на этом / Зрел [...]" (S88, 1, p.261.) Maybe the Orphic and Dionysian themes in the poetry of Tsvetaeva and her contemporaries were manifestations of the more significant myth in which Russia is turned into hell, the Nether world. Apart from the social aspects of this idea there were some mythological allusions, too. Thus Voloshin, in creating the poetic image of Kimmeria, claimed that the shores of the Crimea still witness Odysseus calling for the dead, and that Europe and Russia would come to an end — as did Greece and Genoa (see "Dom poeta" — 1926); or in the poem "Mednyi vsadnik" written after the first Russian revolution Vlacheslav Ivanov depicts the transformation of the Dionysian orgy into a vision of dead bodies all over the city. Almost in the same way Gumilev conveys his vision of Petrograd in "Zabludivshisia tramvai" (1918). Tsvetaeva creates a portrait of her contemporaries in Petrograd in 1916 using Pushkin's theme from "Pir vo vremia chumy". The final scene in her essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" (1936) recalls Ivanov's poem (mentioned above) as well.

Nevertheless, the main reason why Tsvetaeva used Pushkin's text for describing her own experience in 1916 lies in the philosophical background of "Pir vo vremia chumy". Lotman discusses this play in the same vein as did

Tsvetaeva, and draws the conclusion that Walsingham challenges the plague to fight because he has conquered his fear of it. In Lotman's view, "Председатель борется с чумой погружением в безудержную свободу, а Священник — призывом к нравственной ответственности. Но свобода и ответственность — две нераздельные стороны единого, и [...] борьба враждебных героев заканчивается не гибелью одного из них, а нравственным их примирением".²⁶ This point is strongly denied by Tsvetaeva: she proclaims Pushkin a genius for not creating any counterbalance to Walsingham's hymn. (S88, 2, p.379) She understands that the song of Walsingham is the most blasphemous act in the play — *khula na Boga* — but she shows in her essay that it was not Walsingham but Pushkin himself who overcame his fears and became master of his fate. In this Tsvetaeva's approach to Pushkin is very consistent. In the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova", written earlier, she portrayed Pushkin as a person who mastered his fate: he knew that his marriage might cause his death but he made his choice with dignity (this point was discussed in detail in chapter 3) and soberly — in order that the predictions would become true. For Tsvetaeva it was the most crucial feature of Pushkin's life.

In her analysis of the play she claims that prayer and God are placed outside the situation described in the text, in a space to which we are directed but also to which we are pushed by the Hymn to the Plague. On the one hand, such an interpretation derives from the fact that Tsvetaeva, unlike Lotman, does not forget that Pushkin's play is meant to be a tragedy albeit on a smaller scale. Tragedy as a genre includes conflict which cannot be resolved, and therefore there is no possibility of the interpenetration of two antagonistic philosophies suggested by Lotman. On the other hand, Tsvetaeva treats it as a tragic myth in the Dionysian form described in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Twilight of the Idols*. In order to prove this link it would be useful to compare Nietzsche's statements with similar ones in Tsvetaeva's commentary to "Pir vo vremia chumy". For example, Nietzsche characterises the concept of *tragic* as Dionysian: "The affirmation of life, even in its most unfamiliar and severe problems, the will to life, enjoying its own inexhaustibility in the sacrifice of its highest type — that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I divined as the bridge to a psychology of the *tragic* poet. Not in order to get rid of terror and pity, not to purify from a dangerous passion by its vehement discharge (it was thus

²⁶ Lotman, op. cit., p.25.

that Aristotle misunderstood it); but, beyond terror and pity, to realise in fact the eternal delight of becoming, that delight which even involves in itself the joy of annihilating."²⁷ Tsvetaeva describes the feelings of those present at Walsingham's feast and of readers with almost the same words: "мы [...] не в страхе Божьем растворяемся, а в блаженстве уничтожения" (S88, 2, p.379), "Блаженство полной отдачи стихии, будь то Любовь, Чума — или как их еще зовут" (Ibid., p.380). Placing the main conflict outside the text, Tsvetaeva not only makes Pushkin himself a hero of the tragedy, but gives her opinion that every reader of the play faces a choice: accept God's will or challenge it. In some ways Tsvetaeva, as we can see in her interpretation of Pushkin, made a path-breaking link between Nietzsche's philosophy and Russian existentialism (her friendship with Berdiaev, Gertsyk and Shestov indicates her interest in this field). Pushkin became for Tsvetaeva an example of a person whose biographical background allowed her to create a hero of a type who could subordinate his life to his will. Moreover, it became important for Tsvetaeva not just to look at his life as a model for her own poetic fate but also to use his principle as a symbol of the writer's independence in the heavily politicised atmosphere of the twentieth century. Tsvetaeva's preoccupation with individual freedom is in line with what we today identify as Existentialism. It would be useful to outline some of the main features of this movement in order to prove that Tsvetaeva perceived Pushkin's life and work in the light of existentialist concepts.

First of all, all the philosophers who belong to this tradition emphasise that all human beings should choose and act. One of their main points is the "claim that man [...] is open to a future which he determines by his choices and actions; he is free".²⁸ In their view, man makes himself what he is by his choices, choices of way of life. Secondly, Existentialism highlighted human behaviour in so-called limit situations such as death, struggle, guilt etc. And most of all it stressed the importance of individual freedom and aversion to conformism and whatever impairs human freedom.²⁹

All the existentialist notions listed above can be found in Tsvetaeva's essay "Nezdesnii vecher". Thus, describing a party of fellow poets in

²⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, tr. Wm. A. Haussmann, London, 1910, p.193.

²⁸ *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume 4, London, 1989, p.631.

²⁹ Ibid., p.632.

Petersburg in 1916, Tsvetaeva writes that it took place at the beginning of January — "начало последнего года старого мира", "Разгар войны. Темные силы" (S88, 2, p.118). Despite these events, those present that evening were concerned only with poetry. In Tsvetaeva's view, this poetry reading was equivalent to a political act, a protest against the course of history, a proclamation of the individual's freedom to choose his own way of life. The price of the political oblivion chosen was high; as Tsvetaeva admitted, later on Akhmatova lost everyone, Gumilev paid with his life for this act (as did Esenin and Kannegiser); as for Kuzmin, Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva herself, they became prisoners inside themselves for life. The allusion to Pushkin's "Pir vo vremia chumy" in the last passage of Tsvetaeva's essay is quite significant:

Завтра Ахматова теряла всех, Гумилев — жизнь.

Но сегодня вечер был наш!

Пир во время Чумы? Да. Но те пировали — вином и розами, мы же — бесплотно, чудесно, как чистые духи — уже призраки Аида — словами: звуком слов и живой кровью чувств. (Ibid.)

If we read these words in the context of Pushkin's text as suggested by Tsvetaeva, we could reveal her message to readers: the most valuable thing for the author is personal freedom which gives him the right to make an independent choice. It is remarkable that at the same time Shestov wrote a book which was full of the same pathos of freedom.³⁰ It was perceived by Berdiaev as part of the struggle "против власти „общего“ над человеческой жизнью".³¹ Earlier in the essay Tsvetaeva mentions the fact that at this evening she read a poem devoted to her beloved Germany, which in the circumstances could have been regarded as extremely unpatriotic and immoral. Yet such ethical voluntarism was also a significant feature of the existentialists. Undoubtedly, Pushkin's play "Pir vo vremia chumy" was most appealing to the existentialistically minded Tsvetaeva. As Lotman has pointed out, Pushkin subdued the theomachistic motif of Wilson's play and the theme of rebellion against the power of the Plague (portrayed by

³⁰ Léon Chestov, *Kierkegaard et la philosophie existentielle*, Paris, 1936.

³¹ Nikolai Berdiaev, "Lev Shestov i Kirkegor", in his *Tipy religioznoi mysli v Rossii, Sobranie sochinenii*, 3, Paris, 1989, p.398.

Pushkin as a universal force):

Веселье пира — бунт. Но бунт этот лишь косвенно
направлен против Бога, основной его смысл — непризнание
власти Чумы, бунт против Страха. ³²

However, the passage discussed above can also be approached from a different angle. If we try to decipher Tsvetaeva's mythological codes, our understanding of the text can be greatly enriched. First of all, the episode of the feast, which in Tsvetaeva's essay took place in winter, can be seen as the archetype of winter prevalent in Russian post-Symbolism and associated with the theme of a dying God. After all the very theme of the feast in Pushkin's and Tsvetaeva's work could be linked in accordance with European cultural tradition to the Eucharist. In the context of the Russian cultural tradition, historical events are often interpreted by writers in mythological terms, which are usually taken from Greek or Christian mythology. In 1916 Tsvetaeva created most of her poems about Aleksandr Blok who was forced to die betrayed but who would shortly resurrect; in 1916 Blok was still alive. Nonetheless, in 1941 Tsvetaeva was asked by Lidia Chukovskaia how she could possibly have foreseen Blok's death in 1916. The poet's reply was that Blok's own poems were full of such predictions. ³³

Tsvetaeva's words above on Blok tempt us to apply the same approach to her own essay. The leitmotif of the essay "And all of them died, died, died" is taken by the author from Turgenev's famous elegy in prose "Kak khoroshi, kak svezhi byli rozy". This reference to elegy brings into the text a very important feeling of the lyrical depiction of events. Elegy as a genre conveys an author's discourse upon his own fate, or represents a song of lamentation, especially for the dead. In this sense Tsvetaeva's attempt to recreate this genre in prose echoes Pushkin's poems related to the motif of the feast when he grieves for his friends who have died. Again as in Pushkin's poems we see Tsvetaeva's presentiment of her own death. (As seen above, she links Pushkin's life cycle with her own: for example, making a point that the plague occurred again — a hundred and one years after

³² Iu. Lotman, "Tipologicheskaja kharakteristika realizma pozdnego Pushkina", op. cit., p.144.

³³ Lidia Chukovskaia, "Predsmertie", in: Marina Tsvetaeva, *Stikhotvorenija i poemy v platf tomakh*, New York, 3, 1980, pp.394-416.

Pushkin's symbolic description of the cholera outbreak in Russia.) Secondly, bearing in mind Tsvetaeva's poetic techniques, and especially her preoccupation with the etymological explorations of words, we can try to reveal all the hidden subtexts of the essay.

Thus, in the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti", Tsvetaeva exploits all the meanings of the word *plague*, including one which was already forgotten by her contemporaries — "divine punishment". In Russian the title of Pushkin's play "Pir vo vremia chumy" became used in the twentieth century as a figurative idiomatic expression for describing a joyful gathering at a time of social distress.³⁴ Tsvetaeva pinpoints this idiom in her essay "Nezdeshnii vecher". Furthermore, being much more concerned than Pushkin with word etymology, Tsvetaeva merges in the essay the words *pir* (feast) and *upoenie* (rapture). In her essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" Tsvetaeva describes the gathering of poets as a feast being transformed into rapture. The key words of her description of the poetry recital are *bliss* and *divine sounds*. Originally the Russian word *upoenie* derived from the the word *pit'* (to drink), which also forms the stem for the word *pir*. However, in the essay Tsvetaeva emphasises that she and her fellow-poets celebrated not with wine and roses, but with the *sound of words* and the *living blood of emotions* (*zvukom slov i zhivolu krov'iu chuvstv*) contrasting *divine sounds* to *boring mundane songs* (she borrows these expressions from Lermontov's poem "Angel"). Pushkin mentions not roses, but the *girl-rose* ("i devy-rozy p'em dykhan'e"); the latter image most probably derives from the symbolic Christian association between roses and the Virgin Mary. Meanwhile, Tsvetaeva's image is related to the theme of martyrdom because in Christian mythology the red rose symbolizes the martyr's blood. Thus, Tsvetaeva evokes the image of red blood when she claims that the feast was celebrated with the living blood of passions. (Ibid., p.118.)

The final passage of Tsvetaeva's essay seems to paraphrase a Greek description of a race living in the North (beyond the Black Sea), called *Hyperboreans* by the Greeks. Tsvetaeva's portrayal of the poets in "Nezdeshnii vecher" recalls the story about the Hyperboreans in Karamzin's *Istoriia gosudarstva rossiiskogo* (volume 1, chapter 1). Karamzin claimed northern Russia to be the land inhabited by this people. This myth was revived by the Acmeists themselves, whose periodical was given the title

³⁴ N. M. Shanskii, *Opyt etimologicheskogo slovaria*, Moscow, 1987, p.105.

Giperborei. Vasilii Gipplus, for example, recalls the Friday gatherings at the periodical's editorial office in his poem 'Po platnitsam v "Giperboree"', in which he calls it "a bloom of literary roses" (*rastsvet literaturnykh roz*).³⁵ Among those who attended these gatherings Gipplus highlighted Lozinskii, Gumilev, Akhmatova and Mandel'shtam. It is important to bear in mind that Tsvetaeva associated these poets with Kuzmin (like many of her contemporaries she saw links between the Acmeists and Kuzmin — this view was expressed, for instance, by Zhirmunskii in his article "Preodolevshie simvolizm"). That is why she felt the presence of Akhmatova and Gumilev at the party when they were in fact not there.

The atmosphere of the evening, which is described in "Nezdeshnii vecher" as inspiring, ecstatic, etc., can be fully assessed only against the background of Karamzin's paraphrase of the Greek legend about the Hyperboreans. Karamzin wrote that the Greeks' magnificent imagination, fancying pleasant dreams, created Hyperboreans who are quite good-hearted and reside in the North [...] enjoying a happy life in peaceful and joyful countries, where storms and sufferings are unknown; where mortals drink the nectar and dew from flowers and live blissfully for several centuries, and when they satisfy their thirst for life throw themselves into the sea.³⁶ Bearing in mind Tsvetaeva's tendency to transform temporal categories into spatial ones, we can see how this principle was realised in the title given to the essay — "Nezdeshnii vecher". On the one hand, this title echoes that of Kuzmin's collection of poems *Nezdeshnie vechera*. On the other hand, there are further textual links with the Greek legend mentioned above. It seems that Tsvetaeva extends her etymological explorations at the literary level: she traces the origin of the literary motif related to *feast* back to Karamzin's description of the Greek legend about the Hyperboreans. Therefore, Tsvetaeva creates a correspondence between the real event of January 1916 and the last feast of the Hyperboreans. It is mentioned in Karamzin's book that they died indifferently when life had lost its charm for

³⁵ Vasilii Gipplus, 'Po platnitsam v "Giperboree"', in: Anna Akhmatova, *V plati knigakh*, [1], *Desiatye gody*, Compiled and annotated by R.D.Timenchik and K.M.Polivanov; with an afterword by R.D.Timenchik, Moscow, 1989, pp.80-82.

³⁶ N.M.Karamzin, *Istoriia Gosudarstva Rossiiskogo*, vol.1, Moscow, 1988, p.137.

them, giving a feast to friends and relatives before throwing themselves into the sea. This fact is discussed by many classical authors and mythologies. Thus, Grimal also describes the Hyperboreans' tradition of committing suicide: "When the old people considered that they had had a good life they threw themselves joyously into the sea from a high cliff with their heads garlanded with flowers and found a happy end in the waves".³⁷ That is why Lermontov's words are used by Tsvetaeva at the end of "Nezdeshnii vecher" in order to introduce the theme of disillusion with life; it fits exactly into the framework of the myth about the Hyperboreans.

Taking into consideration all the observations mentioned above, we can outline one major feature of Tsvetaeva's artistic vision: all the events of real life take place in two spatial dimensions, viz. temporal and mythological. Following the Symbolists' philosophical division of the world into the *mundane* (false, in their view) and the *divine* (real) world, she opposes existence to being. Also Tsvetaeva's essay can be seen in some ways as a political statement: as an act of unwillingness on her part and on the part of her fellow poets to give up their freedom and independence. Blok's article "Intelligentsia i revoliutsia" reflected upon the division of the Russian intelligentsia caused by their attitude to the revolution. As to Tsvetaeva, she persistently proclaimed her sympathy with the vanishing race of Russian aristocrats whom she perceived somehow in an idealised way — modelling them on Pushkin's contemporaries (the Decembrists and the heroes of the war of 1812 against Napoleon).

Thus, in poems such as "Gerolam dvenadtsatogo goda", "Novogodniata (1)" devoted to Sergei Efron, and "Otsam", the main criterion proclaimed by her in the assessment of Russian aristocrats (more accurately, aristocrats in Tsvetaeva's sense should be called *intelligentsia*) is their moral superiority over others. Thus, in the questionnaire to which Tsvetaeva responded in 1926, she stated that she was a *dvorianka*, although from the technical point of view that was not correct. To clarify her idealised image of the Russian aristocracy it would be useful to recall some notes from Tsvetaeva's diary devoted to the death of Prince Stakhovich, who committed suicide by hanging himself. Tsvetaeva outlines the ability of this type of person to die in a noble manner as heroic; she even chose French (the first language of the Russian aristocracy) to express it: "Pas de savoir vivre sans savoir mourir. Il

³⁷ Pierre Grimal, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, tr. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, Oxford, 1987, p.221.

n'y a pas que le savoir vivre, il y a le savoir mourir." (S88, 2, p.291) In another passage she characterises Stakhovich's nature as *stoiko-epikureiskaia*; these features — stoicism and epicureanism — Tsvetaeva outlines in the behaviour of Pushkin and the Russian heroes of the Napoleonic wars (for example, in her poem "Gerolam dvenadtsatogo goda" — Neizdannoe, pp.23-24), and in her writings devoted to White army officers. It is no coincidence that in one of the stanzas of her poem "Novogodniata (1)" there is a parallel between Del'vig and Pushkin touching their glasses at the feast and Tsvetaeva (the assumed lyric hero of the poem) touching her glass with White army officers in Prague in 1922 (most of whom later formed the Eurasian organisation). The motif of the feast in her poetry, therefore, brings together different generations of the same tribe functioning as a kind of baptism ritual. Traditionally, too, feasts were occasionally used by many illegal political or masonic societies as rituals for accepting new members. Thus, Tsvetaeva's reference to Pushkin in "Novogodniata (1)" and "Nezdesnii vecher" establishes not only a cultural tradition between two generations of the Russian intelligentsia but also a political tradition through continuity in behaviour.

Moreover, where she refers to Sudakov's words about Stakhovich, Tsvetaeva claims that his phrase was expressed in her own, Tsvetaevan, language. Sudakov called Stakhovich's death a lesson in courage and good manners. He died in March 1919, but in 1936 Tsvetaeva would apply the same words to her description of Pushkin's death at the beginning of her autobiographical essay "Moi Pushkin". In her essay "Nezdesnii vecher" the deaths of Gumilev, Esenin and Kannegiser should all be regarded in the context of Tsvetaeva's ideas mentioned above. In other words, she considers the denial of the Soviet régime and resistance to it as a heroic deed, a moral duty, which should be performed by true Russians who belong to Russian culture either by origin or by their devotion to it. Vladimir Veidle highlighted the following events in Russian cultural history claiming that Blok's death was an omen: within three weeks of it Gumilev was killed as a political enemy of the state; this act represented the murder of a poetry disagreeable to the Russian revolution. In Veidle's view, Esenin's suicide symbolised the death of the revolutionary dream — however impossible that seemed — of the Russian peasantry betrayed by the revolution of 1917.³⁸ Tsvetaeva's historical perception was identical to Veidle's. Her mention of

³⁸ V. Veidle, *O poetakh i poezii*, Paris, 1973, p.14.

the Peter and Paul fortress in relation to herself and to Akhmatova and Kuzmin proves this point. She calls their imprisonment within themselves "пожизненное заключение в самих себя, в этой крепости" (at the end of "Nezdeshnii vecher"). This fortress in St Petersburg was well known as a prison for political prisoners. Therefore, the withdrawal from political life and from publishing in Soviet Russia by Kuzmin, Tsvetaeva and Akhmatova was seen by Tsvetaeva as noble acts of "passive" resistance to the regime. Also, in the light of Tsvetaeva's modelling of a heroic type of Russian character, it does not look surprising that in "Nezdeshnii vecher" Kuzmin was described as drinking tea in the same manner as André Chenier. She claims that "так в Консьержерии из оловянной кружки пил наимужественнейший поэт Андрей Шенье [...]" (S88, 2, p.107.) All the details of this description are strictly chosen by Tsvetaeva in order to create a portrait with a very significant semantic meaning. In the poem "Novogodniata" mentioned above, the participants in the White army party drink champagne from lead cups too. Tsvetaeva always linked the White army movement with the events of the royalists' resistance in the Vendée. (Inscribing, for instance, a book of her verses to Mirskii, she wrote: "На память о нашей Вандее".)

There is one more reference to Pushkin's text in "Nezdeshnii vecher", which is again linked to the motif of rebellion. At the beginning of the essay Tsvetaeva creates a visual impression of Kuzmin: his eyes were shining like two planets in a snowstorm. The description of the storm dominates the introduction. Later in the text Tsvetaeva claims that all of those present that evening vanished in this snowstorm, underlining its significance in the story as a fatal force. Tsvetaeva's description of the storm and those eyes could be regarded to some extent as a paraphrase of Pushkin's "Kapitanskaja dochka", chapter 2, entitled "Vozhatyi". In Pushkin's story Grinev thinks of a fierce snowstorm as an animate object. Tsvetaeva goes further, comparing it to "a spinning top" or to "a child going round and round". (S88, 2, p.106.) Pushkin's image of the snowstorm also suggests such an interpretation. In the poem "Buria mglolu nebo kroet...", the snowstorm is compared to a weeping child.

The snow scene in "Kapitanskaja dochka" recalls Pushkin's poem "Besy". It is useful to compare the two texts:

[...]

Сил нам нет кружиться доле;

Колокольчик вдруг умолк;

Кони стали... „Что там в поле?“ —

„Кто их знает? пень иль волк?“ ("Besy", Pushkin, 1, p.476)

[...] Вдруг увидел я что-то черное. [...] Ямщик стал всматриваться. „А бог знает, барин, — сказал он, садясь на свое место, — воз не воз, дерево не дерево, а кажется, что шевелится. Должны быть, или волк, или человек“. ("Kapitanskaja dochka", Pushkin, 3, p.238)

As N. K. Gel has pointed out, the *snowstorm* in Pushkin's writings (including *Povesti Belkina*) represents chaos, the uncontrolled elements. Moreover, the scholar outlines the metaphysical conflict between man and chaos, between life and death, as very prevalent in Pushkin's work.³⁹ Therefore, Tsvetaeva's understanding of it is correct — although, in her French version of Pushkin's *Besy*, this conflict is expressed in the hyperbolised juxtaposition of *inhuman forces* and a *human heart*. Thus, in "Nezdesnii vecher", the Russian revolution is shown to be part of this uncontrolled chaos; historical conflict is perceived by Tsvetaeva at the metaphysical level, too.

Another striking reference to the chapter "Vozhatyi" is Kuzmin's portrait in "Nezdesnii vecher". The significant portrayal of his eyes has been mentioned above. However, Tsvetaeva talks about the impression made on her by Kuzmin's poem "Zaryta shpagoi ne lopatoi Manon Lesko..." allegedly read to her by a bearded flancé. These two features — eyes and beard — merged semantically in a deliberately confusing conversation with Kuzmin. This is not a coincidence. It was mentioned above that the beginning of Tsvetaeva's essay contains a concealed reference to "Kapitanskaja dochka". In Pushkin's story Grinev's first impression of Pugachev is devilish. Grinev remembered seeing first a black beard and two sparkling eyes. Tsvetaeva's encounter with Kuzmin is an obvious repetition of the same situation.

Moreover, Tsvetaeva's hyperbolised description of Kuzmin's eyes is linked to folk tradition. In Slav folk stories there was a tendency to merge heretics with vampires and demons. Some stories told of the eyes of

³⁹ N. K. Gel, *Proza Pushkina*, Moscow, 1989, pp.19–21.

heretics which functioned like those of fully-fledged vampires.⁴⁰ (Afanas'ev even claims that in Germany and Russia there was a belief that the open eyes of a corpse can draw someone into the grave.) In connection with this tradition it would be useful to recall the passage when Tsvetaeva, in "Nezdesnii vecher", talks of the frightening look of the bearded groom – in relation to Kuzmin's poem about Manon Lescaut (mentioned above). If we bear in mind that Kuzmin's poem was dedicated to Nikolai Gumilev, then it becomes clear why Tsvetaeva's essay is permeated with subtexts of a political nature: her mythologised images of heretics fit the traditional folk description of them as vampires. Therefore, writing about her fellow poets in 1936, Tsvetaeva persistently wanted to promote the image of courageous counter-revolutionary rebels – heretics in the context of the Soviet regime. That is why she commented on the poem mentioned above: "И какой в этом восхитительный, всего старого мира – вызов [...]" (S88, 2, p.107). Somehow she associated all the virtues of the Russian and French aristocracies with eighteenth century admiration for the combination of moral principles and Baroque high style and outlook. Also Tsvetaeva was still writing about the White army in a rather idealised manner in the 1920s and thirties (such writings as "Perekop" and "Sibir/" promised to be new Russian epic poems, but due to many unfortunate circumstances they remained unfinished). Tsvetaeva shared with Kuzmin a fascination with the Old Believers, who always perceived Russian historical development in an apocalyptic way. Therefore, she depicted the last feast with him in a symbolic way, outlined its suicidal nature (see the reference, above, to the Hyperboreans). Applying it to the context of Tsvetaeva we can see that her contemporaries rejected life either by seeking death or by withdrawing themselves from it. In the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" Tsvetaeva invites her readers to express their free will and die from plague joyously – as foliage indulges in the rain. (S88, 2, p.380.) Therefore, images such as *snowstorm*, *rain*, *sea*, and *water* as general elements are associated in Tsvetaeva's artistic system not only with chaos, but also with the human origin. However, death in Tsvetaeva's view crowns the period of moral and spiritual ascent. Thus real aristocrats abandoned the mundane world to mould their spiritual stoicism. Tsvetaeva's reference to Kuzmin's eyes as two burning diamonds, two mirrors of the Underworld and

⁴⁰ J. Felix Oinas, *Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology*, Columbus, Ohio, 1985, pp.122-26.

some allusions to "Vozhatyi" show us her perception of Kuzmin as a spiritual leader who revived Pushkin's traditions in Russian poetry in the true sense. Using Zhirmunskii's words, Kuzmin started to revive in Russian literature Pushkin's consideration for the precise meaning of words, restoring not only clarity but also Pushkin's light-heartedness. His poem "Pushkin" can be seen as his self-portrait, and Tsvetaeva identified her image of Pushkin (as she pointed out in "Nezdesnii vecher") with Kuzmin's.

It is useful, therefore, to recall Kuzmin's poem "Pushkin" in order to outline some aspects of Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin's personality:

Он жив! у всех душа нетленна,
Но он особенно живёт!
Благоговейно и блаженно
Вкушаем вечной жизни мёд.
Пленительны и полнозвучны,
Текут родимые слова...
Как наши выдумки докучны
И новизна как не нова!
Но в совершенства хладный камень,
Его черты нельзя замкнуть:
Бежит, горя, летучий пламень,
Взволнованно вздымая грудь.

Он — жрец и он весёлый малый,
Пророк и страстный человек,
Но в смене чувства небывалой
К одной черте направлен бег.
Москва и лик Петра победный,
Деревня, Моцарт и Жуан,
И мрачный Герман. Всадник Медный
И наше солнце, наш туман!
Романтик, классик, старый, новый?
Он — Пушкин, и бессмертен он!
К чему же школьные оковы
Тому, кто сам себе закон?⁴¹

Tsvetaeva, like Kuzmin, highlighted the volitive aspects of Pushkin's

⁴¹ Mikhail Kuzmin, *Stikhi i proza*, Moscow, 1989, pp.97-98.

personality and his ability to enjoy life and suffering. That is why the merging of the Kuzmin and Pushkin subtexts in the essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" illustrates very well Tsvetaeva's preoccupation with the Dionysian tradition as she embarked upon the moulding of her own image as a poet.

Из стран, откуда нет возврата,
Через года он бросил мост,
И если в нём признаем брата,
Он не обидится: он прост
И он живой. Живая шутка
Живит арапские уста,
И смех, и звон, и прибаутка
Влекут в бывалые места.
Так полон голос милой жизни,
Такою прелестью живим,
Что слышим мы в печальной тризне
Дыханье светлых именин.⁴²

Kuzmin wrote this poem in 1921. Tsvetaeva recalled it in 1936. Her cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" which appeared in 1931 contains a similar approach to Pushkin's personality. I link this approach to neo-Baroque tendencies in the poetics of the Russian avant-garde. In contrast to the highly philosophical and religious trend in Russian Symbolism, there is a certain light-heartedness which both Kuzmin and Tsvetaeva outlined as the most essential characteristic of the poet. Commenting on Kuzmin's poem "Pushkin" in the essay "Nezdeshnii vecher", Tsvetaeva claims that her vision of the poet coincides with that of Kuzmin:

„Открываю дальше: Пушкин — мой Пушкин, то, что всегда
говорю о нём я“. (S88, 2, p.117)

⁴² Ibid., p.98.

CHAPTER 5

Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin" in the light of her poetics. Tsvetaeva's model of the poet's fate based on Pushkin's life.

Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin" was written in 1937. It is one of her last major works and crowns, together with "Pushkin i Pugachev", the large corpus of her works relating to Pushkin. It is the most significant of Tsvetaeva's autobiographical writings. Written at the end of her literary career, it demonstrates very vividly her writing technique, which developed into mature post-Symbolist poetics. It is difficult to define the technique more specifically, because so far Tsvetaeva's poetics have not been well enough studied. However, in my view, the technique can be classified, in a broad sense, as Futurist¹, despite the fact that Tsvetaeva did not identify herself with any of the poetic schools existing at her time. In some ways, the technique can also be called neo-Baroque. This will be demonstrated by my analysis of Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's life and writings as expressed in "Moi Pushkin".

1. Tsvetaeva's use of Pushkin's life for creating a model of the poetic fate.

The theme of a personal fate was highlighted both in the art of Russian Futurism and in Baroque culture. Thus, for example, the Russian seventeenth-century tale "Povest' o Gore-Zlochastii" exposed personal fate as an embodiment of the first sin, the guilt of the human race as a whole. The tale retells the Biblical story of Adam and Eve, who procreated the whole race of rebellious, disobedient people. And as a result:

И за то на них Господь Бог разгневался,—
положил их в напасти великия,
попустил на них скорби великия [...]
все смиряючи нас, наказуя
и приводя нас на спасенный путь.¹

¹ *Plamennoe slovo. Proza i poezila Drevnei Rusi*, Moscow, 1978, p.352.

The same idea was conveyed in several of Tsvetaeva's works, and most vividly in her long poem "Poema kontsa", when an allusion to Eve is brought into the description of doomed love (ch.9). Another idea prevalent in Baroque art is the metaphorical perception of life as a game of chess, in which a person is often defeated by coincidental forces. The same idea appears in Pasternak's "Marburg" and in Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh's "Igra v adu". In the poetry of the Baroque writer Belobotskii it is depicted explicitly: "Шахом небо хочешь взять, / мат ты скоро в аде будет"². This metaphor was used in "Poema kontsa" mentioned above:

Ведь шахматные же пешки!
И кто-то играет в нас.

In the essay "Moi Pushkin" we can trace the same principles: Pushkin's fate turns out to be for Tsvetaeva an embodiment of a personal and a poetic fate, and the allusion to life as a chess game permeates the text (although it is expressed through the persistent contrasting of black and white). I. Smirnov has pinpointed the presence of the game aspect in both cultures, Russian Futurism and Baroque, in both of which it functions as an important artistic device: "[...] игровое начало было запечатлено в разнообразных нарушениях логики здравого смысла".³

At the same time personal fate became an artistic device in Post-Symbolist art, too. Viktor Shklovskii wrote in 1922 about Akhmatova's book *Anno Domini* as follows: "Человеческая судьба стала художественным приемом".⁴ Furthermore, as has been discussed by many scholars writing about post-Symbolism, the role of the subject in Russian Futurist poetry is anti-social. In west European Baroque literature, this principle corresponds to the depiction of madness used as a mask by such characters as Hamlet or Don Quixote. Therefore, it is fruitful to analyse Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin" in the light of Futurist and Baroque artistic concepts.

First of all, it is important to point out Tsvetaeva's determination to start the text with the mention of a mystery and Pushkin's duel:

² Quoted from: I. Smirnov, *Khudozhestvennyi smysl i evoliutsiia poeticheskikh sistem*, Moscow, 1977, p.131.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Viktor Shklovskii, *Gamburgskii schet, Stat'i—Vospominaniia—Esse (1914—1933)*, Moscow, 1990, p.143.

В красной комнате был тайный шкаф.

Но до тайного шкафа было другое. была картина в спальне матери — „Дуэль“. (Р, р.17)

Tsvetaeva's discourse on Pushkin's death brings into the text a significant image of the wounded stomach which, as Tsvetaeva claims in the essay, she perceived throughout her life as something sacred. Moreover, in her view, all poets are wounded in the stomach. If we go back to her "Poema kontsa", written much earlier, this wound is inherited by the heroine of the poem from Eve. Thus Tsvetaeva talks of poets as punished rebels. As will be shown in analysis of the essay below, Tsvetaeva makes a strong point out of it, underlining Pushkin's outrageousness.

Secondly, Tsvetaeva talks about Pushkin in terms of his influence upon her personal life. Her own life and childhood, in particular, are used in the text as a major artistic device. Meanwhile we can apply to "Moi Pushkin" Khodasevich's words on Tsvetaeva's autobiographical essay "Mat' i muzyka". He claims that in subject matter this is part of an autobiography, but in execution, in the solution of the tasks which the author had undoubtedly set up for herself, these are not memoirs, because in the foreground we have a psychological pattern which is of interest in itself, without regard to the historical and literary personality of the memoirist.⁵ This observation is extremely valuable in the light of the approach to Tsvetaeva's text presented here. According to Khodasevich, there is an impersonal psychological pattern in Tsvetaeva's autobiographical prose. This seems to contradict the title given by Tsvetaeva to her essay on Pushkin — "Moi Pushkin". However, the result of Tsvetaeva's intention is different. Tsvetaeva created a symbolic model, an emblem out of Pushkin's fate which is more in line with the Baroque æsthetic principle of *representation*.

The other point supporting a definition of the psychological pattern created in the essay as impersonal, and its links with Baroque art, is the fact that Tsvetaeva refers to herself as a part of a family group: "Нас этим выстрелом всех в живот ранили" (Р, р.17). In other words, treating Pushkin's duel as myth she replaces Pushkin himself by inserting the pronoun *us*. In the essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" Tsvetaeva characterises herself as a surviving representative of the last poetic aristocratic movement in

⁵ V. Khodasevich, "Knigi i liudi", *Vozrozhdenie*, Paris, 1935, №3592, 4 April, p.3.

Russia which had been destroyed by the October revolution. In the poem "Pokolen'iu s siren'iu..." (from the cycle "Otsam", 1935) she makes the statement: "Поколение! Я — ваша! — продолжение зеркал". Therefore, Tsvetaeva's references in "Moi Pushkin" to *us* are not a coincidence, and indicate the existence of the artistic persona in relation to others. In some ways it is possible to say that in the literature of Russian Futurism and of Baroque, as well as in Tsvetaeva's writings, there is a principle of social groups and families; this principle was also reflected in architectural forms. Further, the image of the *mirror* was prevalent in Baroque art because person and detail were considered to be the embodiment of the whole, universal reality.

If we apply all the main categories of the European Baroque (*system, centralisation, extension and movement*) to Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin", we can understand its structure to a large extent. And the structural analyses can help us decipher its meaning, which cannot be fully understood by treating Tsvetaeva's prose as merely autobiographical.

It is beyond the limits of this work to analyse certain similarities between the Baroque period and Russian Post-Symbolism. However, it would be useful to outline some of them in order to shed light on Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's life. In the seventeenth century the artist rarely possessed originality, although he had to choose between alternatives. By contrast, Post-Symbolist artists appear to be highly original and innovative in their formal expression. Meanwhile, their orientation towards high allusiveness and quotation resembles the referential character of Baroque art. The spirit of this age can be called pluralistic, in spite of the monistic perception of life expressed in belief in either absolute truth or in absolute monarchy by divine right. Artistic systems of the seventeenth century had an open and dynamic character. Thus for example in architectural designs, patterns could be infinitely extended from a fixed point.

The other important principle in Baroque art is *persuasion*. It aimed to make its form of life visible or manifest. Persuasion has *participation* as its goal. The Baroque world may be characterized as a great theatre where everybody was assigned a particular role. Such participation presupposes *imagination*, a faculty which is educated by means of art. Therefore Baroque art focused its attention on vivid images of situations, real or surreal, rather than on history. At the same time, the world was perceived by artists

of this age as a system of analogies. However, an artist was in full control over the realization of effects and the creation of certain emotional models or psychological patterns. In music such patterns were called *rhetorical figures*.⁶ In spite of the different preconditions of Baroque and Futurism, their artistic structures were based on the same principle: the mixture of items and ideograms. This was due to the fact that these two movements transform temporal categories into spatial ones. Smirnov characterises this tendency as the *overcoming of time*. He has also pointed to the fact that the poets of the Baroque and Futurism were convinced that it would be quite possible to overcome physical time through speed, ruptures and revolution on the historical axis.⁷ Thus, such categories as *before* and *after* replace each other in the art of Baroque and Futurism: *palindrome* becomes the most common device, signifying the reverse of time in the spatial categories of a text.

In the light of the artistic principles discussed above, Tsvetaeva's reference to Pushkin's duel at the beginning of "Moi Pushkin" can be treated as a palindrome. For Tsvetaeva, Pushkin's death is not the end of his life in the spatial dimensions of the text, because all the temporal categories are distorted. Tsvetaeva starts her essay with the description of Naumov's painting "Duel' Pushkina", and later on she switches into discussing real biographical details of the poet's life. As was discussed above there is, for Baroque and Futurist art, a typical principle of the replacement of artistic ideas, or ideograms, and details of the empiric world. Furthermore, the situation is transformed into a rhetorical figure:

С тех пор, да, с тех пор, как Пушкина на моих глазах на картине Наумова — убили, ежедневно, ежечасно, непрерывно убивали всё моё младенчество, детство, юность, — я поделила мир на поэта — и всех, и выбрала — поэта, в подзащитные выбрала поэта: защищать — поэта — от всех, как бы эти все ни одевались и ни назывались. (P, p.18)

Further, Tsvetaeva talks about two other paintings in her parents' house, which for her represent parts of the same symbolic model of the world. Apart from the painting "Duel' Pushkina" by A. Naumov, she mentions

⁶ On Baroque music see an interesting article by M. N. Lobanova, "Printsipy reprezentatsii v poetike baroko", *Kontekst 1988*, Moscow, 1989, pp.208-47.

⁷ Smirnov, op. cit., p.121.

two more works: "Iavlenie Khrista narodu" by A.Ivanov and a lesser known painting which Tsvetaeva calls "Tatary":

Два убийства и одно явление. И все три были страшные, непонятные, угрожающие, и крещение с никогда не виденными чёрными кудрявыми орлоносими голыми людьми и детьми, так заполнившими реку, что капли воды не осталось, было не менее страшное тех двух, — и все они отлично готовили ребёнка к предназначенному ему страшному веку. (P, 18)

From the first glance at the text it seems unclear why Tsvetaeva passionately promotes her idea about the necessity to protect the poet from others. In the context of the essay we can deduce that by *others* Tsvetaeva meant philistines, bureaucrats and so on, who are called in Pushkin's own poetry *chern'*. Tsvetaeva's semantic definitions of black and white will be discussed below. Meanwhile, in the light of the first paragraphs of the essay in which Tsvetaeva etymologically links such words as *chern'*, *chernoe delo* and *chernyi*, we can see that there is a certain mythological mode or rhetorical figure. Describing Naumov's painting, Tsvetaeva transforms Pushkin's duel into a symbol:

[...] на белизне снега совершается черное дело:
вечно черное дело убийства поэта — чернью. (P, p.18)

As was pointed out above, Tsvetaeva persistently uses the Baroque metaphor that "life is a chess game". The black colour here stands for the dark forces of being.

It is important to note Tsvetaeva's merging of three paintings as the realization of the common Baroque principle of linking ideas or notions from different spheres. It is not just paronomasia, which Karlinsky considers to be one of Tsvetaeva's main artistic devices.⁸ His point may be argued by saying that Tsvetaeva's intention was not mere pun-making, but a search for different analogies for the notion of the heterogeneous world. As mentioned above, Tsvetaeva had a monistic approach to the world, unlike the dualistic perception of the Symbolists. Contrasts and differences, in Tsvetaeva's view,

⁸ Simon Karlinsky, *Marina Cvetaeva. Her Life and Art*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966, pp.143—53.

are notions of mundane life which, upon a person's death, is transformed into the universal divine principle. In Baroque poetics there was an artistic principle called *wit* (ostroumie); the artist appreciated difficult, obscurely expressed aspects of life, or absolutes, the understanding of which requires effort. As can be seen in the essay "Moi Pushkin", Tsvetaeva on the one hand tries to create a subtle link between three paintings which she remembers from her childhood. On the other hand, she forces her readers to uncover all the disguised and hidden meanings of such a combination.

Tsvetaeva mastered the Baroque principle of *illusion* to perfection. This makes her text particularly allusive and dense. Moreover, she pursues the device of "optical illusion", aiming at those readers who understand all the subtexts. Thus, analysing "Moi Pushkin", one can discover that Tsvetaeva's reference to the three paintings is almost emblematic. A. Morozov has characterized the eighteenth-century emblem in the following way: "Образуя эмблему, изображение и девиз подчинялись барочному „принципу остроумия“ — неожиданному и поражающему сочетанию представлений, со скрытой дидактикой или спиритуалистическим значением".⁹ It seems that Tsvetaeva intended to promote the analogy between the poet and God (Pushkin and Christ in the first part of the text; later Pushkin is compared to the Creator), extending for example the Baroque musical concept of the *divine chorus* which the artist recreates in miniature.

Tsvetaeva's analogy is based on the mythological model which had already appeared in her cycle "Stikhi k Bloku" (1916-21). In one of the poems of this cycle Tsvetaeva created her portrait of Blok as *bogochelovek*, who celebrates resurrection after his physical death:

Мёртвый лежит певец
И воскресенье празднует. (S88, 68)

There are many more analogies between Blok and Christ in the cycle. Tsvetaeva's perception of Blok was based on his own imagery, inspired by Vladimir Solov'ev's teaching on Divine Wisdom and Christ. Tsvetaeva clearly saw Blok's life as the embodiment of Solov'ev's teaching, which can be

⁹ A. A. Morozov, "Emblematika baroko v literature i iskusstve petrovskogo vremeni", *Problemy literaturnogo razvitiia v Rossii pervoi treti XVIII veka*, Leningrad, 1974, p.184.

reduced to the following principle:

Человечество должно не только *принимать* благодать и истину, данную во Христе, но и *осуществлять* эту благодать и истину в своей собственной и исторической жизни.¹⁰

However, Tsvetaeva's personal myth about Blok is extended, and in "Moi Pushkin" it is applied to Pushkin and to herself. It is especially important while analysing this essay to bear in mind what is implied by Tsvetaeva's reference to the painting "Tatary". The image of Tatars, entwined with the author's discourse on the poet's fate, is a key image in Tsvetaeva's vision of the world and her own place in it.

In order to clarify Tsvetaeva's outlook it would be useful to recall a few passages about Pushkin from Blok's "O naznacheniі poeta" as well as his poetic cycle "Na pole Kulikovom". Tsvetaeva's attitude to the historical development of Russia was occasionally influenced by Blok's poetic mythology. Thus, in the cycle about the Battle of Kulikovo, Blok embarked on an event crucial for Russian history because it was suitable for his mythopoetic model. Blok transformed temporal categories into spatial ones, in order that the situation could be applied to the present moment:

И, к земле склонившись головою,
Говорят мне друг: "Остри свой меч,
Чтоб недаром биться с татарвою,
За святое дело мёртвым лечь!"

[...]

Опять над полем Куликовым
Взошла и расточилась мгла,
И, словно облаком суровым,
Грядущий день заволокла¹¹

Tsvetaeva created her own mythologized pattern which was partly based on the conceptions of Blok (and indirectly of Solov'ev). Blok foresaw the forthcoming revolution as a mystical expression of Tatar forces in

¹⁰ Quoted from: Nikolai Berdiaev, "Osnovnaia ideia Vl. Solov'eva", *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol.3, 1989, p.211.

¹¹ Aleksandr Blok, *Stikhotvoreniia. Poemy*, Tashkent, 1986, p.270, p.272.

Russian history. However, he understood its barbaric aspect as a necessity, believing that destruction of the old civilisation would be followed by the future creation of a new one. Tsvetaeva's vision of the revolution coincides with Blok's view, up to the point when she identifies revolutionary forces with the Tatars. Thus, in her own cycle "Khanskii polon" (1921) she writes:

Град мой в крови,
Грудь без креста,—
Усынови,
Матерь-Верста!

[...]

Хан мой— Мамай,
Хлеб мой— тоска.
К старому в рай,
Паперть-верста!

[...]

Не вскочишь— не сядешь!
А сел — не пеняй!
Один тебе всадник
По нраву— Мамай!

Раскосая гнусь,
Воровская ладонь ...
—Эх, Родина-Русь,

Нераскаянный конь! (S88, 1, pp.167-68)

Tsvetaeva's cycle (quoted above) was written in 1921 and undoubtedly expressed her attitude to the Soviet regime. Her cycle "Lebedinyi stan" was written almost at the same time. The latter can be called a poetic monument to the White army movement. In the light of Tsvetaeva's critical views of Soviet reality (which were expressed not only in her poetry but also in her prose, for example "Moi sluzhby", "Cherdachnoe", "Zemnye primety", "Vol'nyi proezd") one can decipher imagery related to Tatars in her works as a reference to Bolsheviks and, even more broadly, to all types of bureaucrats, philistines and tyrants. Blok in relation to Pushkin extended the traditional image of *chern'* to characterising Soviet bureaucrats who restrict the poet's free expression and intend to use art as an ideological weapon:

Пускай же остерегутся от худшей клички те чиновники, которые собираются направлять поэзию по каким-то собственным руслу, посягая на её тайную свободу и препятствуя ей выполнять её таинственное назначение.¹²

Blok talked not only about Pushkin's death but to a larger extent about the death of Russian culture. Characterising Pushkin's times as the only cultural epoch of the last century Blok unambiguously aimed his accusatory speech at people who occupied the literary scene after Pushkin: Belinskii, Pisarev and their followers. Blok perceived the figures of the Russian democrats as more dangerous than Pushkin's censor Benkendorf. This attitude had its roots in the ideas of Dostoevskii and Solov'ev. Blok's views found their echo in Tsvetaeva's essays "Zhivoe o zhivom" and "Dom u starogo Pimena". Depicting pre-revolutionary life in Russia and the cultural atmosphere at the beginning of the century, Tsvetaeva in her autobiographical essay "Dom u starogo Pimena" characterised dying culture as Pushkin's culture:

Не вырождение девичества (бессмертного), а вырождение целой культуры, открывшейся Пушкиным и докатившейся до последнего листка девического дворянского альбома. (P, p.146)

In the essay "Zhivoe o zhivom" Tsvetaeva refers to Voloshin's vision of historical events, a vision linked with some mystical beliefs (although their source might appear to be different from that of Blok's concepts):

И вкрадчиво, почти радуясь, как добрый колдун детям, картину за картиной — всю русскую революцию на пять лет вперёд: террор, гражданская война, расстрелы, заставы, Вандея, озверение, потеря лица, раскрепощенные духи стихий, кровь, кровь, кровь ... (P, p.257)

As we shall see from our further analysis of "Moi Pushkin", there is a certain affinity between Tsvetaeva's views and Blok's ideas, expressed in his "O naznachenii poeta". However, one should not forget the fact that Tsvetaeva wrote her essay in 1936, and her historical perspective was different. In some ways Tsvetaeva's polemical touch as presented in "Moi

¹² Aleksandr Blok, "O naznachenii poeta", *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, Moscow — Leningrad, 1960-65, 6, p.167.

Pushkin" had slightly different political implications and targets. (This will be discussed below.)

The paintings chosen by Tsvetaeva for discussion in "Moi Pushkin" are very important, especially because Tsvetaeva limited her scope of discourse to just three canvases. (Anastasia Tsvetaeva claims that there were a great number of paintings in their house, and the sitting room was full of paintings by their mother.¹³) All these works play a significant structural role in the essay: they contain elements of the same theme. This theme can be called "the poet's fate" and it permeated the whole text.

It is worth mentioning how Tsvetaeva creates the effect of a *triptych*: Ivanov's painting depicting Jesus Christ appears to be in the middle of the discourse, and central to the context of the essay. In some ways the other two paintings of the triptych formed in the text represent *West* and *East*. Tsvetaeva, being a person of universal outlook, demonstrated how different cultures have anti-human aspects: they are united in the context of the essay in the act of murder. It is interesting that Tsvetaeva characterised witnesses of Christ's appearance in the same vein; they are depicted in terrifying tones in the passage quoted earlier. Tsvetaeva tries to expose the people who are not Christians in the real sense of the name if they are able to commit murder. This idea of *true* and *false* notions is conveyed in Tsvetaeva's usage of *white* and *black* in the text which deliberately destroys any orthodox and conformist preconceptions.¹⁴ Murderers are depicted wearing white gowns, and Pushkin's negritude is reflected positively:

Пушкин был негр. [...] у Пушкина были волосы вверх и губы наружу, и чёрные, с синими белками, как у щенка, глаза, — чёрные вопреки явной светлоглазости его многочисленных портретов. (P, pp.18-19)

Tsvetaeva's footnote states that Pushkin had fair hair and blue eyes. Thus Tsvetaeva's portrait of Pushkin obviously has a semiotic function. This becomes more evident when Tsvetaeva establishes a link between all Russian poets based on their negritude. It is not a portrait but an ideogram:

¹³ A. Tsvetaeva "Korni i plody", *Zvezda*, 1978, 4, p.188.

¹⁴ For an analysis of colours in Tsvetaeva's writings see: L. V. Zubova, *Poezila Mariny Tsvetaevoj. Lingvisticheski aspekt*, Leningrad, 1989, pp.110-89.

Русский поэт— негр, поэт— негр, и поэта— убили. [...]
Какой поэт из бывших и сущих не негр, и какого поэта—
не убили? (S88, p.19)

Moreover, Tsvetaeva mythologises the negro-like appearance of a poet which manifests rebelliousness in her writings. On several occasions she compares herself to a blackamoor.¹⁵ In the essay "Mat' i muzyka" Tsvetaeva created her self-portrait as a reflection in the piano:

И вот, с самого тёмного дна, идёт на меня круглое
пятилетнее пыльное лицо, без всякой улыбки, розовое
даже сквозь черноту— вроде негра, окунутого в зарю, или
розы — в чернильный пруд. Рояль был моим первым
зеркалом, и первое моё, своего лица, осознание было
сквозь черноту, переводением его на черноту, как на язык
тёмный, но внятный. (Р, pp. 79-80)

Tsvetaeva applies the ideogram *poet-negro* to herself and to other fellow-poets with whom she felt affinity. (She compared Pasternak, for example, to a blackamoor, and exaggeratedly conveyed Kuzmin's swarthy appearance in the essay "Nezdeshnii vecher".) In the passage from "Mat' i muzyka" quoted above there is a direct reference to the Pushkin monument when Tsvetaeva compares herself to a negro submerged into the sunrise. This image appeared in one of her early poems, and was later used in her essay "Moi Pushkin":

А там в полях необозримых
Служа небесному царю —
Чугунный правнук Ибрагимов
Зажёг зарю. (Р, p.24)

[...]до „Дуэли“ Наумова была заря, и, из неё вырастая, в
неё уходя, её плечами рассекая, как пловец — реку,—

¹⁵ Akhmatova recalled that Tsvetaeva, after her return to Moscow in 1939, used to identify herself with a "horrible little blackamoor": „Сейчас, когда она вернулась в свою Москву такой королевой и уже навсегда (не так, как та, с кот. она любила себя сравнивать, т.е. с арапчонком и обезьянкой в французском платье, т.е. décolleté grande gorge), мне хочется без просто без легенды вспомнить эти Два дня“. — Anna Akhmatova, *Sochineniia*, 3, Paris, 1983, p.152.

чёрный человек выше всех и чернее всех — с наклонённой головой и шляпой в руке.

[...] То, что вечно, под дождём и под снегом, — о, как я вижу эти нагруженные снегом плечи, всеми российскими снегами нагруженные и осмеленные африканские плечи! — плечами в зарю или в метель... (Р, р.19)

The combination of two images — the negro and sunrise — is based on the merging of two colours: pink and black. This merging in Tsvetaeva's artistic system is evocative and highly significant. L.V. Zubova in her exhaustive survey of colours in Tsvetaeva's poetry gives several interpretations of the poet's use of red. Thus Zubova claims that there is a certain hierarchic system of colours manifested in the symbolic meaning of Tsvetaeva's poetry. In this system "white" stands for initial emptiness representing readiness to start life; "red" means dynamic life leading to the end of life through "burning out"; "black" expresses exhaustion as a result of dynamic life and, at the same time, the state of readiness to reach the absolute after catharsis; and spiritual being, or the absolute, is conveyed by "azure".¹⁶ In this system, Tsvetaeva preferred black to white, because in her symbolic language it was closer to the colour of the spiritual absolute. (It is interesting, as Zubova points out, that in early works of Russian folklore the colours black and blue were indistinguishable. This syncretic fusion of colours find its reflection in Tsvetaeva's cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" in which she talks about Pushkin's forehead as being bluer than olives. — S88, 1, p.274.) Thus in the poem "Buzina" the transformation of colours from green to red and subsequently to black corresponds to the system described above.

Zubova comes to the conclusion that while "white" represents in Tsvetaeva's poetic world *indifference*, or *passionlessness*, "black" symbolises *passion* as well as *suffering*.¹⁷ This becomes particularly evident when Tsvetaeva in her essay "Moi Pushkin" talks about her own time as symbolically juxtaposing the colours black and white.

It seems that Tsvetaeva intended not only to employ the Baroque principle of *w/t* in this essay but also to create a certain metaphor of her own time, which she characterised as a terrifying epoch ("strashnyi vek").

¹⁶ Zubova, op. cit., p.187.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp.117, 122.

Her perception of the period that was marked by the consequences of the October revolution in Russia was close to Solov'ev's vision of *new history* (influenced by Dostoevskii). Berdiaev wrote about Solov'ev:

Под конец жизни Вл. Соловьёв пишет гениальнейшее своё произведение "Повесть об антихристе". В этой повести историческая перспектива исчезает, стираются грани между двумя мирами и всё представляется в апокалиптическом свете. [...] Образ антихриста представляется Соловьёву как образ филантропа, человеколюбца, осуществителя социализма, всеобщего мира и счастья человечества. Черта, родственная с Великим Инквизитором Достоевского. Вл. Соловьёв видит нарастание зла под видом добра, зла, соблазняющего добром. Власть окончательно переходит к антихристу.¹⁸

In the essay "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva's use of black and white conveys her reflections upon the modern historical situation. Solov'ev's ideas were translated in the essay into the language of art. Tsvetaeva skilfully demonstrates how *chern'* can disguise its evilness (in the text Tatars wear white gowns), while poets like Pushkin, for example, might seem to look black, or devilish, in spite of their truly divine character.

Almost ten years later, the same phenomenon in modern history was described by Pasternak when he was reflecting upon the present Russian situation in his conversation with Aleksandr Gladkov:

In order to exist evil must masquerade as good. The pretence alone makes it immoral. [...] even the Nazis have to dress up the blackest of crimes — racism — in various arguments about its benefits to the German people.¹⁹

So far this feature has not been noticed by Soviet scholars writing on "Moi Pushkin". Despite its usefulness, Zubova's system of meanings for the different colours used by Tsvetaeva has its limits when applied directly to the texts. It can be argued that the interpretation of colours used in a text

¹⁸ N. Berdiaev, "Osnovnaia ideia Vl. Solov'eva", op. cit., p.212.

¹⁹ Alexander Gladkov, *Meetings with Pasternak*, tr. Max Hayward, London, 1977, p.73.

should derive from the analysis of all the images to which they are linked in the text.

Bearing in mind Tsvetaeva's usage of Ivanov's painting "Iavlenie Khrista narodu" we can extend the suggested analogy between the poet and Christ to the description of Pushkin's monument submerged into the sunrise. It can be interpreted as an allusion to the Gospel statement that Jesus is the light of the world.

In the extract from "Mat' i muzyka" cited above, this image is reinforced by the comparison of the poet's reflection in the piano not only to the Pushkin monument but also to a rose in an "inky pond". The latter image is quite significant because it links the symbolic usage of the colour pink not only to the motif of the dream but also to the theme of holiness. Pink is perceived by Tsvetaeva as a transparent colour exemplifying light itself. In the poetry of the Symbolists, the image of the rose played a significant role. Thus in Blok's poem "Dvenadsat'" we come across Jesus Christ wearing a wreath of white roses. This image was inspired by the Western Catholic tradition of depicting Christ. In the poetry of Andrei Belyi this image was linked to the anthroposophical cult of the Rosicrucians.²⁰

However, in Tsvetaeva's case, it most probably derives from the Catholic association of the flower with the Virgin Mary, who is called "the rose without thorns", meaning "sinless". (Tsvetaeva was mostly brought up on Western culture, and spent some time in a Catholic school in Germany, which undoubtedly had an impact on her outlook — see, for instance, her autobiographical story "Chert".) In Italian painting the Virgin is represented under the title Santa Maria della Rosa holding a rose (sometimes the rose is held by the infant Christ). Also in Western culture a red rose symbolises martyrdom (the blood of the martyr).²¹ Taking into account both Zubova's association of black with the theme of suffering and the Catholic symbolic meaning of the red rose, the foregoing observations may be summarised.

²⁰ See the survey of rose imagery in Russian Symbolism in Lena Szilárd and Peter Barta, "Dantov kod russkogo simvolizma", *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 35, Budapest, 1989, pp.61-95.

²¹ James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, London, 1974, p.268.

Thus a strong link between Tsvetaeva's description of Pushkin's monument submerged into the sunrise and Naumov's painting "Duel/ Pushkina" suggests that Tsvetaeva established a certain archetype of the poet-martyr modelled on Pushkin's life. Therefore Tsvetaeva wants us to believe (in "Moi Pushkin") that she accepted the poet's destiny as tragic from the very beginning. The rhetorical model prevails in the text, distorting the factual background in Tsvetaeva's essays (as was pointed out by her sister Anastasia Tsvetaeva²²). Marina Tsvetaeva's recollections of her own childhood were influenced by the concept she created of the tragic life of a poet. Tsvetaeva's friends pointed out many times that she forced this point, constantly talking about misunderstanding by friends and about loneliness. Some of Tsvetaeva's contemporaries believed that she sought isolation by creating enemies and displaying her political independence. (Thus, many saw her attacks on the leading Parisian émigré critic Adamovich, as well as her openly expressed support for Maiakovskii, as provocative.)²³

The other important aspect for the interpretation of Tsvetaeva's usage of the colour black derives from her vision of the poet as an outcast from society. Thus in a poem dedicated to Akhmatova in 1921, Tsvetaeva called her favourite poet "chernoknizhnitsa" (an adept of black magic). The poem was written after the execution of Gumilev, and had obvious political implications. Also, metonymically transforming the appearance of Pushkin's monument into the poet himself, Tsvetaeva imposed on this image the model of the Devil featured in her essay "Chert". This image represents the world of passions and of unorthodox beliefs in Tsvetaeva's imagery, and in the essay "Chert" it is associated with Pushkin's "Utoplennik", which she cites in relation to her dream:

Мама! Мне сегодня снились... утопленники... Будто они

²² Anastasia Tsvetaeva, op. cit. (note 13), pp.187-193.

²³ This aspect of Tsvetaeva's behaviour has been well surveyed by V. Lossky, S. Karlinsky and I. Kudrova. See: Véronique Lossky, *Marina Tsvetaeva v zhizni (Neizdannye vospominaniia sovremennikov)*, Tenaflly, 1989, pp.104-17, 125-27, 146-53; Simon Karlinsky, *Marina Tsvetaeva. The woman, her world and her poetry*, Cambridge, 1985, pp.151-54, 176-78, 191-93; Irma Kudrova, "Polgoda v Parizhe (K biografii Mariny Tsvetaevoi)", *Marina Cvetaeva. Studien und Materialien, Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband, 3*, Vienna, 1981, pp.129-59.

меня взяли на руку и несли через реку, а тот главный утопленник, мне сказал: „Мы с тобой когда-нибудь поженимся, черт возьми!“ (Р, р.87)

Pushkin's poem was based on folklore images, which was indicated by the subtitle "prostonarodnaia skazka". Tsvetaeva knew Russian folklore and Slav mythology very well (her long poems "Tsar'-devitsa" and "Molodets" were written in the style of Russian folk art). In Slav folk belief, there are two types of demons: some of them are demons from birth, while others were turned into demons (after drowning, committing suicide, being damned by their parents, and so on). Moreover, in many regions of Russia, heretics were seen as devils or sorcerers who become vampires after their death. In some Christian legends (derived from apocryphal literature) God appears to be floating in the air and Satan lives in the sea.²⁴

In a political sense Tsvetaeva considered herself an outcast: she did not accept the Russian revolution and maintained her loyalty to the White army even at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s (while working on the long poems "Perekop" and "Sibir'"); at the same time she had some sympathies for the Eurasian movement and for fellow-poets living in Soviet Russia, such as Malakovskii and Pasternak (which was unthinkable for many émigrés in Paris).

Nevertheless, there were reasons for Tsvetaeva's belief in her destiny as an outcast. For example, Simon Karlinsky has pointed out that some of the editors of leading émigré publications could not understand Symbolist and post-Symbolist art. Editors of *Sovremennye zapiski* and *Poslednie novosti*, like the majority of the pre-revolutionary radicalised intelligentsia, were more in tune with realistic and accessible literature than with the idiosyncratic writing of Tsvetaeva. As Karlinsky puts it, "their cultural roots were the same as Lenin's and Trotsky's: the radical utilitarianism of the nineteenth century, as represented by Belinsky and Chernyshevsky. While these men of the February revolution would not dream of censoring literature like Lenin or being as abusive and dictatorial toward established writers as Trotsky, they were nonetheless raised on some of the same attitudes: art and literature had to be simple, realistic, uplifting and

²⁴ See: V. M. Mokienko, *Obrazy russkoi rechi*, Leningrad, 1986, pp.170-89; Felix J. Oinas, *Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology*, Columbus, Ohio, 1984, pp.121-30.

continue narrowly defined 'progressive' traditions."²⁵

Tsvetaeva's editors, such as Igor' Demidov and Vladimir Rudnev, edited her prose to such an extent that a number of passages were deleted and some of them were unrecognisable. When Tsvetaeva's essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" appeared in *Sovremennye zapiski*, it had been cut to half its original length. (It is worth mentioning that Nabokov was also forced to delete a chapter from his novel *Dar* in which he portrayed the radicals' idol Chernyshevskii in a satirical vein.) Tsvetaeva uses Pushkin's writings in order to promote the idea of freedom from such censorship (for example, in her cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" and in the poem "Dvukh stanov ne boets" which were discussed in chapter 2).

In the 1930s the situation for writing poetry in Soviet Russia, as well as in Paris where Tsvetaeva lived at the time, was not favourable. In some ways it was similar to the situation of the second half of the nineteenth century in Russia, when prose writing prevailed. However Tsvetaeva wrote to Khodasevich in 1934:

Нет, надо писать стихи. Нельзя дать ни жизни, ни
Вяшнякам, ни „бриджам“, ни всем и так далеем — этого
торжества: заставить поэта обойтись без стихов, сделать
из поэта — прозаика, из прозаика — покойника. Вам (нам!)
дано в руки что-то, чего мы не вправе ни выронить, ни
переложить в другие руки (которых — нет)...²⁶

The tragedy of Tsvetaeva's situation had been noticed already by Mirskii in 1926:

The verse she wrote in 1920-1923 is largely experimental. To the Russian student it is particularly interesting for the clever and creative way in which she made use of the example of Russian folk poetry. From this school she has emerged a new poet, the poet of a new era in Russian poetry. This, of course, has cut her off from the sympathy of the essentially Conservative (even when they are Socialist)

²⁵ Karlinskii, op. cit., 1985, p.220.

²⁶ Quoted from: I. Kudrova, "Plennyi lev (Marina Tsvetaeva, 1934 god)", *Zvezda*, 1989, 3, p.150.

literary and journalistic *émigré* leaders, and with the exception of the Prague *Volya Rossii*, the *émigré* magazines have almost ceased to accept her new work. The Bolshevik censorship, on the other hand, does not allow the works of an *émigré* into Russia. So in the present unfortunate state of things Russia is deprived of the possibility of reading one of her greatest poets.²⁷

It is important to point out that in 1932 *Volia Rossii* had to close, largely due to the fact that the Czechoslovak government could not afford to subsidise it any more. And in Bolshevik Russia one has to bear in mind that Tsvetaeva was not just ignored but was denounced in the 1934 edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia for glorifying both the Romanov family and naked rhythmic formalism. (In 1940 Kornelii Zelinskii, writing a report on Tsvetaeva's collection of verse prepared for publication, again accused her of formalism.) It has also to be taken into account that the economic crises of the 1930s in Western Europe contributed to misery in the literary world.

In the article "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti", written in 1931, Tsvetaeva argued that in spite of the fact that all other professions are more important than that of the poet — from both the social and human point of view — it was impossible for her to give up poetry, which had its secret mission and aim and could not be judged in any pragmatic way:

Посему, если хочешь служить Богу или людям, вообще хочешь служить, делать дело добра, поступай в Армию Спасения или ещё куда-нибудь — и брось стихи. (S88, 2, p.406).

It is important to underline that Tsvetaeva perceived poetry as something derived from darkness (*chernota*) or unrefined elements. As in the passage about her own reflection in the piano (mentioned above), where Tsvetaeva talks about the translation of her *self* into dark but understandable language, in the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" she claims that Pushkin was greatly inspired by the elements, but could resist their destructive force by creating a song. She identifies Pushkin with the genius who can be driven by passion and inspiration and at the same time can express his will power through creative work:

²⁷ D. S. Mirsky, *Uncollected writings on Russian literature, Modern Russian Literature and Culture, Studies and Texts*, volume 13, Berkeley, 1989, p.219.

Гений: высшая степень подверженности наитию — раз, управа с этим наитием—два. Высшая степень душевной разъятости и высшая— собранности. Высшая — страдательности и высшая — действенности. [...] Гения без воли нет, но ещё больше нет, ещё меньше есть— без наития. (S88, 2, pp.377-78)

Partly, this statement derives from the mode created by Pushkin himself in the poem "Poet". Nevertheless Tsvetaeva takes this point much further and lays particular emphasis on the will power of the creator. (This will be discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.) In the article "Poet o kritike" (published in 1926) she calls the poet's private life a *draft copy* (chernovik) and his creative work a *fair copy* (belovik, chistovik). Moreover, Tsvetaeva claims that everything is allowed for the poet in his private life, but nothing in his poems.

In Tsvetaeva's model of the poet's life, the creator is in a position to master his own life and transform it into art. Thus, in "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva moves away from the traditional analogy between the poet and Christ (which was common in the culture of Symbolism and Post-Symbolism) and pinpoints Pushkin's last act of will as a creative mode:

— Нет, нет, нет, ты только представь себе!— говорила мать, совершенно не представляя себе этого ты, — смертельно раненный, в снегу, а не отказался от выстрела! Прицелился, попал и ещё сам себе сказал: bravo!— тоном такого восхищения, каким ей, христианке, естественно бы: „Смертельно раненный, в крови, а простил врагу!“ Отшвырнул пистолет, протянул руку,— этим, со всеми нами, явно возвращая Пушкина в его родную Африку мести и страсти, и не подозревая, какой урок— если не мести, так страсти— на всю жизнь даёт четырехлетней, еле грамотной мне. (P, 18)

This aspect of Pushkin's duel was already discussed before Tsvetaeva, by Vladimir Solov'ev in the essay "Sud'ba Pushkina" (1897). In fact, some of Solov'ev's statements about Pushkin's fate stand so close to Tsvetaeva's essay that there is the possibility of Tsvetaeva's dependence on his article.

Thus, Solov'ev sees, as the main source for the creativity of genius,

powerful passions which the latter transforms into his art:

Сильная чувственность есть материал гения. Как механическое движение переходит в теплоту, а теплота — в свет, так духовная энергия творчества в своем действительном явлении (в порядке времени или процесса) есть превращение низших энергий чувственной души. И как для произведения *сильного* света необходимо сильное развитие теплоты, так и высокая степень духовного творчества (по закону здешней, земной жизни) предполагает сильное развитие чувственных страстей. Высшее проявление гения требует не всегдашнего бесстрастия, а окончательного преодоления могучей страстности, торжества над нею в решительные моменты.²⁸

Solov'ev's views on Pushkin's creative genius recall Tsvetaeva's statements from "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" discussed above. Also Tsvetaeva's emphasis on Pushkin's negritude in "Moi Pushkin" derives from the same idea of the poet's passionate character. In this sense Tsvetaeva's images of *darkness*, the *elements*, the *draft copy*, the *blackamoor* or *gypsy appearance* in relation to creativity represent the same aspect. (See the discussion below of Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's "K moriu".) In her own life Tsvetaeva forcefully promoted this principle in her essays and public statements. Georgii Adamovich, one of the leading opponents of Tsvetaeva in Paris in the 1930s, characterised this feature reinforced in Tsvetaeva's writings and behaviour as "her demonstrative superpoeticness" (*demonstrativnaia sverkhpoetichnost'*).²⁹ On a different occasion, when Tsvetaeva tried to impose the same image of the poet on émigré critics, Adamovich had to reply to Tsvetaeva that it is impossible to live constantly at a temperature of 39 degrees.³⁰

Tsvetaeva's understanding of the poet's genius is not only based on Pushkin's life but has to a great extent been orientated toward the patterns of behaviour and the tactics used by the Russian Futurists. In the essay "Poet o kritike", for example, she develops Pushkin's idea about the poet's

²⁸ V. S. Solov'ev, *Literaturnaiia kritika*, Moscow, 1990, pp.182-83.

²⁹ G. Adamovich, "Iz zapisnoi knizhki", *Novosel'e*, 39-41, New York, 1949, p.146.

³⁰ Kudrova, "Polgoda v Parizhe", op. cit. (ref.23), p.152.

freedom from dependence on his earnings, conveyed in "Razgovor knigoprodavtsa s poetom" (1824), to the justification of self-advertising taking shape in scandals and polemics:

Так, лично рекламой брезгуя, рукоплещу — внемальному
я здесь — масштабу Маяковского. Когда у Маяковского нет
денег, он устраивает очередную сенсацию („чистка поэтов,
резка поэтесс“, Америки, пр.). Идут на скандал и несут
деньги. Маяковскому, как большому поэту, ни до хвалы ни
до хулы. Цену себе он знает сам. Но до денег — весьма. И
его самореклама, именно грубостью своей, куда чище
попугаев, мартышек и гарема Лорда Байрона, как
известно — в деньгах не нуждавшегося. (IP, 1, p.233)

Tsvetaeva's references to Pushkin's writings in the article "Poet o kritike", which was published in 1926 in *Blagonamerennyi*, and which had scandalous implications, are quite significant: they show Tsvetaeva's intention to promote the new art through a deliberate attempt to break with the established aesthetic tastes of the Russian literary milieu in the Paris of the 1920s and 1930s. Tsvetaeva applied Pushkin's term *chern'* to all critics who did not understand the new art (this was considered by Tsvetaeva to be their professional failure). In fact, in "Poet o kritike" Tsvetaeva wrongly called Pushkin's poem "Poet i chern'" while referring to his poem of 1828 "Poet i tolpa". Obviously, Pushkin's poem was misused by Tsvetaeva. While Pushkin's "Poet i tolpa" proclaims —

Не для житейского волненья,
Не для корысти, не для битв,
Мы рождены для вдохновенья,
Для звуков сладких и молитв. (Pushkin, 1, p.436)

— Tsvetaeva's article "Poet o kritike" with its appendix "Tsvetnik" was used for political, personal and strategic reasons. First of all, it was the intention of Tsvetaeva to provoke a scandal on the verge of the appearance of the new periodical *Versty* (Tsvetaeva and Mirskii were among its editors). As Tsvetaeva confessed in a letter to Anna Tesková of 8 June 1926, she was satisfied with the outcome of her article:

Статья написана просто [...], читалась она предвзято. [...]
Грызли меня: С. Яблоновский, Осоргин, Адамович (впрочем,

умеренно, втайне сознавая мою правоту) и ... Петр Струве, забыв на секунду и Кирилла и Николая Николаевича. Ни одного голоса в защиту. Я вполне удовлетворена. (IP 1, p.452)

The far-reaching aims of Tsvetaeva's publication of the article caused a ricochet effect among émigré writers. Tsvetaeva went after the scalps of a wide variety of critics including not only Iulii Aikhenval'd and Georgii Adamovich but also such celebrated literary figures as Zinaida Gippius and Ivan Bunin. Gippius was attacked by Tsvetaeva for failing to appreciate Pasternak, and Bunin for his hostility to Blok and Esenin. As a result of Tsvetaeva's open condemnation of the Parisian literary establishment, there followed a large number of articles in defence of Tsvetaeva's opponents. Iablonovskii, for instance, published a rebuttal of Tsvetaeva's accusations against him in the sarcastic article "V khalate". Struve qualified Tsvetaeva's writings as pointless and incomprehensible. Gippius tried to organise a campaign against Tsvetaeva and Mirskii and against their journal *Versty*.³¹

Taking into account Mirskii's views and the fact that most of the editors and contributors to *Versty* were Eurasians, it is not surprising that Gippius perceived this periodical as a Bolshevik plot. In fact, even Berdiaev, who broke his long-lasting friendship with Gippius for her aggressive attacks on *Versty*, warned in his own article published in 1927 in *Put'* (№8) of the dangers of the Eurasian movement. (By this time the Eurasians had published a complete political and ideological programme for their group.) Berdiaev recognised its political realism which brought Eurasians to an understanding of the historically irreversible character of the Russian October revolution. At the same time Berdiaev characterised their ideology as monistic, contradicting the principles of moral pathos and dualism expressed in Christianity. As Berdiaev pointed out, the most dangerous aspect of the Eurasian mentality is the fact that it will be always based on the category of necessity rather than individual freedom:

[...] утопический этатизм евразийцев приводит их к той же ложной и опасной идее, что идеократическое государство должно взять на себя организацию всей

³¹ Kudrova, *ibid*.

traces in the group images portrayed by Tsvetaeva — for example, the Old Believers in "Khlystovki", or the gypsies in "Moi Pushkin" — Tsvetaeva created parallels between Pushkin's friendship with the Decembrists and her own involvement with the Prague circle of Eurasians (which chiefly consisted of White army officers). (This affinity was expressed in the poem "Novogodniia 1" written in 1921). In fact, this perception of Pushkin as 'a man of a group' was prevalent in the views of the Russian Slavophiles, and later it recurred in the writings of Annenskii (who claimed that Pushkin introduced the cult of friendship into Russian poetry), and of Rozanov (who promoted a Mozartian image of Pushkin, showing him as a party-goer most of the time).³⁴ It is also significant that Tsvetaeva inserted a quotation from Pushkin's poem "Arion" as an epigraph to the last chapter of her essay about Voloshin — "Zhivoe o zhivom". In "Arion" Pushkin created the image of a poet who, on the one hand, has withdrawn from involvement in politics and whose role is just to sing to the crew of the boat. On the other hand, the person described in "Arion" is the last survivor of a group with certain political inclinations. In Pushkin scholarship this poem has been linked to the poet's loyalty to the Decembrist movement.

Tsvetaeva's attempt to propagate Pushkin's image of a 'pure art' type of poet derives from her one-sided approach to Pushkin. In some ways the image of such a poet in her writings seems to be modelled more on Voloshin than on Pushkin. The dominant characteristic of Voloshin, accentuated by Tsvetaeva in "Zhivoe o zhivom", is his compassion and ability to unite antinomies:

Макса Волошина в Революцию дам двумя словами: он спасал красных от белых и белых от красных [...]. Знаю еще, что его стихи „Матрос“ ходили в правительственных листовках на обоих фронтах, из чего вывод, что его матрос был не красный матрос и не белый матрос, а морской матрос, черноморский матрос.[...]

Не политические убеждения, а мироубежденность, не мировоззрение, а миротворчество. Мифотворчество — миротворчество, и, в последние годы своей жизни и лиры,

³⁴ I. Annenskii, *Pushkin i Tsarskoe selo*, St Petersburg, 1899; V. V. Rozanov "Zametka o Pushkine", *Mir iskusstva*, 13-14, 1899, pp.1-10.

³⁵ Berdiaev, op. cit. (ref.32), p.663.

Tsvetaeva, denying there were any moral implications in poetic art (see the above quotation from "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti") overlooked the practical credo of Pushkin's "Pamiatnik" as well as the fact that Pushkin was a social philosopher and a historian.³⁶ Her own position in emigration was rather ambiguous. She published her writings in the "left" periodicals, and at the same time she continued to praise the White army and the Russian royal family (at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s she worked on the long poems "Perekop" and "Sibir", which unfortunately remained unfinished for several non-literary reasons).

However, in "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva leaves aside all the political problems of her time and focuses her attention on the fact that Pushkin was a poet. She transforms his personal situation into a rhetorical one, extending it to all poets. This rhetorical figure is expressed in Tsvetaeva's formula "to defend the poet against everyone" (see the quotation earlier in this chapter). Tsvetaeva's attitude to Pushkin stands very close to that of Veresaev, who saw a gap between Pushkin's life and his writings. Veresaev's approach was reflected in the choice of title for the collection of his essays on Pushkin — *V dvukh planakh*.³⁷ As discussed above, Tsvetaeva divided the poet's life into the "draft copy" and the "clean copy". In spite of the division suggested by Tsvetaeva in her approach to Pushkin's life, she herself inclines to narrow her vision by choosing to rely on the poet's works as the main source of information about his life and outlook. In other words, the mythopoetical aspect is prevalent in Tsvetaeva's interpretations of Pushkin's life.

The mythopoetical aspect of Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin" mentioned above can be explained by the poetics of the Russian Futurists and even more by the poetical language of Boris Pasternak whose poetry

³⁶ Pushkin's philosophical and historical views are well studied in the following works: Sam Driver, *Pushkin. Literature and Social Ideas*. New York, 1989; John Bayley, *Pushkin: A Comparative Commentary*. Cambridge, 1971; Paul Debreczeny, *The Other Pushkin*. Stanford, 1983; A. B. Anikin, *Muza i mamona. Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie motivy u Pushkina*. Moscow, 1989.

³⁷ V. Veresaev, *V dvukh planakh: Stat'i o Pushkine*, Moscow, 1929.

influenced Tsvetaeva in many ways. (This was especially felt, for instance, by Tsvetaeva's main opponent Adamovich.³⁸) The main feature of Pasternak's dealings with the texts of other authors has been highlighted by Jerzy Faryno in his book *Poetika Pasternaka*. The most valuable observation (from the point of view that it can also be traced in Tsvetaeva's poetics) made by Faryno is the suggestion that Pasternak's perception of the world as a book (text) differs from the position of a literary subject present in Romanticism: "В случае Пастернака существует как раз удвоение воспринимающего субъекта, коммуникация с мировым текстом протекает не непосредственно „мир-Я“, а „мир-мир“, где „мир-адресат“, естественно может считаться двойником „Я“. Дело, однако, в том, что, удваивая адресата, пастернаковский „Я“ становится не на позицию воспринимающего текст, а на позицию воспринимающего в мире коммуникативную ситуацию. Не текст, а акт коммуникации является мироопределяющей единицей пастернаковской поэтики."³⁹

The principle pinpointed by Faryno as the major feature of Pasternak's poetics was applied by Tsvetaeva in "Moi Pushkin". Using Faryno's words, we may refer to the situations taken from Pushkin's life and writings, and discussed by Tsvetaeva in the essay, as *communicative situations*. However, if we employ the terminology of Baroque art, we can call them *rhetorical figures*. Throughout the essay they form a certain chain — Tsvetaeva marks them out as lessons taught by Pushkin:

1. A lesson of revenge, or passion (Tsvetaeva perceives Pushkin's last desire to shoot his enemy as the perfect embodiment of his passionate character);
2. A lesson of measurement (Tsvetaeva makes a *communicative situation* out of her childhood games which supposedly involved Pushkin's monument —

Памятник Пушкина был цель и предел прогулки [...];

Памятник Пушкина был и моя первая пространственная мера [...],

³⁸ Georgii Adamovich, "Pamiati Poplavskogo", *Poslednie novosti*, 5320, Paris, 17 October 1937 p.2; Id., "Posle Rossii. (Novye stikhi Mariny Tsvetaevoi)", *ibid.*, 2647, 21 June 1928, p.3.

³⁹ Jerzy Faryno, *Poetika Pasternaka* ("Putevye zapiski" — "Okhrannaia gramota"), *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband*, 32, Vienna, 1989, p.45.

Памятник Пушкина был — обиход, такое же действующее лицо детской жизни, как рояль [...];

Памятник Пушкина был и моей первой встречей с черным и белым [...];

Памятник Пушкина был и моей первой встречей с числом [...];

Памятник Пушкина был и моей первой встречей с материалом [...];

Первый урок числа, первый урок масштаба, первый урок материала, первый урок иерархии, первый урок мысли [...].

(P, pp.19-21)

Tsvetaeva exploits different situations which involve Pushkin's monument in order to expose all the possible meanings. (In fact, following the experiments of the Russian Futurists and expanding the borders of literature, she applies purely linguistic techniques of etymological search to sculpture.) Also, the idea of the monument coming alive (one of the passages of "Moi Pushkin" tells about the visit of Pushkin's son to their house; Tsvetaeva perceived him as a monument himself — P, pp.24-25) derived from Pushkin's play "Kamennyi gost'". Taking into account Tsvetaeva's own interest in the mythological implications of sculptural imagery, one can easily read in the described situation a subtext related to the Cnidus myth (see chapter 3 of this work). Therefore, it suggests the tragic motif of the impossibility of love (in a trivial sense) — "Так и у меня был свой Командор" (P, p.26). Besides the points mentioned above, such a polysemic treatment of the monument in Tsvetaeva's essay brings to mind Adelaida Gertsyk's article "Iz mira detskikh igr".⁴⁰ (Tsvetaeva praised Gertsyk's work in the essay "Zhivoe o zhivom".)

The most significant aspect of Gertsyk's article (and of her writings as a whole) lies in the mythopoetic reconstruction of the world. In Tsvetaeva's writings the same mechanism is used as an artistic device. Gertsyk brings together all the spiritual spheres of life which contain an element of creativity (which can be reduced to communication) — such as

⁴⁰ A. Gertsyk, "Iz mira detskikh igr", *Russkaia shkola*, St Petersburg, 1906, 3, pp.31-45.

play, myth, ritual, religion and faith. Gertsyk exposed the very mechanism of mythopoetry which was later developed in Tsvetaeva's "Moi Pushkin":

Как? Каждое слово, каждая буква имеют только одно определённое значение? И ничего другого нельзя понять и прочесть в них? [...] И неудовлетворенная я начинала читать по-своему, „сочинять“ по книге, прибавляя новые черты и детали.⁴¹

In the same manner as Tsvetaeva talks about her childhood, Gertsyk comes up with her own system of semiotic cypher: she identifies algebraic symbols with certain historic events or figures. As Gertsyk admitted, her perception of the surrounding world had ritualistic implications:

Вспоминая [...] детские представления, я вижу, что все они имели в основе случай, стремящийся найти себе санкцию и стать законом. Это была потребность упорядочивать жизнь, дать окружающему чудесные объяснения, чтить непонятную незримую силу и принимать от нее приказания...

Перед домом тянулась длинная тополевая аллея; все деревья были одинаково окопаны и подстрижены. Не вынося неосмысленной симметрии и однообразия, мы выделили среди этих деревьев одно, которое властвовало над всеми.⁴²

Tsvetaeva's references to the alley, trees and a cult object (in this instance, a monument to Pushkin) make her text very similar to that of Gertsyk. However, there is an important difference between them. Tsvetaeva's text is more dense and complicated, due to her attempt to translate Pushkin's life and writings not only into a new pagan ritual,⁴³ but also into

⁴¹ Quoted from: Maksimilian Voloshin, *Liki tvorchestva*, Leningrad, 1988, p.498.

⁴² Ibid, p.500.

⁴³ Thus, Tsvetaeva claims that the monument was a deity different from all others: „Памятник Пушкина я любила за черноту — обратную белизну наших домашних богов.“; and „Наших богов иногда, хоть редко, но переставляли. Наших богов, под Рождество и Пасху, тряпкой обмахивали. Этого же мыли дожди и сушили ветра. Этот всегда стоял.“ (P, p.22)

the language of Tsvetaeva's own text. In other words, Tsvetaeva's role as a narrator is more complex: she is not only a receiver of Pushkin's text, she is a creator of her own semiotic space as well as a messenger. Moreover, it suggests the rôle of an ideal reader who would be in a position to perceive all its meanings. This opportunity lies beyond Tsvetaeva's limits as an author. The tragic conflict between the creative act (expressed in a play) and the reality will be discussed further in the analysis of Tsvetaeva's interpretation in the same essay of "K moriu".

2. Tsvetaeva's interpretation of the love theme in Pushkin's writings and his poem "K moriu".

It has been illustrated above that Tsvetaeva's approach to Pushkin's life and writings was subordinated to her attempt to symbolise Pushkin's image and mark out a model of the poet's fate. Tsvetaeva's treatment of Pushkin's personality was not highly innovative, in the sense that it was based on the experience of the Symbolists who worked out a mechanism to emblematised their famous predecessors — especially Dante. Andrei Belyi characterised the mode of living provided by Dante as "put' soznaniia", while Briusov defined it as a "norm of a poet's behaviour".⁴⁴ Tsvetaeva follows Briusov's path in dealing with Pushkin's biography: she denies that the psychological-biographical course can be applied to a poet's life, and replaces it with a mythopoetical *modus operandi* and emblematising. This attitude derives from the outlook of such Symbolists as Andrei Belyi. He proclaimed creative art as an alternative to creative living.⁴⁵ Tsvetaeva wrote with great sympathy about Bely's creative living in her essay "Plennyi dukh".

Like Belyi, Tsvetaeva used her own biography as an artistic device, and she selectively made use of it in parts of her writings. In relation to Pushkin, Tsvetaeva demonstrated the same selectivity. Thus, she overlooked the social and political reasons for Pushkin's dandyism, branding it as the standard rebellious mode of the poet's behaviour. Her dismissive remark on

⁴⁴ See: L. Szilárd, P. Barta, op.cit., p.65; P. Davidson, *The poetic imagination of Vyacheslav Ivanov*, Cambridge, 1989, pp.72-99.

⁴⁵ Belyi juxtaposed Dante and St Francis of Assisi in relation to these two forms of creativity. — A. Belyi, *Tragediia tvorchestva. Dostoevskii i Tolstoi*, Moscow, 1911, pp.37-38.

Evgenii Onegin illustrates the same symbolizing tendency:

Иные из моих современников усмотрели в „Евгении Онегине“ блистательную шутку, почти сатиру. Может быть, они и правы [...]

Быт? („Быт русского дворянства в первой половине XIX века“.) Нужно же, чтобы люди были как-нибудь одеты. (Р, р.35)

In the second part of "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva continues to create a type of passionate hero based on Pushkin's works. In her approach Tsvetaeva merges Pushkin's life and writings in order to outline a mode which to some extent can be called the 'life of genius', told as a story to others or, using Belyi's words, an example of the word of genius as a word perceived in experience.⁴⁶ The latter gives us a key to the internal structure of Tsvetaeva's narrative in "Moi Pushkin". Using Pushkin's texts she extracts from them a number of rhetorical figures and modes and projects them upon her own experience (itself set against the background of Pushkin's life). This can be seen as an attempt to bring back into literature Baroque ideas of rhetorical figures which were intended to move the audience and to make the perceiver of the work of art experience the same psychological state.

The other important feature, which appears in every character taken from Pushkin's works and in Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's own personality, is will power. Thus, as noted earlier, Pushkin's firing of the shot in the duel represents for Tsvetaeva an expression of will power, which helped Pushkin to transform his own life into a masterpiece. Tsvetaeva's discussion of Aleko and Tat'iana in "Moi Pushkin" highlights the same trait. In line with Tsvetaeva's interpretation of the love story in *Evgenii Onegin*, it was Tat'iana who initiated the whole situation:

В том-то и все дело было, что он ее не любил, и только потому она его — так, и только для того его, а не другого, в любовь выбрала, что втайне знала, что он ее не сможет любить [...] У людей с этим роковым даром несчастной — единоличной — всей на себя взятой — любви — прямо *гений* на неподходящие предметы. (Р, р.33)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Tsvetaeva talks in the same vein about Pushkin himself in her essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" (see chapter 3 of this work). Nonetheless, such a view contradicts the many-faceted image of the poet created by Pushkin. Thus, in the poem "Ekho", Pushkin convincingly depicted the process of the poet's inspiration. In this poem and in many others (for example, "Prorok", "19 oktiabria", and "Osen'") Pushkin demonstrated that creative freedom is not freedom of will, due to its passive nature: a poet perceives the world as something given to him from above in moments of inspiration. In this sense Pushkin was the ideal poet open to all aspects of reality. If we compare Pushkin to Byron or Mickiewicz, they can be distinguished from Pushkin in the sense that they had a strong or dominant theme which determined the very nature of their poetry. As Vladimir Solov'ev mentioned in his article "Znachenie poezii v stikhotvoreniiakh Pushkina" (1899), Pushkin did not have such a dominant aspect in his personality: "Основной отличительный признак этой поэзии — ее свобода от всякой предвзятой тенденции и от всякой претензии."⁴⁷

Although Tsvetaeva understood the two aspects of creativity which require passive perception and determined craftsmanship (she devoted a lengthy discourse to this in her essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti"), she strongly emphasised the active element in a creator. Tsvetaeva's words about Tat'iana Larina, cited above, can be treated as a self-characterisation. In "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva claims that she followed in Tat'iana's footsteps by setting the course of her relationships, and she saw the scene of the last meeting between Onegin and Tat'iana as a lesson in courage, pride, loyalty, fate and solitude: „Урок смелости. Урок гордости. Урок верности. Урок судьбы. Урок одиночества" (P, p.33). So once again we see Tsvetaeva's attempt to transform an episode in Pushkin's work into a rhetorical figure: Tsvetaeva claims that "тогда, в саду, Татьяна застыла статуей". In the light of Tsvetaeva's allusion to *Evgenii Onegin* it would be interesting to refer to her self-characterisation in a letter to Salomeia Gal'pern of 22 March 1927:

Милая Саломея, хотите разгадку — полу-трагедии, Вашей и моей? Вас всегда будут любить слабые, по естественному закону тяготения сильных — к слабым и слабым — к сильным. Последнее *potre cas*, в нас ищут и будут искать опоры. Сила к силе — редчайшее чудо и на него

⁴⁷ Solov'ev, op.cit., p.226.

рассчитывать нельзя.

Слабость, то есть: ЧУТЬЕ, многообразие, созерцательность и невозможность действия. Слабость как условность, конечно, слабость — как, может быть, сила в других мирах, но в этом, любимом Вами и нелюбимом мною, конечно — слабость: неумение (нехотение!) жить. В нас любят ЖИЗНЬ. Даже во мне.⁴⁸

Tsvetaeva's model of a pair in love was extended to Pushkin when, in the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova", she stated that Pushkin represented everything, while Goncharova personified nil. („Он хотел нуль, ибо сам был все." — S88, 2, p.58) Tsvetaeva's comments on Goncharova's melancholic character fit her mythopoetic mode, cited above, where she sees passivity as the opposite to passion. Tsvetaeva's emphasis on willpower and volition stands out even in her interpretation of Pushkin's poem "Pora, moi drug, pora ...".⁴⁹

Bearing in mind Tsvetaeva's assertion that for her Pushkin's monument represented a lesson in thought, and relating it to the theme of willpower, love and personal fate, certain links with the tradition existing in Symbolist culture can be traced. In the concepts worked out by the Russian Symbolists, a poet repeats the mystic experience described in Dante's *Divine Comedy* — experience found on the path of descent and ascent. Ellis, one of Tsvetaeva's teachers, to whom she devoted her long poem "Charodel", described the poetic fate of Dante thus:

От сознания близости вечного осуждения до последних
высот благодатного слияния с Творцом лежит путь
восхождения Данте, путь вечный, неизменяемый,
пройденный некогда как стезя падения совершеннейшим из
Духов и всей вселенной, лежащий в будущем после
воплощения Бога стезею возврата и примирения с
Создателем, лежащий одинаково перед всей вселенной,

⁴⁸ "Iz pisem Mariny Tsvetaevoi k Salomee Andronnikovoi-Gal'pern", *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizhenia*, Paris, 138, 1983, p.170.

⁴⁹ See note 53 in chapter 2.

всеми духами и душами, перед каждым из нас.⁵⁰

The vision of Dante expressed by Ellis was a commonplace among the Symbolists. We come across the same views on Dante — whose fate was an emblem of the path taken by any Symbolist poet — in the works of Ivanov, Belyi and Briusov. The Russian Symbolist movement was permeated with the anthroposophic ideology, which proclaimed three types of pathway for the ordained; one of them advanced a method of initiating willpower and thought. In the light of these teachings it becomes clearer how Tsvetaeva applied to Pushkin the principles developed by her predecessors. In particular, Tsvetaeva's description of Pushkin's monument can be compared to her interpretation of his poem "K moriu" (this will be discussed below). Tsvetaeva's own "Poema vozdukha" embarks upon the aspect of ascent, and in some ways Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's "K moriu" hinges on her own model which appeared in her poem and which derived from Symbolist concepts. As Dante was for earlier Symbolists an embodiment of spiritual aristocracy, Pushkin symbolised for Tsvetaeva the same principle in the same way. That is why Tsvetaeva overlooked Pushkin's preoccupation with the position of the aristocracy in Russia. These ideas became irrelevant for writers of her generation.

As was pointed out earlier, the image that Tsvetaeva had of Pushkin, based on the emphasising of Pushkin's negritude, was developed into a special theme of blackness. In the second part of "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva mentions characters from Pushkin's writings such as Peter the Great, Pugachev, Vurdalak and Napoleon. All of them merge into one theme in Tsvetaeva's discourse — evil. This theme is interpreted by Tsvetaeva in a very unorthodox way, and it is also linked to the love theme.

The theme of evil is related in Tsvetaeva's writings to the motif of *individualism* and *rebelliousness*. As we shall see further in our analysis, love represents, in Tsvetaeva's view, an embodiment of one's willpower (it can be felt even in the remark in the letter to Salomela Gal'pern, quoted

⁵⁰ Ellis, "Uchitel' very", *Trudy i dni*, Petrograd, 7, 1914, p.66. The allusion to Ellis seems to be appropriate even in the light of Tsvetaeva's reference to her own poetic description of Pushkin's monument in "Charodel". The image of the black monument which "lit the sunrise" in honour of the Divine Tsar may well be influenced by Ellis's teachings related to mystic experience and Symbolist cultural orientations.

above, about a gift of *edinoличnoi* love). Although this mode might seem to be romantic, Tsvetaeva's poetics and artistic vision are very different from those of the writers of the period of Romanticism. It appears to be more fruitful to look at it from the point of view of a different tradition: Tsvetaeva's perception of the Greek philosophical tradition of Heraclitus and Plato — partly indirect — through the culture of the Russian Symbolists who absorbed ancient art to a large extent.

Thus, Tsvetaeva's ethical model (and subsequently her system of colours) has an origin in Plato's theory of Forms and Ideas. In the view of Plato, change is evil and rest is divine. This doctrine was summarised in the *Laws*: "Any change whatever, except the change of an evil thing, is the gravest of all the treacherous dangers that can befall a thing — whether it is now a change of season, or of wind, or of the diet of the body, or of the character of the soul".⁵¹ On the one hand, Tsvetaeva establishes an ideal world in her poetry which gets distorted when imitated. (This idea is very evident in the works of Plato). In the "Poema lestnitsy" Tsvetaeva reminds her readers about the original purity of the divine design:

Мы, с ремеслами, мы, с заводами,
Что мы сделали с раем, отданным
Нам? Нож первый и первый лом,
Что мы сделали с первым днём? (S84, 1, p.398)

Tsvetaeva examines Pushkin's poem "K moriu" in her essay "Moi Pushkin" in the same vein. It seems to be significant that Tsvetaeva talks about her childhood perception of the poem because in European culture a child's vision of the world is considered to be closer to the original created by God. (Thus, for instance, Heraclitus in one of his fragments suggests that all the Ephesians ought to hang themselves and leave the city to be ruled by infants; in the Enlightenment the idea of the unspoiled child's soul was reinforced by such philosophers as Rousseau.) Tsvetaeva overlooks Pushkin's symbolic references to Napoleon and Byron in his poem "K moriu", and, in the final words of the essay she makes a point that the sea as a free element was in her view identical to poetry:

И — больше скажу: безграмотность моего младенческого
отождествления стихии со стихами оказалась —

⁵¹ Translated from the Greek by K.R. Popper in his *The Open Society and its Enemies*, volume 1, *The Spell of Plato*, London, 1989, p.37.

прозрением: „свободная стихия“ оказалась стихами, а не морем, стихами, то есть единственной стихией, с которой не прощаются — никогда. (Р, р.57)

In spite of Tsvetaeva's claim that her interpretation of "K moriu" was inspired by her childhood perception of the poem, one should look into another aspect of it, in particular Pasternak's influence on Tsvetaeva's poetry. It seems very likely that Pasternak's cycle "Tema s variatsiiami" has something to do with it, especially if one bears in mind Tsvetaeva's reference to this cycle in "Moi Pushkin" :

К морю было: море + любовь к нему Пушкина, море + поэт, две стихии, о которых так незабвенно — Борис Пастернак:

Стихия свободной стихии

С свободной стихией стиха, —

опустив или подразумев третью и единственную: лирическую. (Р, р.56)

In Pasternak's cycle the poet in the act of creation is identified with God. The whole structure of the cycle has very notable similarities with some biblical texts.⁵² However, this idea derives from a more ancient tradition introduced into European culture by Plato. One of the dominant points of Plato's theory of Form and Ideas suggests that all products of human art are only copies of 'natural' sensible things. Therefore, the artist produces only copies of divine Forms, in other words — copies of copies, twice removed from reality and correspondingly less true. Plato established an opposition between nature and art in its correspondence to the opposition of truth and falsity, of reality and appearance, of original and man-made things. According to Plato, the opposition is analogous to the antinomy which exists between the objects of rational knowledge and those of delusive opinion, between the products of divine art and human art. That is why Tsvetaeva's farewell to the sea depicted in the essay can be fully understood only in conjunction with Plato's ideas discussed above.

There is a trace of Plato's ideas (conveyed in particular in *Timaeus*) in

⁵² See: Jerzy Faryno, "Pushkin in Pasternak's 'Tema s variatsiiami' ", *Slavonic and East European Review*, 69, 1991, 3, pp.418-57.

Tsvetaeva's mythological model of the world as well as in her poetics. Like Plato, Tsvetaeva was preoccupied with a search for the etymological origin of words. Plato's poetics is well known for the persistent usage of the synonymous amplitude of words derived from the same semantic stem. In *Timaeus*, for example, Plato's semantic structure of the text manifests "принцип единой энергичной субстанции число-смысло-слово".⁵³ Plato attaches the whole word structure of the text to the key-words derived from the stem *loy/ley*. Subsequently, Plato's artistic device reflects his belief that every semantic paradigm can be traced to its original 'pre-stem'. Tsvetaeva applies the same device to her poetic technique — especially in the late 1920s. This feature brings her closer to the poetics exploited by Pasternak and the Cubo-Futurists.⁵⁴

However, Tsvetaeva extends Plato's device to the semiotic level. Thus, in "Moi Pushkin" she writes:

Но и до „Дуэли“ Наумова есть свое до-воспоминание,
предок-воспоминание. (Р, р.19)

Moreover, in the recollections of Count Volkonskii, Tsvetaeva had a habit of relating details of everyday life to the higher reality which corresponds to Plato's teaching on Forms and Ideas:

Однажды Вы мне написали, что нравится Вам, как я быстро
от неприятных вопросов быта перехожу к сверхжизненным

⁵³ N.I. Grigor'eva "Poetika slova. Paradoksy platonovskogo *Timela*: dialog i gimn", *Poetika drevnegrecheskoi literatury*, ed. by S.S. Averintsev, Moscow, 1981, p.68.

⁵⁴ Tsvetaeva characterises Pasternak's poetic style in terms which can be applied to her own artistic manner: „И вместе с тем, его более чем кого-либо нужно вскрыть. (Поэзия Умыслов.)“ ("Svetovoi liven'", S88, 2, p.331), „Вы — переписка Пастернака с его Гением.“ (From a letter to Pasternak written in February 1923, S88, 2, p.478). It is also interesting to note that Count Volkonskii emphasised Tsvetaeva's tendency to give a special meaning to some sounds and phonetical units: „Вам нравится это чередование П и Р, и О и И — знаю“, „Я был в Париже, вы жили в Праге. Я знаю, — Вам и тут нравится чередование П и Р, и преобладание А, но и тут не моя вина.“ (in: Кн. Sergei Volkonskii *Быт i bytie. Iz proshlogo, nastoiashchego, vechnogo*, Paris, 1978, pp.VII-VIII).

вопросам бытия. [...] Помню, Вы как-то сказали, что сочинили себе девиз: „Mieux vaut être qu'avoir“. Вы правы. „Avoir“ это — *быть*; „Être“ — это *бытие*.“⁵⁵

Tsvetaeva's paradigm 'Pushkin — Blok — Rilke — Orpheus' which stands out in her poetic system (see chapter 4 of this work) has an analogy in Plato's concept of creativity and the Demiurge's role in it. Following Plato, Tsvetaeva perceives every artist as an embodiment of the Creator—Demiurge. This is particularly noticeable in her attitude towards Pasternak:

Исповедываются не священнику, а Богу. Исповедуюсь (не каюсь, а вос-каждаю!) не Вам, а духу в вас. Он больше Вас — и не такое еще слышал!

(From a letter to Pasternak written in February 1923, S88, 2, p.477)

Tsvetaeva also revived Plato's idea about the masculine nature of creative force. In a long poem "Na krasnom kone" her Genius appears to be male — it is a rider on a red steed. In the light of Plato's concept, suggesting that the Demiurge created gods of a fiery nature, it becomes clear why the whole range of red colours (from pink to negritude) is so prevalent in Tsvetaeva's poetry (especially in relation to the image of the poet). According to *Timaeus* the Universe was created as a result of realised masculine force, and the whole plenitude of the originated cosmos was "вызвано для самой лучшей жизни силой слова творящего Ума".⁵⁶ The same idea is conveyed, in Tsvetaeva's view, in Pushkin's "K moriu". It is particularly felt in a passage from "Moi Pushkin" where Tsvetaeva talks about Pushkin carrying the whole sea in an egg (in ancient Greek cosmology the latter image was a symbol of the Universe):

И вот — видение: Пушкин, переносящий, проносящий над головой — все море, которое еще и внутри него (тобою полн), так что и внутри у него все голубое — точно он весь в огромном дё неба хрустальном продольном яйце, которое еще и в нем (Моресвод). (P, p.50)

Tsvetaeva's approach to Pushkin's texts has certain similarities with that of Pasternak whose "Tema s variatsiiami" she regarded highly. One of

⁵⁵ Volkonskii, op.cit., p.XIV.

⁵⁶ Quoted from: *Poetika drevnegrechskoi literatury*, op. cit., p.62.

the poems from the cycle, "Oblako. Zvezdy. I sboku...", she claims to be her favourite.⁵⁷ Moreover, Tsvetaeva inserts a quotation from Pasternak's cycle in her essay in order to clarify her own perception of Pushkin's poem (see the quotation above).

Pasternak's cycle recreates the same situation, Pushkin's farewell to the sea, although unlike Tsvetaeva's image it serves as an extension of the scene taken from "Mednyi vsadnik". However, Pasternak's narration is complicated by the suggestion of autobiographical details. Thus, for instance, young Pasternak was his father's model for the charcoal drawing of Pushkin on the Black Sea; and among his contemporaries he was known for his resemblance to Pushkin. Tsvetaeva seemed to be aware of the autobiographical aspect of Pasternak's mythopoetical model which he exploited in the cycle "Tema s variatsiiami". She closely linked Pasternak's marine images with Pushkin's "K moriu", and her attitude towards them follows the same pattern: it presents a clear contrast between the real sea and the poetic myth. To illustrate this point it would be useful to refer to Tsvetaeva's own words about Pasternak's "Deviat'sot platyi god" and Pushkin's poem:

И все-таки не раскаиваюсь. „Придается все — лишь тебе не дано“. С этим, за этим ехала. И что же? То, с чем ехала и за чем: *твой стих*, т.е. преобразование вещи. Дура я, что я надеялась увидеть *воочию* *твое море* — заочное, надочное, внеочное. „Прощай, свободная стихия!“ (мой 10 лет) и „Придается все“ (мой тридцать) — вот мое море. (From Tsvetaeva's letter of 23 May 1926, to Pasternak, S88, 2, p.485-86.)

Теперь, тридцать с лишним лет спустя, вижу: мое к *морю* было — пушкинская грудь, что ехала я в пушкинскую грудь, с Наполеоном, с Байроном, с шумом, и плеском, и говором волн его *души*, и естественно, что я в Средиземном море со скалой-лягушкой, а потом и в Черном, а потом в Атлантическом, этой груди — не узнала. ("Moi Pushkin", P, pp.55-56)

⁵⁷ In a letter to Pasternak of 11 February 1923 she wrote: „Теперь о книге вплотную. Сначала налюбимейшие цельные стихи. До страсти: "Маргарита", "Облако. Звезды. И сбоку..." (S88, 2, p.482)

Therefore, on the one hand, we come across the same approach taken by Tsvetaeva in dealing with Pushkin's and Pasternak's texts. On the other hand, using Pasternak's mythopoetic model, based on a comparison of two elements (water and poetry), Tsvetaeva creates a certain type of 'marine' personality which she freely applies to Pushkin, Pasternak and herself as a poet. In some ways this type of a poet can be characterised as lyrical and romantic, although it is entwined with some elements which are more typical of Baroque and avant-garde art:

Пастернак же — динамика двух впертых в стол локтей,
подпирающих лоб — мыслителя.

Так неподвижно море — в самую бурю. (S84, p. 386)

In a similar manner Tsvetaeva describes Pushkin's monument, identifying it with Pushkin's "K moriu":

Ибо Пушкин не над песчаным бульваром стоит, а над
Черным морем. Над морем свободной стихии — Пушкин
свободной стихии. (P, p.23)

It is interesting that Tsvetaeva tries to 'revive' the monument, seeing in Pushkin a lyrical poet open to transformations and interpretations, in comparison to her definition of some poets — such as Briusov and Maiakovskii, for example — whom she characterises as "marble", static, living monuments, and so on. („Статичность Маяковского от его статуарности. Даже тот быстроногий бегун он — мраморный. [...] Маяковский — живой памятник." — "Epos i lirika sovremennoi Rossii", S84, p. 387)

Jerzy Faryno, in his comprehensive analysis of Pasternak's "Tema s variatsiiami", comes to the conclusion that Pasternak establishes analogies between a lyric hero and the Creator, between Pasternak's poetic language and the Bible. (See ref.52.) In Tsvetaeva's case, however, we should also look for links with ancient Greek tradition. (Her own tragedies, "Ariadna" and "Fedra", illustrate her preoccupation with ancient Greek culture.) Thus, Tsvetaeva's description of the seaside in the long poem "S moria" (written in the form of a letter to Pasternak and Rilke) resembles some aspects of the poetics developed by Plato and Aristotle. In the poem Tsvetaeva concentrates her attention on playing with pebbles, which leads her to creating a game

(with a certain semiotic significance); she hopes that her game will be joined by her addressee in a telepathic, dream-like way. Child's play was at the centre of the attention of Greek philosophers, too. Plato's *Timaeus*, for instance, talks about the transformation and metamorphosis of all kinds of elements. Plato compares a philosopher who observes such transformations to a child at play:

Игра, забава, детская шутка — вот, оказывается, какое значение придает философ учету и исчислению видов материи, порождаемых каждой стихией, и, мало того, это занятие оценивается им всего лишь как погоня за правдоподобным мифом.⁵⁸

Just as *Timaeus* establishes the difference between reason and myth, Tsvetaeva compares her vision of the real sea with the image created by Pushkin. Another analogy lies in the fact that the sea in "Moi Pushkin" seems to be an alter ego of the poet:

[...] море — друг, море — зовущее и ждущее [...] Море — взаимное, тот единственный случай взаимности — до краев и через морской край наполненный, а не пустой, как счастливая любовь. (P, p.56)

The crucial principle of avant-garde poetics, the identification of the author's creation with the creator himself, bears a resemblance to Plato's concept of the Demiurge who made everything around himself look like him.

In "Moi Pushkin" the statement about travelling to Pushkin's chest (quoted above) reveals Tsvetaeva's perception of the poem in terms of the poetics of the avant-garde. This 'metonymic' aspect in the depiction of a lyric hero is especially prevalent in Pasternak's poetry and was pointed out by Tsvetaeva herself in "Svetovoi liven'". As one scholar puts it, 'I' in the poetry of Pasternak is hidden to a large extent — „оно максимально невыражено, оттеснено вглубь структуры, так что можно говорить о своеобразном „минус-Я“, [...], лирическое Я пастернаковской поэзии — пустой центр компоновки, к которому обращены предметы (вещи,

⁵⁸ Grigor'eva, *Poetika drevnegrecheskoi literatury*, op.cit., p.72.

явления, движения) „внешнего мира“.⁵⁹ In the same vein Tsvetaeva comments on Pasternak's and Pushkin's poetics:

Кому же говорит Пастернак? Пастернак говорит сам с собою. Даже хочется сказать при самом себе. ("Epos i lirika sovremennoi Rossii", S84, 2, p.374)

Пастернак весь на читательском сотворчестве [...] Пастернак — претворение предмета в себя; растворение предмета в себе. (S84, 2, p.375)

Но *К морю* было еще и любовь *моря* к Пушкину: море — друг [...], которое боится, что Пушкин — забудет, и которому, как живому, Пушкин обещает и вновь обещает. (P, p.56)

As mentioned above, Tsvetaeva talks in the same manner as Pasternak about the "waves of Pushkin's soul", claiming that such an image of the sea as created by Pushkin and herself can exist only "inside" someone (P., p.56).

Both Pasternak and Tsvetaeva read Pushkin's text as an 'open work', and interpreted his term "svobodnala stikhila" in the light of avant-garde poetics. The very title of Pasternak's cycle — "Tema s variatsiiami" — implies this; Tsvetaeva's title "Moi Pushkin" is also suggestive. This aspect of 'openness' in modern art has been thoroughly studied by Umberto Eco in his book *The Open Work*. According to his observations, the modern artist subsumes *openness* "into a positive aspect of his production, recasting the work so as to expose it to the maximum possible *opening*".⁶⁰ Eco establishes in his study the significant difference between the 'open' work of the avant-garde and what we might call 'classical' art. In Eco's analysis of Dante's theoretical statements and poetics we come across an important conclusion that a medieval text made available to its readers "a range of rigidly pre-established and ordained interpretative solutions, and these never

⁵⁹ Josip Užarević, "K probleme liricheskogo sub'ekta v lirike Borisa Pasternaka", *Poetika Pasternaka, Studia filologiczne, zeszyt 31/12*, Bydgoszcz, 1990, p.26.

⁶⁰ Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, translated by Anna Cancogni, London, 1989, p.5.

allow the reader to move outside the strict control of the author".⁶¹ In other words, "the reader can concentrate his attention on one sense rather than on another, in the limited space [...], but he must always follow rules that entail a rigid univocability. The meaning of allegorical figures and emblems which the medieval reader is likely to encounter is already presented by his encyclopedias, bestiaries and lapidaries. Any symbolism is objectively defined and organised into a system".⁶²

The "openness" prevalent in modern art appeared for the first time in the "open form" of Baroque culture due to the preoccupation of Baroque artists with dynamic types of expression:

Searching for kinetic excitement and illusory effects leads to a situation where the plastic mass in the Baroque work of art never allows a privileged, definitive, frontal view; rather it induces the spectator to shift his position continuously in order to see the work in constantly new aspects, as if it were in a state of perpetual transformation.⁶³

Therefore, in Baroque art for the first time man opts out of the canon of authorised responses and perceives the world in a fluid state. That is why Baroque culture can be seen as the first clear manifestation of modern aesthetics and sensitivity.

It was pointed out earlier that Tsvetaeva's poetics stands very close to the principles of Baroque art, although her interest in dynamic forms of expression derives not only from the Baroque tradition but also from Heraclitus whose *Fragments* she treasured very much.⁶⁴ The 'kinetic' approach found by Eco in the art of the Baroque and the avant-garde is applied by Tsvetaeva to Pushkin's poem "K moriu" which she tries to put into different dimensional perspectives. She sees it as a potential mystery to be solved;

⁶¹ Ibid., p.6.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., p.7.

⁶⁴ Saakiantz claims that Heraclitus's book, translated by Tsvetaeva's friend Vladimir Nilender, was among Tsvetaeva's favourite books with which she never parted. — A. Saakiantz, "Vstrecha s knigoi dlia menia radost'". Marina Tsvetaeva", *Oni pitali muzu. Kniga v zhizni i tvorchestve pisatelei*, Moscow, 1986, p.201.

thus, Tsvetaeva includes a whole chain of possible interpretations of Pushkin's image, for example: „С Асей К Морю дробилось на гравий“, „со старшей сестрой Валерией [...] превращалось в татарские туфли [...], в скалу Деву и в скалу Монах“, „Ничего зрительного и предметного в моем К Морю не было, были шумы [...], звуки слов, и — самое главное — тоска: пушкинского призвания и прощания“ (Р, pp.51-2). All the suggested possibilities, however, were surpassed by Tsvetaeva's conclusion that Pushkin's free element turned out to be lyric poetry.

In some ways Tsvetaeva's statement can be justified by taking into account some personal details of Pushkin's life in the Crimea which form the background of his poem "K moriu". Byron's death in 1824 inspired several Russian poets: Pushkin wrote "K moriu", Klukhel'beker published a poem "Smert' Bairaona", Ryleev — "Na smert' Bairaona". Pushkin's response to Byron's death was in line with the Russian poetic tradition: like Viazemskii, Ryleev and many others Pushkin perceived it as a highly honourable subject for solemn poetry. He wrote to Viazemskii: „Тебе грустно по Байроне, а я так рад его смерти, как высокому предмету для поэзии.“⁶⁵ Despite this attitude, Pushkin dismissed the attempts of his fellow poets to revive the genre of ode in relation to Byron. His own dedication to Byron was closer to the genre of elegy, although almost at the same time Pushkin criticised Romantic elegiac poets in his novel *Evgenii Onegin*. By this time Pushkin was seeking new applications for his literary gift, eager to extend the boundaries of lyric genres. As Tynianov argues, the literary path of a pure lyricist, as outlined by Klukhel'beker, by the mid 1820s had already become unacceptable for Pushkin:

[...] смерть элегий и посланий была для Пушкина показателем того, что лирика должна уступить на время первенство другим литературным формам: трагедии, комедии, сатире; приближалась пора „Бориса Годунова“.⁶⁶

From this point of view, Tsvetaeva was correct to sense that Pushkin's farewell symbolised a farewell to lyric poetry. However, her image of Pushkin's poetic persona is one-sided. As indicated by many scholars (for

⁶⁵ Quoted from Iu. N. Tynianov, *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki*, Moscow, 1969, p.108.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.115.

example Tynianov), Pushkin turned his attention from lyric genres to dramatic art (a verse play in particular). Tsvetaeva's own plays follow Pushkin's tradition in many ways, although this fact lies beyond the boundaries of her essay "Moi Pushkin". Pushkin's creativity was not limited to lyrical forms of expression as was exaggeratedly claimed by Tsvetaeva in the essay. It was Pushkin himself who wrote:

Нам приятно видеть поэта во всех состояниях и
изменениях его живой творческой души: и в печали, и
в радости, и в парениях восторга, и в отдохновении
чувств, и в ювенальном негодовании, и в *маленькой досаде*
на скучного соседа... Благоговею перед созданием Фауста,
но люблю и эпиграммы... *Есть люди, которые не признают*
иной поэзии, кроме выпренной... ⁶⁷

Moreover, Pushkin's "Oda grafu Khvostovu" contains elements of parody on the 'odes of Ryleev and Kiukhel'beker. Undermining and overlooking this satirical trend in Pushkin's art, Tsvetaeva recreates in her essay the type of a poet which matches Kiukhel'beker's ideal of the solemn poet devoted to the themes of 'high art' with which Pushkin wanted to break in the 1820s. This type of elevated poet was cultivated by the Symbolists and subsequently by Tsvetaeva herself.

Another interesting feature of Tsvetaeva's approach is the fact that she freely uses Pushkin's text as an 'open' work to such an extent that she adopts and plays out the role of the lyric hero of the poem "K moriu":

И, внезапно повернувшись к нему спиной, пишу обломком
скалы на скале:

Прощай, свободная стихия!

[...] я должна дописать до волны, все дописать до волны, а
волна уже идет, и я как раз еще успеваю подписаться:

Александр Сергеевич Пушкин [...] (P, p.55)

Tsvetaeva's usage of the situation suggested (in her own view) by Pushkin, and of the word *podpisat'sia* (to put one's own signature) indicates that "Moi Pushkin" contains a certain mythopoetical model related to Tsvetaeva herself rather than to Pushkin.

As was pointed out above, Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model on the one hand derives from Pushkin's "K moriu" and Pasternak's "Tema s variatsiiami":

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.118.

It is based on merging the sea (as an embodiment of the water element) with poetry. On the other hand, it is an expansion of Tsvetaeva's model of her lyric "I" which is linked to her Christian name *Marina*. Etymologically Tsvetaeva traced the origin of her name to two Latin stems *mare* (sea) and *mori* (death):

Я, выношенная во чреве
Не материнском, а морском. [...]
Ты скажешь: „Я любил — морскую!
Морская канула — в моря!“ ("Dve pesni", S88, 1, p.127)

Кто создан из камня, кто создан из глины,—
А я серебрюсь и сверкаю!
Мне дело — измена, мне имя — Марина,
Я — брeнная пена морская. [...]
— В купели морской крещена — и в полете
Своем — непрестанно разбита! ("Kto sozdan iz kamnia...",
S84, 1, p.139)

Уже не memento, а просто — море!
Завтра, когда пойдем. ("Поэма горы", S84, 1, p.366)

In this example Tsvetaeva makes a pun from the Latin expression *memento mori*, freely identifying the Russian word *море* (sea) with the Latin *mori* (death).

Bearing in mind the role of the water element in the cosmogonic theories of ancient Greek mythology and Christian theology, it is possible to see that Tsvetaeva confers her lyric "I" with world-creating power. Sometimes this lyric character stands out as a Creator independent of God — like the Egyptian goddess Nieth (whom the Greeks identified with their Pallas Athene — the great weaver who wove the world with her shuttle as a woman weaves cloth.)⁶⁸ According to Plato's account, Nieth was considered

⁶⁸ Nieth played a part in many cosmogonic myths. She was made a sky-goddess like Nut and Hathir, and she was proclaimed to be mother of the gods in general and Ra in particular. She was a warrior-goddess, and wore the crown of the North while holding in her hand a bow and arrows. (In some ways Tsvetaeva's character in the poem "Tsar'-Devitsa" resembles Neith.) According to Plutarch her celebrated temple in Sais had this inscription: "I am all that has been, that is, and that will be. No mortal has yet been able to lift the veil which covers me." — See: *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, Intr. Robert Graves, London, 1969, p.37.

by the Greeks to be both god and goddess, who created the Universe by uttering words.⁶⁹ The latter image matches precisely Tsvetaeva's androgynous character bestowed with creative and magical powers.

In addition to my analogies suggested above, it is worth mentioning that there are some scholars — Faryno, for example — who trace some features of Tsvetaeva's lyric character to Slav folk tradition. Thus her self-identification with the foam may have its origin in the folk tale about the creation of the world by God and the Devil, who emerged from the foam. Nevertheless, whatever the origin of this lyric character, it always has the status of the fundamental principle of existence, of being — concludes Faryno.⁷⁰

It is suprising, however, that the functional role of Tsvetaeva's mythopoetic model in her poetics (the identification of her name with the water element) has been overlooked by scholars. The significance of this identification is that it forms part of an "open" work created by its author (similar to the term "empty element" mentioned above in relation to Pasternak). As an element, water has the ability to reflect different images in a mirror-like way. Tsvetaeva's lyric heroine adopts the same role very frequently. It is not a coincidence that Akhmatova augurally called Tsvetaeva her "double" and a "mocking bird" (in the poem "Nevidimka, dvoynik, peresmeshnik..."). It also would be fruitful to place Tsvetaeva's mythopoetic model against the background of the cosmogonic concepts related to water in ancient Greek philosophy:

Вода есть прозрачность и оформленность одновременно. Как умный эйдос различен в себе и тождествен, так вода отлична от всего окружающего, будучи в то же время абсолютно прозрачной и как бы тем самым уже теряя свою границу, уже отождествляясь с окружающим. Она — модификация огня, когда он зацветает более или менее твердыми оформлениями, отказываясь от беспокойства своих исканий. [...] она — символ беспечности, невинности,

⁶⁹ Grigor'eva, *Poetika drevnegrecheskoi literatury*, op. cit., p.94.

⁷⁰ Jerzy Faryno, *Mifologizm i teologizm Tsvetaevoi („Magdalena” — „Tsar'-Devitsa” — „Pereulochki”)*, *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband*, 18, Vienna, 1985, p.393.

безрадостности и безгорестности умного самопроявления
подвижного в себе покоя вечности.⁷¹

In Tsvetaeva's poetics there is a clear manifestation of the qualities of water described above, which become particularly evident in her symbolic use of the colour silver. In the 1930s the most prevalent characteristic of Tsvetaeva's writing becomes, probably, a dynamic image within a framework. Her self-description in 1938 illustrates this point very well:

А как хорошо было бы — если бы я жила в Бельгии, как
когда-то жила в Чехии, мирной жизнью, которую я так
обожаю... („А он „мятежный, ищет бури...“ — вот уж не про
меня сказано, я еще: — Блажен кто посетил сей мир — В
его минуты роковые... вот уж не блажен!!!) [...] ⁷²

Tsvetaeva gives a symbolic meaning to the colour silver, applying it either to self-characterisation, or in the depiction of other poet-singers (Blok, for example) or to the sea. In the poem "Kto sozdan iz gliny..." (quoted above) we came across the line "A ia serebrius' i sverkalu"; the description of sea water in "Moi Pushkin" appears to follow the same pattern:

Я сохну и смотрю: теперь я вижу, что за скалой Лягушка
— еще вода, много, чем дальше — тем бледней, и что
кончается она белой блестящей линейной чертою — того
же серебра, что все эти точки на маленьких волнах. (Р,
p.55)

In Zubova's study of colours in Tsvetaeva's poetry, the colour silver represents, on the one hand, dynamism, and, on the other, the idea of withdrawal from life. It is opposed to the colours gold and red: „серебряный — седой цвет выражает в произведениях Цветаевой идею бесцветности как отрешения от жизни, и в этом смысле он противопоставлен всем оттенкам красного“.⁷³ This definition matches the functions of water as an element suggested by the Greeks.

⁷¹ A. F. Losev, *Antichnyi kosmos i sovremennaiia nauka*, Moscow, 1927, p.222.

⁷² From Tsvetaeva's letter to Ariadna Berg of 15.02.1938. — *Pis'ma Mariny Tsvetaevoi k Ariadne Berg 1934-1939*, Paris, 1990, p.91.

⁷³ Zubova, op.cit., p.140.

In the light of the characteristics of water discussed above, it becomes clearer why Tsvetaeva sees an advantage in identifying her lyric "I" with it. Most importantly the aspect of reflectiveness allows the lyric "I" to be dynamic and enter different artistic systems. This flexibility forms an essential element of an "open" work. It is particularly relevant to Tsvetaeva's prose writings about other poets. All of them contain an autobiographical element which reveals itself through the function of reflectiveness, or mirroring. Thus it has been noticed by many scholars that Tsvetaeva's portraits of Belyi, or Voloshin, can be taken for self-portraits. The "mirroring" principle was already outlined by Tsvetaeva as early as 1913 in the poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" in which she proudly declares that she loves her reflection in the mirror, although this reflection appeared to have a background containing elements of Pushkin's poetic world. To a large extent the same approach can be applied to "Moi Pushkin". Thus, Pushkin's poem "K moriu" was perceived by Tsvetaeva as an "open", communicative situation which she plays out in her own life: as was pointed out earlier, she puts a signature of Pushkin on the rock after inscribing the first line from his poem "Proshchai, svobodnaja stikhia".

In terms of the personal circumstances of Tsvetaeva's life the ritual of her farewell to poetry in the essay reflected the real shift from poetry to prose writing which was due to financial pressures. Tsvetaeva found that it was easier to publish prose than her poems which in the 1930s started to become more and more incomprehensible to the Parisian public. Tsvetaeva's letters to friends from this period are full of complaints related to the necessity to write prose rather than poetry. Besides her financial and personal problems there are some indications that Tsvetaeva experienced a crisis in her poetic career, although she very rarely admits it. Thus, in 1935 she wrote to Tesková:

Я давно уже выбита из колея писания. Главное — нет стола[...]. Но еще главней: это (вся я) никому не нужно. Это, в лучшем случае, зовется „неврастения“. Век меня — миновал. Но об этом в другой раз. (РАТ, р.126-7)

Anna Akhmatova comments on Tsvetaeva's poetic crisis in one of her diary notes in 1959 in the following manner:

Марина ушла в заумь. См. „Поэма воздуха“. Ей стало тесно

в рамках Поэзии. Она dolphin-like, как говорит у Шекспира Клеопатра об Антонии. Ей было мало одной стихии, она удалилась в другую или другие.⁷⁴

It is beyond the scope of this work to analyse all the reasons which led Tsvetaeva to the "escape" from poetry, as Akhmatova puts it. The relevance to this work lies in the fact that Tsvetaeva tries to match her personal situation with that of Pushkin. In other words, in "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva applies the same method of "mirroring" to her discussion of Pushkin's "K moriu" which is prevalent in her other autobiographical writing. The theme of being Pushkin's double appears also in Tsvetaeva's essay "Mat' i muzyka" in which Tsvetaeva persuasively claims that her mother wanted to have a son, Alexander, instead of her. Tsvetaeva followed her myth-making line in promoting this parallel in several letters and personal remarks. Thus, for instance, she wrote to Ariadna Berg about being Alexander in her spiritual and intellectual ego: „Моя мать хотела сына Александра, родилась — я, но с душой (да и с головой!) сына Александра.“⁷⁵

The very freedom which is felt in Tsvetaeva's approach to Pushkin's text was typical not only of Tsvetaeva. It was worked out by the whole range of writers representing the Russian avant-garde. As early as 1910 the question of the "reading" and interpretation of literary texts was examined by Andrei Belyi, who outlined an important theoretical basis for the new art. It is particularly important to point out that Belyi urged writers and readers to look for "suggestive" aspects of any piece of art in order to perceive it in a creative way:

[...] стихотворение, воспринятое нами, требует определенно нашего творческого отношения, чтобы завершить символ, который лишь загадан в стихотворении, но не дан в определенно кристаллизованном образе.⁷⁶

Suggestiveness became a milestone in the poetics of the avant-garde, although to a certain extent it was already prominent in the writings of the

⁷⁴ Anna Akhmatova, "Iz dnevnika", *V piati knigakh*, edited and compiled by R. D. Timenchik and K. M. Polivanov, [4], *Posle vsego*, Moscow, 1989, p.273.

⁷⁵ *Pis'ma Mariny Tsvetaevoi k Ariadne Berg*, op.cit., p.82.

⁷⁶ A. Belyi, "Magila slov", *Simvolizm: sbornik statei*, Moscow, 1910, p.426.

period of Romanticism. In Russian poetry it was Zhukovskii who worked out the suggestive potentials of Russian poetic language. Pushkin's poetics was significantly different from Zhukovskii's techniques. It inclined towards logically clear, balanced and neutral forms of expression; in some ways Pushkin's poetry stands close to the prosaic language of Karamzin (which was known for its precision and adequacy) as was pointed out by Tynianov:

Он был на самой вершине культуры карамзинского *точного* слова, там, где это слово вызывало реакцию. И, как реакцию, Пушкин влил в эту [...] культуру враждебные ей черты, почерпнутые из архаистического направления.

Но у Пушкина это было внутренней, „гражданской“ войной с карамзинизмом; владея всеми достижениями карамзинизма, соблюдая принципы точного, адекватного слова, он воевал против последышей карамзинизма, против периферии карамзинистской культуры, против ее статики; ферментом же, брошенным на эту культуру, очищенную от маньеризма, эстетизма, малой формы, были принципы враждебной культуры — архаистической.⁷⁷

However, in spite of his tendency towards precision, Pushkin occasionally exploited the element of suggestiveness in his poems. Moreover, these particular poems attracted the attention of the Russian Symbolists and post-Symbolists. In "Moi Pushkin", for example, Tsvetaeva focuses her mind on what she claims to be her favourite word in the poem "K moriu" — "votshche" ("in vain"). For some reason, she interprets this word as "туда" ("over there") and turns it into the most suggestive key-word in the whole poem. Tsvetaeva provides several associations triggered by this word in her attempt to reconstruct the "hidden symbol" (using Belyi's phrase) and take part in re-creating Pushkin's text:

Вотще рвалась душа моя!

Вотще — это *туда*. Куда? Туда, куда и я. На тот берег Оки, куда я никак не могу попасть [...]; *вотще* — это в чуждую семью, где я буду одна без Аси и самая любимая дочь, с другой матерью и с другим именем — может быть, Катя, а может быть, Рогнеда, а может быть, сын Александр. (Р, р.49)

⁷⁷ И. N. Tynianov, *op.cit.*, p.70.

Tsvetaeva treats in the same way the most suggestive elements from her favourite Pushkin poems which she translated into French in 1936 (see chapter 1).

The opportunity to develop different potential interpretations provided by Pushkin's writings can be explained by the fact that sometimes Pushkin's poetic world appears to be far from static. As one scholar observes, „художественный мир Пушкина не статичен в своей совершенной гармонии, но богат скрытыми потенциями развития.“⁷⁸ Also Pushkin's evolution was advancing towards broader objectivity, historicism and scientific open-mindedness. This was already felt in *Evgenii Onegin* and "Kapitanskaya dochka", in which the author's point of view is by no means dominant, and it shifts from one perspective to another. (This aspect will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter, devoted to "Kapitanskaya dochka"). In his prose writings Pushkin included some documentary material and created a narrator who differs from Pushkin himself; moreover, in order to avoid any authoritative judgement such as is usually passed to readers by the author, he chose the role of publisher in some of his stories (such as "Kapitanskaya dochka", *Povesti Belkina*, "Dubrovskii"). This fact was largely overlooked by Tsvetaeva, who preferred to identify an author entirely with his writings.

Nevertheless, in spite of the presence of semantic plurality in some of Pushkin's texts, his works contain only the first degree of openness, using Eco's definition. In other words, they produce a univocal message, whereas in Tsvetaeva's case there is a definite tendency to expand and multiply the possible meanings of a given message. As we see in "Moi Pushkin", Tsvetaeva perceives Pushkin's writings as "open" works, attempting to demonstrate to her readers that Pushkin's poem "K moriu", for example, offers us not just one story, one plot, but rather tries to alert us to the presence of more stories and plots in the same text. Tsvetaeva's essay is, therefore, a clear experiment in translating Pushkin's texts and even his life (perceived as a text, a certain semiotic message) into the language of the avant-garde. It comprises an invitation to modern readers to search for new plots and meanings embedded, in Tsvetaeva's view, in Pushkin's works.

⁷⁸ O. S. Murav'eva, "Ob osobennostiakh poetiki pushkinskoi liriki", *Pushkin. Issledovaniia i materialy*, XIII, Leningrad, 1989, p.31.

CHAPTER 6

Tsvetaeva's mythopoetics in "Pushkin i Pugachev".

In the course of this analysis of Tsvetaeva's works on Pushkin it has become evident that among the writers of her time she stood out as an inheritor of the traditions of the Russian Symbolists. Her essay "Pushkin i Pugachev" crowns the whole body of "Pushkiniana" created by Tsvetaeva and represents the most controversial issues of Tsvetaeva's polemics with her opponents. Once again Tsvetaeva uses Pushkin's work in order to promote her own mythopoetical principles and to shed some light on the political convictions she held in 1936. She also provides her readers with an excellent analysis of one of the most important aspects of Pushkin's novel — the role of *artistic truth* in his works.

Tsvetaeva's essay revives the crucial issue of art and revolution, a dominant theme of many Russian Symbolists since 1905. In Tsvetaeva's case it has been extended to the matter of the acceptance of the inevitability of the course of Russian history. Furthermore, the theories of Ivanov and Belyi about the Dionysian nature of the Russian revolution and the Slav character received their artistic dénouement in "Pushkin i Pugachev".

It has been pointed out by some scholars, and particularly by Z.G. Mints¹, that the Symbolists tended to understand revolution as something symbolic, and consequently they saw Symbolism as a new, revolutionary form of art. This view was characteristic of Tsvetaeva as well. It comes across very distinctly in Tsvetaeva's essay "Gerol truda" and in her poetic cycle "Stikhi k Pushkinu" which she called "the most revolutionary of all times". (See chapter 2 of this work.)

However, the most important "Dionysian" aspect of Tsvetaeva's

¹ Z.G. Mints, "Russkii simvolizm i revoliutsiia 1905-1907 godov", *Al. Blok i revoliutsiia 1905 goda, Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 813, *Blokovskii sbornik*, 8, Tartu, 1988, pp.3-21.

treatment of revolt is rooted in Nietzsche's philosophy and subsequently in the outlook of Ivanov as developed in such works as "Ellinskaia religia stradaiushchego boga", "Religia Dionisa", "Nitshe i Dionis" and "Dukhovnyi lik slavianstva". A comparison of some of Tsvetaeva's remarks from "Pushkin i Pugachev" with Ivanov's ideas can establish a certain affinity between them. Thus, Ivanov characterises the Dionysian principle as the surpassing of oneself, a desire to embrace eternity and to disappear into it; in the article "Dukhovnyi lik slavianstva" he uses Leopardi's words "Так сладостно крушение в этом море".² In the same vein Tsvetaeva talks about Pushkin and Pugachev:

Все бессмертные диалоги Достоевского я отдам за
простодушный незначительный гимназический
хрестоматический диалог Пугачева с Гриневым, весь (как
весь Пугачев и весь Пушкин), идущий под эпитафием:

· Есть упоение в бою
И бездны мрачной на краю...

В „Пире во время чумы“ Пушкин нам это — сказал, в
„Капитанской дочке“ Пушкин нам это — сделал. (Р, р.546)

Tsvetaeva traces the same desire to experience pleasure from danger in Pushkin's conversation with Nicholas the First:

Та же интонация страстной и опасной правды: хождения
бездны на краю. В ответах Гринева мы непрерывно слышим
эту интонацию, если не всегда в кабинете монарха
звучавшую, то всегда звучащую — внутри Пушкина и уже,
во всяком случае, — на полях его тетрадей. (Р, р.546)

Furthermore, Tsvetaeva herself applies this principle to her own life — creating a certain mythopoetical model which was especially vividly expressed in her poem "Poet":

[...] Между да и нет
Он, даже размахнувшись с колокольни,
Крюк выморочит... Ибо путь комет —
Поэтов путь. [...] (S88, 1, p.220)

² Vlacheslav Ivanov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4, Brussels, 1987, p.668.

It is also important to point out that Tsvetaeva emphasises the Dionysian aspect of the Slav character. This feature of her outlook puts her closer to the views of Viacheslav Ivanov. Thus, in the poem "Pereselentsami..." (1922) she characterises Russians in the Dionysian vein:

Волчьими искрами
Сквозь выюжный мех—
Звезда российская:
Противу всех! (S88, 1, p.180)

The ending of the poem cited above — "Мир белоскатертный! / Уже тебе!" represents an allusion to Pushkin's "Mednyi vsadnik". However, in the context of the poem it stands out as an embodiment of the Slavophile revolt against the Westernising reforms of Peter the Great which brought the revolution of 1917 (this attitude was already formulated in Tsvetaeva's poem "Petru" and later on it again dominated the programme of the Eurasians).³ The characteristic of the Slavs identified by Ivanov sheds more light on Tsvetaeva's perception of Pushkin's Pugachev:

[...] германо-романские братья славян воздвигли свое духовное и чувственное бытие преимущественно на идее Аполлоновой, — и потому царят у них строй, связующий мятежные силы жизнеобильного хаоса, — лад и порядок, купленный принуждением внешним и внутренним самоограничением. Славяне же с незапамятных времен были верными служителями Диониса. То безрассудно и опрометчиво разнуздывали они, то вдохновенно высвобождали все живые силы — и не умели потом собрать их и укротить [...]. Истыми поклонниками Диониса были они, — и потому столь похож их страстной удел на жертвенную долю самого, извечно отдающегося на растерзание и пожранье, бога священных безумий, страдающего бога эллинов.⁴

Tsvetaeva's discourse on Russian history (marked by "pugachevshchina") has a striking affinity with Ivanov's view. To clarify,

³ See the reference to Mirskii in the discussion of this point in chapter 5 of this work.

⁴ Ivanov, op. cit., pp.668-69.

some examples from "Pushkin i Pugachev" follow: using a quotation from "Pir vo vremia chumy" about the happiness that comes from dangerous pleasures, Tsvetaeva concludes that Pushkin was deprived of this experience:

Этого счастья Пушкину не было дано. Декабрьский бунт бледнеет перед заревом Пугачева. Сенатская площадь — порядок и во имя порядка, тогда как Пушкин говорит о гибели ради гибели и ее блаженстве. (P, p.551)

Пушкину я обязана своей страстью к мятежникам — как бы они ни назывались и ни одевались. Ко всякому предприятию — лишь бы было обречено. (P, p.554)

Оттого, может быть, мы так Пугачеву и предаемся, что это — сон, которому нельзя сопротивляться, сон, то есть мы в полной неволе и на полной свободе сна. (P, p.558)

It is important to show in the light of Tsvetaeva's emphasis on the sacrificial aspect of Russian revolt that her interest in the White army movement and in the fate of the Tsar's family (which put her at odds with 1930s literary circles) matches Ivanov's perception of the Slavs, and the Russians in particular, as true Dionysians.

Tsvetaeva's fascination with Russian revolt is not something exceptional, and can be fully understood in the context of the mythopoetical model of devilry („миф о бесовстве“) which was created by the Symbolists as an extension of the image of devils in Pushkin and Dostoevskii. It was particularly dominant, for example, in Blok's "Dvenadsat'" and in Voloshin's poem "Severo-vostok".⁵ Tsvetaeva quite rightly sees the origin of this myth in "Kapitanskaja dochka", emphasising again and again the significance of its main elements — *wind, snowstorm, the theme of the journey (tema puti), devil imagery*. Thus Tsvetaeva claims that Pugachev was for her a rhyming word for devil (P, p.544); also the image of "vozhatyi" turns out to be powerful, not just in her essay "Pushkin i Pugachev", but in all of her work (especially that of the 1930s).

⁵ See a very suggestive analysis of this myth in D.M. Magomedova, "Blok i Voloshin (Dve interpretatsii mifa o besovstve)", *Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 917, *Blokovskii sbornik*, 11, Tartu, 1990, pp.39-49.

Taking into account Tsvetaeva's revival of the myth in the essay, it becomes clear why she focused her attention solely on Pushkin's attitude towards Pugachev and highlighted this aspect in the title. One of the methods which Tsvetaeva applies to Pushkin's texts can be called "readdressing of the reference from the character to the author". (This method has been described by Faryno in his work on Pasternak's poetics.)⁶ In other words, Tsvetaeva adopts the method of applying the text of one author to another author, or to herself, treating it in a mythological way – as a ritual which can be performed by anyone. The same technique appeared very openly in Tsvetaeva's essay "Moi Pushkin", and certainly it cannot be ruled out in our analysis of "Pushkin i Pugachev". The most striking 'rearrangement' of Pushkin's novel occurs in Tsvetaeva's essay in connection with Pushkin and Grinev. First of all, Tsvetaeva's perception of the novel, which can be specified as 'art and revolt', 'deletes' all the other characters not linked to the conflict:

В моей „Капитанской дочке“ не было капитанской дочки, до того не было, что и сейчас я произношу это название механически, как бы в одно слово, без всякого капитана и безо всякой дочки. Говорю: „Капитанская дочка“, а думаю: „Пугачев“.

Вся „Капитанская дочка“ для меня сводилась и сводится к очным встречам Гринева с Пугачевым: в метель с Вожатым [...] (Р, р.542)

Secondly, Tsvetaeva 'forgets' that the "real" author of the story is Grinev (Pushkin takes the role of the publisher of Grinev's memoirs) and readresses the whole narrative from the moment of Pugachev's appearance to Pushkin:

С явлением на сцену Пугачева на наших глазах совершается превращение Гринева в Пушкина: вытеснение

⁶ Thus, in his analysis of one of the episodes from *Doktor Zhivago*, Faryno writes: „[...] совпадение имени и отчества Грибоедова и Пушкина „Александр Сергеевич“ переадресовывает референцию с персонажа на автора, т.е. с Грибоедова на Пушкина. Это системный Пастернаковский прием – он исключительно отчетлив в *Подражательной* вариации из „Темы с вариациями“ [...]“ – J. Faryno, "Kak Lenskii obernulsia Solov'ém Razboinikom (Arkhepoetika "Doktora Zhivago". 3)", *Pushkin i Pasternak, Studia Russica Budapestinensia*, 1, Budapest, 1991, pp.149-68.

образа дворянского недоросля образом самого Пушкина. Митрофан на наших глазах превращается в Пушкина. [...] Шестнадцатилетний Гринев судит и действует, как тридцатилетний Пушкин. (Р, р.550)

However, Tsvetaeva overlooks the fact that the narrative structure of "Kapitanskaia dochka" suggests, in fact, two Grinevs: Grinev's persona splits into a participant in all the events and into the author of the memoirs. This device of making different spatial and temporal dimensions coexist was a discovery of Pushkin's. Unfortunately, the complexity of Pushkin's narrative structure in the novel has been overlooked not only by many contemporaries (including Odoevskii) but also by a great number of later readers and scholars. It is notable that Tsvetaeva overlooks it, too. It leads her to perceive the story in the wrong way because of the important omission of what is called the "dvugolosie" of Grinev. This aspect of Pushkin's work was outlined in a very illuminating study of Pushkin's prose by Gel:

Происходит центральное разделение центральной фигуры на событийную сферу и на сферу рассказывания, область повествовательно-персонажную и область повествователя и повествования как такового. [...] каждое событие, каждая повествовательная позиция разделены по временной вертикали. Все это позволяет говорить о двух ипостасях Гринева. Повествование идет как бы на двух уровнях.⁷

Tsvetaeva is preoccupied with what can be called "Pushkin's universal humanism". In accordance with Gel's analysis, this is the key element in Pushkin's poetics:

Главной смысловой константой и, что особенно важно для понимания, константой конструктивной, т.е. объективирующей реальный смысл произведения (на что обычно указывается, но бегло и непоследовательно), является универсальное и художественно ценностное обоснование подлинно человеческих отношений, даже если это отношение между дворянином, офицером правительственных войск Гриневым и вождем крестьянской

⁷ N. K. Gel, *Proza Pushkina. Poetika povestvovaniia.*, Moscow, 1989, p.219.

войны Пугачевым.⁸

This 'humanitarian' aspect of Pushkin's novel could appeal to Tsvetaeva because she herself tried to play out the same behavioural pattern which was based on humanitarian rather than political grounds. Tsvetaeva, Voloshin and other representatives of Symbolism and post-Symbolism treated Pushkin's art as a source of inspiration and imitation. Voloshin's attitude towards the revolution (which was highly praised in Tsvetaeva's "Zhivoe o zhivom") was characterised by Dolgoplov as the attitude of the *citizen-romantic* (in other words, *poetic*).⁹ Tsvetaeva observed the same 'poetic' transformation of history in "Kapitanskaia dochka":

Пушкинский Пугачев есть рипост поэта на исторического Пугачева, рипост лирика на архив [...] (P, p. 565)

Пушкинский Пугачев есть поэтическая вольность, как сам поэт есть поэтическая вольность, на опыте отыгрывающаяся от навязчивых образов и навязанных образцов. (Ibid.)

However, in Tsvetaeva's view, Pushkin owes his poetic vision of revolt to the Russian people (*narod*):

Пушкин поступил как народ: он правду исправил, он *правду* о злодее — забыл [...]

И, всю правду о нем сохранив, изъяв из всей правды только пугачевскую *малость*, дал нам другого Пугачева, своего Пугачева, народного Пугачева, которого мы *можем* любить: не можем не любить. (P, p.566)

In some ways, this approach to Pushkin's text can be justified by the fact that Pushkin introduced a *mythopoetical* level to the structure of his novel. It is especially evident in the usage of proverbs and folk songs.

In fact, Tsvetaeva's interest in Pushkin's novel is limited to this particular level. Tsvetaeva's perception of "Kapitanskaia dochka" is largely based on the suggestive nature of proverbs and sayings which were exploited by Pushkin in the story. Thus, for example, Tsvetaeva claims in "Pushkin i Pugachev" that folk language is the most expressive way to communicate

⁸ Ibid., p.218.

⁹ L. K. Dolgoplov, "Voloshin i russkaia istoriia (na materiale krymskikh stikhov 1917-1921 godov)", *Russkaia literatura*, 1987, 4, p.169.

with another spiritual reality (ideal in terms of Tsvetaeva's poetic code) —

А Вожатого — поговорки! Круглая, как горох, самотканая
окольная речь наливного яблочка по серебряному блюдечку
— только покрупнее! Поговорки, в которых я ничего не
понимала и понять не пыталась, кроме того, что он
говорит — о другом: самом важном. Это была первая в
моей жизни иносказательная речь (и последняя, мне
сужденная!) — о том самом — другими словами, этими
словами — о другом, та речь, о которой я, двадцать лет
спустя:

Поэт — издалека заводит речь.

Поэта — далеко заводит речь... —

как далеко завела — Вожатого. (Р, р.541)

The attitude to folk speech expressed by Tsvetaeva in "Pushkin i Pugachev" and cited above is more typical of Russian modernists (especially of the Cubo-Futurists) than of Pushkin. Tsvetaeva was herself renowned for using Russian folk structures and archaisms abundantly in her own art (in particular in such works as "Pereulochki", "Tsar'-Devitsa" and "Molodets"). Tsvetaeva's intention to treat Pugachev's language as some sacred form of speech again puts her closer to the Russian Futurists' experiment with transcendent language ("zaum/").

However, some of the proverbs and folk songs used by Pushkin in "Kapitanskaja dochka" do form a chain of what can be called key mini-plots or prototypes, which shed light on the development of events and characters in the novel. Thus, for instance, Savel'ich's words about Pugachev in the very first scene of the story — "either a wolf or a human" — (the snowstorm in "Kapitanskaja dochka" repeats the situation of Pushkin's profound poem "Besy") contain an important characterisation of Pugachev, who showed both sides of his personality in the story. Tsvetaeva focuses her attention on them, too. Thus she provides her readers with the lengthy discourse of Pugachev's principle "kaznit' tak kaznit', pomilovat' tak pomilovat'", emphasising the extreme nature of his love (which stands out as an opposite to his cruelty in *Istorija Pugachevskogo bunta*). —

Весь Пугачев „Капитанской дочки“ взят и дан в

исключительном для Пугачева случае — добра, в исключительном — любви. Всех-де казню, а тебя *милую*. (P, p.559)

Tsvetaeva also develops another suggestive aspect of Pushkin's image, revealed in the characteristic given by Savel'ich to Pugachev — "a wolf". Furthermore, she transforms it into an image from Russian fairy tales:

Пушкинский Пугачев („Капитанской дочки“) есть собирательный разбойник, людоед, чумаки, бес, „добрый молодец“, серый волк всех сказок [...]. (P, p.567)

Here it would be interesting to discuss two points advanced by Tsvetaeva in the statement quoted above:

Firstly, Tsvetaeva's persistent usage of the word "vozhatyi" (a guide) in her essay, together with the conclusion that Pugachev is a wolf from folk tales, are linked to the earlier statement (in the beginning of "Pushkin i Pugachev") about the sacred nature of his speech. One should not forget about Tsvetaeva's 'readdressing' to herself the whole situation related to Grinev. The remarks by which Tsvetaeva reveals this point are scattered around the text, but the most important of all is her claim that Pugachev's allegorical language (*inoskazatel'naiia rech'*) is the last allegorical talk which she is to hear in accordance with her destiny (P, p.541). This 'personal' touch in Tsvetaeva's attitude to Pushkin's Pugachev brings us closer to understanding how Tsvetaeva links the plot from "Kapitanskaia dochka" to her own mythopoetical model. Secondly, it would be fruitful to examine Tsvetaeva's application of Pushkin's theme of fate (Pushkin provides us with an example in "Kapitanskaia dochka") to her own circumstances.

E.B. Korkina has conducted an interesting study of Tsvetaeva's long poems based on folk tradition, and has concluded that all of them can be traced to one plot (she calls it "liricheskiĭ sluzhet") which involves a tragic union of a human being with the force of the Devil. —

Во всех поэмах описана одна и та же пограничная ситуация — противостояние Силы и Жертвы. Встреча героя (героини) с неземным существом и стремление к союзу с ним ведет к разрушению его личности и жизни. [...]

Всех героев притягивает к себе — до полного самозабвения

и забвения земного долга — стихийная сила, темная, ничем не просветленная и в этом смысле противоположная Богу, воплощенная в существе иного мира — Царь-Девяце, Всаднике, Чернокнижнице, Мблodge. Разрушительная для жизни и души человека, сила эта требует от него нечеловеческих жертв, давая взамен чувство причастности к иному — высшему — миру.¹⁰

In the light of Korkina's observation, it becomes clearer why Tsvetaeva pays such great attention to two aspects of Pushkin's novel — to the name "Vozhatyi" given to Pugachev and to the theme of duty ("dolg"). She thus emphasises the "inhuman" nature of Grinev's guide, claiming that one is enchanted by him. It is also important to bear in mind Tsvetaeva's device of "readdressing" the situation which she applies to herself and to the readers of her essay (treating Pushkin's text once again as an 'open' work — see chapter 5 of this work in which this point is thoroughly discussed):

И если мы уже зачарованы Пугачевым из-за того, что он — Пугачев, то есть *живой* страх, то есть смертный страх, наш детский сонный смертный страх, то как же нам не зачароваться им вдвойне и вполне, когда [...] этот изверг — еще и любит.

В Пугачеве Пушкин дал самое страшное очарование: зла, на минуту ставшего добром, всю свою самосилу (зла) перекинувшего на добро. Пушкин в своем Пугачеве дал нам неразрешимую загадку: злодеяния — и чистого сердца. (Р, р.567)

Tsvetaeva's words cited above have brought controversy in recent years. In 1989 the Parisian *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniia* published an anonymous article which contained many acid accusations against Tsvetaeva for creating a 'cover up' for the NKVD activities of her

¹⁰ E. B. Korkina, "Liricheskiĭ siuzhet v fol'klornykh poemakh Mariny Tsvetaevoi", *Russkaiā literatura*, 1987, 4, pp.167-68.

husband. The author of the article argues that this was reflected in the essay "Pushkin i Pugachev".¹¹ One may not agree with the tone of the article, but it reassures us once more that Tsvetaeva's Pugachev is a mythopoetical model taken from the character created by Pushkin, and to some extent Tsvetaeva's essay contains an insight into her own political mood at the end of the 1930s.

Undoubtedly, Tsvetaeva's images of evil and the 'pure heart' have, on the one hand, some roots in her own tolerance and loyalty to her husband. On the other hand, autobiographical details seem to justify, in Tsvetaeva's opinion, such a combination in Pushkin's work. It is amazing to see an interesting match between Tsvetaeva's words on Pugachev and her comments on her husband's political crimes. One example comes from Tsvetaeva's letter to Ariadna Berg (of 2.11.1937) — after Efron's disappearance from France due to his crucial involvement in the murder of Reis:

Видю перед собой Ваше строгое, открытое, смелое лицо, и говорю Вам: что бы Вы о моем муже ни слышали и ни читали дурного — не верьте, как не верит этому ни один (хотя бы самый „правый“) из его — не только *знавших*, но — *встречавших*. Один такой мне недавно сказал: — Если бы С.Я. сейчас вошел ко мне в комнату — я бы не только обрадовался, а без малейшего сомнения сделал бы для него все, что мог. (Это в ответ на анонимную статью в *Возрождении*).¹²

In spite of Tsvetaeva's denial of any knowledge of her husband's activities, the facts which we have in our possession today contradict her profession of ignorance. It seems that Tsvetaeva was applying the formula created in "Pushkin i Pugachev" :

„Да, знаю, знаю все как было и как все было [...], но этого своего знания — знать не хочу, этому несвоему, чужому знанию противопоставляю знание — свое. Я лучше знаю.
Я лучшее знаю:

¹¹ A.A., "1937 god v zhizni Tsvetaevoi", *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniia*, 155, 1989, pp.137–48.

¹² From letter №47, *Pis'ma Mariny Tsvetaevoi k Ariadne Berg 1934–1939*, Paris, 1990, p.77.

Тьмы низких истин нам дороже
Нас возвышающий обман." (Р, р.565)

In support of her claim Tsvetaeva refers to Trediakovskii's statement of the poet's right to create a poetic transformation of reality. However, when applied to her husband, and to the theme of motherland in Tsvetaeva's art, this approach leads us to contradiction and confusion, especially if one follows Ariadna Efron's advice on how to read Tsvetaeva's texts. Thus, in her conversation with Veronika Losskaia, Efron suggested that one has to link every creation of Tsvetaeva to a biographical subtext: "Надо знать подтекст, а то ничего не поймешь. Каждое стихотворение тесно связано с жизнью, кровно."¹³

Unfortunately, we do not have enough evidence today to assess to what extent Tsvetaeva knew about the political activities of her husband. However, we can say that she shared with the Eurasians a strong fascination with the Russian people (*narod*) and their belief in its missionary role. That is why, despite Tsvetaeva's condemnation of Stalin (expressed in one of the letters), we do not have any poems devoted to the repression or suffering of Soviet citizens opposed to the regime. Instead, Tsvetaeva produced poems such as "Stikhi k synu", "Luchina", "Rodina", and "Cheliuskintsy". This was partly due to the fact that Tsvetaeva's art developed in such a way that it stood very close to Russian Futurism with its optimistic wavelength (in terms of historical judgement). As was mentioned earlier in this analysis (see chapters 4 and 5), Mirskii cited Tsvetaeva and Pasternak as poets of *active, life-asserting* art in comparison with the decadent tone of Russian Parisian literature.

Nevertheless, this belief in the future of Russia coexisted in Tsvetaeva's mind with a strong feeling of disillusion with the world and culture to which she belonged. The image of the world being diseased comes again from the European Baroque, and supports the thesis that Tsvetaeva's art can be called neo-Baroque. Even Tsvetaeva's perception of Catherine II in "Kapitanskaya dochka" bears a resemblance to European Baroque artists who claimed that the world is a stage:

Контраст между чернотой Пугачева и ее белизной, его
живостью и ее важностью, его веселой добротой и ее —

¹³ Veronika Losskaia, *Marina Tsvetaeva v zhizni*, Tenaflly, 1989, p.204.

снисходительной, его мужичеством и ее дамством не мог не отвратить от нее детского сердца, едино-любивого и уже приверженного „злодею“. [...]

На огневом фоне Пугачева — пожаров, грабежей, метелей, кибиток, пиров — эта, в чепце и душегрейке, на скамейке, между всяких мостиков и листиков, представлялась мне огромной белой рыбой, белорыбицей. (Р, pp.554-55)

Tsvetaeva's preference for Pugachev reflects the fact that such Baroque *topoi* as the *world upside down*, *world as hostelry*, *world as dynamic consistency* form an essential base for her artistic outlook. She chooses Pugachev as an embodiment of the principles mentioned above. The whole chain of images such as revolt, fires, snowstorms, carriages, and feasts is linked in Tsvetaeva's description to Pugachev, simply because the Baroque notion of disharmony had a great impact on her artistic vision. We could compare, for example, the words of the Spanish Baroque writer Critilo — "this entire Universe is composed of contraries and is harmonised by disharmonies"¹⁴ — to Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model.

Tsvetaeva's fascination with Pugachev has roots in Baroque art with its taste for bloody ruthlessness, violence and cruelty. However, it has merged in "Pushkin i Pugachev" with Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model which appeared in her poems in folk style. Taking into account our reference to Korkina's observation about the recurring theme of the fatal union of the victim with an evil or violent force (see reference 10 of this chapter), it becomes easier to trace this plot in Tsvetaeva's affirmation of the love union of Grinev/Pushkin and Pugachev:

Встреча Гринева с Пугачевым — в метель, за столом, под виселицей, на лобном месте — мечтанная встреча самого Пушкина с Самозванцем. (Р, р. 551)

В „Капитанской дочке“ Пушкин под чару Пугачева подпал и до последней строки из-под нее не вышел. [...]

И главное (она дана) в его *магической* внешности, в которую сразу влюбился Пушкин. (Р, pp.552-53)

¹⁴ Quoted from: José Antonio Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque. Analysis of a Historical Structure, Theory and History of Literature*, Volume 25, Manchester, 1986, p.158.

Tsvetaeva's claims are a distorted picture of Pushkin's text. She even shows Pugachev with black eyes, though Pushkin does not specify the colour of his hero's eyes. All in all, Tsvetaeva's recreation of Pushkin's Pugachev stands out as a distorted, highly exaggerated and symbolised image which has experienced much transformation. Thus, for instance, Tsvetaeva's attempt to make it more symbolic is related not only to the chain of romantic images linked to Pugachev, but also transforms Pushkin's usage of the word *vozhatyi* (a guide) into a symbol: in "Pushkin i Pugachev" she persistently writes it with a capital letter (in the manner of the French and Russian Symbolists). Thus, her image is far from that created by Pushkin. One may compare Pushkin's 'neutral', realistic description of Pugachev, emphasising the adventurous nature of the character, with the highly symbolised figure (based on highlighting supernatural, magic aspects) created by Tsvetaeva. A few examples can establish how Tsvetaeva's re-creation contradicts the original image:

Я взглянул на полати и увидел черную бороду и два сверкающие глаза. [...]

Наружность его показалась мне замечательна: он был лет сорока, росту среднего, худощав и широкоплеч. В черной бороде его показывалась проседь: живые большие глаза так и бегали. Лицо его имело выражение довольно приятное, но плутовское. Волоса были обстрижены в кружок; на нем был оборванный армяк и татарские шаровары. (Pushkin, 3, p.240)

Необыкновенная картина мне представилась: за столом, накрытым скатертью и установленным штофами и стаканами, Пугачев и человек десять казацких старшин сидели в шапках и цветных рубашках, разгоряченные вином, с красными рожам и блистающими глазами. [...] Пугачев на первом месте сидел, облокотясь и подпирая черную бороду своим широким кулаком. Черты лица его, правильные и довольно приятные, не изъясляли ничего свирепого. (Ibid., p.277)

Пугачев смотрел на меня пристально, изредка прищуривая левый глаз с удивительным выражением плутовства и насмешливости. (Ibid., p.278)

As we mentioned above, Tsvetaeva's perception of Pugachev is highly symbolised and focused around the one word 'guide' which is transformed into a symbol. From the very beginning of the essay Tsvetaeva claims that this word always had a magic meaning for her:

Есть магические слова, магические вне смысла [...] — самознаки и самосмыслы, не нуждающиеся в разуме, а только в слухе, слова звериного, детского, сновиденного языка.

[...]

Таким словом в моей жизни было и осталось — Вожатый.

Если бы меня, семилетнюю, среди седьмого сна, спросили: „Как называется та вещь, где Савельич, и поручик Гринев, и царица Екатерина Вторая?“ — я бы сразу ответила: „Вожатый“. И сейчас вся „Капитанская дочка“ для меня есть — то и называется — так.

[...]

И когда незнакомый предмет стал к нам подвигаться и через две минуты стал человеком — я уже знала, что это не „добрый человек“, как называл его ямщик, а лихой человек, страх-человек, тот человек.

[...]

Вожатого я ждала всю жизнь, всю свою огромную семилетнюю жизнь. (Р, р.540)

The very beginning of "Pushkin and Pugachev" provides us, therefore, with all the key images which help us to understand the mythopoetical model applied by Tsvetaeva to Pushkin's text. Earlier we mentioned Tsvetaeva's favourite device of rearranging references or 'readdressing the situation' from one person to another. Tsvetaeva treats Pushkin's story as a myth which is based on the central situation of Grinev's meeting with Pugachev. In terms of Tsvetaeva's mythology such a meeting is a desirable event in someone's fate — especially in a poet's fate (that is why she wants to convince her readers that Pushkin replaces Grinev in his own story).

Taking into account Tsvetaeva's semiotic language and imagery, it is possible to unfold the whole meaning of her essay, which is not as controversial as it appears. As Korkina has pointed out, most of Tsvetaeva's characters seek a union with a supernatural figure or force. This superhuman

force destroys their human, material shape and compensates for this destruction with the possibility of entering another reality. In the light of this mythopoetical model, Tsvetaeva's image of a guide and the number seven create a certain ritualistic background for the recreation of Pushkin's myth. Many Tsvetaeva scholars have commented on her obsession with death, particularly vividly expressed in "Novogodnee", "Poema kontsa" and "Poema vozdukha". For many of the characters created by Tsvetaeva, death is desirable, helping the spirit to be free and to return to its origin. This view goes back to ancient Greek philosophy, in particular to the Orphic tradition. There is no need here to go in depth into Tsvetaeva's artistic model of the world. Once again we need to outline the fact that Slav folk tradition merges in her essay with ancient Greek concepts. Thus, she mentions the number 7 in relation not only to her age but also to the dream — "sredi sed'mogo sna" (P, p.540). (It is interesting to note that further on in the text Tsvetaeva claims that she was six years old when she read Pushkin's story. — P, p.552) In many mythological traditions the number 7 stands out as being magic; it helps to enter different realities as well as being an essential element for many rituals. Thus, almost in a ritualistic manner, Tsvetaeva states that she waited for her *Guide* all her life: "Вожатого я ждала всю жизнь, всю свою огромную семилетнюю жизнь" (P, p.540). (The number 7 plays a very important role here, and in this function of ensuring entry to other worlds it appears in Tsvetaeva's very last poem "Ia stol nakryl na shesterykh". (S88, 1, pp.331-32.) In the latter, Tsvetaeva calls herself "the seventh".)

Tsvetaeva's Pugachev resembles the very ancient image of the Guardian of the Underworld — Charon (who took spirits to the other side of the river of the dead). Charon is represented in Greek mythology as an ugly old man with a grey beard wearing a tattered cloak; he behaved towards souls in a despotic and brutal way. Tsvetaeva highlights similar aspects of Charon's character in Pugachev. Furthermore, she merges the Greek archetype with the Russian folk character the wolf, who performs a function similar to those of Charon. (She calls Pugachev a wolf of fairy tales — P, p.567.) As always in Tsvetaeva's poetic system, her key words and images turn out to have some linguistic links. Thus, if we take into account the etymological origin of the word "volk", then we can see that the word 'guard' (*vozhatyj*) is an explicated notion of the word 'wolf'. One of the possible origins of the word is traced to the Slav stem "vel-". This stem appears in the verb

"volochit'"; from the etymological point of view it means 'to take away'. (There is a certain analogy with the Greek language, in which the similar sounding verb "helko" — "I am taking away" — appears.)¹⁵ Also Tsvetaeva's vision of Pushkin's Pugachev merges with Egyptian tradition. (Tsvetaeva was very interested in ancient mythology in general; she learnt much from her father's collection of Egyptian and Greek works of art.¹⁶) Thus in Egyptian mythology there was a wolf-headed god Upuaut who signified "he who opens the way".¹⁷ Taking into consideration another aspect of this god — the guidance of the warriors into enemy territory — we can come closer to revealing the meaning of this image in terms of Tsvetaeva's personal myth.

At the time of writing the essay, Tsvetaeva's mind was very much focused on the idea of going back to Russia. In the light of her intention to go back it is understandable why she emphasised Pugachev's function of guiding in such a prominent way. On the one hand, the Egyptian principle of the wolf-god who takes warriors to enemy territory matches Tsvetaeva's description of Pugachev. (She always opposed the Soviet regime as such, therefore it was enemy territory for her.) On the other hand, she perceived Russia as not only her actual homeland but also as her spiritual homeland; reunion with this type of homeland is achieved by death. (The model of such a 'return' is described in the most straightforward way in "Poema kontsa".) Besides, Tsvetaeva talked of Russia in the poem "Novogodnee" as a land of the dead. (In this poem she wrote to Rilke about Russia: „тот свет на этом спел“ — S88, 1, p.261.) From this point of view, Tsvetaeva's Pugachev resembles the wolf-god once again — due to the Egyptian tradition of worshipping him as a god of the dead too. To conclude this aspect, one has to state that "Pushkin i Pugachev" stands in line with Tsvetaeva's tradition of recreating folk ritual by 'recalling' the dead as guides into another

¹⁵ G. P. Tsyganenko, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Kiev, 1989, p.66.

¹⁶ Anastasiia Tsvetaeva recalls the following: "Марина читала античную литературу. Интерес к ней появился не только благодаря отцу. До ее десяти лет музея не было, мифами нас начинала мать, и Марина мифологией очень интересовалась." — Veronika Losskalo, *op.cit.*, p.214.

¹⁷ In prehistoric representations the wolf-god guides the warriors of his tribe into enemy territory. A former warrior-god, he was also worshipped as the god of the dead. — *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, Introduction by Robert Graves, London, 1969, pp.25-27.

reality. This device prevails in such works as "Novogodnee", "Nezdeshnii vecher" and "Zhivoe o zhivom". It was one of the reasons, too, why Tsvetaeva chose Pushkin's "Zaklinanie" for her French translation (see chapter 1 of this work).

In addition to the points stated above, it seems important to note that some linguistic theories link the Russian word "volk" to another word "volkhv" (meaning "wizard"). I have not come across such a link. However, it is discussed in Faryno's article on *Doktor Zhivago*, in which he considers the image of a "wolf" to be the double of a poet.¹⁸ In "Pushkin i Pugachev" such a parallel is suggested by Tsvetaeva herself:

Поэт — издалека заводит речь.
Поэта — далеко заводит речь...—
как далеко завела — Вожатого. (P, p.541)

Furthermore, Tsvetaeva points out that this speech contains some sacred message relating to her final moment of life and destiny, as well as claiming that the image of *Vozhatyi* appeared, for her, from the "fairy tale of her life and being" (P, *ibid.*). Such an approach to Pugachev reveals a very important feature of Tsvetaeva's poetics which undoubtedly in this case can be outlined as the poetics of the avant-garde. This refers to Tsvetaeva's regarding Pushkin's text as an event or act which took place in her personal life. This fact was called by István Nagy "an event-being". By contrast with nineteenth-century art, in Nagy's view we see in the avant-garde paradigm "перемещение акцента с „жизнетворчества“ (примат жизни над искусством) на приоритет текста (художественное сообщение получает статус второй реальности)".¹⁹

Furthermore, Tsvetaeva judges Pugachev in the same terms, claiming that *speech*, his orientation towards folk culture (proverbs, folk songs) brought him to a tragic end (see the quotation above). In other words, Tsvetaeva establishes the dominance of folk culture, *text* in Pugachev's life.

¹⁸ „В индоевропейских традициях, в том числе и в славянском фольклоре, волк — носитель особой мудрости, предводитель, вождь, связан с волхованием и этим самым легко связывается и с поэтическим творчеством.“ — J.Faryno, *op. cit.*, (note 6), p.163.

¹⁹ I. Nagy, "BIOGRAFIJA—KUL'TURA — TEKST (O "sdvige" v russkoi kul'turnoi paradigme)." — *Studia Russica Budapestinensia*, *op. cit.*, p.239.

Subsequently, this statement leads to an interesting suggestion which Tsvetaeva had in mind when writing her essay. It seems that not only was Pushkin's text taken by Tsvetaeva as a behavioural model, but in the same vein she judges Pugachev who, in her view, was using folk songs and culture as a prototype for modelling his own life (see Tsvetaeva's comments quoted above about the text, *speech* which dominated his life). When drawing a parallel between a poet and Vozhatyi, Tsvetaeva undoubtedly had in mind one particular episode from "Kapitanskaia dochka": at the most important military gathering Pugachev proposed to sing a song, which contained a certain pattern of his own fate:

И на сем-то странном военном совете решено было идти к
Оренбургу: движение дерзкое, и которое чуть было не
увенчалось бедственным успехом! поход был объявлен к
завтрашнему дню. „Ну, братцы, — сказал Пугачев, —
затянем-ка на сон грядущий мою любимую песенку.
Чумаков! начинай!“ — Сосед мой затянул тонким голосом
заунывную бурлацкую песню, и все подхватили хором:

Не шуми, мати зеленая дубровушка,
Не мешай мне, доброму молодцу, думу думати.
Что завтра мне, доброму молодцу, в допрос идти
Перед грозного судью, самого царя.

[...]

Что возговорит надежа православный царь:
Исполать тебе, детинушка, крестьянский сын,
Что умел ты воровать, умел ответ держать!
Я за то тебя, детинушка, пожалуйю
Среди поля хоромами высокими,
Что двумя ли столбами с перекладиной.

Невозможно рассказать, какое действие произвела на меня
эта простонародная песня про виселицу, распеваемая
людьми, обреченными виселице. Их грозные лица, стройные
голоса, унылое выражение, которое придавали они словам и
без того выразительным, — всё потрясало меня каким-то
психическим ужасом. (Pushkin, 3, p.278)

In "Pushkin i Pugachev" there is an indirect reference to the episode
quoted above. Tsvetaeva creates a certain anagram:

Вожатый во мне рифмовал с жар. Пугачев — с черт и еще с чумаками, про которых я одновременно читала в сказках Полевого. Чумаки оказались бесами, их червонцы — горящими угольями, прожегшими свитку [...]. Все это — костровый жар, червонцы, кумач, чумак — сливалось в одно грозное слово: Пугач, в одно томное видение: Вожатый. (Р, р.544).

Tsvetaeva's linking of Pugachev to the word "chumak" seems unexpected. However, it has a meaning similar to the word "vozhatyi": in olden days in Ukraine it denoted a peasant who used to transport and sell various items (including food and goods).²⁰ Therefore, it stands close to the word 'guide' in the sense applied by Tsvetaeva to her image of Vozhatyi who is about to take her to another place.

If we take into consideration the fact that in Pushkin's story it was Chumakov who was leading the song about the execution, we could come even closer to Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model which is based on the anagram featuring the stem "chum". This stem appears persistently throughout the text of Tsvetaeva's essay, and denotes a very important semantic code created by her in "Pushkin i Pugachev". Thus, as pointed out above, Tsvetaeva talks about Pugachev and Pushkin in the same vein, seeing in them heroes who seek death through dangerous pleasures. Moreover, she considers them to be true Dionysians in a way which was described in Pushkin's "Pir vo vremia chumy" (Р, р.546). Therefore, all the words with the stem "chum" or sound "ch" which form the anagram are linked to the theme of suicide/voluntary death for the sake of experiencing dangerous pleasures or, more broadly, to the motif of revolt: Pugachev, chert, pugach, chumaki, Chumakov, chuma, kumach, chernyi, chara, chistota. All these images are essential codes for Tsvetaeva's mythopoetical model (described above by Korkina), in accordance with which the poet has to sacrifice himself or to give himself up to what Tsvetaeva calls the elements' force (chaos) in order to achieve the realm of pure spirit.

The mythopoetical model described above was already outlined by Tsvetaeva in the essay "Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti" and her "Poema kontsa". It is easy to establish affinity between statements in "Pushkin i Pugachev" and the works mentioned above, if we see them in the perspective of

²⁰ S.I. Ozhegov, *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Moscow, 1987, p.772.

Tsvetaeva's mythopoetics. Most of her works have a recurring mythopoetical pattern: a hero either faces the elements or is enchanted by a fatal force which brings him to destruction and, subsequently, takes him into the realm of pure spirit (an ideal world where his potential is fulfilled). This place of rebirth is called by Tsvetaeva either "*lazur'*" (as in the poem "Na krasnom kone"), "*nebesa*" or "*chistota*". In "Pushkin i Pugachev" in order to support her mythopoetical model Tsvetaeva introduces a love theme (or enchantment element) between Pugachev and Grinev, readdressing it later to Pushkin and herself. She calls one scene of the story "a dreamed meeting between Pushkin and Pugachev", claiming that Pushkin was seeking destruction by meeting with chaos, revolt etc. Tsvetaeva applies her model to the interpretation of Pushkin's would-be motives for writing "Kapitanskaja dochka", even when she claims that he achieved purity at the end of his work:

По окончании „Капитанской дочки“ у нас о Пугачеве не
осталось ни одной низкой истины, из всей тьмы низких
истин — ни одной.

Чисто.

И эта чистота есть — поэт. (P, p.568)

A very similar ending had already appeared in Tsvetaeva's essay "Nezdesnii vecher" (see chapter 4 of this work) where she portrayed her contemporaries in the same Dionysian vein:

Пир во время Чумы? Да. Но те пировали — вином и
розами, мы же — бесплотно, чудесно, как чистые духи —
уже призраки Аида — словами: звуком слов и живой кровью
чувств. (P, p.276)

И как бы ни побеждали *здесь* утра и вечера, и как бы
по-разному — *всесторонне* или *бесшумно* — мы,
участники того *нездешнего* вечера, ни умирали —
последним звучанием наших уст было и будет:

И звуков небес заменить не могли

Ей *скучные* песни земля. (P, p.277)

Tsvetaeva makes the same type of Symbolist poet out of Pushkin, using his poems about Napoleon and his story about Pugachev to illustrate

her point. In "Nezdeshnii vecher", Tsvetaeva states that the only duty one needs to have is "правда всего существа". However, Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's would-be fascination with Pugachev provides us with the clues leading to her own mythopoetical vision of the world and the poet's role in it.

In accordance with this vision, Tsvetaeva's heroine needs a guide who could take her to the real destiny or spiritual realm (realised through death as, for instance, in "Na krasnom kone", "Novogodnee", "Poema kontsa"). As observed recently by Aleksandrov, Tsvetaeva's art is permeated with elements of the archaic forms of lamentation and incantation. As Aleksandrov puts it, — "заговорное слово", оказавшись в центре системы поэтической речи Цветаевой, не только сохраняет свое функциональное значение, но и преумножает его.²¹ Furthermore, he finds some elements of laments (for example, belief in the magical power of words) in Tsvetaeva's poetic speech. It is also evident that Tsvetaeva makes a taboo of some words: thus, in "Pushkin i Pugachev" there are only hints about the real meaning of the Vozhatyi's speech — instead of the word "death" she uses indicative pronouns ("о том самом", for example). This is an important insight provided by Tsvetaeva in "Pushkin i Pugachev". At the time of its writing Tsvetaeva was seriously considering returning to Russia, although she saw it as an important step in her poetic fate not for political but rather for artistic reasons. She identified herself with the poetry of revolt, and her understanding of Russian history was somehow close to Blok's vision of revolt as a *cleansing* force in history. In terms of personal myth, Tsvetaeva sought her own death. It is symbolic that in her last card to Tesková (written on the way to Russia) Tsvetaeva wrote: „Теперь не страшно. Теперь уже судьба" (PAT, p.185). Her own return to Russia Tsvetaeva saw as necessary and inevitable, and the word *Vozhatyi* and the whole meditation on *pugachevshchina* were used by her in a form of incantation and lament (upon her own death). Thus, Tsvetaeva promoted her true self in her arguments with émigré critics both about her husband and the Eurasian movement and about Russia being the only spiritual motherland for a Russian writer in spite of all the historical upheavals.

Tsvetaeva's analysis of Pushkin's story hints at her preoccupation with

²¹ V.Iu. Aleksandrov, *Fol'klorizm Mariny Tsvetaevoi (Stikhotvornaja poetika, zhanrovoe svoeobrazie)*, Avtoreferat dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata filologicheskikh nauk, Moscow, MGPI imeni V.I. Lenina, 1989, pp.6-7.

her husband's pro-Soviet activities. In Tsvetaeva's eyes Efron found himself in a situation similar to that of Grinev: his duty was to serve the Russian monarchy, and yet he sympathises with the revolt. Once again we come across Tsvetaeva's attempt to merge heroes and poets in the same manner as Merezhkovskii did in his book *Vechnye sputniki* (see chapters 2 and 4 above). Tsvetaeva sympathises with heroes' ability both to be enchanted by something supernatural and to seek pleasures (or even death) through danger. That is why Pushkin's story is reduced by Tsvetaeva to Grinev's encounter with Pugachev. Her interpretation of the story reveals that she was profoundly influenced by Nietzsche: in Pushkin's characters and in Pushkin himself she sees most of all a desire to overcome the present state and to attain a higher realm of being.

CONCLUSION

Tsvetaeva's writings on Pushkin and her references to his work display her long-standing and consistent interest in Pushkin. Her poem "Vstrecha s Pushkinym" was written at the very beginning of her career, and yet it contains all the elements of the "Pushkin's myth" which were developed in her work later on. Pushkin was a constant source of inspiration for Tsvetaeva as she moulded her self-image. Tsvetaeva's approach to Pushkin differs from that of the scholarly-minded Briusov, Belyi or Khodasevich: she attempted to create a myth about her kinship with Pushkin with the focus on the most rebellious and tragic moments in his life or his work. Thus, Pushkin's play "Pir vo vremia chumy" was on her mind throughout the nineteen thirties - she referred to it in her essays and letters and translated a hymn from it into French. Pushkin's mode of "pleasures through danger" was applied by Tsvetaeva to herself and to Petersburg poets in the essay "Nezdeshnii vecher" written in 1931. Tsvetaeva's description of the feast with her fellow poets resembles Pushkin's own poem written on 19 October 1925. The essay also has elegiac features and was written upon the death of Kuzmin.

In 1936 the motif from Pushkin's play was employed by Tsvetaeva for her analysis of "Kapitanskaia dochka". In her essay "Pushkin and Pugachev" she revealed herself as an avant-garde writer: she identifies Pushkin with the narrator of "Kapitanskaia dochka" and brings into play her own mythopoetical concepts. Moreover, she applied the situation described by Pushkin to her own life. In 1936 Tsvetaeva knew about the pro-Soviet activities of her husband and she was considering returning to Russia herself. In this respect it can be noted that if in "Pushkin and Pugachev" Tsvetaeva projects a strong belief in Pushkin's formula "to seek pleasures through danger or death", in her translation from "Pir vo vremia chumy" into French Tsvetaeva inserts a question mark at the end of Pushkin's line "бессмертья, может быть, залог". This gesture indicates her doubts about returning to Russia. It is also interesting to observe how Tsvetaeva turned to Pushkin in 1920 - writing a poem after a long silence due to the death of her second daughter: "Punsh i polnoch'. Punsh i - Pushkin" evokes Pushkin's poems about feast and the death of his friends. Tsvetaeva referred

to Pushkin for inspiration in order to escape from the unbearable reality of the times. At the same time Tsvetaeva wrote her long poem "Na krasnom kone" in which she claimed that everything should be sacrificed to the poet's own Genius.

Pushkin was particularly on Tsvetaeva's mind in the nineteen thirties. Tsvetaeva was concerned with her self-image as a great Russian poet. She linked Pushkin's life to the Orphic myth, declaring that every poet is a resurrected Orpheus. Like Viacheslav Ivanov, Tsvetaeva combined Dionysian and Christian beliefs in creating her own mythopoetry. Moreover, she vigorously developed the idea of her kinship with Pushkin. In some ways she saw Pushkin as a desired existential projection or reflection of herself in the ideal world, an icon, or her *true* self, which can only be realised through death. Thus, in the essay "Mat' i muzyka", she described her reflection in the piano in the same vein as Pushkin's monument in "Charodei" and in the essay "Moi Pushkin". In "Moi Pushkin" Tsvetaeva made rhetorical figures out of situations from Pushkin's life and claimed that Pushkin mastered his own fate. In the essay "Natal'ia Goncharova" Tsvetaeva openly admired how Pushkin died, emphasising that his marriage and his death were his own choice. Tsvetaeva's outlook, marked by the influence of Nietzsche, is felt in her approach to Pushkin. It also derives from Merezhkovskii's attempt to extract heroic and poetic elements from Pushkin's work in the Dionysian manner prevalent in Nietzsche's philosophy. In the essay "Pushkin and Pugachev" Tsvetaeva went further and claimed that poets and heroes are beyond good and evil; they reach this state of elevation by giving themselves to the elements. Tsvetaeva gives Pushkin's Pugachev the role of guide (Charon) who should take her into another world. In "Moi Pushkin" this world was identified by Tsvetaeva as "votshche". The word "votshche" comes from Pushkin's poem "K moriu" and in Tsvetaeva's poetic code it represents another reality in which she could become Pushkin's double. In Tsvetaeva's translation of this poem into French (achieved in 1936) the sea itself is called "the space of spaces" and it symbolises for Tsvetaeva another — fifth — element: lyrical poetry. Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Pushkin's writings and her translations of Pushkin's poems into French reveal a true avant-garde author who perceives Pushkin's poetry as an "open" work — open to new interpretations and to the process of mutual creativity. That is why in "Moi Pushkin" she allowed herself to imitate the signature of the great poet whom she admired so fervently.

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