6

The Lyrical Essence

In chapter two I discussed the way in which in *Onegin* the 'implied author' (to use Wayne Booth's terminology [1961,211-21]) is projected into the work itself. As Lotman indicates, all the different 'voices' that go to make up the fabric of the text are subsumed in the single voice of the narrator, who 'adopts,' as it were, the voices in an act of mimickry.l There is thus an implied author in the sense which Booth means it, but there is also the author-narrator, and finally the character 'Pushkin,' who has a certain role to play in the novelistic events, and whose function can be compared to the 'editor' of the eighteenth-century epistolary novel. These characters are not necessarily totally identical, but rather overlapping. A number of recent studies of *Onegin* have been devoted to the analysis of this phenomenon, which was, as we have seen, largely ignored by critics, at least until the 1920s. K. Hielscher, for example, distinguishes three distinct characters in the narrative voice, while L. Stepanov sees no need to split the author into different roles.2 Perhaps the best description of the plasticity of the character 'author-narrator' is to be found in Lotman, who writes: 'The work is narrated as if by several voices which interrupt each other, some of them being outside the events, at a remote distance, like historians or chroniclers, while others are intimately acquainted with the participants, and yet others are themselves included directly in the text. Inasmuch as all these voices are united in the voice of the author and compose the range of its various manifestations, there arises that complex richness of the authorial personality' (1980,296). Whether or not they agree on the structure of the figure of the author, all recent critics seem united in stressing the importance of the author's presence in the work. In counterbalancing the novelistic elements in the structure, the authorial voice is crucial. It is the prism - the verbal equivalent

of the 'magic crystal' that Pushkin mentions - through which we perceive all the events (with the exception of those which are relayed to us directly by document - e.g., letter - although in a deeper sense the reader is reminded that these too have not just been filtered through the author's consciousness, but are also his fictions).

The relationship of the author-narrator to his work is constantly defined and redefined. The ultimate definition is offered in the farewell statement at the end of Eight:

> Prosti zh i ty, moi sputnik strannyi,
> I ty, moi vernyi Ideal,
> I ty, zhivoi i postoiannyi,
> Khot' malyi trud. la s varni znal
> Vse, chto zavidno dlia poeta:
> Zabven'e zhizni v buriakh sveta,
> Besedu sladkuiu druzei.
> Promchalos' mnogo, mnogo dnei
> S tekh por, kak iunaia Tat'iana
> I s nei Onegin v smutnom sne
> lavilisia vpervye mne
> I dal' svobodnogo romana
> la skvoz' magicheskii kristal
> Eshche ne iasno razlichal.
>
> *[And farewell to you,* my *strange companion, and to you,* my *faitbful ideal,and* to *you, lively and constant, tbougb sligbt work. Witb Y011 I knew everytbing tbat is enviable for a poet: oblivion from the world amid tbe storms of society, the sweet conversation of friends. Many, many days bave bastened by since tbat time wben youtbful Tat'iana and witb ber Onegin first appeared to me in a vague vision - and I glimpsed tbe distant perspective of a free novel - tbougb not clearly as yet - tbrough* my *magic crystal.* (Eight: L: 1-14)]

This stanza is crucial in shattering the illusion of the novel and returning the centre of attention back to the narrative voice which the reader has been lulled into forgetting. It makes us newly aware of the 'metavoice' which has provided a constant commentary on the authorial activity throughout the text. It reminds us that the kernel of the work, the 'message' conveyed by the text, is, ultimately, a lyrical one. Tat'iana is the poet's ideal- a symbol of his lyrical concerns, not

an observed portrait, for all the novelistic trappings. Lo Gatto's formula for *Onegin* - *diario lyrico* - is thus not entirely without merit, for the lyrical element is, I would submit, the ultimate one, since it not only frames, but conditions and subsumes, the novelistic events. Failure to understand this has been, as I showed above in chapter one, the principal defect that has vitiated so much writing on *Onegin.* Without the lyrical tone that informs it, the structure of *Onegin* would disintegrate or become a prose novel.

It is frequently thought that the authorial figure is conveyed largely through the digressions:' However, we have seen that the digressions, especially those in the first four chapters, are replete with the standard cynical remarks of the romantic anti-hero. They represent the temporary entering of the author-narrator into the orbit of Onegin. The lyrical spirit is rather the point where the converging lines of irony, plot, character, and verse intersect. It is conveyed mostly in the narrative tone, in the asides, even in the choice of epigraphs and the footnotes. As Shaw has shown, the actual nature of the author-narrator changes over the years, since the poem was written and published piecemeal, and since the passage of time and its effect upon the narrator were dramatized, and made significant (1981, 26). This is the 'diario' aspect of the work, though, to be sure, not in the sense that Lo Gatto meant it. The changes in the author's situation, though alluded to only coyly ('And so, at that time I lived in Odessa ...'), are therefore an indispensable backdrop. Since the facts of Pushkin's biography are well enough known, especially to the informed reader, the stylization which they receive, while contributing an air of mystery, is to some extent a narrative device, and tends not to diminish but to heighten the drama of the author-narrator's situation. In particular, it focuses our attention on the author-narrator as a lyrical persona rather than a historical personage.

The discussion in this chapter is centred around the three different guises or roles that the author-narrator assumes in the course of the narrative, although, as I have already said, the structure of the figure is so complex, both in its evolution and in its characterization, that the divisions proposed must be seen as to some extent hypothetical or even as different ways of viewing the same thing:

1. Poet as stylized version or analogue of the historical Pushkin.
2. Poet as *litterateur,* replying to critics, commenting on language and other matters of poetic form, and apostrophizing, often ironically, his fellow poets.
3. Poet as lyrical persona, responding to life in lyrical passages (not necessarily the digressions), and ultimately the hero of the whole work (in opposition to Onegin, who appears as the anti-hero).

The detail given in the text which leads us to speak of a historical Pushkin is sparse indeed: notes I and 10, references in One to Pushkin's life in Petersburg before exile, his arrival in Moscow after receiving permission to return from exile at Mikhailovskoe (Seven: XXXVI: 5-11), the descriptions in the Journey of Pushkin's 'typical day' in Odessa (a description which is itself in contrast with Onegin's 'typical day' in One).4 Moreover, it is given in no particular order, unlike the chronological consequentiality with which we receive the facts of Onegin's life. Generally speaking, the historical facts of Pushkin's life are suppressed or simply hinted at, e.g., 'but the north is dangerous for me' (One: II: 14). Prominence is instead given to the 'creative biography' of the poet, e.g., in the first six stanzas of Chapter Eight. Characteristically, the external events of Pushkin's biography are here given not directly, but as the peregrinations and transformations of Pushkin's muse - from the gardens of Tsarskoe selo, to the bacchanalia of Pushkin's post-lycee sojourn in Petersburg, through the various stages of exile - the Caucasus, the Crimea, Bessarabia, the garden at Mikhailovskoe, and finally the balls and routs of Petersburg. The focus, even in this historical aspect, is thus on Pushkin's poetic history and the development of his poetic talent.

I have already examined one aspect of the author-narrator as *litterateur* in chapters two and five, above, namely the 'battle with the critics' mode contained in the footnotes and in the various prefaces, omitted and otherwise. His use of quotes in the footnotes parallels his insertion of quotations, identified or not, in the text itself. Some of the quotations are clearly ironic, e.g., the burlesqued quotation from Lomonosov in Five: XXV: 1. Others seem to be sincere recognitions of admiration for the work of one poet or another, e.g., the quotation from Viazemskii in note 42. Yet others seem to be entirely neutral, and serve simply to enrich the fabric and perhaps place *Onegin* more firmly in a context, e.g., the quotations from the (banned) play *Woe from Wit* in Eight: XIII: **14** and Six: XII: 12 (which also serve to express Pushkin's solidarity with Griboedov). Some quotations are offered completely without tonal indicators, so that the reader is left unclear how to read them, and whether they are offered in seriousness or in parody, e.g., the quotation from Gnedich in note 8.

Another aspect of the work of the author-narrator in the role of *litterateur* is the amount of commenta~y on different questions of poetic form and content. This commentary adds up to a meta-text which heightens the reader's awareness of questions of poetics, and focuses the attention in *Onegin* on the work *qua* work, rather than the illusion created. The work of the poet thus becomes material for the poetry in

a way that foreshadows modernist writing. In particular, the question of Pushkin's development as a writer is posed, nearly always with irony. Thus, in One: LIX-LX, the poet notes the disappearance in his output of lyric poetry devoted to a real muse: 'Love passed, the Muse appeared.' When all traces of such nostalgia are gone, the author-narrator tells us he will undertake a 'long poem in 25 cantos.' This passage, for all its obvious flippancy, immediately establishes the link between the changing dynamic of the poet's life (cooling towards love) and developments in his art - the projected shift towards the longer form serving as a sort of metaphor for the poet's settling down to a comfortable middle age without love and happiness.

A second mention of the poet's 'creative plans' is in some ways a development of this:

> Unizhus' do smirennoi Prozy;
> Togda roman na staryi lad
> Zaimet veselyi moi zakat.
>
> [1 *will lower myself* to *humble prose; then a novel in the old style will occupy my merry old age.* (Three: XIII: 6-8)]

Again the longer form is associated with advancing years. All such ironical visions of an old age for the poet are cut off in the last lines of Chapter Eight, where the author-narrator reminds us of the virtues of dying young. Although Pushkin was undoubtedly moving towards prose, he was far froth embracing the vast novel-canvas, from which he distanced himself unequivocally in his remarks on Richardson's *Grandison:* 'the inimitable Grandison, who sends us to sleep' (Three: IX: 10-11). The writing of a novel-in-prose, though an idea to be contemplated at some future stage, is, for the Pushkin of *Onegin*, largely a joke, or at best an ironic contemplation of the fate to which the passage of time may bring him willy-nilly. True, *Onegin* does, in a sense, carry out the programme of the sentimental novel, in which virtue is rewarded and the anti-hero (Onegin) is punished. However, the programme is carried out in a totally unexpected way.

As a whole, the description of a 'novel in the old style' (Three: XIIIXIV) is in counterpoint to the plot and structure of *Onegin* (as discussed above, chapter two). In a last mention of the prose/verse opposition, the question is again linked to the passing years:

> Leta k surovoi proze kloniat, Leta
> shalun'iu rifmu goniat

[The years incline one to *stern prose, the years chase away frivolous rhyme* (Six: XLIII: 5-6)]

The time is no longer appropriate, the poet tells us, for the lightheartedness of verse, a sentiment reinforced by the reference in the lines immediately after these to 'other chilling dreams' (an apparent reference to the change in the political climate following the crushing of the Decembrist revolt). The author expresses his surprise at finding that the ritual, conventional content of the elegy, a regret at the passing of youth, which he had mocked in the poetry of the eighteen-year-old Lenskii, is now invested with a real content:

Uzhel' i vpriam, i v samom dele,
Bez elegicheskikh zatei,
Vesna moikh promchalos' dnei?

[Can it really be and in very truth, without any elegiac embroidering, that the spring of my *days has sped away!* (Six: XLIV: 9-10)]

The (metapoetic) question of genre and form is thus intimately linked with the central theme of the dynamic of time, and the choice of genre and medium, prose or verse, is dramatized as the facing of the reality of middle age by the poet.

It can thus be seen that even in the 'metapoetic' mode the image of the poet is essentially a lyric one, in which two principal lyric themes dominate. The first of these concerns the passage of time, and is adumbrated as early as the epigraph from Viazemskii which stands at the head of Chapter One:

I zhit' toropitsia i chuvstvovat' speshit.

[And one rushes to *live, and one hastens* to *feel. (PSS,* VI, 5)]

It is maintained throughout *Onegin,* so that the last line, 'And so, I lived at that time in Odessa,' by giving us in the past tense what the author-narrator had experienced in Chapter One in the present, conveys an extraordinary sense of this dynamic' headlong rush into the future, of the role of memory in making us sense the passage of time, and also, like the poetic imagination (of which memory is one manifestation), of its power to arrest that passage, at least temporarily. Images of time dominate in *Onegin:* the description of Onegin's day, regulated

by the 'unsleeping *breguet'* (One: XV: 13; XVII: 3); the movement of the seasons in Two to Seven (summer-autumn-winter); the references to the passage of time (e.g., in Seven: XLII: 2L and so on.s

Onegin is, however, carried out not only in time, but also in the dimension of space: whether micro-space (Tat'iana's rushing from the house into the garden and down to the bench to get away from Onegin) or macro-space (Onegin's peregrinations round Russia, which in turn are in counterpoint to Pushkin's movement from Petersburg to the Caucasus, Bessarabia, Odessa, Mikhailovskoe, Moscow, and Petersburg again, and Tat'iana's move from the estate to Moscow and on to Petersburg, the end point where all the paths converge). Such movement in space is associated with another very important lyrical theme, namely that of exile - the longing to be where one isnot.6 This theme is expressed particularly in One, where Pushkin at once looks back with regret to the Petersburg from which he has been exiled, and at the same time looks out, beyond the confines of Russia, to Italy and Africa. Regret at the passage of time is thus linked intimately with regret that the poet cannot be in those places where he has been happy - or might be again (e.g., One: XIX, where he recalls the splendours of the Petersburg theatre, and One: XLIX, where he expresses his longing for the 'waves of the Adriatic'). Time and space are dimensions of the same thing, and again it is poetry that can traverse the boundaries that separate the poet from a longed-for world (poetry symbolized, for example, in the Italian opera music which 'recreates' that Italy that the poet will never see physically).

Space and time converge in the images of headlong speed that characterize many of Onegin's movements in One (and appear as the fulfilment of the suggestion given by the epigraph): 'flying' *(letia* II: 2); 'rushed' *(pomchalsia* XVI: 5); 'flew' *(poletel* XVII: 9); 'galloped headlong' *(stremglav poskakal* XXVII: 3-4); 'flew up like an arrow' *(streloi vzletel* XXVIII: 2-3); then with Lenskii in Two: 'the friends galloped' *(poskakali drugi* III: 1); 'they flew home full speed' *(Domoi letiat va ves' opor* IV: 2); and in Eight: 'whither does Onegin hasten his speedy flight?' *(Kuda svoi bystryi beg* / *Stremit Onegin?* XXXIX: 14-XL: 1). Striking in all these examples is how close the semantics of movement in space are to those of movement in time - the headlong gallop of Onegin and Lenskii symbolizes their haste to live their lives, to spend them with as little thought as Onegin's father spent his money or Onegin drains a bottle of champagne. The rapid movement culminates in the gallop of the horses that pull the sleigh with Lenskii's body from the field. The heedless gallop of the young men contrasts significantly with the measured, thoughtful movement of the young reader:

I shagom edet v chistom pole,
V mechtan'ia pogruzias', ona

[And at a walk she rides across the open field, sunk in reveries (Six: XLII: 1-2)]

The passage of time is reflected in the ages of man as they are represented in *Onegin.* Thus, for women the crucial ages are seen to be thirteen and eighteen (the first age being that at which Tat'iana's nurse and mother were married, and the latter being that of Tat'iana in Chapters Two through Seven). For the men, the decisive ages are eighteen and thirty. Lenskii isa young man of eighteen. Onegin is approximately that age when he enters society. Thirty is the age at which we leave Onegin. It is the age at which a man is no longer young, by which time he must have made a successful marriage and be established in his career.? Most important, thirty is the age of the poet at the end of Chapter Six of *Onegin:*

Uzhel' mne skoro tridtsat' let?
Tak, polden' moi nastal

[Can it be that I will soon be thirty~ So, my *mid-day has arrived* (Six: XLIV: 14-XLV: 1)]

The ages of man can thus be described as youth and middle age. Childhood is hardly ever described in Pushkin, and the poet never discusses his own childhood.8 As for old age, Pushkin gives us a number of images of that state in *Onegin,* all of them negative: Onegin's father, his uncle, Dmitrii Larin; the projected view of Lenskii as an old man (Six: XXXIX); and, most interestingly, the poet himself, in a momentary glimpse of him as an old man (Two: XL: 14). It is clear that for him old age is far from a desirable state; hence his categorical declaration in favour of leaving life's cup undrained:

Blazhen, kto prazdnik zhizni rano
Ostavil, ne dopiv do dna
Bokala polnogo vina,
Kto ne doche! ee romana
I vdrug ume! rasstat'sia s nim,
Kak ia s Oneginym moim.

[Blessed is he who has left life's feast early, without draining

to *the bottom the cup full of wine, who has not read its novel* to *the end, and has known how* to *part with it suddenly, as I have with* my *Onegin.* (Eight: 11: 9-14)]

Grouped around the theme of youth in *Onegin* are a number of motifs that serve as emblems of it: love, wine - in particular champagne poetry. To these are contrasted those of middle age: lack of love, bordeaux, and prose. Since I have discussed the problems of love and poetry elsewhere, it is perhaps useful to focus on those of wine. The allusions to wine are so numerous in the text that any modulation in the use of the motif is highly significant. Traditionally, wine in the imagery of anacreontic poetry connotes the pleasures of youth. This role in *Onegin* is played specifically by champagne, to which there are three references in the text: the 'wine of the Comet' (i.e., wine from the year of the mysterious comet of 1811 - a specially good vintage, and one with hidden Napoleonic associations, for the comet was visible well into 1812) which Onegin drinks with Kaverin at Talon's (One: XVI: 8); the Veuve Clicquot or Moet which Onegin and Lenskii drink together in the country and which the author-narrator recalls buying with his last penny to drink with his friends (Four: XLV: 1-10); and the metaphor in the Journey in which the singing at the Italian opera is compared to Ay. Also associated with the carefree days of youth are the (unidentified) wine which Zaretskii drinks on credit three bottles at a time at Very's in Paris, and the 'light wine' which Pushkin drinks at Automne's in Odessa. In every case the role of France as the purveyor of pleasure is very clear. Hence the domestic Tsimlianskoe (a Russian sparkling wine from the Don region) with which the guests are regaled at Tat'iana's nameday party is a comic modulation of the theme, as is the lingonberry-water which Onegin and Lenskii drink at the Larins' and which disagrees with Onegin. The 'shift' from youth to middle age in Pushkin is marked by a change in his choice of wine:

No izmeniaet penoi shumnoi
Ono zheludku moemu,
I ia *Bordo* blagorazumnyi
Uzh nynche predpochel emu..

[But it upsets my *stomach with its hissing foam, and I have now switched from it* to *a sensible bordeaux.* (Four: XLVI: 1-4)]

The associations of champagne are more complex than first may ap-

pear. Pushkin twice mentions the poetic use of champagne as a metaphor (in Six: XLV and the Journey, *PSS,* VI, 204). According to Lotman, the use of champagne as a metaphor was rejected once by the censor, which helped to bind it further to the associations of 'dangerous youth.'9 Ay, the author-narrator tells us, is 'like a brilliant, flighty, lively, capricious, and vacuous mistress' (Four: XLVI: 6-8). It is a 'magic stream' that can produce 'jokes and verse, quarrels and merry dreams' (Four: XLV: 13-14). It is, in other words, one way of entering the youthful world of danger, of adventure, of love, and of death. Pushkin's choice of bordeaux thus represents not only a gastronomit decision but a symbolic farewell to that world.

The most significant modulation of the wine motif occurs, however, in the lines from the last stanza of Eight, quoted above, in which the author declares his admiration for those who decide not to drink the cup of life to its dregs. (This image, beyond its obvious metaphorical resonances, recalls the biblical association of Christ begging the Lord not to make him drink the cup: the implication - that for Pushkin, the wine of life has turned to wormwood - has not been noticed in the literature on *Onegin).10* Here, as Bocharov points out, 'the traditional epicurean motif is seen from a new point of view, which is complicated by the experience of life. It does not have the former "levity": the author is speaking now not about that conventional poetic death which in the poetry of his youth was earlier depicted in a conventional sense as an insignificant *[legkoe]* event, but about the fact that "some are no more" in very truth *[v samom dele]*. The author is recalling those in whose fate the conventional poetic situation has become reality' (1975,62). The expression of envy for those who have dared to leave life's feast is consonant with the general tone of the last chapters of *Onegin:* the champagne of youth has been drunk; at best there remains the bordeaux of middle age, and an old age too dismal to be desired. The equation of wine, especially champagne, with poetry and youth is made explicit in the lines in the Journey:

> Smirilis'vy, moei vesny
> Vysokoparnye mechtan'ia,
> I v poeticheskii bokal
> V ody ia mnogo podmeshal.
>
> *[You have subsided, high-flown reveries of* my *springtime, and I have mixed a great deal of water into* my *poetic goblet. (PSS,* VI, 2001]

The contrast between youth, which has passed for the poet, and middle age is expressed by other important metaphors as well, especially by the opposition of the seasons spring and falLll This is particularly evident in the opening of Chapter Seven where the poet discusses his preference for fall over spring, the conventional time of poetry and passion (and traditionally greeted with joy by the poet):

> Kak grustno mne tvoe iavlen'e,
> Vesna, vesna! pora liubvi!
>
> *[How sad to me is your appearance, spring, spring! time of love!*
> (Seven: I: 1-2)]

In the following lines the poet rejects spring, especially the conventionality of its role as a time of love and youth:

> IIi, ne raduias' vozvratu
> Pogibshikh osen'iu listov,
> My pomnim gor'kuiu utratu,
> Vnimaia novyi shum lesov;
> IIi s prirodoi ozhivlennoi
> Sblizhaem dumoiu smushchennoi
> My uviadan'e nashikh let,
> Kotorym vozrozhden'ia net?
>
> *[Or is it that,* not *jubilant at the return of the leaves which perished in the autumn, we recall a bitter loss as we hear the renewed rustle of the woods; or is it that we with downcast thoughts compare with nature's revival the withering of our years for which* there *is no rebirtM* (Seven: III: 1-8)]

Spring, then, is associated with the love/youth/poetry/champagne nexus that is rejected by the author-narrator in *Onegin.* It is Lenskii, we note, who bewails the passing of the 'golden days of my spring' in the elegy that he composes on the eve of his death. Pushkin himself draws our attention to the incongruity in Lenskii's choice of theme:

> On pel pobleklyi zhizni tsvet,
> Bez malogo v os'mnadtsat' let.
>
> [He *sang the faded flower of life, a little short of his eighteenth year.*
> (Two: X: 13-14)]

It is the imagery of fall that is most lovingly treated in the poem. Already, in the lines quoted above about spring, it is there - in the use of the root 'wither,' the repetition of which becomes a recurrent note in the poem, signalling the poet's approaching middle age. [12] The lyrical descriptions of autumn in Chapter Four, which conveys Onegin's activities in the fall, are an evocation of the beauty of the Russian countryside at that time of year, experienced by Pushkin himself at Mikhailovskoe. They form a singular contrast to Lenskii's 'something, and the misty distance' (Two: X: 8) in the concreteness of the detail and the minor drama of the wolf and his hungry mate:

Vstaet zaria vo mgle kholodnoi;
Na nivakh shum rabot umolkj
S svoei volchikhoiu golodnoi
Vykhodit na dorogu volk;
Ego pochuia, kon' dorozhnyi
Khrapit - i putnik ostorozhnyi
Nesetsia v goru vo ves' dukh

[Dawn arises in the cold gloom; on the meadows the noise of work has fallen silent; the wolf comes out onto the road with his hungry mate; sensing him, the travelling horse snorts - and the cautious wayfarer races up the hill full tilt (Four: XLI: 1-7)]

The fact that winter (or at least the snow) arrives late - on the night of the second of January - is a kind of wish-fulfilment on the part of Pushkin. Summer, the culmination of the passions stirred in the spring, barely exists for Pushkin:

No nashe severnoe leto,
Karrikatura iuzhnykh zim,
Mel'knet i net

[But our northern summer is a caricature of southern winters: it flashes by and is gone (Four: XL: 1-3)]

If we take the summer as the time when the desires of love conceived in youth are fulfilled, then it is clear that for Pushkin those pleasures are seen to be transitory indeed - as momentary as they are for Tat'iana, who never actually knows love as anything more than a desire, a longing that is left unfulfilled. Tat'iana's 'autumn' - her middle age - begins

as soon as she has heard Onegin's 'sermon' at the beginning of Four. It is signalled by the root 'to wither':

> Uvy, Tat'iana uviadaet
>
> *[Alas, Tat'iana withers* (Four: XXIV: 1)]

The symbolism of winter is the most interesting of the four seasons, since it can be seen to be ambiguous. Since it follows autumn, the emblem of middle age, one might be tempted to 'read' winter in Pushkin's symbolism as old age. Rather, I would submit, winter is the coming of death (thereby short-circuiting old age). It is winter that transforms everything in the marvellously lyrical passage which opens Five. Winter, the cold, freezes the quickness of water into the rigour of ice (an association that gives a particular overtone to the merry scenes of boys skating and geese slipping and falling). It is winter that has cold hands, recalling the coldness of Lenskii. Winter leads Tat'iana to flirt with the other world (in her dream which I read here as a descent into the underworld, a flirtation with death) and brings Lenskii to his death.

The equation of winter with death, however, if left unmodified, would be an inadequate definition of the complex function of winter, for there is at least one further element involved. It is the notion of winter as the symbol of marriage. Nature, with whom Tat'iana is closely associated, trembles at the onset of winter, which will dress her in white:

> Priroda trepetna, bledna,
> Kak zhertva pyshno ubrana
>
> *[Nature is trembling, pale, sumptuously adorned, like a sacrifice* (Seven: XXIX: 10-11)]

The coming of the first snow at the beginning of Five is, as it were, a dramatization of Tat'iana's own fate. It is in the winter that Tat'iana is carried off to be married, a notion which, I have suggested, is connected, not with wish-fulfilment, but with sacrifice:

> Ne rado ei lish' serdtse Tani.
> Neidet ona zimu vstrechat', ...
> Tat'iane strashen zimnii put'.
>
> *[Only Tania's heart is not joyful at it [the coming of winter}.*

She does not go to greet the winter... The winter road is fearful for Tat'iana. (Seven: xxx: 9-10, 14)]

In a deeper sense, since winter is the symbol of them both, marriage is equated with death - it is passage from the quickness of youth into the dead other world of reason and prose.

As well as signifying death and marriage, the coming of the snows of winter denotes, like both those states, transformation. In his study of the poetics of *Onegin,* Bocharov sees the underlying principle as that of *translation.* This is a creative application of Lotman's notion of *transcoding* to a specific literary. context.13 *Onegin* is a fruitful case for the discussion of the contrastive semiotics of cultures. Indeed, Pushkin himself saw it as such, although he would have used different terms. In his writings on the concept of *narodnost',* Pushkin showed that he considered that the role of the poet lay in his ability to define the national identity.14 The whole of *Onegin* can be interpreted as a attempt to do precisely this, through the analysis of the penetration of foreign elements into Russian reality - whether it be fashions, language, literature, imported carriages, or Napoleon himself (and the ideas of revolution, genius, and amoralism which he represented). I would suggest that a better word than *translation* for the mechanics of this phenomenon is *transformation,* since it encompasses the wider theme of the transformation of individuals and character. Seen as transformation, Tat'iana's character moves outwardly in one direction - from Russian *baryshnia,* Tat'iana, to a society lady, Princess N, who would be as much at home in Paris or Vienna as she is in Petersburg. That is to say, superficially she becomes more foreign. Inwardly, however, she moves from an unquestioning acceptance of the (foreign) literary models whose personification she had considered Onegin to be to a rejection of those models (in the form of the fashionable liaison of a married woman with a society rake) in maturity. Onegin, we note, has failed to make the transformation, and is left with an empty shell of 'foreign' behaviour with no'Russian' content (except for the appreciation of Russian verse). In a nutshell, Tat'iana is Russia trying to understand the foreign, and Onegin is the foreigner trying to understand Russia. The transformation of them both is the core problem of the *fabula.*

It is this idea of transformation that is, I would contend, symbolized by the Russian winter. Nabokov writes of the imagery in *Onegin* as follows: 'Pushkin's composition is first of all and above all a phenomenon of style, and it is from this flowered rim that I have surveyed its

sweep of Arcadian country, the serpentine gleam of its imported brooks' (Nabokov, I, 7). Although it is clearly true that Pushkin's descriptions of the Russian landscape owe something to the Western European tradition of pastoral poetry, Nabokov's sweeping statement does much of the landscape description in *Onegin* an injustice. In particular, it is clearly not true of the winterscapes. These are landscapes transformed by the Russian phenomena of snow and winter; there is no snow in Arcadia. It is as a celebration of transformation that we should read the first stanza of Chapter Five, in which Tat'iana awakes to find the landscape that she has known and loved *transformed* by the coming of winter. It is not by chance that we view this transformation from Tat'iana's vantage-point since her own transformation - symbolized by that of nature - is a central theme of the poem. It is thus that the imported poetic myths, characters, and paraphernalia which invited Nabokov's scorn are *made Russian,* just as the poetic motifs of world literature are somehow integrated by Pushkin into a national imagery, and 'Russified.'

Central to the lyrical persona that is projected by Pushkin into *Onegin* is the nature of his muse. Like the other figures - Onegin, Tat'iana, author-narrator - the figure 'muse' is endowed with extraordinary plasticity - 'polysemy,' to use Roman Jakobson's term. The first 'given' in any discussion of the muse is that she does not correspond to a reallife individual: 'Love passed, the muse appeared' (One: LIX: I), the poet tells us, after taking a whole stanza to deny any tendency to link verse and love in his poetry (even expressing mock-envy at the ability of others to do so). Pushkin's muse, then, is an 'ideal' whose incarnate manifestations may take a variety of forms. This ability is made clear in the first stanzas in Eight, already discussed above, in which she appears in a variety of guises. The figure of the 'muse' is manipulated in quite unexpected ways: she is transformed into Pushkin's old nurse, to whom he reads his latest creations (to what effect is left unsaid):

> No ia plody moikh mechtanii
> I garmonicheskikh zatei
> Chitaiu tol'ko staroi niani,
> Podrugi iunosti moei
>
> *[But I read tbe fruits of* my *reveries and harmonic undertakings only* to my *old nurse, the friend of* my *youth* (Four: XXXV: 1-4)]

The notion of 'muse' is reduced to burlesque when Pushkin, in his

next lines, 'suffocates a neighbour with a tragedy. lis **In** refusing to accept the traditional poetic notion of a real-life referent for the figure 'muse,' Pushkin distances himself from the commonly held view of love poetry, to which Lenskii, by contrast, strictly adheres. For Pushkin, 'muse' is simply the incarnation of or metaphor for poetry, and her various guises correspond to the different genres, milieus, and themes that he practised.

The question arises to what extent we may take Tat'iana herself as a hypostasis of Pushkin's muse. Although the question is ultimately unanswerable, there is clearly a considerable affinity between them. Like the muse, Tat'iana is Pushkin's 'idea!.' Like her, she is capable of transformation, in her case from country miss to society queen. The muse figure is, however, much more elastic than Tat'iana, who, on the one hand, represents rather the ideal of femininity expressed in other places in Pushkin's lyric verse by the figure 'angel' or 'madonna,' and is, on the other hand, 'bound' by the novelistic situation in which she is endowed with certain character traits, so that her 'elasticity' is limited to some degree by the requirements of verisimilitude. Admired 'secretly,' 'from afar,' Tat'iana is 'untouchable,' so that Pushkin cannot describe her, as he does his muse, as *rezvaia* (a code-word in Pushkin's poetic vocabulary for a woman of fickle affections and easy virtue).

Of all the transformations that *Onegin* documents, however, the most profound and subtle occur in the lyrical persona of the author/ narrator. These can be traced, among other places, in the evolution of the semantics of the words denoting 'freedom.'16 There are two roots and their derivatives which occupy this semantic field in the text:

1. *Svobod-a (-nyi, -no)*
2. *vol-ia (-'nost', -'nyi)*

Four distinct meanings can be distinguished within this semantic field. (Interestingly, the distribution of roots crosses the boundaries between the meanings and is evidently determined by such matters as style, metre, and euphony.)ll The meanings are as follows:

1. Political freedom (calque of the French *liberte,* as in *liberte, egalite, fraternite).*

In this sense *svoboda* is used twice and *vol'nost'* once, each time with reference to a writer:

Fonvizin, drug svobody

[Fonvizin, the friend of freedom (One: XVIII: 3)]

Zashchitnik vol'nosti i prav

[[Grimm] the defender of freedom and rights (One: XXIV: 13)]

Poklonnik slavy i svobody, ...
Vladimir i pisal by ody,
Da Ol'ga ne chitala ikh.

[an admirer of fame and freedom ... Vladimir would have written odes, but Ol'ga did not read them. (Four: XXXIV: I, 3-4)]

Vladimir (Lenskii) is here identified with the Decembrist poets (d. the reference to Kiukhel'beker's propaganda in favour of the ode, Four: XXXII: 14-XXXIII: 2). The inclusion of Lenskii in the same 'series' as Grimm and Fonvizin is clearly ironic, as is the association with *slava* (honour, glory) and the ode. It is noteworthy that the three instances of this meaning of freedom occur early in the poem: two in One, the other in Four.

2. Personal freedom from care and responsibility (associated with *dolce far niente*, with the wordnega -languor, delectation - and, in Pushkin's case, with the untrammmelled life of the poet). This meaning of freedom applies to Onegin:

Vot moi Onegin na svobode

[Behold my *Onegin set free* (One: IV: 5)]

Svobodnyi, v tsvete luchshikh let

[Free, in the flower of his best years (One: XXXVI: 10)];

to Pushkin:

Pridet li chas moei svobody?

[Will the hour of my *freedom comet* (One: L: I)]

Dlia sladkoi negi i svobody

[for sweet delectation and freedom (One: LV: 9)]

Svoboden, vnov' ishchu soiuza

[free, again I seek the union (One: LIX: 3)];

and to the audience in the theatre:

Gde kazhdyi, vol'nost'iu dysha

[where everyone, breathing freedom (One: XVII: 10)]

All the occurrences of this second meaning of freedom occur in Chapter One. At this point personal freedom is seen by Pushkin as a kind of possibility for self-indulgence (in his case manifested in poetry-writing) and the easy life. The linking of this meaning to the theatre audience is a particularly interesting point, suggesting the liberating force of art. 3. Freedom of manner, rustic simplicity (associated only with Tat'ianaJ:

Imeet sel'skaia svoboda
Svoi schastlivye prava,
Kak i nadmennaia Moskva.

[Rustic freedom has its happy laws, as does haughty Moscow. (Four: XVII: 12-14)]

Gde vse naruzhe, vse na vole.

[In whom everything is visible, everything is free (Eight: XX: 9)]

Svobodnoi zhivost'iu svoei

[By her free vivacity (Eight: XXIII: 14)]

Svobodno doma prinimaet

[she receives freely at home (Eight: XXXI: 3)]

The early prefiguring of this quality in Four is realized in that 'rustic' freedom of manners that Tat'iana manages to preserve in her comportment as a society lady. 4. The final meaning that Pushkin arrives at for the notion of freedom is akin to those mentioned a:bove, but refined and deepened. Thus, the 'external' political notion of *liberte* is rejected, as is the superficial

freedom of the lazy poet or society wastrel. They give way to a concept of inner harmony and independence which is a refinement of that rustic freedom perceived in Tat'iana. This meaning of freedom occurs only three times in the text of *Onegjn,* but the location - in Chapter Eight, where the issues have now crystallized and we see poet and creatures at their most mature - suggests its importance as the culmination of the process of definition and distillation:

> Ia dumal: vol'nost' i pokoi
> Zamena schast'iu.
>
> *[I thought that freedom and peace could replace happjness.* (Onegin's letter: *PSS,* VI, 180)]
>
> Sidit pokoina i vol'na.
>
> *[[Tat'jana] sjts calm and free.* (Eight: XXII: 14)]

In the first instance the doublet ('freedom and peace') is applied to Onegin, in the second to Tat'iana. It occurs for a third time in Pushkin's 1834 lyric 'Pora moi drug, pora ...' ('Tis time, my friend, 'tis time ...J:

> Na svete schast'ia net, no est' pokoi i volia.
>
> *[There* js *no happjness jn the world, but there* js *freedom and peace. (PSS,* III, 224)]

. This time it is applied to the persona of the poet himself. The concept is, we note, contrasted with happiness, which evidently implies tumult, passion, and eventual woe. Tat'iana, the poet's ideal, lives, isolated, cold, outside warmth and love (which exist for her only as an encapsulated memory). Onegin's confusion at the end of the novel arises because he is unable to live up to such an ideal of independence and lack of human ties. It is Tat'iana's tears and her confession of her love for Onegin during their final tete-a-tete that make her human and admirable. They soften the appearance of external coldness and lack of human ties evoked by Pushkin's formula. Pushkin, in the character of his heroine, modifies what we might otherwise take as his concluding wisdom that happiness is unattainable, and only freedom and peace are desirable goals. Tat'iana's statuesque sublimity is mitigated by her human frailty and her nostalgic recall of her rural haunts.

The refined 'freedom' that is defined in Eight applies not only to

Onegin and Tat'iana in their differing ways, but also, most significantly, to the poet himself. It is hinted at in the reference to the 'distant prospect of my free novel' ('dal' svobodnogo romana' - Eight: L: 13) that he makes at the very end of the novel. The implication is not simply that the novel is 'free form' or 'free from convention' (a notion that I have discussed already in chapter two), but that in poetry Pushkin finds the inner freedom he seeks, just as Tat'iana finds it in the memory of the country places where she grew up and first saw Onegin (Eight: XLVI: 8-14).18 Both poet and heroine have found that peace and freedom in an inner world which is a substitute for happiness~ Pushkin's ideal of the inner freedom which the poet attains through his art is suggested as early as Chapter One - in the rejection of the real-life person as muse, poetry ('muse') as substitute for a woman's love, and the escape from the evils of life in the *grand monde* into a Horatian rural retreat (evoked by the epigraph to Chapter Two). The difference lies in the fact that where escape in meaning (2) of 'freedom' had appeared as ironic self-indulgence on the poet's part, by Eight it seems, against the sombre hints of friends who are dead or far away, to be a necessity and a salvation from the grim vicissitudes of life. Of the three, only Onegin, who is impervious to the charm of the Russian countryside, and who does not completely master Russian poetry (the two being closely linked in the semantics of the work), cannot, despite the fact that at the end he is in love with Tat'iana, maintain his 'peace and freedom,' and must go on a belated and vain quest for happiness. It is Onegin who, in his letter, renounces the 'peace and freedom' ideal because he does not have the inner resources, either the poet's poetry or Tat'iana's deep love of Russia, to sustain him.

Thus, the notions set out somewhat shallowly and in stereotyped fashion at the beginning of the text, especially Chapter One, of a sardonic amusement at society, of the rejection of love as a will 0' the wisp, of the desirability of going away from it all to some country retreat (an option parodied in the figure of Zaretskii), and finally the notion that happiness, if it exists at all, resides in 'habit' (expressed by the dictum from Chateaubriand) - all these notions, which had seemed so facile, are invested by the end of the novel with a real, tough, bitter content. They are transformed by the infusion of values - in Tat'iana's case moral ones, in the poet's case - aesthetic. It is this truth, which Onegin does not have the inner resources to attain, that leaves him confounded at the end of the novel and constitutes the essential truth of the work - a truth that Pushkin himself could hardly have foreseen when he began. It is the deep lyrical kernel of the entire work.

In examining the imagery and semantics of Pushkin's lyrical content

in *Onegin*, one is inevitably struck by the extent to which they are structured around oppositions or contrasts. An exhaustive survey of the entire orchestration of the imagery would take a long study, and is perhaps beyond the capability of one person. A preliminary list would, however, have to include the following oppositions, among many more:

hot: cold
red: white
youth: middle age
free: bound
water: ice
passion: peace
country: city
verse: prose
spring: fall
summer: winter
South: North
foreign: Russian
poetry: novel

Such a listing of contrasts is simple enough: it is the detailed working out of anyone item in the imagery that can be, as we have seen in the discussion of the notion of 'freedom/ quite intricate. This intricacy is no doubt explained at least in part by Pushkin's own evolution as a poet in the seven or more years during which he worked at *Onegin.* In the course of that time his imagery developed. While this presents less of a problem when we have to do with separate works, which therefore acquire the status of independent systems, in *Onegin* we have to do with a system that itself changes in time.

On a number of occasions in the course of the text, Pushkin draws the reader's attention to the principle of contrast and opposition in the imagery; for example, in the following lines comparing Onegin and Lenskii:

Volna i kamen',
Stikhi i proza, led i plamen'
Ne stol' razlichny mezh soboi.

[Wave and stone, verse and prose, ice and flame are not as different from each other. (Two: XIII: 5-7)1

Here the movement and liveliness of water and flame is contrasted

with the immobility of stone and ice. The reference is clear: Lenskii, incarnation of passion, youth, and enthusiasm, is the water (i.e., the waves of the sea, a standard Romantic image) and the flame, while the sceptic Onegin is the stone and the ice. The contrast that is drawn here is related to the statue: living being contrast first discussed by Jakobson (see above, chapter five). The imagery in *Onegin* is thus deeply rooted in the metaphorical structures of the work. (This does not prevent Pushkin from introducing an element of irony in the application of these comparisons quoted here, especially in those applied to Lenskii, since we know from the entire tone of the chapter that Lenskii is a purely conventional poet, whose passion is unreal, a cliche, and whose more usual pose is Wertherian *Weltschmerz.*

The fact that Pushkin 'sets up' such an intricate set of contrasts permits him to manipulate detail in a very significant way. An example of this is the 'moving stream' which rushes between the snowy banks in Tat'iana's dream:

V sugrobakh snezhnykh pered neiu
Shumit, klubit volnoi svoeiu
Kipuchii, temnyi i sedoi
Potok, ne skovannyi zimoi

[Before her among the snowy *drifts there babbles and eddies with its wave a boiling, dark and grey stream, unbound by the winter* (Five: XI: 5-8)]

The mention of 'wave' is a reminder of the contrasts which have earlier been 'programmed.' The paradoxical nature of the diabolical stream is stressed by the repeated mentions of the winter. The symbolical nature of the stream as a metaphor for passion, tumult, sex, is heightened by the contrast with previously given mentions of ice. The following description of winter from the preceding chapter is an example:

I vot uzhe treshchat morozy
I serebritsia sred' polei ...
(Chitatel' zhdet uzh rifmy *rozy;*
Na, vot voz'mi ee skorei!)
Opriatnei modnogo parketa
Blistaet rechka, l'dom odeta.
Mal'chishek radostnyi narod
Kon'kami zvuchno rezhet led;

Na krasnykh lapkakh gus' tiazhelyi
Zadumav plyt' po lonu vod,
Stupaet berezhno na led,
Skol'zit i padaeti veselyi
Mel'kaet, v'etsia pervyi sneg,
Zvezdami padaia na breg.

[And 10! *the frosts already crackle and gleam like silver amid the fields ,,. (The reader is waiting for the rhyme 'roses' - well, take it quickly!) More perfect than a fashionable parquet gleams the little river, dressed in ice. A happy crowd of urchins cuts scraping1y through the ice with their skates; the heavy goose, thinking* to *swim on the bosom of the water, steps carefully onto the ice on its red feet, then slips and falls; the first snow flashes and whirls merrily, falling like starlets on the bank.* (Four: XLII: 1-14)]

This stanza, like the initial playing of a motif in a fugue, sets up the images upon which Pushkin will create the variation in Tat'iana's dream. It is itself adumbrated by an earlier references to Onegin swimming in the stream and taking baths in water with ice (Four: XXXVI: 6-10; Four: XLV: 3). Onegin's swimming seems almost certainly a metaphor for sexual freedom, especially when Tat'iana is made to walk a tottering log-bridge to escape from the bear which pursues her. [19] (The sexual activities of Onegin in this chapter are hinted at in Four: XXXVIII: 3-4.) The description of the river as being 'dressed in ice' is a modulation of the transformation of nature by the snow discussed above. The mention of the 'fashionable parquef is a foreshadowing of those ballrooms where pale Tat'iana, transformed by marriage, will shine. Finally, the image of winter conjured up in these lines ends with the description of the first snow (which will be described in more detail in Five: I-II). The contrast 'sexual passion: celibacy' underlined by the imagery in this stanza is comically alluded to by Pushkin in the metapoetic mention of rhyme: the rhyme 'frosts' *(morozy)* decidedly *does not* lead one to expect the rhyme 'roses' *(rozy),* symbol of passion. By this comic allusion Pushkin stresses for the aware reader the underlying contrasts in his imagery. The most puzzling image in the stanza, if we are to assume that it is more than a chance detail, is the 'heavy goose.' I am inclined to see in it a veiled reference to the 'whiteskinned dark-eyed girl' with whom Onegin has had his summer-time dalliance: surely she is well and truly pregnant by this time, and there

fore 'heavy. '20 It is because Pushkin has created a web of metaphorical detail, a 'private vocabulary,' that he is able to weave such elaborate concealed jokes, which the reader must be a sleuth, finely tuned to the nuances of Pushkin's language, to catch. The 'water: ice' contrast is in fact present at many points in the text. It is adumbrated in the waves that wash over the feet of Pushkin's unnamed companion in Chapter One; these are present, transformed, in the comic images of the people and animals sliding on the ice. Tat'iana, who fears, yet dreams, to 'get her feet wet/ takes the tottering bridge in her dream (itself covered with ice), further transformed in Chapter Eight into the parquet of the ballroom floor, which she negotiates perfectly, maintaining her modesty in society just as she maintains her footing on the bridge.

A set of images at least as productive as the 'water: ice' contrast is that associated with the 'sleep: waking' nexus, which is again principally linked with the image of Tat'iana (and as such has been partially discussed in connection with the analysis of the figure of Tat'iana in chapter four). The attentive reader is struck by the large number of references to 'sleep' in the text, especially if he realizes that the Russian *son* can connote 'sleep' or 'dream,' and has a very complicated semantics in Pushkin. The meanings of this word can be summarized as being of three principal kinds:

1. Physical sleep. As such there are numerous references, throughout the novel, to characters sleeping. The information is seldom fortuitous: Onegin's sleeping while others are awake and vice versa in Chapter One is highly significant. Just as significant is the information concerning Tat'iana's sleep, or lack of it, in Three and Four: while she cannot sleep, Onegin is granted 'innocent' (literally 'sin-free') or 'deep' slumberY
2. Dreams. These can be divided into three types:

(a) Erotic dreams - the kind that disturb the sleep of young maidens. (b) Fearful dreams: the dreams that visit the sleep of one who has killed a man, especially his friend. This is the kind of dream which visits Onegin in Chapter Eight.

(c) Mysterious, ambiguous dreams, the kind that Tat'iana has in Chapter Five. These dreams are a mixture of (a) and (b).22

3. Creative activity, poetic imagination (linked with the semantics of the word 'revery' - *mechtan'e).* Practically every use of the word in this meaning is linked with the figure of Pushkin the poet.23

In addition to these usages, Pushkin tends to use the term *son* in a figurative sense to denote the oneiric state of one who is in love. This

is the application of the term to Taeiana (recalled by Monsieur Triquet's lines 'Reveillez-vous, belle endormie ...'), and to Onegin in the ironic reversal of roles in Chapter Eight.24

The intriguing thing about the semantics of 'dream' is the link between dreaming and poetic inspiration. From the lyrical point of view, Pushkin's stress on the dream as the source of inspiration suggests that he is very much in the romantic, 'orphic' stream, seeking his inspiration in the other world of dream (a metaphorical equivalent of death), a world which contrasts with everyday reality. The dreaming of the poet comprises another link between poet and heroine, since she, too, is a dreamer. It is only in Eight that Onegin ceases to be a heavy sleeper and is visited by the fearful dream in which he sees the dead Lenskii and Tat'iana (Eight: XXXVII: 1-14). It is at this point, as we have shown, that he 'almost becomes a poet.' (The semantics of dreaming are related to those of another word - *mechta*, 'revery' - and its derivatives. The difference lies in the fact that *mechta* is a daytime phenomenon, the dreaming and hoping of the young girl, or alternatively the bitter recall of bygone hopes by the poet and his hero, Onegin. As such, *mechta* is imbued with none of the terror which *son* can inflict upon its passive victim.)25

In this brief review of some of the essential images and metaphors underlying the lyrical substance of *Onegin* I believe I have been able to show that this aspect of the work is of prime importance and justifies the interpretation that I have offered, namely that first and foremost *Onegin* must be seen as a lyrical poem. To conclude this chapter I will review the essential features of the lyrical persona, as I have called it, which I see drawn in the work. The theme is set in the two stanzas (Six: XLIV-XL V) in which the poet ponders the approach of his thirtieth year, bids farewell to youth, and greets his 'mid-day':

> S iasnoiu dushoiu
> Puskaius' nyne v novyi put' Ot
> zhizni proshloi otdokhnut'.
>
> *[With a bright soul I now set out on a new path,* to *rest from* my *past life.* (Six: XLV: 12-14)]

The 'path' of which the poet speaks might not, it is clear, be a long one. As we have seen (above) in the last stanza of Eight, the author/ narrator explicitly rejects the desirability of a lengthy old age. The far from attractive images of old age on the one hand and the ever-present theme of death on the other (represented, for example, in the epigraph

to Chapter Six) serve to reinforce this impression.26 As a contemplation of the vicissitudes of life through the lyrical persona, *Onegin* is a sombre and sobering work. Underlying it all is what Gustafson calls the 'philosophical concern with time irretrievable' (1962, 7).

Faced with the relentless passage of time, the poet sees two possibilities of consolation, of stepping outside time's boundaries. The first of these is memory. If memory can be a source of regret and bitterness for the poet (summarized in the meaning of the word *mechta* discussed above) and reminds him of his spent youth, it also has the power to recreate that past happiness. Already in Chapter One the theme of memory arises (directed from the poet's southern exile towards his life in Petersburg)Y This use by the poet of memory to relive the past peripeties of youth is shared with the poet's heroine, Tat'iana, and signalled by the presence of the verb *pomnit':*

Onegin, pomnite I' tot chas

[Onegin, do you *remember the time* (Eight: XLII: 10)]

A source of regret and nostalgia, memory is also an escape into what appears - viewed in retrospect - to be a happier time (or at least, a time when happiness seemed attainable). For Onegin, by contrast, far from being an escape, a fertile and redeeming inner world, memory is a torment, since it recalls images of Tat'iana spurned and Lenskii killed (Eight: XXXVII). Memory can thus be a moral force, punishing us for our misdeeds.

Memory is one form of the imagination *(voobrazbenie* in Eight: XXXVII), of which a nobler version is poetry. If memory can arrest time briefly, for one individual, poetry can capture and transfigure the moment eternally. It is this power of poetry to defy time which Pushkin evokes at the end of Two:

Bez neprimetnogo sleda
Mne bylo b grustno mir ostavit'.
Zhivu, pishu ne dlia pokhvali
No ia by kazhetsia zhelal
Pechal'nyi zhrebii svoi proslavit',
Chtob obo mne, kak vernyi drug,
Napomnil khot' edinyi zvuk.

[I would be sad to *leave tbe world without a noticeable* trace*.*

> *I live and write not for praise; but I think I would like to make famous*
> my *sad fate so that at least one lonely sound would remind others of me, like a faithful friend.* (Two: XXXIX: 8-14)1

True, in the lines immediately following this Pushkin responds ironically to the *exegi monumentum* theme, when he imagines his poetry and his reputation at the hands of the 'future ignoramus.f28 Poetry, and the pleasures and the recall that it provides, are for the intimate few who understand him, not the ignorant masses (hence the 'hierarchy of narratees'). Pushkin's poetry is a deeply personal matterj it is defined by what it is not, for the death of Lenskii surely implies a rejection of his elegiac poetry, just as Derzhavin's pompous classicism is criticized in the lines just quoted). The invocation of the image of the poet wandering above the lake, scaring the wild ducks with his verse, suggests the strangeness and unconventionality of his poetry. By implication, poetry is the highest value in the work, the aesthetic analogue of memory, an ennobling and moral force that compels the poet to obey the dictates of inspiration over the transitory blandishments of a 'successful career.' It is the irreducible kernel of existence.