4

Tat'iana:
Diana's Disciple

... I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.
(Romeo and Juliet, II.2)

'Ah! madame... que! fantome de devoir opposez-vous a man bonheur?'
(La Princesse de Cleves, 172)

Although Pushkin chose to call his work *Eugene Onegin,* and although the first chapter of it is devoted almost entirely to the eponymous hero, the reader becomes much closer, in the course of reading the novel, to Onegin's female counterpart Tat'iana. Indeed, it is Tat'iana who makes the transition from composite of literary traits to realized psychological portrait much more fully than any other character (with the exception of Pushkin himself). It is therefore not surprising that some critics have even suggested that the work should really have been called 'Tat'iana Larina,' since she dominates the action from Chapter Two onwards, and by the tone of the narrative is clearly perceived to enjoy the sympathy of the narrator, who declares himself to be her secret admirer. The reason for Tat'iana's dominance in the novelistic structure is simply the fact that it is Tat'iana whose innermost thoughts the reader is privy to. She is perceived 'from the inside,' whereas all the other characters are viewed largely externally. It is only in Chapter Eight that the poet gives us a glimpse of the thoughts and emotional 'interior' of Onegin, and then his tone of sympathy for his cparacter is much less overt than it is for Tat'iana.

Pushkin was by no means alone in his admiration of Tat'iana. It is perhaps no exaggeration to describe her as the most important character

in Russian literature, for she was to have a decisive impact on the shaping of subsequent heroines of Russian realism, in particular those of Turgenev and Tolstoi. Above all, those writers learned from Pushkin a sensitivity to the inner life of their characters which they might not otherwise have acquired. Richard Freeborn writes: 'What Tat'iana asserts - and what other heroes and heroines of the Russian novel will assert - is the privacy of conscience, the singularity of all moral awareness and certitude, the discovery of the single, unique moral self which opposes and withstands the factitious morality of the mass, of society, of humanity or the general good' (1973, 37). Freeborn's is a classically succinct summation of one aspect of Tat'iana's character - or one way of viewing it. It is revealed, as Freeborn shows, in one or two scenes of extraordinary clarity.

The character of Tat'iana is, however, much more complex than it appears in Freeborn's statement, as can be seen if we contrast it with the Russian critic Belinskii's commentary on the last meeting between Tat'iana and Onegin and her decision to 'remain eternally faithful' to her husband:

> There is the true pride of feminine virtue! 'But I have been given to another' - precisely, 'given,' not 'have given myself'! Eternal fidelity - to whom and in what? Faithfulness to relationships which constitute a profanation of feelings and feminine purity, because relationships not sanctified by love are highly immoral. ... But in Russia it all goes together somehow - poetry and life, love and the arranged marriage, the life of the heart, and the strict fulfilment of external obligations which are inwardly violated every hour. ... The life of woman is principally concentrated in the life of the heart; to love means to live for that life; and sacrifice is another word for love. (1843-6,498-9)

Belinskii's position is a 'romantic' one - love and marriage must go together. Tat'iana's relationship with her husband is therefore seen as immoral, and provokes Belinskii's indignation. The Russian critic thus takes a view diametrically opposed to Freeborn. He sees in Tat'iana's marriage and her conformity to the morality of the day the pressure of society on the individual, who is forced to obey the dictates of the mass rather than listen to his own heart. One is inclined to side with Freeborn, since there are, as we shall see, certain other considerations - moral, as Freeborn says, but also practical and realistic ones - which

militate against Tat'iana's initiating a liaison with Onegin. **In** a way, by conforming not only to the letter but also to the spirit of the social links she has contracted, Tat'iana paradoxically asserts her own individual strength of character in a world of hypocrisy in which the letter was customarily observed, but the spirit violated. The point is lost on Belinskii, who 'reads' Tat'iana's faithfulness as signifying her consent to a reactionary social order. Nevertheless, he admirably describes those contradictions in Russian life - the outward mask and the inner emotion. Somehow, as he says, it all goes together - perceiving the contrast between duty and freedom which is endemic in Russian literature and which is at the base of Tat'iana's (and perhaps her creator's) character. Tat'iana's solution to this dichotomy is passivity and personal suffering.

To account for the whole of Tat'iana's character, we clearly have to account for the paradoxes in it which can give rise to such contradictory interpretations as those of Freeborn and Belinskii. My own thesis, which will form the basis of the argument in the rest of this chapter, is that Tat'iana is a composite of two different, opposing character types, which I will designate, to some extent arbitrarily, as the 'Juliet' and 'Cleves' types. While it is the 'Juliet' type which dominates in the first part of the novel (approximately Chapters Two to Six), that type becomes interiorized - turned into the life of the heart, to use Belinskii's terminology - and replaced, at least on the outside, by the other.

This notion of the dual nature of Tat'iana is, by the way, suggested by Pushkin himself, who insists on the change in Tat'iana in Chapter Eight, and reinforces it by a jump of several years in the chronology:

> Kak izmenilasia Tat'iana!
> Kak tverdo v rol' svoiu voshla!
> Kak utesnitel'nogo sana
> Priemy skoro priniala!
>
> *[How Tat'iana had changed! How firmly she had assumed her role!*
> *How quickly she had accepted the habits of her restrictive rank!*
> (Eight: XXVIII: 1-4)]

As I have already suggested, the characters in *Onegin* begin life as amalgams of literary allusions or 'quotations,' often paradoxical in their juxtaposition. The author stresses this by the wealth of these references, both overt and covert. This is so to such an extent that some of the 'characters' (e.g., Ol'ga) remain catalogues of literary traits and

borrowed features, and risk never becoming believable characters in the sense in which the realistic novel understands them. Although this is not the case with Tat'iana, it is nevertheless necessary to examine certain allusions which Pushkin invokes in connection with her, and use them to illuminate her meaning. In the following discussion I do not intend to be exhaustive, but rather seek to analyse certain basic references which I believe illustrate her 'dual' nature.

The 'first' or 'Juliet' Tat'iana is that dreamy, abstracted figure whom the reader (and Onegin) encounters in Chapter Two, and who, like Romeo, likes to greet the dawn.' We may call her both 'romantic' and romantic. That is to say, she is both influenced by her reading of romantic literature ('romantic'), and has traits of the romantic heroine. It is the latter traits which interest us specifically in her, and it is to these that we must now turn. They are derived, I would argue, from two principal sources - Shakespeare, with whom Pushkin had become familiar in his southern exile in French translations, and the romantic ballad, which had been transmitted to Russian literature principally by Pushkin's mentor Zhukovskii.

I have elsewhere argued the case for literary echoes in *Onegin* of Shakespeare's *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and do not intend to repeat the arguments in detail here (Clayton 1975). The case for allusions to *Romeo and Juliet* has been less fully examined in the literature, although it is a commonplace to compare the relationship of Tat'iana and her nurse in Four with that of Juliet and her nurse. The resemblance that I wish to pursue here is to be found less in specific detail than in the general atmosphere of night-time and enchantment which pervades both *Romeo and Juliet* (especially 11.2) and Chapter Three of *Onegin.* In Shakespeare's play, much of the imagery centres on the darkness of night (contrasted with day) and the night-time luminaries, as in Romeo's speech:

> But soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the
> East, and Juliet is the sun!
> Arise, fair sun and kill the envious moon ...
> *(Romeo and Juliet,* 11.2.44-6)

Night-time is the time of love. It is presided over by the moon, the symbol of Diana (and, by neo- Platonic extension, of the Virgin), goddess of chastity. Romeo's reference to the killing of the moon is thus a veiled hint at the loss of Juliet's maidenhead (the penetration and bloodshed of which parallel his running through of Tybalt with his sword).

Night is thus not only a time for love, but also for dark deeds, including death, so that love and death are inextricably entwined. It is this truth that is worked out in Shakespeare's play, as the 'ill-starred' (another reference to night) love leads to Juliet's sleeping with the dead:

> Chain me with roaring bears,
> Or hide me nightly in a charnel house,
> O'ercovered quite with dead men's rattling bones,
> With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls,
> Or bid me go into a new-made grave
> And hide me with a dead man in his tomb ...
>
> (IV.1.80-Sj

Apart from death and love, night connotes dreams and the deception which they wreak - Romeo's 'the flattering truth of sleep' (V.1.1) and the stirrings of the subconscious.

The complex imagery of night-time, enchantment, dreams, and the relatedness of love and death in *Romeo and Juliet* is beyond the scope of this study. The imagery is akin to that in *Midsummer-Night's Dream,* save that there love is related, not to the tragic motif of death, but to the comic 'Circean' theme of the transformation of men into animals by lust (Clayton 1975, endnote 9). Both elements - the Circean and the mortal- are present in *Onegin.* There the word 'circe' is used to describe the 'fashionable coquettes' whose activities adorn their husbands with antlers (of cuckoldry) and who transform their lovers into beasts.2 The death theme is present in the threat that Onegin represents for Lenskii and even for Tat'iana, a threat that is enacted in Tat'iana's dream, and then partially in the reality of the novel as Lenskii is killed by Onegin in the duel. Tat'iana's escape from death at Onegin's hands is the crucial difference between *Onegin* and *Romeo and Juliet.*

The *Romeo and Juliet* echoes in *Onegin,* though present, are somewhat muted, I believe, because they are transmitted through an intermediary source, which is indicated by Pushkin himself in the epigraph to Chapter Five. In Shakespeare's play there are two particularly important features of the imagery which suggest the link to the other source. The first of these is the necessity for the two lovers to consummate their relationship under the cover of night, and the attendant fear of the dawn, which threatens to reveal their love (d. the famous 'aubade,' IlLS). The second, not unrelated feature is the equation of Romeo with death itself, stressed by the numerous references in the play to Juliet sleeping with the dead.

It is my contention that the pre-Romantics appropriated Shakespeare's darkling, nocturnal, and deathly world such as we find in *Romeo and Juliet* and melded it with popular vampire myths to create the balladic theme of the midnight bridegroom that was so influential on Russian poetry in the nineteenth century. The source for the Russian versions of the ballad was Burger's *Lenore* (1773). This was translated by Zhukovskii several times: as *Liudmila* (1808), a periphrastic version, and in a more accurate transposition as *Lenora* (1831) (Nabokov, **III,** 152-3). It was also translated as *Ol'ga* (1815) by Katenin. Although Pushkin was certainly familiar with all these versions, the most important version of the Lenore tale was Zhukovskii's *Svetlana* (1812), in which the process of the 'Russianization' of the ballad was brought to its conclusion.

Although the different versions of the ballad give different emphases, the motifs present in them can be listed, so that it is possible to see the individual divagations from the common stock, and especially to see how closely related to them is *Romeo and Juliet:*

1. The lovers are divided by war or feud.
2. The heroine questions the faithfulness of her beloved.
3. She boldly defies the conventions of the world.
4. The lover comes to her at night.
5. He carries her off to a church and a night-time marriage.
6. He experiences increasing anxiety at the approach of the dawn (usually signalled by the cock crowing).
7. He is discovered to be dead.
8. The tragic outcome is a punishment for the hubris of the heroine's rebellion against the existing world-order.

Romeo and Juliet can be readily seen to be an elaboration of these basic motifs, but with a 'real-world' solution of the 'dead bridegroom' motif. This is achieved by the intrigue of the 'poison,' its unforeseen miscarriage, and by the references to Romeo as 'dead' - first as metaphor, later as unconscious prophecy, as we see in the following passage from Capulet's speech to Paris:

> 0 son, the night before thy wedding day
> Hath death lain with thy wife.
> There she lies, Flower as she was, deflowered by him.
> Death is my son-in-law.
>
> (IV.5.35-8)

In contrast to the 'real-world' motivation of Shakespeare's ending, Burger's is pure fantasy - the groom is dead all along, and he carries

off Lenore to the grave on his steed. Typically for German romanticism, Burger's ballad starts in a 'real,' believable world, and finishes in an incredible, fantasy one. If the comparison of endings is revelatory, so too is Romeo's fear of the dawn - the references to the graying light in the east, the song of the lark, and the cock betraying not only the lover's fear of discovery but the demonic nocturnal visitor's need to return to the other world. The resemblances are so striking that one is tempted to posit medieval, balladic sources as a substratum for the Renaissance facade of the Shakespeare play.

It was Zhukovskii's embroidering of the *Lenore* text in *Svetlana* that proved most inspiring to Pushkin. Zhukovskii, unhappy with the Burger ending in a fantasy world, finds a different solution to the problem of the ending of the tale: the nocturnal visit is a *dream* which Svetlana experiences as she waits at midnight in front of a mirror in which she expects to see, according to ancient custom, the image of her husband. Svetlana's awakening from the dream provides a path back to the real world from the fantasy world of night and death in which Burger had left his heroine, and preserves the strict boundaries between those two worlds, which German romanticism had tended to erase. Although Shakespeare had likewise respected these boundaries, banishing the notion of sleeping with death to the realm of metaphor, he too had left his heroine in the clutches of death. By contrast with both the preceding texts, we find that Zhukovskii's poem has a 'happy ending' - the daytime wedding of Svetlana and her beloved, who returns to her safe and sound across the distances. Lenore's blasphemy and its unfortunate consequences, and Juliet's defiance of the feuds and hatreds of the real world, contrast with the platitudinous world in which all is for the best that we find conjured up in Zhukovskii's moral:

Luchshei drug nam v zhizni sei
Vera v providen'e.
Blag zizhditelia zakon:
Zdes' neschast'e -lzhivyi son;
Schast'e - probuzhden'e.

[The best friend for us *in this life is a belief in providence. Blessed is the creator's law: here .unhappiness is a false dream; happiness is awakening.]*

Zhukovskii here recoils from the criticism of the world and of providence present in *Lenore* and in *Romeo.* The change of ending shows clearly his inacceptance of the romantics' rejection of the world order

and flight into fantasy and demonstrates why Zhukovskii's romanticism is really a bijou-gothic decoration on a sentimental structure.

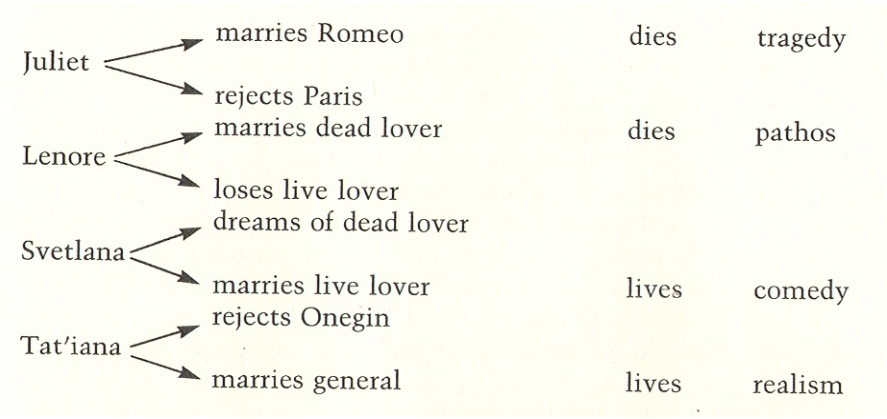
It is the lines immediately following those quoted above which Pushkin uses as the epigraph to Chapter Five:

> 0, ne znai sikh strashnykh snov
> Ty, moia Svetlana!
>
> [0 my *Svetlana, may you not know these terrible dreams!]*

This is one of the many ways that Pushkin signals to the reader that his heroine, at least as she appears in that chapter, is to be read as a sort of pastiche of Zhukovskii's. The resemblance, which would in any case be clear to any Russian reader of the time, is apparent in such matters as the similarity of their names, which rhyme; the fact that, like Svetlana, Tat'iana indulges in midnight soothsaying; like her, she experiences a 'horrible dream' in which her beloved figures, but which has a different content; and like her wakens to reality:' That Pushkin was fascinated by Zhukovskii's *Svetlana*, with its numerous original touches - the mid-winter blizzard setting of the dream, the raven, the candles, etc. - is attested to by the frequent recurrence of motifs from it in Pushkin's work, e.g., 'The Blizzard,' 'The Devils,' *The Captain's Daughter*, and elsewhere (Clayton 1980a).

There is one crucial difference between Zhukovskii's Svetlana and Pushkin's Tat'iana, which illustrates not only literary divergences between the two Russian poets, but philosophical ones too. When the former poet's heroine awakes, it is to be married to the man she loves, i.e., he and her 'nocturnal visitor,' the man she sees in her dream, are one and the same person. In Zhukovskii there is no tragic rift between day and night. In Burger's version, there is, again, only one lover, but he is dead, and carries Lenore off to her death as well. If Zhukovskii's poem has a comic happy ending, Burger's is pathetic. Again there is no dysfunction between day and night - the latter triumphs, just as the former did in Zhukovskii's poem. In *Romeo* and in *On egin* , the night-time lover (Romeo, Onegin) and the day-time suitor (Paris, fat general) are different. Juliet marries her nocturnal lover and dies (tragedy). Tat'iana marries her day-time suitor and lives (realism).

The four different plot patterns could be represented graphically, as in the scheme at the top of page 123. What is important about this scheme is that it shows, firstly, that *Onegin* has to be seen in the matrix of plot possibilities, and that it fulfils the 'fourth alternative'



within them, and, secondly, that Pushkin's solution to the problem of the plot ending, far from replicating that of Zhukovskii's poem, distances itself from it. Tat'iana, although presented as a pastiche of Svetlana, is in fact a critique of Zhukovskii's heroine and of the false conclusion that 'happiness is awakening.' Like Shakespeare, Pushkin knows too well the sweetness of the dreams of love to believe that awakening from them is happiness. In her last speech Tat'iioma tells' Onegin: 'Happiness was so possible, so close.' Unlike Shakespeare, Pushkin shows that the unattainability of happiness need not lead to death, but simply to resignation. Pushkin's world, like Shakespeare's, is a tragic one (in that the irreconcilability of night and day is expressed by the fates of the lovers), but Pushkin's resolution, avoiding Zhukovskii's comedy and Shakespeare's tragedy, is realism - in Pushkin's world, Juliet marries Paris, accepts the inevitability of unhappiness, and is reconciled to it.

Whatever the differences that divide the texts that we have compared here (and I am willing to concede that the comparisons given may appear daring), there is one crucial similarity between the heroines which leads me to speak of the 'Juliet' type with reference to Tat'iana. This is the fact that in all four cases we find a heroine who is .willing to seek out boldly her 'nocturnal lover' and risk her happiness with him. In Juliet's case, it is her willingness to say 'ay,' to consent to the marriage with Romeo, which distinguishes her and seals her fate. For Lenore, the coming of the bridegroom is the fulfilment of her deathwish:

Lisch aus, mein Licht, auf ewig aus!
Stirb hin, stirb hin in Nacht und Graus!

Ohn ihn mag ich auf Erden,
Mag dort nicht selig werden. (Lenore, 1613-14)

Svetlana's 'seeking-out' of her lover takes the form of her midnight vigil (a much less life-or-death enterprise than those of her literary sisters, illustrating, again, Zhukovskii's 'salonization' of the *Lenore* myth). In *Onegin*, Tat'iana's exploit takes the form of the soothsaying that precedes the dream, and of one of the most famous features of the novel - the letter which she writes to Onegin offering herself to him.

It is here necessary to cite a part of the letter in order to examine the precise terms in which Tat'iana addresses Onegin:

Drugoi! ... Net, nikomu na svete
Ne otdala by serdtse ia!
To v vyshnem suzhdeno sovete ...
To volia neba: ia tvoia;
Vsia zhizn' moia byla zalogom
Svidan'ia verno go s toboi; .
Ia znaiu, ty mne poslan bogom,
Do groba ty khranitel' moi ...
Ty v snoviden'iakh mne iavlialsia,
Nezrimyi, ty mne byl uzh mil,
Tvoi chudnyi vzgliad menia tomil,
V dushe tvoi golos razdavalsia
Davno ... net, eto byl ne son!
Ty chut' voshel, ia vmig uznala,
Vsia obomlela, zapylala
I v mysliakh molvila: vot on!
Ne pravda I'? ia tebia slykhala:
Ty govoril so mnoi v tishi,
Kogda ia bednym pomogala,
IIi molitvoi uslazhdala
Tosku volnuemoi dushi?
I veto samoe mgnoven'e
Ne ty li, miloe viden'e,
V prozrachnoi temnote mel'knul,
Priniknul tikho k izgolov'iu?
Ne ty 1', s otradoi i liubov'iu,
Slova nadezhdy mne shepnul?
Kto ty, moi angelli khranitel',
IIi kovarnyi iskusitel':
Moi somnen'ia razreshi.

Byt' mozhet, eto vse pustoe,
Obman neopytnoi dushi!
I suzhdeno sovsem inoe ...
No tak i byt'! Sud'bu moiu
Otnyne ia tebe vruchaiu,
Pered toboiu slezy l'iu,
Tvoei zashchity umoliaiu ...
Voobrazi: ia zdes' odna,
Nikto menia ne ponimaet,
Rassudok moi iznemogaet,
I molcha gibnut' ia dolzhna.
Ia zhdu tebia: edinym vzorom
Nadezhdy serdtsa ozhivi,
11' son tiazhelyi perervi,
Uvy, zasluzhennym ukorom!

[Another! ... No, I would not give my *heart* to *any other in the world! It has been decreed in the loftiest council... It is the will of heaven: I am yours; all* my *life was a gage for the true meeting with you. I know that you have been sent to me by God, to the grave you are* my *guardian angel... You appeared* to *me in* my *dreams, unseen, you were already dear* to *me, your wondrous glance tormented me, I have long heard your voice in* my *heart ... no, it was not a dream! Hardly had you come in, when I in a trice recognized you, became all weak, flushed, and in* my *thoughts said: that's him! Is it not truet Did I not hear you, did you not speak* to *me in the hush, when I helped the poor or sweetened with a prayer the woe of an impassioned hearU And did you not, dear vision, appear in the translucent gloom, quietly lean down to* my *bedt Did you not, with joy and love, whisper words of hope to met Who are you,* my *guardian angel or a cunning tempter: resolve* my *doubts. Perhaps all this is vapid, the illusion of an inexperienced soul! And something quite different has been decreed ... But* so *be it! Henceforth I place* my *fate in your hands, I pour out* my *tears before you, I implore your defence ... Imagine, I am here alone,* no *one understands me,* my *reason is exhausted, and I must perish in silence. I am waiting for you: with a single glance revive the hopes of* my *heart, or interrupt this oppressive dream with a deserved - alas! - reproach. (PSS:* VI: 66-7)]

In perusing Tat'iana's letter, the reader is struck by a number of important features. Firstly, the letter does not have a 'real' addressee. The Onegin to whom she directs the letter is unknown, a phantom. (In the same way the Romeo whom Juliet falls in love with is a shadow, and indeed the midnight bridegrooms of the ballads are all insubstantial, ghostly figures.) Tat'iana's letter is thus a missive into the void. Tat'iana is not even sure that she has seen a real person: 'Perhaps all this is vapid, the illusion of an inexperienced soul!' Secondly (and this is related to the first point), Tat'iana does not know if she is awake, or if the whole matter is a dream: 'You appeared to me in my dreams... dear vision ... interrupt this oppressive dream ...' The last sentence is particularly important, since it confirms again that Tat'iana does not even know if she is asleep or awake (the words *tiazhelyi son* 'oppressive dream' - may also mean 'deep sleep'). (Compare Burger: 'Schlafst, Liebchen, oder wachst du?')

In short, the letter is a description of the 'first' Tat'iana - an enchanted sleeper, dreaming the oppressive dreams of adolescence. Not for nothing does Monsieur Triquet address to her the lines: 'Reveillezvous, belle endormie,' for she is indeed a 'sleeping beauty.'

A third aspect of the lines quoted above which deserves comment is the emphasis on fate: Tat'iana's surrender to Onegin is, she tells him, 'the will of heaven.' The role of destiny in the life of the heroine who surrenders to her midnight lover is so striking that I have included it in the list of motifs given above. The 'fate' theme in *Romeo and Juliet,* for example, is well attested to in the criticalliterature.4 In *Lenore,* it is the heroine's belief that God has turned against her that provokes her to blasphemy. In the case of Svetlana, the notion of fate is made brilliantly tangible in the form of the soothsaying. It is, of course, 'fate' which decides who will be the object of a girl's love (and whether he will love her). Fate is the root cause of the ties that bind each heroine and produce the various results in the life of each. Distinctive in the case of Tat'iana (as opposed, for example, to Lenore) is her acquiescence in her fate: 'Henceforth I place my fate in your hands.' Her passivity in the face of destiny contrasts not only with Lenore but also with Juliet, who is far from passive in her attempts to manipulate her fate. In this perspective, Tat'iana's letter is an act of supreme daring, her one thrust against her milieu, placing her in the company of the other literary heroines with whom we have compared her.

The other, principal 'moment' in *Onegin* that links Tat'iana with Svetlana and Juliet is, of course, Tat'iana's dream. This episode is

saturated with folkloristic material, literary reminiscences, and original 'Pushkinian' motifs. The balladistic content is made clear by Lotman in his discussion of the folklore of Russian fortune-telling:

> First of all one must point out that fortune-telling 'by dream' is a dangerous activity typical of Yuletide fortune-telling during which the fortune-teller enters into contact with the evil one. When undertaking such fortune-telling, girls take off their crosses and belts (the belt being the an~ient pagan symbol of the protective circle). ... fortune-telling by dream takes place in an atmosphere of fear typical of all ritual contact with the evil one. The evil world is the reverse of the everyday one, and, since the marriage ritual to a large extent copies in a mirror-like, inverted fashion the burial ceremony, in enchanted fortune-telling the bridegroom is frequently replaced with a dead man or the devil. Such an interweaving of folkloristic elements in the figure of the Yuletide 'fated one' (husband) became in Tat'iana's consciousness consonant with the 'demonic' image of Onegin the vampire and Melmoth created by the action of the Romantic 'fictions' of the 'Britannic muse.' (Lotman 1980, 266-7 *j* see also 270-4)

The difference between the dream of Svetlana and that of Tat'iana is that the latter sees, not one husband, but two: the 'desired' one Onegin - who takes a demonic form, and the 'fated' one - the husband of an arranged marriage, represented symbolically by the bear from which she runs.s Neither is dead, but Onegin may be 'read' as the evil one, and certainly assumes such an aspect in the dream, where he is the master of the 'witches' sabbath.'

In introducing this discussion of the literary quotations associated with Tat'iana and hinting at the meaning of her character, I pointed out that literary allusions are generally, in *Onegin* (and perhaps also in the whole of Pushkin's oeuvre), combined in a startling, even paradoxical way. Thus, though I have stressed the very real parallels between *Onegin* and the balladic plot structure, there are other elements of the plot which do not fit. Onegin, for example, although Tat'iana expects him to play the role of demonic nocturnal lover, carrying her off to a midnight wedding (as in 'The Blizzard'), declines the 'role/ so that this plot structure is frustrated (and realized only in her dream), being 'deformed' by being welded to other plot structures with other expectations. Each 'role' (with the plot expectations it evokes) is in

ironic juxtaposition to some other, unrelated element in a amalgam of 'quotations' from literature.

To this point the discussion has centred on what I have called the 'first Tat'iana' - the young romantic provincial girl who assumes the 'role' of the romantic heroine. To her, as I have suggested, we must oppose 'another Tat'iana' - again an unexpected juxtaposition of roles quoted from different literatures. The second Tat'iana might be called 'Princess N/ since the most important fact about her is that she is married to a man whose name the author judges it unnecessary for us to know (or too significant for him to lift the 'veil of secrecy'). She is the beautiful wife of a fat general, the queen of Petersburg society, and the person with whom Onegin falls in love. With this second Tat'iana, who is condemned to share the same character as the first, comes a new set of literary allusions. These have their source, not in Shakespeare and the Romantic balladic tradition, but in the French prose novel. There is, for example, more than a trace in Tat'iana of the Countess of Toumevel as she defends her chastity against the onslaughts of the Viscount of Valmont in Choderlos de Lados's *Les Liaisons dangereuses.* There is, indeed, much about *Onegin* which shows that it is written in the idiom of the French novel - the intimacy of the narrative, the character of Onegin himself, which owes much to the heroes of French fiction, the thematic importance of seduction and adultery, and the vestigial traces of the epistolary tradition.6

In particular, however, *Onegin* deserves to be discussed in relation to one French novel that has had very little attention in Pushkin studies, although it offers some very interesting parallels with Pushkin's novel in verse, namely *La Princesse de Cleves* (1678), by Madame de Lafayette. In this novel we find a beautiful young woman who is married to the Prince de Cleves, a man whom she respects but does not love. Pushkin does not give us the details of Tat'iana's marriage, save in a few laconic words she addresses to Onegin:

Neostorozhno,
Byt' mozhet, postupila ia:
Menia s slezami zaklinanii
Molila mat'; dlia bednoi Tani
Vse byli zhrebii ravny ...
. Ia vyshla zamuzh.

[Perhaps I acted carelessly: my *mother begged me with tears of supplication; all fates were equal for poor Tania ... I married.*
(Eight: XLVII: 3-8)]

Pushkin does not need to add any detail to this laconic description of the *mariage de convenance,* since his readers would already be familiar with such matters from their reading of French novels:

> Des Ie lendemain, ce prince fit parler a Mme de Chartresj elle rec;ut la proposition qu'on lui faisait et ne craignit point de donner a sa fille un mari qu'elle ne put aimer en lui donnant Ie prince de Cleves. Les articles furent *conclusj* on parla au . roi, et ce mariage fut su de tout Ie monde. *(La Princesse de Cleves,* 50)

After her marriage, Mme de Cleves is pursued by, and falls in love with, the handsome M. de Nemours in a way that reminds us of Onegin's pursuit of Princess N. M. de Nemours's nocturnal penetrations of his quarry's garden at Coulommiers have more than a slight echo of the night-time lover motif. However, the crucial resemblance to *Onegin* comes at the end of the novel. With M. de Cleves dead, the way is now apparently clear for M. de Nemours and Mme de Cleves to consummate their love. In a final interview between them that is surely a precursor of the Tat'iana/Onegin scene in Chapter Eight, the Princesse de Cleves sets out the moral reason that motivates her to reject him:

> I1 n'est que trop veritable que vous etes cause de la mort de M. de Cleves; les soupc;ons que lui a donnes votre conduite inconsideree lui ont coute la vie, comme si vous la lui aviez otee de vos propres mains. Voyez ce que je devrais faire, si vous en etiez venus ensemble aces extremites, et que Ie meme malheur en fut arrive. Je sais bien que ce n'est pas la meme chose a l'egard du *mondej* mais au mien il n'y a aucune difference, puisque je sais que c'est par vous qu'il est mort et que c'est a cause de moi. (172)

These moral considerations are similar to those in *Romeo and Juliet,* in which Juliet's love for Romeo is rendered tragic by the fact of Tybalt's death at Romeo's hands, and in *Onegin,* in which Tat'iana's 'brother' Lenskii is killed by Onegin in the duel. In each case someone close to the heroine is killed by the hero. Tat'iana has too much delicacy to bring up this point in the final conversation with Onegin, although it is one of the most powerful reproaches she could have made. It is, however, adumbrated at other points in the novel. 7

To the principal moral objection to her marriage to M. de Nemours, the Princesse adds another, pragmatic or realistic one:

> Mais les hommes conservent-ils de la passion dans ces engagements eternels? Dois-je esperer un miracle en ma faveur et puis-je me mettre en etat de voir certainement finir cette passion dont je ferais toute ma felicite? M. de Clevesetait peutetre l'unique homme du monde capable de conserver de l'amour dans Ie mariage. Ma destinee n'a pas voulu que j'aie pu profiter de ce bonheur; peut-etre aussi que sa passion n'avait subsiste que parce qu'il n'en aurait pas trouve en moi. (173)

The Princesse brings in the paradoxical fact that love and a prolonged relationship, such as marriage, are two incompatible things - the realization of one destroys the other. Tat'iana, too, in rather similar terms, sees the dangers of a renewed relationship with Onegin, although her view is modified because of her marriage and the consequent results of an adulterous relationship:

> Chto zh nyne
> Menia presleduete vy?
> Ne potomu I', chto moi pozor
> Teper' by vsemi byl zamechen,
> I mog by v obshchestve prinest'
> Vam soblasnitel'nuiu chest'?
>
> *[Why do you pursue me now? ... Is it not because* my *shame would be noticed by all and could bring you a tempting honour in society?* (Eight: XLIV: 3-4, 11-14)]

It is because of the unrealizable nature of their love, and because they wish to preserve that love intact, that both heroines reject the advances of the men they love and to whom they even confess their feelings.

Tat'iana, then, makes the transition in the novel from young girl seeking out happiness in love to mature woman rejecting the possibility of that happiness - from Juliet to the Princesse de Cleves. It would not, however, be correct to see the two literary characters which I have proposed as emblems of the two states in Tat'iana's development as opposites. Rather, they are two sides of the same coin, or two developmental possibilities out of one situation. Again, it is fate which is to blame for the particular predicament in which each heroine finds herself at the end:

> - Pourquoi faut-il, s'ecria-t-elle, que je vous puisse accuser de la mort de M. de Cleves? Que n'ai-je commence a vous connaitre depuis que je suis libre, oupourquoi ne vous ai-je pas connu devant que d'etre engagee? Pourquoi la destinee nous separe-t-elle par un obstacle si invincible? (175)

Again, the different reactions of our four heroines towards fate are nuanced. In Tat'iana's case, as in that of the Princesse, the attitude in the face of the vagaries of life is acceptance of what cannot be changed and willingness to suffer. It is this resignation -that is the source of their moral superiority over the other two heroines, Lenore and Juliet, who are destroyed for their impatience. Both Tat'iana and the Princesse grow, change, and become better people in the course of the novelistic events to which they are subjected.

At this point it is appropriate to consider the relationship of Tat'iana to another crucial character in the structure of the novel, namely her sister Ol'ga, since it is clear that their roles are complementary and that Ol'ga's main function is to serve as a conventional foil for her remarkable sister. The 'conventionality' *(uslovnost')* of Ol'ga's character is stressed by the author, who seems not at all concerned to imbue her with the characteristics of real life:

> Vsegda skromna, vsegda poslushna,
> Vsegda kak utro vesela,
> Kak zhizn' poeta prostodushna,
> Kak potsalui liubvi mila,
> Glaza kak nebo golubye,
> Ulybka, lokony l'nianye,
> Dvizhen'ia, golos, legkoi stan,
> Vse v Ol'ge ... No liuboi roman
> Voz'mite i naidete verno
> Ee portret
>
> *[Always modest, always obedient, always as merry as the morning, as simple-minded as the life of a poet, as darling as the kiss of love, with eyes as blue as the sky; her smile, her flaxen locks, her movements, vqice, slender form, everything in Ol'ga ... but take any novel and you'll surely find her portrait.* (Two: XXIII: 1-10)]

Ol'ga, the poet seems to be telling us, is not a character but a cliche, and the innocent reader is at first inclined to accept this apparent

judgment and pass on, as does the author himself, and look at Tat'iana. There is, however, a hint in the description which should give the attentive reader pause: Ol'ga, we read, is as simple *as the life of a poet.* This is an evident ironic barb, since we suspect that the life of a poet like Lenskii may be very simple, but the life of a poet like Pushkin can be very complicated indeed. The apparent conglomeration of cliches that serves to describe Ol'ga thus contains a hint at hidden depths which we would do well to heed.

That Ol'ga is not what she appears to be, especially to her enamoured Lenskii, is further stressed by the ironic tone which the author adopts when describing the young poet's love for her:

> Akh, on liubil, bk v nashi leta Uzhe
> ne liubiati bk odna Bezumnaia dusha
> poeta Eshche liubit' osuzhdena
>
> *[Alack, he loved as in our years no one loves any longer; as only the foolish soul of the poet is any longer fated to love* (Two: XX: 1-4)]

The inference is clear: Lenskii's love, like his verse, is purely conventional, and does not perceive the object of the poet's desire as she really is. In other words, Pushkinis mocking the whole convention of a real person as the muse to whom a poet dedicates his verse:

> I vpriam, blazhen liubovnik skromnyi,
> Chitaiushchii mechty svoi
> Predmetu pesen i liubvi,
> Krasavitse priiatno-tomnoi!
> Blazhen ... khot', mozhet byt', ona
> Sovsem inym razvlechena.
>
> *[And indeed, blessed is the modest swain who reads his dreamings to the object of his poems and his love, a pleasantly langourous beauty! Blessed ... although perhaps she has something totally different in mind.* (Four: XXXIV: 9-14)]

Such hints that Ol'ga is not the chaste, pure-minded young virgin of Lenskii's imaginings (he leaves out of a novel he is reading her several pages which might prove embarrassing) culminate in an easily perceivable phallic quibble which serves to mock the muse convention:

Ne madrigaly Lenskoi pishet
V al'bome Ol'gi molodoi;
Ego pero liubov'iu dyshet,
Ne khladno bleshchet ostrotoi

[It js *not madhgals whkh Lenskjj wrjtes jn the album of young Ol'ga; hjs pen breathes love, and does not coldly sparkle wjth wjt* (Four: XXXI: 1-4)]

Pushkin leaves us in the dark about the true state of Ol'ga's amours. The reader is led to wonder, however, at the blush that covers Ol'ga's face when she runs into Tat'iana's room after the night-time soothsaying 'more crimson than the Northern dawn' (Five: XXI: 11). Like Tat'iana, Ol'ga has been expecting to see her bridegroom in her dream.s There is, likewise, fire in her eyes when she is married to the uhlan:

Moi bednyi Lenskoi! iznyvaia,
Ne dolgo plakala ona.
Uvy! nevesta molodaia
Svoei pechali neverna.
Drugoi uvlek ee vniman'e,
Drugoi uspel ee stradan'e
Liubovnoi lest'iu usypit',
Ulan umel ee plenit',
Ulan liubim ee dushoiu...
I vot uzh s nim pred altarem ana
stydlivo pod ventsom
Stoit s ponikshei golovoiu,
S ognem v potuplennykh ochakh,
S ulybkoi legkoi na ustakh.

[My poor LenskW pjnjng, she dM not weep long. Alas! the young brMe js *unfajthful to her sadness. Another has attracted her attenUon, another was able to quell her sufferjng wjth the flattery of love, an uhlan was able to capUvate her, an uhlan* js *loved by her soul... and there she stands wjth hjm already before the altar, her heqd bowed chastely beneath the wreath, wjth fire jn her downcast eyes and a hght smne on her hps.* (Seven: X: 1-14)]

The reader is left to speculate on these hints, since there is no 'truth' outside the lightly sketched detail of Ol'ga's 'character.' She does not

exist, and thus no hypothesis has more or less validity than any other, given the 'stylized' *(uslovnyi)* nature of Pushkin's text, the ambiguity of which permits a variety of interpretations.

I have already suggested that Tat'iana is associated in the poem with Diana, goddess of chastity and the hunt, and that this association is reinforced by the frequent mention of the moon in association with Tat'iana (the moon being, as I have said, the emblem of Diana and, in baroque parallels between Hellenic and Christian myth, of the Virgin). The similes that are applied to Tat'iana are most often those of the wild fauna of the forest, a deer or a tremulous hare hiding from the hunter, a fact which reinforces the Dianan aura around her. For Ol'ga, the corresponding image is that of a flower - visited by every passing moth or bee, or nibbled at by the worm (Clayton 1975, 56-9). The classical figure with which Ol'ga'seems to be associated is not Diana, but Helen of Troy, the beautiful adulteress, as is suggested by the following lines from Chapter Five, dropped from the final version:

No Tania (prisiagnu) milei
Eleny pakostnoi tvoei

Nikto i sporit' tut ne stanet
Khot' za Elenu Menelai
100 let eshche ne perestanet
Kaznit' Frigiiskoi bednyi krai,
Khot' v krug pochtennogo Priama
Sobran'e starikov Pergama
Ee zavidia, vnov' reshit:
Prav Menelai, i prav Parid.
Chto zh do srazhenii, to nemnogo
Ia poproshu vas podozhdat'
Izvol'te dalee chitat'
Nachala ne sudite strogo Srazhen'e budet.

[But Tania (1 *swear) is more charming than your disgusting Helen.* No *one will even argue with this, even though because of Helen Menelaus will not stop for a hundred years yet* to *punish the poor Phrygian land, even though around the respected Priam the council of elders of Pergamon, seeing her, will decide again: Menelaus is right, and Paris is right. As for battles,* 1 *will beg you to wait just a little: please read on:*

do not judge too *strictly at the beginning; there'll be a battle.* (Five: XXVII: 13-14; XXVIII: 1-13; *PSS,* VI, 609)1

The 'battle' that ensues is, of course, that between Onegin and Lenskii, and Ol'ga is the 'adulteress' who is the *casus belli,* just as Helen is in the *Iliad.* The comparison of the squalid duel to the mighty battles of the ancient epic is a typical burlesque technique (the old-fashioned nature of which probably induced Pushkin to delete these rather awkward lines). They serve to fix Ol'ga in our minds as a 'Helen,' an adulteress who is the total antithesis of the Diana/Virgin figure of Tat'iana (although it should be noted that a possible reason for their omission in the final text is that they could make the character of Ql'ga too explicit). With this in mind we can appreciate the irony of Onegin's comparison of Ol'ga to a Van Dyck Madonna:

Ia vybral by druguiu,
Kogda b ia byl kak ty poet.
V chertakh u Ol'gi zhizni net.
Toch'-v-toch' v Vandikovoi Madone:
Krugla, krasna litsom ona,
Kak eta glupaia luna
Na etom glupom nebosklone.

[I would choose the other if I were a poet like you. There is no life in Ol'ga's features. Exactly as in a Van Dyck Madonna: she's round and red in the face like that stupid moon on that stupid horizon. (Three: V: 6-12)]

Onegin's mockery of Ol'ga echoes that of Pushkin: Ol'ga is a mass of cliches: a blonde, blue-eyed, ruddy-complexioned Helen masquerading as a Madonna.

Ol'ga's role is thus to be a foil, a counterpoint to Tat'iana - the petty flirt or adulteress whose peccadilloes serve to underline Tat'iana's constancy and purity. Ol'ga is even, at the ball at least, the rival of Tat'iana for Onegin's attentions. That she is successful to some degree is less the result of her beauty than the expression of the fact that Onegin is not a poet, and therefore, it is suggested, incapable of love.9 Since it is precisely love which Tat'iana is offering, he is more likely to choose a dalliance with her sister, whose changeable affections indicate no lasting consequences (except, of course, Lenskii's death, which none could foresee).

Beyond the point-counterpoint relationship of Tat'iana and Ol'ga, we can discern in the other female characters, however lightly drawn, a distinct ordering by Pushkin in terms of their fidelity. In her 'Russianness' and her constancy, Tat'iana is, as the author-narrator puts it, his 'faithful ideal' (Eight: L: 2). She is, however, not the only figure whom he evaluates positively: Tat'iana's nurse is projected in an equally positive light; indeed, there is some parallel to be discerned between their different fates. She represents the traditional Russian virtues of obedience, and, significantly, sees the word 'love' as a devilish, alien concept, so that she is moved to cross Tat'iana when the latter uses it as if she had been possessed by an unclean spirit. 'Love' - the idea of the selection by the individual of his/her sexual mate - was an important manifestation of imported manners and contrasted with the traditional institution of the arranged marriage. As a revolt against authority, it had connotations of the evil or devilish. Thus the obedience to parental will which Tat'iana shows in Seven and Eight, and her respect for her husband and her marriage vows thereafter, can be read as the manifestation of her rejection of the foreign. Although noble society insisted on the virginity (or at least the good reputation) of the bride, it tolerated, and even expected, extra-marital affairs (on the model of the French novel). Hence, Tat'iana's refusal of an affair was uncharacteristic, a sign of her 'Russianness' (and presumably of the influence of the old nurse).10

To some extent Tat'iana's mother can possibly be included in the group of women whom Pushkin evaluates positively: she is forced to give up 'Grandison' for Dmitrii Larin. She is, as it were, a parody of her daughter: carried away by literary stereotypes, then accepting of her fate (perhaps only because her wise husband has carted her off to the country), but still described with much irony - her French fashions, her domination of the household.

Ol'ga, by contrast, is in the other camp, as we have seen. She shades into the mass of coquettes who inhabit the balls and the 'routs' of society and who threaten their husbands with the horns of cuckoldry and death in the duel. Pushkin reserves the terms *izmennitsa* and *tsirtseia* for such females. The second word is Homeric, and suggests the turning of men into animals through sexual passion. The monsters who inhabit Tat'iana's dream are precisely such victims of the 'circes' of society. 11 The presence of such women in the text, and the suggestion that such behaviour is the norm, leads us to appreciate Tat'iana's worth and difference even more.

Pushkin's predilection for Tat'iana is an expression of his distaste

for these society traitresses. His descriptions of society life and mores are filled with considerable venom, e.g., the satirical portraits of the *habitues* of the rout in Chapter Eight. Tat'iana - the pale chaste heroine who wanders the woods beneath the rays of Diana and passes unscathed through the horrors of society - is the fulfilment of the poet's search in womankind for a woman who is both ideal and faithful.

Drawing by Pushkin on a rough draft of Tat'iana's letter. 1824