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**MARINA TSVETAeva'S MEMOIR ON MAKSIMILIAN VOLOSHIN
IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL
TRENDS OF THE 1910S-1930S**

Marina Tsvetaeva's prose works of the 1930s are usually described as elegiac, nostalgic and introspective. Many scholars believe that Tsvetaeva wrote her memoirs with the view either to putting into perspective her childhood and family background, or commemorating her deceased friends and fellow writers. According to Simon Karlinsky, Tsvetaeva's prose exemplifies well the prose of a poet: not only because it was written by a poet, but because Tsvetaeva's prose is characterised by consistent employment of the lexicon, the stylistic and structural devices incorporated into her verse. Karlinsky also points out that Tsvetaeva's autobiographical writing contains "verbal effects that makes one think of musical or architectural procedures rather than of literary usage".¹ Viewed in this light, Tsvetaeva's prose can be readily compared to the ornamental fiction penned by writers of the 1910s-20s including Andrei Belyi and Aleksei Remizov. The term Russian ornamental prose is often applied to some Soviet writers of the 1920s, yet Tsvetaeva's friend Prince Sviatopolk-Mirskii saw Nikolai Gogol, Nikolai Leskov and Bely as precursors of this literary phenomenon. All these writers mentioned by Mirskii as precursors of ornamental fiction were among the favorite authors of Tsvetaeva: her own stylistic experiments emulated effectively the interest in word-consciousness found in the works of Gogol, Leskov and Belyi. In his 1926 book, Mirskii identifies word-consciousness as the most essential feature of ornamental prose and elucidates thus on the gripping quality of this type of writing: "It keeps the reader's attention to every small detail: to the words, to their sounds, and to the rhythm".² According to Viktor Goffman, the main feature of ornamental prose is its orientation towards stylistic effects, to the extent that "the style outdistances the plot" and acquires an independent value because it "subordinates to itself

¹ Karlinsky, Simon. *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 218-219.

² Mirsky, D.S. *A History of Russian Literature*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966, 468.

plot dynamics”.³ The result of the style’s prominence is that “the centre of gravity shifts to a perceptibility of the literary work as such”.⁴

Gary L. Browning develops Goffman’s views further, and identifies the unusual treatment of characters as another important aspect prevalent in Russian ornamental prose: “In depicting characters, the Ornamentalists commonly choose the romantic, eccentric and exotic rather than the typical”.⁵ The latter trend is especially strongly felt in Tsvetaeva’s mnemonic writing about Maksimilian Voloshin, whom she presents as one of the leading figures of the revival of Hellenism in Russia: he is depicted as the exotic Other of Russian late imperial culture who saw modernist aesthetic experiments as a counter-cultural manifestation of the transnational outlook capable of transgressing both violence and its naturalistic representation in Russian visual arts and print media. As will be discussed below, Voloshin associated the widespread depiction of violence in Russian culture, and the traumatic experiences of reader and audience, with the popularity of naturalism and realism in that period of historical turmoil and with the development of cinema that blurred the boundary between life and art.

In contrast with naturalist authors, ornamentalist writers have no such negative impact upon the reader. They usually “neither elaborate nor appear to possess an integrated philosophy of life”: they tend to focus on the message that is “preeminently aesthetic” and “largely stylistic”.⁶ Furthermore, as with Viktor Zhirmunskii finding ornamental prose comparable to poetry for its emphasis on rhythm, syntactic parallelism, alliteration and repetition⁷, we see mixed responses to Tsvetaeva’s 1930s essays and stories in Russian émigré criticism because many Russian émigré editors and critics found her prose works difficult to follow. Unfortunately, leading representatives of Russian émigré literary circles were more concerned with the revival of the Russian nineteenth-century realist tradition, utilitarian approaches to literature and ideological wars between Soviet Union and Russian émigré community. Tsvetaeva’s letter to Anna Teskova (16 October 1932) is a good illustration of the above-mentioned pattern. In the letter Tsvetaeva informs Teskova that her essay about Voloshin contains many polemical points with Russian émigré critics and editors. In Tsvetaeva’s view, they disliked Voloshin for his lack of hatred toward Soviet Russia.⁸ Her essay “Art in the Light of Conscience” (*Iskusstvo pri svete sovesti*, 1931 – published in 1932)

³ Goffman, Viktor. *Fol’klornyi skaz Dalia*, in Eikhenbaum, B.M., editor. *Russkaia proza. Sbornik statei*. Leningrad: Voprosy poetiki, 1926, 232-262, 232.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Browning, Gary L. “Russian Ornamental Prose”, *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Volume 23, No.3, Autumn 1979, 346-352, 347.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Zhirmunskii, Viktor. “O ritmicheskoi proze”, *Russkaia literature*, No.4, April 1966, 103-115, 107.

⁸ Tsvetaeva, Marina. *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh. Tom vtoroi: Proza*, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literature, 1984, 469.

also takes polemical issue with critics of Aleksandr Blok's long poem "The Twelve" (*Dvenadsat'*, 1918) in which Blok welcomes revolutionary changes in Russia and alludes to how the poet's role in new developments parallels that of a spiritual leader and martyr. Yet Tsvetaeva's message, that Blok's right to proclaim his poetic truth is more valuable than official historical accounts of the revolutionary events, was not welcomed by many leading critics in Paris.

Thus, Georgii Adamovich's review of Tsvetaeva's essay "Art in the Light of Conscience" reports the essay's main message as diffused, such that the reader would be learning nothing of art, artistic consciousness or art in the light of conscience.⁹ It seems that other readers were also annoyed by the predominance of style over semantic meaning in that essay by Tsvetaeva: it was severely censored by Vadim Rudnev, the editor of *Contemporary Annals*, whose published version of it contains just half of Tsvetaeva's original text.¹⁰ According to Karlinsky, Rudnev and many other editors of leading émigré journals were representatives of the pre-revolutionary liberal intelligentsia, who preferred the radical utilitarianism found in the works of Vissarion Belinskii and Nikolai Chernyshevskii over the artistic experiments of Russian Symbolists and Sergei Diaghilev. Needless to say, Tsvetaeva was not the sole object of their attacks: for example, due to severe criticism by Russian émigré editors of the satirical portrayal of Chernyshevskii in Vladimir Nabokov's novel *The Gift* (*Dar*), Nabokov's editors sought the deletion of one chapter from the novel before its publication.¹¹

Notwithstanding disagreement with Ute Stock's observation that Tsvetaeva's essay "Art in the Light of Conscience" constitutes an attempt to clarify her "own conception of art, both for herself and for her public",¹² it is worth mentioning that Tsvetaeva planned to include a separate chapter titled "Poet and Time" (*Poet i vremia*) in her essay on art and conscience in order to communicate to the reader her unique vision of temporality and contemporaneity. She read the chapter "Poet and Time" to a Russian émigré audience in Paris on 27 January 1932. In her letter to Teskova (1 January 1932) Tsvetaeva informs her friend of the forthcoming reading of her chapter that was supposed to earn her 300 francs. In this letter, Tsvetaeva stresses how she feels displaced both in Russia and in France: "I do not belong to the contemporary world" ("v sovremennosti mne

⁹ Adamovich, G. "Retsenziia: *Sovremennye zapiski*, kniga 51. [Otryvok]", in Mnukhin, L.A., editor. *Marina Tsvetaeva v kritike sovremennikov. V dvukh tomakh. Tom 1: Rodstvo i chuzhdost'*, Moscow: Agraf, 2003, 409-411, 411.

¹⁰ Karlinsky, op.cit., 220.

¹¹ Ibid., 220-21.

¹² Stock, Ute. *The Ethics of the Poet: Marina Tsvetaeva's Art in the Light of Conscience*, Leeds: Maney Publishing for the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2005, 83.

mesta net").¹³ It is clear that a main concern of Tsvetaeva in the 1930s was the representation of time and the construction of her own version of historical truth in memoirs, fiction and autobiographical writings. For example, in her 1933 story "House at Old Pimen" (Dom u starogo Pimena), and in her 1936 essay "Pushkin and Pugachev", Tsvetaeva juxtaposes the notion of poetic truth (exemplified by Pushkin's works and her own writings) both with the mnemonic rendering of the past by various witnesses of important historical events and with the mainstream versions of historical developments presented in historical textbooks and documents. Tsvetaeva's "House at Old Pimen" is a story that talks about her childhood and extensively about her grandfather Dmitrii Ivanovich Ilovaiskii (1832-1921, a prominent Russian historian of the pre-revolutionary period). Into this story Tsvetaeva inserts a quote from Ivan Turgenev's prose poem "How good and how fresh the roses were..." ("Kak khoroshi, kak svezhi byli rozy...") with the view to invoke the presence of phantom and spectral in the narration that points to unveiling a hidden space identifiable as the realm of the uncanny. In his apt summary of different theoretical approaches to the uncanny, David Kennedy writes: "For Heidegger, the uncanny is the empty space produced by a loss of faith in divine images, a space that is neither God's nor man's. Consequently, religious sense is transformed into myth, magic and supernatural. For Freud, the uncanny involves uncovering what is usually kept hidden with the result that everyday is radically defamiliarised. Jackson [...] draws on the work of H el ene Cixous to argue that the uncanny represents our terror at the possibility of non-being and non-signification".¹⁴ Below I would like to propose a new interpretation of Tsvetaeva's 1932 autobiographical elegiac story "The Living about the Living" (Zhivoe o zhivom), in the light of the theoretical approaches mentioned above. Namely, that they view modern manifestations of mourning as unfinishable conversation with the past and as an embodiment of a literature of desire that oscillates between the urge to tell of desire and the urge to participate in activity simulating experience of what is lost, thereby destabilising the steadiness of the real.

The simultaneity of the real and the past conflating with an uncanny imaginary space that is imbued with elegiac overtones can be only achieved through construction of temporal categories in the vein of Bergsonian time. This creates the lack of consolation and sense of unambiguous continuity as emphasised by the title of Tsvetaeva's essay on Voloshin – "The Living about the Living". The title invokes the notion of duration described in Bergson's 1888 essay *Time and Free Will* as the form arising from our evolving consciousness, and which states: "when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present

¹³ Tsvetaeva, M.I. *Sobranie sochinenii v 7 tomakh*, [edited by A. Saakiantz and L. Mnukhin], Moscow: Ellis Lak, 1994-1997, volume 6, 1995, 398.

¹⁴ Kennedy, David. *Elegy*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007, 61.

state from its former states".¹⁵ Bergson's notion of duration is comparable to the stream of consciousness found in many Russian and European modernist works, especially because of Bergson's advocacy of the notion of fundamental self. According to Bergson, it is attainable through self-analysis and intuitive grasp of the flow of inner duration (psychological time). Bergson writes: "[...] our perceptions, sensations, ideas occur under two aspects: the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility or fit it into its common-place forms without making it into public property".¹⁶

The latter statement is well exemplified by Tsvetaeva's 1923 cycle of poems "Poets" (Poety), in which poets are compared to trains that people constantly miss, implying thereby that poets – who are driven by intuitive cognition of life that cannot be adequately verbalised – possess a sense of poetic truth that differs from the linear perception of time. Tsvetaeva's vision of poetic truth is entwined with the notion of a temporality cognised both by intuitive and analytical methods of perception of reality. Like Bergson, who links the ability to grasp one's own duration to the notion of freedom and constant becoming, Tsvetaeva links creativity, displacement and simultaneity to poets' ability to cognise life in a synthesising way. Furthermore she firmly links, but non-linearly, poetry with intuitive cognition of life and time. Tsvetaeva's statement "Time! I'm going to escape you" – inserted into her 1923 poem "Praise to Time" (Khvala vremeni) – underscores her clear opposition to the nineteenth-century conception of time as a measurable entity subordinated to linear event progression. By contrast, Tsvetaeva in her 1923 poems embraces the notion of psychological time, the time of one's inner life, the time that is always in flux and changing. It resists mathematical analysis and empiricist approaches to life based on the observation of external phenomena. In "The Living about the Living", Tsvetaeva depicts Voloshin as a true adherent of Bergson's ideas who taught her and her fellow writers to appreciate intuition as a tool enabling individuals to grasp their inner flow of time (psychological time), attaining thereby a true knowledge of themselves and a sense of spiritual harmony.

According to Hilary Fink's pioneering study on the reception of Bergson's ideas in Russia, "the most important reason for Bergson's popularity in Russia in the early 20th century was that Bergson's pronouncements on the active role of artistic intuition in the process of life-creation and participation in existence satisfied the Russian modernist desire to unite word and world".¹⁷ Other scholars noted the impact of Bergson's ideas on Russian modernist poetry and prose.

¹⁵ Bergson Henri. "Time and Free Will: The Idea of Duration", *Key Writings*, [Edited by Keith Ansell Pearson], New York, London: Continuum, 49-80, 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁷ Fink, Hilary. *Bergson and Russian Modernism: 1910-1930*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999, xv.

In Hansen-Löve's opinion, Konstantin Bal'mont's notion of hypnotic and magical powers of poetry and Belyi's preoccupation with the magic effects of sound and rhythm of poetry on its listeners derive directly from Bergson's theoretical statement on the emotional effect of the imaginary reality created by authors.¹⁸ It should be noted here that both Bal'mont and Belyi are included in Tsvetaeva's personal canon, but not Russian Symbolist poet Valerii Briusov whom Tsvetaeva saw as an advocate of positivist thought. Tsvetaeva saw Briusov not as a modern poet capable of a new synthesising vision of life, but as a mouthpiece for scientific truths and positivist thinking: his outlook was incompatible with the evolutionary model of life based on the notion of interconnectedness and organicist view of social space. Hence Tsvetaeva's 1925 essay about him labels Briusov as a hero of labour, depicting Briusov as a craftsman who lacks intuitive perception of the flow of life.

Renate Lachmann, in her study on the use of memory in Russian literature, analyses how Bergson's vision of memory and evolution shaped the organicist model of culture advocated by Russian Acmeists.¹⁹ The model can be easily applied to Tsvetaeva, because her view of culture as continuously evolving emphasised memory's role in creative evolution and promoted the recurrence of architectonic motifs. Tsvetaeva's model of cultural evolution compares with Osip Mandelshtam's vision of music as the representation of dynamic duration through architectonic motifs (as expressed in his book *Stone*). Finally, one may mention striking similarities between Tsvetaeva's and Zinaida Hippus's understanding of love and time. As Fink notes, Hippus "applies the principles of ceaseless flow and indivisibility that characterises Bergsonian indivisibility to her own metaphysics of love and time".²⁰ The same can be said about Tsvetaeva's metaphysics of love and time, as conveyed in "The Living about the Living" where she proclaims her love for Voloshin as a special form of love based on their spiritual union and common belief in spiritual immortality: in her view, Voloshin's body and soul were inseparable from the realm of the mythopoic.

According to various critics, Bergson "was preparing the way for a global approach to the study of memory as a process involving various regions of the brain"; he also proposed that "certain memories can be revived by the stimulus of even an emotion" and "acknowledged the existence of unconscious memory in certain dream states".²¹ In light of Bergson's vision of mnemonic processes

¹⁸ Oge. A. Khanzen-Leve. *Russkii formalizm*, Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2001, 46-47.

¹⁹ Lachmann, Renate. *Memory and Literature: Intertextuality in Russian Modernism*, [translated by Roy Sellars and Anthony Wall; foreword by Wolfgang Iser], Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

²⁰ Fink, op.cit., 60.

²¹ Nalbantian, Suzanne. *Memory in Literature. From Rousseau to Neuroscience*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 11.

and creativity, Viktor Shklovskii's famous statement that art's purpose is to emotionally affect readers and spectators – to heighten their receptivity – might be seen as an attempt to appropriate Bergson's ideas for modern literary theory. Thus Shklovskii's pronouncements that “the purpose of art is to impart sensation to an object as something seen rather than recognised”, and that “the device of art is the device of the *estrangement* of things and the device of defacilitated form” thus heightening an object's perceptibility and memorability, resonate well with Bergson's concerns related to memory and matter.²² Likewise, Tsvetaeva uses ornamental prose in her memoir on Voloshin in an attempt to join both Bergsonian vision of duration and Shklovskii's notion of defamiliarisation with the transformation of elegiac scene into uncanny space, where the narrator's review of the past brings Tsvetaeva's spiritual mentor (Voloshin) into the present as a revisionary fantasy. Since the elegist's self remains untransformed, the desire for transformation continues to write itself. That is why the title of the essay has an open-ended touch.

Tsvetaeva's “The Living About the Living” describes faithfully her encounters with Voloshin in the 1910s in Moscow and in the Crimea, but it conceals how her poem “You are walking, looking just like me...” was inspired by Voloshin's essay on theatre that appropriates many ideas expressed in Bergson's writings. Tsvetaeva's poem was written during her stay at Voloshin's house in Koktebel in the Crimea, when his article “Theatre As Dreaming” (*Teatr kak snovidenie*) was published.²³ In his article, Voloshin's images compare creative evolution to a set of images on an unfolding fan. The images thus strongly resemble Bergson's ideas on duration and memory based on the vision of psychological flow of time.

Tsvetaeva's poem envisages a future encounter with a stranger and presents the elegy as desire related to uncanny spaces with the absence of both the living about to become corpses and the dead speaking. Its references to laughter also echo Bergson's ideas on the role of the comic in the renewal of our perception of familiar objects of everyday life, that insist on the need to break the mould of automated and rigid behaviour. Tsvetaeva's poem “You are walking...” features a dead poet's voice speaking to a passer-by in the cemetery, calling on him to pause in his aimless walk and pay attention to her gravestone inscribed with her name and details of her life. The lyric persona of the poem imagines herself dead and talking to a stranger about the past and about her life as an event from the past. At the same time, the poem suggests the notion of three co-existing temporal dimensions related to the past, present and future, using the gram-

²² Shklovskii, Viktor. “Iskusstvo kak priem”, *Gamburgskii schet: Stat'i – vospominaniia – esse*, Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990, 58-72.

²³ Voloshin, Maksimilian. “Teatr kak snovidenie”, *Liki tvorchestva*, Leningrad: Nauka, 1988, 349-355. (It was originally published in the fifth issue of the journal *Maski* in Moscow: Voloshin. M. “Teatr kak snovidenie”, *Maski*, No.5, 1912-13, 1-9).

matical forms of all the tenses. The sense of the present tense is reinforced by the instruction that the living voice of the lyric persona is giving to her interlocutor. The automatic perception of the monistic world is broken in the poem by the use of the notions of simultaneity and synaesthesia (the smells and colours of berries and flowers are presented in the poem as an experience of the lyric persona herself). The poem illustrates well Bergson's notion of the psychological flow of time that deviates from the notion of memory based on the static image. As Bergson explains, "the whole difficulty of the problem that occupies us comes from the fact that we imagine perception to be a kind of photographic view of things, taken from a fixed point by that special apparatus which is called an organ of perception".²⁴ Furthermore, the lyric persona of the poem encourages her interlocutor while examining her gravestone to break into laughter, suggesting that it would be a natural thing to do: "I, too, used to like laughing when it was not appropriate to do so". Such a view of laughter as a tool of transgression that enables the experience of a continuity of the creative flow of life is in line with Bergson's theory of the comic. In his 1900 essay on laughter, Bergson suggests that ability to laugh differentiates humans from animals. He claims that by laughing away all the old and rigid forms of life we ensure the creative flow of life, and free the creative impulse from its captivity in the frozen image of eternity. Bergson also points to the dialogic nature of laughter.²⁵ In "The Living about the Living" Tsvetaeva talks of the importance of walking and dialogic imagination to the construction of the creative self that enables the experience of the flow of life (duration) in similar terms.

Furthermore, Tsvetaeva's description of walks with Voloshin promotes free and unconstrained movement (embodied in the notion of walking versus military marching) as something highly useful for the construction of dialogic imagination. Tsvetaeva's link between movement and thought derives from Lev Tolstoy's somatics of literature incorporated into his infection theory, according to which literature infects its readers with the author's emotions. Tsvetaeva, prior to writing her memoir about Voloshin, had engaged, in her essay "Art in the Light of Conscience", with the ideas Tolstoy expressed on literature's infective qualities in his 1898 philosophical treatise "What is Art?" ("Chto takoe iskusstvo?"). According to Douglas Robinson, Tolstoy's metaphor of infection might be seen as a useful tool that helps the reader "to build a dialectical bridge between the Platonic image of art as the carrier of social disease or disorder (infecting audiences with insurgent feelings and disinclination to resist or suppress them) and the Aristotelian image of art as the carrier of a cure or therapy

²⁴ Bergson, Henri. "Matter and Memory", *Key Writings*, op.cit., 81-140, 99.

²⁵ Bergson, Henri. *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, [Translated from the French by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell], København and Los Angeles: Green Integer, 1999, 11.

for emotional excess (infecting audiences with the excessive feeling *and* their purgation – a dim or distant model for the homeopathic cure the estranging formalists imagine).²⁶ Tsvetaeva's portrayal of Voloshin implies that his vision of modern culture was entwined with the notion of estrangement and his vehement denunciation of violence: Voloshin's active involvement in Russian pacifist movement is especially felt in his essays of the 1910s. Even though Vladislav Khodasevich regarded Voloshin as a highly educated yet superficial person and insignificant poet,²⁷ Tsvetaeva presents Voloshin as an important Silver Age thinker and critic capable of sustaining the necessary philosophical and practical engagement with the dialectical complexities of estrangement.

Tsvetaeva's interchanges this portrayal of Voloshin with her discussion of the therapeutic qualities of art. Thus she recalls Voloshin's response to Il'ia Repin's portrait of Ivan the Terrible, suggesting that Voloshin had the gift of persuading his critics to accept a different perspective and of diffusing potential conflict. She writes: "In one instance he had managed to soften Repin's public attack on him to the extent that Repin kept telling everyone that he was disappointed by the fact that such an educated and nice person like Voloshin would not appreciate Repin's portrayal of Ivan the Terrible".²⁸ Tsvetaeva's impressionistic mentioning of Voloshin's encounter with Repin alludes to an important episode that took place at the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow on 13 January 1913: the young Abram Balashov vandalised Repin's 1885 painting "Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan on 16 November 1581" with a knife, saying "We had enough of blood". Repin suspected the involvement of radical artists from the group "Knaves of Diamonds" in the attack, but Voloshin defended Balashov as someone traumatised by the naturalistic depiction of violence embedded in Repin's portrait of Ivan the Terrible. Needless to say, Voloshin was an ardent supporter of David Burliuk and other members of "Knaves of Diamonds" group. Furthermore Voloshin, in a paper presented on 12 February 1913 at the Polytechnic Institute on Repin's painting of Ivan the Terrible, made several bold statements supporting Russian Futurist art.²⁹ Prior to this presentation, on 16 January 1913 in the newspaper *The Morning of Russia* (Utro Rossii), Voloshin published an article "On the meaning of the catastrophe related to Repin's painting" ("O smysle katastrofy, postigshei kartinu Repina"), in which he focused on psychological aspects of the reception of violence in art, and on the harmful effects of naturalism on contemporary viewers subjected to the media's frequent

²⁶ Robinson, Douglas. *Estrangement and the Somatics of Literature: Tolstoy, Shklovsky, Brecht*, Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008, x.

²⁷ Khodasevich, V. "Retsenzii: *Sovremennye zapiski, kniga 52. [Otryvok]*," in Mnukhin, 2003, op.cit., 413.

²⁸ Tsvetaeva, Marina. "Zhivoe o zhivom," *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh*, volume 2: Proza, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1984, 175-234, 208.

²⁹ Voloshin, Maksimilian. *Liki tvorchestva*, op.cit., 679.

presentation of violence as spectacle. In his autobiography, Voloshin said that his public appearance at the Polytechnic Institute and his article triggered much opposition from critics and publishers who thought that he undermined the significance of Repin for Russian national consciousness in the 1910s. Many critics perceived Voloshin's attacks on Repin as a symbolic duel between realist and Futurist art.³⁰ In Voloshin's view, realism was an outmoded form of artistic expression based on superficial copying of reality without any conceptualisation of important trends. Most importantly, Voloshin highlighted the exaggerated nature of Repin's realism, suggesting that Repin's unnatural depiction of violence was subordinated to the idea of glamourising terror. In his speech at the Polytechnic Institute, Voloshin stressed that artifacts' ability to infect the viewer's imagination with images of terror should not be seen as a manifestation of artistic value and as a criteria of somebody's artistic talent. Voloshin's speech highlighted the appeal in the 1910s of Repin's portrayal of Ivan the Terrible, comparable to the popularity of gothic films and the naturalistic representation of violence in European cinema. Voloshin defined such visual representations of violence as "drugs of terror" (*narkotiki uzhasa*).³¹

Clearly, Voloshin thought that Repin inscribed himself in his painting, showing Ivan the Terrible murdering his son, as an imaginary witness of Ivan the Terrible's act of violence. Voloshin believed that Repin failed to estrange himself from his fantasy and his terrifying image triggered by his imaginative encounter with the past, communicating thereby to his viewer his own unmediated traumatic experience. Similar pronouncements on the ability of poets to become estranged from the objects of their poetry can be found in Tsvetaeva's discussion of Pushkin's play "A Feast at the Time of the Plague" which was incorporated into her essay "Art in the Light of Conscience". The affinity between the views of Voloshin and Tsvetaeva on the dialectical complexities of estrangement as creative therapy might be explained by Tsvetaeva awareness of Voloshin's attacks on Repin and Russian naturalism, since she and her husband Sergei Efron published Voloshin's articles on Repin and the responses to them in a 1913 book – as soon as they had created their publishing house *Ole Lukoie*. That Tsvetaeva published such a book is not coincidental: she valued the dialogic imagination per se and saw Voloshin as a person capable of understanding dialectical complexities of life, of dialogue's role in cultural evolution, and of the Bergsonian vision of simultaneity. In his autobiography, Voloshin mentions Bergson as a spiritual mentor who gave him lucid thinking and self-express-

³⁰ Vlasenko, Aleksei. "Kategoriia uzhasnogo v estetike Maksimiliana Voloshina: Kul'turologicheskii etiid," *Oktiabr'*, No. 4, 1999; <http://magazines.russ.ru/october/1999/4/vlasen.html> [27.07.212].

³¹ Quoted in Vlasenko, *ibid.*

sion.³² It is clear that Tsvetaeva presents Voloshin, with his ability to synthesise different aspects of the flow of life, as more relevant to contemporary cultural developments than Soviet writers and filmmakers who were determined to promote revolutionary violence in their works. By contrast, Tsvetaeva associates Voloshin's interest in mythopoeic aspects of creativity with his pacifism deriving from empathy with victims of terror and his ability to see the same object from different viewpoints.

Tsvetaeva in "The Living about the Living" depicts Voloshin's decision to avoid World War I military service as an important ideological statement based on the belief in non-violent resolution of conflicts at both national and international levels. She recalls Voloshin's explanation to his mother for his decision not to go to war: "Mother, I cannot turn into a soldier only because other people think differently from me".³³ Furthermore, Tsvetaeva talks about Voloshin as an important figure whose ability to synthesise different influences turned him into an important mouthpiece for the peaceful co-existence of social groups and different national traditions. She appears aware of Voloshin's articles on World War I, including "The Victims of War," "Insignificant Shortcomings," and "France and War". As Tatiana Aleksandrovna Pavlova aptly observed, Voloshin's articles about war's innocent victims and the numerous tragic deaths of prominent French writers in World War I contained several important allusions to Russian war casualties, since Voloshin wanted to bypass Russian censors and highlight striking analogies between all war victims regardless of ethnic background.³⁴

The above-mentioned portrayal of Pushkin in Tsvetaeva's "Art in the Light of Conscience" as a transformer of evil into the object of art in an estranged way resonates well with Voloshin's 1910 essay "The Death of Tolstoy" in which Voloshin suggests that the artist's foremost goal should be the idea of resistance to evil not by escapism but by direct confrontation with use of the artistic imagination: Voloshin urges artists to transform violence into an aesthetic object so that it would be inseparable from the dialectical principle of evolutionary processes of life.³⁵ Both Voloshin's and Tsvetaeva's essays are permeated with allusions to Vladimir Solov'ev's works on the spiritual transformation of material life and on the doctrine of salvation. According to Solov'ev's essay "Three speeches about Dostoevsky", if one believes that Christianity is linked to the

³² Voloshin, Maksimilian. *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy v dvukh tomakh*, vol.1, Paris, 1982, cix. The impact of Bergson's ideas on Voloshin's worldview is discussed in Wallrafen's study: Wallrafen, Claudia. *Maksimilian Volosin als Künstler und Kritiker*, Slavistische Beiträge, Bd. 153, München, 1982, 205-224.

³³ Tsvetaeva 1984, op.cit., 207.

³⁴ Pavlova, T.A. "'Vseobshchii primiritel'": Tema voiny, nasillia i revoliutsii v tvorchestve M. Voloshina", in *Dolgi put' rossiiskogo patsifizma*, Moscow: IVI RAN, 1997, 245-261, 251.

³⁵ Voloshin. Maksimilian. "Sud'ba Tolstogo," *Liki tvorchestva*, op.cit., 528-533, 532-33.

notion of salvation based on the internal unification of disparate principles, then the essence of the true Christian task should be twofold: the attainment of *synthesis* and the act of *reconciliation*. Solov'ev in his essay emphasises Russia's messianic role to produce a spiritually enlightened form of communication to reconcile West and East.³⁶ Similar concerns are voiced in the essays of Tsvetaeva and Voloshin subordinated to the promotion of the transnational identity based on spiritual links of poets of different periods and nations.

Clearly, Tsvetaeva's elegiac essay on Voloshin laments him as the living embodiment of Solov'iev's and Dostoevsky's vision of Logos suppressed in Soviet Russia. Given that Tsvetaeva wrote her memoir on Voloshin after the April 1932 decree abolishing independent artistic and literary associations, it can be inferred that Tsvetaeva used that opportunity to discuss her own aesthetic views and present herself as Voloshin's disciple at a time when Stalin's Russia instituted radical departure from Russian modernist traditions. Tsvetaeva was undoubtedly well aware how Socialist realism as a method of artistic expression was formulated in the 1932 April decree announcing the creation of the Union of Soviet Writers. The term also appeared on 17 May 1932 in a speech delivered by Ivan Gronskaa, the President of the Union of Writers' Organisational Committee.³⁷ Maksim Gorkii, the first Secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union, and other leading writers, discussed the new method at the First Plenum of the Organisational Committee in October 1932. The suppression of pluralism and the subordination of literary activities to the goals of the Communist Party would have been very much on Tsvetaeva's mind when she was writing her memoir on Voloshin in which many pages describe various artistic groups and literary associations in pre-revolutionary Russia in highly favourable light.

As early as 7 November 1921, three months after the death of Aleksandr Blok – whom Tsvetaeva worshipped as a spiritual leader and an important national poet – she wrote to Voloshin on the destruction of spiritual values in Moscow in apocalyptic vein: "It is monstrous. A fatty tumor, a purulent sore. On Arbat Street, there are fifty-four luxury food stores. Buildings disgorge food-stuffs [...] People are just like the stores: everything is to be had for money. The general law is ruthless. No one cares for anyone else. Dear Maks, believe me, this is not envy. If I had millions, I still would not buy whole hams. All this smells too much of blood. Many are starving, but they are somewhere in burrows and slums. Appearances are dazzling".³⁸ Viewed in this light, Tsvetaeva's allusions to Repin in her 1932 essay on Voloshin appear triggered by Tsvetaeva's concerns for the appropriation of Repin's ideas on realism in Soviet

³⁶ Solov'ev, Vladimir. "Tri rechi v pamiat' Dostoevskogo," *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh*, volume 2, Moscow: Mysl', 1988, 290-323, 320.

³⁷ Stock, op.cit., 85.

³⁸ Quoted in Karlinsky, op.cit., 105.

Russia at a time when the emergence of a new wave of terror in Russian everyday life became highly visible. Furthermore, Tsvetaeva was well aware how in late 1920s and early 1930s Russia the revolutionary violence was promoted both as spectacle and ritual through Soviet films, propaganda posters and novels.

According to the illuminating articles of Elizabeth Valkenier and Irina Chaikovskaya on the strong interest in Repin among Soviet educationalists at the end of the 1920s and into the early 1930s, there were several attempts by Soviet leaders to bring Repin back to Russia from Finland where he lived in exile since 1917.³⁹ According to Valkenier, many émigré newspapers published Repin's letter denying rumours of his desire to return to Russia following an official Soviet government invitation.⁴⁰ Tsvetaeva would have been also disturbed by reports of Soviet leaders' attempts to commission Repin to create a large canvas depicting the death of Russia's empire to mark the tenth anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution. Clearly, the depiction of violent struggle between Bolsheviks and White Army officers would have triggered more hostility among groups of Russians living in Russia and abroad. In the early 1930s an image of Repin as an important precursor of Socialist Realism was forged, and even with Repin's death in 1930 his paintings were promoted in the Soviet Union for educational purposes as an essential part of Russian national and didactic art suitable for the development of ideological views on culture. As Valkenier points out, in 1936 Soviet officials organised lectures and excursions for large groups of students and factory workers to highlight Repin's contribution to the development of Russian realism and to the representation of class struggle in Russia.⁴¹

It does not seem coincidental that Tsvetaeva's essay on Voloshin mentions that her father's house in Moscow in 1911 contained several paintings by Vasilii Vereshchagin (1842-1904), well known for his belief in art's autonomy from the state. In 1874 Vereshchagin refused a professorship, saying that official honours are harmful for artists. He stressed that ties with the government would undermine his independence.⁴² Tsvetaeva's own artistic credo was based on the principle of artistic independence. Her essay on Voloshin exemplifies her dual perception of language in the style of Pavel Florenskii's article "The Construction of the Word" (*Stroenie slova*) in which the antinomy of language is ex-

³⁹ Chaikovskaya, Irina. "V chem taina tvorchestva?", *Neva*, No.11; <http://magazines.russ.ru/neva/2006/11/ch21.html> [17.04.2013]; Valkenier, Elizabeth Kridl, "Politics in Russian Art: The Case of Repin", *Russian Review*, Vol. 37, No. 1, January 1978, 14-29, 21. See also the description of the discussion of a possibility of Repin's return to Russia in 1924 in this book: Iakovlev, A.N., editor. *Bol'shaia tsenzura. Pisateli i zhurnalisty v strane Sovetov: 1917-1956*, Moscow: Materik, 2005, 75.

⁴⁰ Valkenier, op.cit., 21.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 22.

plained in terms of monumentality (monumental'nost') and receptivity (vos-priimchivost'). While the former notion implies language's ability to act as a fixed object, the latter category underscores the communicative aspects of language and its fleeting qualities related to the existence of a unique meaning at the moment of reception. "Words are unrepeatable," states Florenskii, "in every instance they are spoken anew, that is with a new sememe [...] Only the *outer* form of a word can be objectively one and the same thing in conversation, but never the inner form".⁴³ According to Florenskii's model of cognition of reality, human beings cannot see and know the world of the divinity, but they can enjoy contact with it through experiencing a shared communal life in the kenotic Christ.

According to Tsvetaeva's portrayal of Voloshin in her memoir, the Christian and Hellenistic aspects of communal life appear entwined: Voloshin acts as a spiritual leader who recognises the boundary between matter and the divine, celebrating matter as a gift from God and presenting all individual acts of creative communication as an engagement with the universal Logos. Voloshin's 1923 letters to Elizaveta Efron, Tsvetaeva sister-in-law, illustrate well his notion of a divine union attainable through engaging Logos with the help of prayer: "During the Red Terror I spent all the time next to the executors. That experience enabled me to understand the power of prayer, especially when I had to pray both for the life of victims and for the wellbeing of executors: my prayer softened their hearts and transformed them".⁴⁴

Tsvetaeva defined a vision of Voloshin as a spiritual leader, an advocate of freedom of speech and a protector of victims of terror and historical cataclysm in her essay "The Living about the Living" as a "great, wise and kind person"⁴⁵; the vision accords well with Barbara Walker's observation suggesting that Voloshin's ties with the Reds and with the Whites secured his reputation in Russia and abroad as a defender and patron of writers and artists. In Walker's opinion, Voloshin's knowledge of Russian and European cultural traditions, and his organisational skills and leadership qualities, were useful to the early Soviet government that had a lack of professional specialists at a time of economic and financial problems. Yet, maintains Walker, "Voloshin's powerful patrons, including Lunacharsky, became displaced in 1932 due to the overwhelming influence of cultural policies promoted by Maksim Gorkii and the Serapion Brothers group."⁴⁶ In a nostalgic vein, Tsvetaeva's description of Russian pre-revolution-

⁴³ Florensky, P.A. "Stroenie slova," in Miasnikov, A.S., Palievskii P.V., El'sberg Ia.E., editors. *Kontekst 1972*, Moscow: Nauka, 1973, 344-75, 353.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Vlasenko, op.cit., 64.

⁴⁵ Tsvetaeva 1984, op.cit, 209.

⁴⁶ Uoker, Barbara. "Kruzhkovaia kul'tura i stanovlenie sovetskoi intelligentsia na primere Maksimiliana Voloshina i Maksima Gor'kogo," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, nomer 40, 1999; <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/1999/40/yoker.html> [28.07. 2012].

nary intellectuals' cooperation with the Soviet government in the early 1920s is positively presented in her essay on Voloshin. Thus, Tsvetaeva reports how Voloshin took care of homeless dogs around his house in the Crimea during the Red Terror: in Voloshin's letter they were described alongside his request to Lunacharskii to help starving Russian writers in the Crimea. Tsvetaeva writes proudly of her own role in securing Lunacharskii's help for them, since she delivered this letter to Lunacharskii in person.⁴⁷ Her description of the early Soviet period can be seen as elegiac since she understood how Iosif Stalin's cultural policies radically differed from those adopted by Lunacharskii whose eclectic worldview often manifested in co-existence of different beliefs: in 1913 he named Bergson as one of his teachers in a letter from Paris, yet in the same year he criticised Briusov's mystical beliefs as comparable to the "Kantian position, revived by the fashionable Bergson".⁴⁸ Given how Tsvetaeva and her husband keenly read Soviet periodicals and newspapers, Tsvetaeva would have been well informed about the attacks from the 1920s to the early 1930s on Aleksandr Voronskii, editor of the influential literary journal *Red Virgin Soil* (*Krasnaia nov'*), due to his alleged Bergsonism and his advocacy of the intuitive cognition of reality.

Raisa Messer in her 1930 article "Bergson's aesthetics and the Voronskii School" (*Estetika Bergsona i shkola Voronskogo*) writes that Bergson's dialectics "are absolutely incapable of pointing the way to a solution of the system's antinomies".⁴⁹ As André Joussain points out in his article "Bergsonisme et marxisme", "Bergsonian spiritualism is the negation of dialectical Marxism itself": both Bergson's deism going "against Bolshevik atheism" and Bergson's notion "of the creation of the unforeseeable form"⁵⁰ contradict the idea of historical progress conceived by Soviet Marxists. Viewed in this light, Tsvetaeva's image of Voloshin is far from apolitical. Her essay on Voloshin clearly supports Bergsonian intuitivism, spiritual aspects of culture and Bergson's vision of evolution that foregrounds the creation of unpredictable forms of life.

Tsvetaeva's assertion that Voloshin's mythopoetic activities (*mifotvorchestvo*) are inseparable from his pacifism and the construction of alternative reality (*mirotvorchestvo*) invokes many of the ideas about art and rituals conveyed in the works of Jane Harrison, a leading British specialist on ancient Greek art and a translator of Russian literature, who was closely linked to the Bloomsbury circle in London and to a group of Russian writers and thinkers in Paris and in London, including Sviatopolk-Mirskii, Lev Shestov and Aleksei Remizov. Harrison was a sponsor of the Eurasianist journal *Milestones* (*Versty*) edited by

⁴⁷ Tsvetaeva 1984, op.cit., 218.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Fink, op.cit., 102.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Fink, *ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Fink, *ibid.*, 109.

Tsvetaeva and Efron, so we may assume that Tsvetaeva was familiar with her ideas through Mirskii and Remizov. Harrison together with Hope Mirrless, her long-standing friend and pupil, published an English-language version of Archpriest Avvakum's autobiographical book *The Life of the Archpriest Avvakum* (1924) and a collection of translations of several Russian fairy tales (both folk and literary stories) as *The Book of the Bear* (1926). Harrison's enthusiasm for Russian folk drama is strongly felt in her portrayal of Russian *Vertep* plays: the rites that take place on 23 June, the Eve of John Baptist's day; and the worship of the pagan spring-god Iarilo. By concluding her account of the above-mentioned performances with the statement that the reader should thank the Russian peasant for all the artifacts, Harrison encourages her readers to appreciate the universal aspects of Indo-European cultures and languages. Harrison's empathy for Russian peasant culture stands in striking contrast to James Frazer's approach to the primitives: in the words of Martha Carpentier, Frazer "could vent an astonishing disdain for the peasant class whose religious customs he analysed so closely".⁵¹ According to Carpentier, Harrison's disagreement with Frazer and other scholars involved in rationalising religion and hierarchical thought stems from her belief in the mystical aspects and vitalism of early pre-intellectual religious experience. "For Harrison," says Carpentier, "primitives were not 'purl-blind' as for Frazer, but visionary".⁵² To this end, Harrison's interest in the personal experience and the sense of immediate intuitive revelation is especially strongly felt in her understanding of magic as the borderline between man and beast, and as a form of the spiritual protoplasm which "gives rise to Religion and other 'civilised' things".⁵³ She also produced an eloquent explanation for the emergence of artistic imagination and symbolic representation of reality from ancient ritual. The latter cultural model, connecting artistic imagination and performance, is conveyed in Tsvetaeva's essay "The Living about the Living".

Harrison in her 1913 book *Ancient Art and Ritual*, writes on the formation of abstract concepts during ritualistic re-enactment of commemorative ceremonies: "The savage begins with the particular battle that actually *did* happen; but, it is easy to see that if he re-enacts it again and again the *particular* battle or hunt will be forgotten, the representation cuts itself loose from the particular action from which it arose, and becomes generalized, as it were abstracted. Like children he plays not at a funeral, but at 'funerals', not at a battle, but at battles; and so arises the war-dance, or the death-dance, or the hunt-dance. This will serve to show how inextricably the elements of knowing and feeling are inter-

⁵¹ Carpentier, Martha C., *Ritual, Myth, and the Modernist Text: The Influence of Jane Ellen Harrison on Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf*, Amsterdam, 1998, 51.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 52.

⁵³ Harrison, Jane Ellen, *Alpha and Omega*, London: Oxford University Press, 1915, 162-3.

twined".⁵⁴ Harrison's ideas about ancient ritual and performers inspired many British Victorian performers who, through their art-as-ritual experiences, emotionally embraced the new spirituality advocated by Harrison as a substitute for traditional religion. As Rita Wright observes, scholarship on anthropology and archeology triggered revivals of ancient Greek and other Near Eastern art forms to such an extent that they started to dominate "public and private theatricals for many upper class and well-educated Victorians".⁵⁵ Tsvetaeva's essay on Voloshin testifies to similar trends in Russia in the 1900s-1910s, notably through the activities of associations and literary circles led by such prominent modernist artists, writers and thinkers as Viacheslav Ivanov, Nikolai Evreinov, Voloshin and Prince Sergei Volkonskii, who were deeply affected by contemporary debates on the relativity of perception and on the crisis of idealism.

Michael Bell links the mythopoeic imagination of European modernists to the growing influence of anthropological study in the second half of the nineteenth century on the subsequent emergence of a cultural reflector, by which Europeans could recognise their own world view as having an ultimately similar mythopoeic status. Bell writes: "Science, then, like religion lost a certain literalism, and assumed objectivity in its truth value. Both religion and science had now to be understood as active creations of human culture rather than as direct accounts of external reality. This is the sense in which they each took a step towards myth. Mythopoeia, without losing its archaic overtones, became the paradigmatic capacity of the human mind".⁵⁶ Tsvetaeva portrayed Voloshin as a pioneer of modern mythopoeia dealing with the very substance of myth and of collective beliefs hermeneutically and then presenting his experiences as motives for action in the style of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx; such a portrayal appears representative of the prevalent cultural trend to view performance and the re-enactment of the past as an important part of new artistic expression that accounts for psychological explanations in human behaviour. Both Marx and Freud were, in the words of Bell, "mythopoeic de-mythologisers".⁵⁷ They wished to be as authoritative as possible in order to achieve urgent tasks. Likewise, Voloshin's ideological drive to promote peace and dialogic imagination was inseparable from his profound understanding of the role of myth in the construction of cultural knowledge and useful patterns of human behaviour beneficial for evolutionary processes.

It is unsurprising to see Tsvetaeva's definition of Voloshin as an Orpheus who accompanies her into Hades. The image appears in the essay several times:

⁵⁴ Harrison, Jane. *Ancient Art and Ritual*, London: Oxford University Press, 1913, 43.

⁵⁵ Wright, Rita R. *Jane Ellen Harrison's "Handmaiden No More": Victorian Ritualism and the Fine Arts*, PhD thesis, Utah: The University of Utah, 2009, 199.

⁵⁶ Bell, Michael. *Literature, Modernism and Myth: Belief and Responsibility in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 16.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

“Here is the entrance to Hades, Marina. Orpheus went to rescue Euridice here”; “One ought to walk into Hades on one’s own”; “I don’t know if I still remember the translator of Orphic Hymns but I would never ever forget Maks who accompanied me to Hades where I walked with him and without him. I’m sure that I will always think of that rock with a big crack inside and the silver glittering of the waves on the nearby rocks [...] when I will encounter the image of Orpheus in my poems, or in Gluck’s opera, or anywhere else”.⁵⁸ The ritualistic nature of the imaginary re-enactment of the past is entwined with mythopoeic overtones in Tsvetaeva’s description of her Orphic mystery-invoking experiences in the Crimea. Her essay also alludes to Voloshin’s Orpheus-like self-representation in several photographs of the 1910s, and to the rhythmical exercises, dances and performances of scenes from ancient texts and myths undertaken by Voloshin and his associates in the Crimea – in the style of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze’s Eurythmics. His ideas were popularised both by Voloshin and by Prince Volkonskii, a close friend of Tsvetaeva since 1919 with whom she recited her works publicly on several occasions in Paris in the 1930s.

Before emigrating to France, Volkonskii attended festivals organised by Jaques-Dalcroze at his school at Hellerau near Dresden.⁵⁹ In his review on Christoph Willibad Gluck’s opera performed in Hellerau in summer 1913, Volkonskii stressed the importance of minimalist setting, costumes and decorations in the opera performance that featured several pupils of Dalcroze. Volkonskii was especially complimentary of the use of ancient Greek garments (chitons) in the opera. He praised the image of Orpheus, dressed in chiton and wearing a thin headscarf as truly symbolic and highly effective due to its simplicity and minimalist qualities. It is clear from Tsvetaeva’s essay that Voloshin used Dalcroze’s image of Orpheus as a model for imitation. It is notable that Voloshin’s own performance of Orpheus happened to take place only in the Crimea, since his encounters with Tsvetaeva in Moscow were somewhat different: visiting Tsvetaeva in Moscow in the early 1910s, he dressed in a European suite and a hat. Tsvetaeva’s essay labels Voloshin as a Russian Frenchman, but her depiction of Voloshin in the Crimea unfolds Voloshin’s strong interest in antiquity, myth and rituals. In the style of Volkonskii’s portrayal of Hellerau actors, in which they transformed on stage into real people “overwhelmed by real emotions and inseparable from music,”⁶⁰ Tsvetaeva depicts herself and Voloshin as performers and adherents of Orphic mysteries capable of comprehending Bergsonian flow of time (psychological time) and simultaneity (*durée et simultanété*). Tsvetaeva’s image of Voloshin and his friends also invokes

⁵⁸ Tsvetaeva 1984, op.cit., 214-215.

⁵⁹ Panova, Zh. “Predislovie,” in Zhak-Dal’kroz, E. *Ritm*, Moscow: Klassika –XXI, 2010, 1-22, 8.

⁶⁰ Volkonskii, S. M. “*Orfei* Gliuka v Khelerau,” *Otkliki teatra*, Petrograd, 1914, 63-72, 68.

Viacheslav Ivanov's vision of Russian universalism based on the Dionysian principle of universal brotherhood.

According to Ivanov, "it is not unreasonable to conjecture that the near future will create types of philosophical creativity close to those of the pre-Socratic, pre-critical period, which Nietzsche called 'the tragic age' of Hellenism".⁶¹ More importantly, both Voloshin and Tsvetaeva are depicted in her story as adherents of Ivanov's pronouncements that "true myth is a postulate of collective self-determination" and "the hypostasis of a certain essence or energy".⁶² It is not coincidental that Tsvetaeva's depiction of Voloshin's house in the Crimea as a tower-like building invokes the image of Ivanov's apartment in St Petersburg described by many contemporaries as Viacheslav's tower. Ivanov in his studies of Dionysos articulated the cult of life as emergent from the intoxicating art born out of ritual. Tsvetaeva's "The Living about the Living" invokes Ivanov's definitions of collective ecstatic experiences of the divinity as a choir-like or group-dance-like communion of like-minded individuals.⁶³ Given that Tsvetaeva wrote her essay on Voloshin in 1932, she appears determined to remind contemporaries in Paris about the utility of Dalcroze's ideas advocated in Russia in the pre-revolutionary period by her friend Prince Volkonskii⁶⁴ and developed by the Institute of Living Word in Petrograd in 1918-1924. In Volkonskii's words, Dalcroze's discovery of rhythm as an essential basis for the construction of cultural identity was larger than his own life.⁶⁵

Dalcroze's methods of teaching rhythmical exercises and dance were inseparable from his belief in the need to construct a new modern subject whose life would be organised through mastery of rhythmic processes of external and internal life. Panova explains: "Dalcroze was keen to know everything about his students because he believed that every detail of their everyday life would be important for the creation of a new rhythmically organised individual".⁶⁶ Dalcroze enabled each individual he supervised to find something specific to their own needs and character, encouraging his students to organise their everyday life in the most efficient way. It is worth mentioning here that Voloshin's friendship with Tsvetaeva in the 1910s coincided with Voloshin's keen interest in Dalcroze and Volkonskii's lectures on Dalcroze's system. In his review of a Volkonskii lecture delivered in November 1910, Voloshin welcomes the empha-

⁶¹ Ivanov, Viacheslav. "Presentiments and Portents: The New Organic Era and the Theatre of the Future," *Selected Writings*, [Translated by Robert Bird and Michael Wachtel], Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001, 95-112, 99.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ivanov, Viacheslav. "Predchustviia i predvestiia: Novaia organicheskaia epokha i teatr budushchego", *Po zvezdam*, Letchworth, Hertfordshire: Bradda Books Ltd., 1971, 189-219, 193-194.

⁶⁴ Panova, op.cit., 11.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

sis on non-verbal artistic expression as an important element of the new synthetic art.⁶⁷ Likewise, Russian critic A.A. Arkhangel'skii in his article "Music and Rhythm of Theatrical Performance" published in 1913 highlighted how at times when words cannot express all nuances of an actor's deep emotions, music and gesture should come to the rescue. According to Arkhangel'skii, non-verbal forms of expression function as an endless source of "the most delicate movements of the human spirit".⁶⁸

Needless to say, fluid creativity and organic growth of the ever-new were often expressed in musical terms in the Russian modernist writings inspired by Bergson. For example Hippus wrote: "Human relationships create a real, daily, vital atmosphere for life, its colour, its [...] music."⁶⁹ Tsvetaeva's poetry and fiction of the 1920s-30s were strongly oriented towards the representation of different rhythms of everyday life: thus while in 1922 Bely praised Tsvetaeva's use of melodic gestures and her skilful use of metric structures in the book *Separation* (Razluka),⁷⁰ Mirskii greatly enthused about Tsvetaeva's ability to use Bergsonian rhythms and Bergsonian vision of temporality⁷¹, portray the dynamism of everyday life and create a mythopoeic rendering of the visible world with the use of phonetic structures and heroic pathos.⁷² Likewise, Tsvetaeva's "The Living about the Living" translates Bergson's pan-cultural principle of unity, vitalism and interconnectedness into the almost pure *durée* of the author's consciousness. Yet the memoir genre might be seen as an obstacle to artistic rendering of the flow of life. Thus while Hippus associated the genre of the journal (*dnevnik*) with duration, she saw memoirs (*vospominaniia*) as static. In 1929 Hippus expressed her views clearly in this statement: "'Memoirs' can provide an image of time, but only a Journal can show time in its duration".⁷³ Tsvetaeva appears aware of the limitations of the genre of memoirs highlighted by Hippus: in addition to her essay on Voloshin, in 1932-35 she wrote a cycle of poems dedicated to Voloshin – "Ici-Haut".⁷⁴ In this cycle, in a subversive manner, Tsvetaeva refers to the Soviet period as the age of the collective body's ideology and mass culture (*vek skopishch*). She presents Voloshin as an upholder of the modernist tradition based on the principle of individuality unconforming to the Soviet notion of brotherhood as ironised in Tsvetaeva's poem cycle

⁶⁷ Voloshin, M. "Ob iskusstve akterov. Po povodu lektzii kn. Volkonskogo v Khudozhestvennom teatre", *Utro Rossii*, No.295, 9 November 1910, 5.

⁶⁸ Arkhangel'skii, A.A. "Muzyka i ritm stsenicheskogo deistviia," *Maski*, No.6, 1912-13, 23.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Fink, op.cit., 61.

⁷⁰ Belyi, Andrei. "Poetessa-pevitsa," in M nukhin, editor, op.cit. , 95-98, 96.

⁷¹ Sviatopolk-Mirskii, D. "Rersenziia: Marina Cvetaeva. "Molodets: Skazka. Praga: Plamia, 1924," in M nukhin, volume 2, *ibid.*, 242-247, 244.

⁷² Sviatopolk-Mirskii, D. "Retsenziia: Marina Tsvetaeva. *Posle Rossii: Stikhi 1922-25*, Paris, 1928," in M nukhin, *ibid.*, 375-76, 375.

⁷³ Quoted in Fink, op.cit. 69.

⁷⁴ Tsvetaeva, Marina. *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990, 427-431.

as an extension of mechanistic and spiritless totalitarian ideology. Tsvetaeva's dedication to the principle of living memory is also strongly felt in her desire to organise several public readings of her memoirs in the 1930s together with Prince Volkonskii whose autobiographical writing she highly praised. It is difficult not to agree with Monika Greenleaf's observations that Tsvetaeva's public performances might be seen as a manifestation of her active engagement in memory wars both in Russia and outside Russia. Greenleaf comments on Tsvetaeva's public performance of her 1933 story "My mother and music" (Mat' i muzyka) thus: "That Bergson's theory of memory and entire intuitionist philosophy were discredited as covert metaphysics in 1930 and fell into sudden neglect could only serve as a stimulus to Tsvetaeva, that fervent defender of underdogs. Hers was thus a polemical performance of the *obsolescent* art of Bergsonian memory, undertaken at a moment when Stalinism and historical materialism had seemingly solidified their victorious hold on the past and future. The threat of erasure was made shockingly literal in 1933 when Tsvetaeva discovered her father's name and life's achievement, the Alexander Third Fine Arts Museum of European Sculpture, had been deleted from the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*".⁷⁵ Greenleaf's observation can be extended to Tsvetaeva's essay "The Living about the Living" for its advocacy of poetry as a new form of surrogate religion, based on an eclectic mix of Hellenism and Christianity. In Tsvetaeva's memoir on Voloshin, poetic truth and religious-like experiences of mythopoeia are presented as being highly appropriate for an atheistic age. Furthermore, in her essay, Tsvetaeva re-defines poetry as spiritual fix for melancholic grievance over loss of enchantment in modern times.

⁷⁵ Greenleaf, Monika. "Laughter, Music, and Memory at the Moment of Danger: Tsvetaeva's Mother and Music in Light of Modernist Memory Practices," *Slavic Review*, No.68, issue 4, 2009, 825-847, 833.