



This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights and duplication or sale of all or part is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for research, private study, criticism/review or educational purposes. Electronic or print copies are for your own personal, non-commercial use and shall not be passed to any other individual. No quotation may be published without proper acknowledgement. For any other use, or to quote extensively from the work, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder/s.

**The role of the feminine in masculine cycles
of death, rebirth and new life:
Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Babel, Bulgakov and
Pasternak**

Victoria Ruth Woodgate O'Neill

Degree for which thesis has been submitted: PhD

Date of thesis submission: January 2015

Date of Senate approval: June 2015

Keele University

SUBMISSION OF THESIS FOR A RESEARCH DEGREE

Part I. DECLARATION by the candidate for a research degree. To be bound in the thesis

Degree for which thesis being submitted: PhD

Title of thesis: The role of the feminine in masculine cycles of death, rebirth and new life:
Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Babel, Bulgakov and Pasternak

This thesis contains confidential information and is subject to the protocol set down for the submission and examination of such a thesis.

NO

Date of submission: 15th January 2015 Original registration date: January 2009

(Date of submission must comply with Regulation 2D)

Name of candidate: Victoria Ruth Woodgate O'Neill

Research Institute: Humanities Name of Lead Supervisor: Joe Andrew

I certify that:

- (a) The thesis being submitted for examination is my own account of my own research
- (b) My research has been conducted ethically. Where relevant a letter from the approving body confirming that ethical approval has been given has been bound in the thesis as an Annex
- (c) The data and results presented are the genuine data and results actually obtained by me during the conduct of the research
- (d) Where I have drawn on the work, ideas and results of others this has been appropriately acknowledged in the thesis
- (e) Where any collaboration has taken place with one or more other researchers, I have included within an 'Acknowledgments' section in the thesis a clear statement of their contributions, in line with the relevant statement in the Code of Practice (see Note overleaf).
- (f) The greater portion of the work described in the thesis has been undertaken subsequent to my registration for the higher degree for which I am submitting for examination
- (g) Where part of the work described in the thesis has previously been incorporated in another thesis submitted by me for a higher degree (if any), this has been identified and acknowledged in the thesis
- (h) The thesis submitted is within the required word limit as specified in the Regulations

Total words in submitted thesis (including text and footnotes, but excluding references and appendices): 83,708

Signature of candidate:

Date: 12th January 2015

Note

Extract from Code of Practice: If the research degree is set within a broader programme of work involving a group of investigators – particularly if this programme of work predates the candidate's registration – the candidate should provide an explicit statement (in an 'Acknowledgments' section) of the respective roles of the candidate and these other individuals in relevant aspects of the work reported in the thesis. For example, it should make clear, where relevant, the candidate's role in designing the study, developing data collection instruments, collecting primary data, analysing such data, and formulating conclusions from the analysis. Others involved in these aspects of the research should be named, and their contributions relative to that of the candidate should be specified (*this does not apply to the ordinary supervision, only if the supervisor or supervisory team has had greater than usual involvement*).

Abstract

This thesis uses the narrative framework developed by Theresa de Lauretis' essay 'Desire in Narrative' (1984) to shed new light on the development of male and female characters in texts by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Isaac Babel, Mikhail Bulgakov and Boris Pasternak. De Lauretis' narratological framework is based on work by Vladimir Propp and Yuri Lotman. She draws attention to the inherently masculine identification of heroes, and argues that it is the development of these masculine heroes that drives narrative.

I apply this insight to nineteenth-century texts including *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and a selection of Tolstoy's short stories. From the twentieth century, I consider *Red Cavalry*, *The Master and Margarita* and *Doctor Zhivago*. This range of works, by five different writers spanning two centuries, draws out themes in the portrayal of male heroes changing and developing, spiritually and intellectually 'moving', throughout narratives. I show the variety of ways female characters act as helpers, or donors, to their male counterparts; and also as the prize awaiting them at the end of their successful quest.

This re-reading highlights the significance of cycles of death, transformation and rebirth for the development of masculine heroes. While in texts by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, male heroes strive for intellectual and rational mastery, in twentieth-century texts the focus shifts to male characters' abilities to exercise artistic and creative freedom.

In contrast to the cerebral and imaginative freedom associated with masculine heroes, I highlight portrayals of physical and sexual violence against women's bodies, showing that female characters are associated with their physical bodies to a far greater extent than male heroes experience embodiedness. The intellectual freedom and development of masculine heroes is privileged, while female characters remain in static positions, more defined by bodily limitations and vulnerabilities than male protagonists.

Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Note on the Text	ii
Introduction	1
1. Quests, Journeys and Trials: Dostoevsky's Use of Female Spaces and Bodies in his Development of Masculine Characters	29
2. Female 'Heroes' and Self-determination: Tolstoy's Portrayal of Women in his Major Novels and Short Stories	74
3. Making Sense of Chaos: The Role of Cerebral Understanding in Babel's Development of the Male Hero	121
4. Fantastic Flights: The Role of Feminine Supernatural Powers and the Endurance of a Male-Authored Text in Bulgakov's <i>The Master and Margarita</i>	154
5. Immortality through Poetry: Male Journeys and Female Nurturing in Pasternak's <i>Doctor Zhivago</i>	197
Conclusion	245
Bibliography	250

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude for all the support and patience my supervisors, Prof. Joe Andrew and Dr. Kate Cushing, have shown me throughout the completion of this thesis. They have been sources of great encouragement and inspiration.

I am also very grateful to Prof. David Amigoni, Prof. Barbara Kelly, Tom Amigoni and Fiona Amigoni. It would have been much harder to complete this project without the love and hospitality they have shown me.

I would also like to express my thanks to my husband, Craig Dalton, whose support and friendship have been invaluable, especially in the final stages of this project.

My parents, Patrick and Christine O'Neill, have always believed deeply in the abilities and the potential of all five of their children. They have worked so hard for a great many years to give us as many opportunities as possible. This completed thesis is for them.

Part of the chapter 'Making Sense of Chaos: The Role of Cerebral Understanding in Babel's Development of the Male Hero' was presented at the 'Extremity and Excess' postgraduate research conference hosted by Salford University in September 2011. It was also subsequently published in the conference proceedings.

Note on the Text

Where I have illustrated my arguments with quotations from primary texts, I have included both the original Russian and an English translation. The majority of the translations use a simplified form of the British Standard system for the romanisation of Russian Cyrillic letters, and I use the same system for the names of Russian characters and places. In general this means that ё is converted to yo, -iy and -yy endings are simplified to -y, and apostrophes are omitted for ъ and ѣ.

I have not included the original Russian for quotations which are not taken from the primary texts under discussion. For example, in my chapter on Tolstoy's works I provide quotations from his novels and short stories in both the original Russian and in English translation, but quotations from his diary appear only in R.F. Christian's English translation.

Introduction

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a number of important books were written about the role of women writers in Russia. Joe Andrew's book, *Women in Russian Literature, 1780-1863* was published in 1983. In this text Andrew considered major works of Russian literature from a feminist viewpoint, contending that his chosen texts operated as part of a process of social control, by which women's voices were both suppressed and women were persuaded actively to consent to their own subordination.¹ He discussed works by Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Nickolay Gogol, Ivan Turgenev and Nickolay Chernyshevsky which were written during the formative period of Russian realism – approximately between the Decembrist Revolt in 1825 and the Emancipation of Serfs in 1861.² Andrew focused his analysis on prominent male writers to demonstrate that within Russian culture women were rarely portrayed from a female perspective, and male writers generally did not understand women, and therefore were unable to provide realistic representations of them.³ Despite this weakness, the assumed universality of these well-known writers has remained unchallenged for many decades, even though they are written from a specific, embodied, male perspective.⁴

Barbara Heldt's *Terrible Perfection* was published four years later, in 1987, drawing attention to the many Russian female writers who had previously been overlooked by Western scholarship. Heldt analysed the work both of well-known male writers, such as Tolstoy and Chekhov, and lesser-known female writers such as Dashkova, Durova and Sokhanskaya, comparing the ways in which male and female writers portray women and femininity. She argued that for male writers, writing the powerful novels for which Russia became known in the West, 'woman' became a sort

¹ Andrew (1983), pp. 2 and 3. Full bibliographical information about this and all subsequent references to secondary sources are given in my bibliography. For the sake of clarity, fuller details about primary texts are given in footnotes.

² Ibid., p. 8.

³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

of paradigm or shorthand for a model of idealised perfection.⁵ Significantly, Heldt also pointed out the differences in tone and genre between writing by men and women. She found that works authored by female writers portrayed women in a more nuanced way, as rounded and developing people, rather than as a glorified ideal, but also that women tended to write texts that could be categorised as either autobiography or lyric poetry.⁶ Both of these key conclusions offered an alternative perspective on the traditional view of the canon of Russian literature known and studied in the West.⁷

Then, in 1994, Catriona Kelly published *A History of Russian Women's Writing*, which unlike Heldt's and Andrew's works, focused only on female-authored works. Kelly compared Russian culture to other European literary cultures, arguing that as elsewhere in Europe, the established culture worked to efface and suppress the work of women writers.⁸ Kelly's work was particularly concerned with the work of women who choose to write as women, using a feminine authorial persona. She argued that writing was seen as a traditionally male activity and, like Heldt, she contended that this led to a distortion in the way women were portrayed, given that the prominent literary representations of women and femininity were penned by men.⁹

Two years later Rosalind Marsh published *Gender and Russian Literature: New Perspectives* which applied previous research on Russian male writers to works written by women.¹⁰ Marsh reflected on how conclusions drawn about nineteenth-century texts can help us interpret twentieth-century texts – an approach I also use in this current research.¹¹ She found that themes of feminine

⁵ Heldt, p. 2.

⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷ Ibid., p. 160.

⁸ Kelly, p. 5.

⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰ Marsh, p. 1.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 4.

passivity, silence, confinement and hysteria can be found in modernist works, and that the female writers of these texts have responded in a variety of ways to these persistent stereotypes.¹²

Returning to the nineteenth century, and focusing on the portrayal by male writers of very specific type of female character, Svetlana Grenier's study of wards was published in 2001. In *Representing the Marginal Woman in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature: Personalism, Feminism and Polyphony* Grenier argued that ward characters were doubly coded as 'other'.¹³ As women they were in the position of the 'other' in a patriarchal society, but they were also marginal compared to other women as they were dependent on the charity of others for their physical needs, and for their social integration into the community.¹⁴ Grenier used Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue and polyphony to understand how these female ward characters were portrayed in nineteenth-century works of fiction.¹⁵ By applying these principles she was able to analyse the extent to which male authors endowed 'doubly-marginalised' ward characters with their own voice, enabling them to express their own thoughts, feelings and opinions in dialogue with other, less marginalised, personalities.¹⁶

Adele Marie Baker and Jehanne M. Gheith have also explored female marginalisation in Russian literature. In their book, *A History of Women's Writing in Russia*, published in 2002, they argue that in the past little attention has been given to the ways in which women articulate their own experience.¹⁷ Instead, descriptions of female experiences written by male authors have dominated cultural life and this has led to certain problematic images of female bodily experience being replicated in texts.¹⁸ In their Introduction to their collection of essays, Barker and Gheith use the

¹² Ibid., pp. 4 and 23.

¹³ Grenier, p. 7.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁷ Barker and Gheith, p. 7.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

example of the relationship between women and their bodies to illustrate this issue. They argue that women who are perceived to ‘dwell too much’ within their bodies, embracing the sensual and physical side of their personalities, are often coded as sexually provocative.¹⁹ On the other hand, women who ‘dwell too little’ within their bodies, avoiding sexuality, are seen as cold and barren.²⁰ Their collection of essays aimed to challenge these dominant, patriarchal interpretations of female experience by highlighting the ways in which women portray their own experiences in fictional texts, for example, by drawing their readers’ attention to important relationships, such as those between sisters, which arguably may be overlooked by male writers.²¹ Barker and Gheith’s work emphasises the shadow that patriarchal attitudes has cast over cultural expressions of women’s lives, by suggesting that the Russian female writing tradition is inseparable from the male tradition.²² Female writers must first respond to the images of femininity perpetuated by this dominant, masculine tradition, before they are able to assert their own subjective, artistic visions.

My dissertation builds on this body of work, developing Heldt’s assertion that within Russian literature ‘heroines are used lavishly in a discourse of male self-definition.’²³ I explore the portrayal of masculine identity formation in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Idiot* (1868), a selection of texts spanning Tolstoy’s career, including *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877), the *Red Cavalry* cycle of short stories (1926)²⁴ by Babel, *The Master and Margarita* by Bulgakov²⁵ and *Doctor Zhivago* by Pasternak (1957). My analysis of these works is informed by the narratological theory developed by Theresa de Lauretis, which I use in combination with work by other feminist theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. I aim to show how narrative is structured in an inherently patriarchal way which establishes particular functions for male and female characters, through the portrayal of masculinity

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 2 and 6.

²² Ibid., p. 2.

²³ Heldt, p. 2.

²⁴ The *Red Cavalry* stories were published individually in journals and newspapers between 1923 and 1925, and then as a collection in 1926. Babel added the final story, ‘Argamak’ to an edition published in 1931.

²⁵ The complicated publication history of this text means that no definitive publication date can be given.

and femininity. In this Introduction I summarise de Lauretis's theory, and outline some other key feminist arguments and approaches which have influenced this thesis. The essay which provides the theoretical focus for this thesis, 'Desire in Narrative' was written by de Lauretis in 1984. This year therefore marks the thirtieth year of its publication. I intend to demonstrate that, despite three decades passing since 'Desire in Narrative' was written, the framework it provides continues to shed new light on cultural works, even those such as *War and Peace* which is extremely well known and has been analysed by scholars from many viewpoints since its publication. By linking de Lauretis' work with those of critics and theorists who argue from different feminist positions I will demonstrate how her theory builds on, and differs from, other fruitful areas of feminist scholarship. In this Introduction, I plan to show in particular how writers such as Irigaray and Judith Butler can be used alongside de Lauretis in order to demonstrate the discursive nature of narrative, and how de Lauretis' narratological framework can be used to link the work of post-modern feminists, such as Hélène Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray with that of feminists such as Elaine Showalter who take a more pragmatic, rights-based approach to literary analysis.

De Lauretis builds on the approach of Propp, whose study of Russian folktales highlights the recurring plot of a hero who must complete quests in order to gain a reward.²⁶ Propp's argument focuses in particular on the initiation rites that male heroes undertake. He highlights the importance for the folktale of the hero's ritual death and re-birth.²⁷ De Lauretis builds on this approach to draw attention to the gender dynamic inherent in this standard plot. She argues that narrative is driven by masculine desire: 'the desire is Oedipus's, and though its object may be woman (or Truth or knowledge or power), its term of reference and address is man: man as social being and mythical subject, founder of the social order, and source of mimetic violence'.²⁸

²⁶ Propp (1984), p. 68.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ de Lauretis (1984), p. 112.

One of the purposes of my thesis is to debate the meaning of this ‘violence’. Physical violence towards women’s bodies is a theme that recurs throughout the texts I discuss, but I also think that de Lauretis’ framework highlights a more subtle violence. Throughout my analysis of the work of five different Russian writers, I consider the ways in which their focus on masculine quests and male development has the effect of repressing stories of female development. I interpret this denial of women’s need to change, to develop and have the freedom to move and transgress boundaries, as a form of mimetic violence.

The masculine hero, whose development into a coherent, unified personality, drives the narrative, must move through an enclosed space, or across a boundary, to complete his ‘quest’.²⁹ The space through which the hero moves is gendered as feminine and the hero is, necessarily, male. This approach identifies the tendency to perceive female characters as static and fixed, while male characters maintain their freedom to move physically and, perhaps more significantly, philosophically. De Lauretis argues that narrative is driven by the desire to develop strong masculine heroes who are whole, unified characters who are able to act rationally. The male character completes quests or trials in order to demonstrate that he is able to cross boundaries, and penetrate space.³⁰ This movement across boundaries is critical because it symbolises a sense of adventure, of stepping into the unknown and opening the self up to new possibilities. De Lauretis powerfully links the physical crossing of boundaries and moving between spaces with a sense of spiritual and intellectual change. I believe that this connection between a character’s movement across geographic spaces and their opportunities for spiritual growth and change can shed new light on the way literary characters develop throughout a novel.

²⁹ Throughout this thesis I use the terms ‘unified’ or ‘whole’ to signify the sense that a character, usually a male character, has resolved the internal conflicts within his psyche, and has established a clear, ordered sense of his identity. This generally mirrors the idea of a character growing in maturity, from acting unpredictably on childlike impulses to developing a stable personality. In my definition, a character may be said to be ‘unified’ or ‘whole’ if he has rejected personality traits he identifies as unhelpful and consistently incorporated personality traits he values into his self. When he can be said to act predictably in accordance with this set of traits, he is a ‘unified’ character. The opposite would be a ‘fragmented’ personality, which defines a character who has unresolved contradictions, leading them to act in confused, disorganised ways.

³⁰ de Lauretis (1984), p. 119.

In the terms of de Lauretis' theory the feminine is the space, or boundary that the masculine character transgresses: 'the obstacle, whatever its personification is morphologically female and indeed, simply, the womb.'³¹ This shows how the feminine is fixed and static, and 'not susceptible to transformation, to life or death; she (it) is an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix and matter.'³² The persistence of this image of the female in narrative structures reveals the powerlessness that is associated with femininity. One of the functions women fulfil in narrative is to wait for the male hero to penetrate them, symbolically or physically, as part of his journey. An important theme that recurs throughout this thesis is the symbolic and physical significance of this act of penetration.

Penetration of feminine space, and emergence from it, enables characters to experience transformation. The image of transformation has been significant for many theorists, including Marina Warner, who writes: 'the protagonist's true self generates itself in its proper character after undergoing several transformations; the longer transformation of their circumstances and the appearance of the person's fullness of being unfolded through several smaller transformations'.³³ Although in this quotation Warner is referring to transformation undergone by both heroes and heroines, in this dissertation I examine de Lauretis' contention that female 'fullness of being' (to use Warner's term) is hidden in traditional narratives.

According to de Lauretis, when the hero successfully completes his quest, and is transformed, the woman must fulfil another narratological function – she is the prize waiting for him when he has emerged as a whole, unified character. This function also relies on the passivity of the woman and her willingness both to wait for the hero and to conform to his idea of a suitable prize. In this way,

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Warner (2004), p. 85.

the female journey towards a 'fullness of being' remains unexplored as the narrative is driven by the progress of the male character from a boy into a fully developed masculine hero.

De Lauretis's approach of identifying movement as masculine and enclosed space, or boundaries, as feminine builds on established perceptions of gender characteristics. Gender has traditionally been seen as one of many dualisms in Western culture. For example, Toril Moi points out some of the dualisms coded as 'masculine' or 'feminine' by psychologists. She lists 'aggressive, ambitious, assertive and independent' as masculine qualities and 'affectionate, childlike, gentle and understanding' as female characteristics.³⁴ This duality is seen by Jaggar as inherently oppressive, particularly for women, because it is based on an assessment of what are valuable characteristics for those performing public roles, that is, for men.³⁵

These masculine characteristics are perceived as more valuable, as the first characteristic in each pair (e.g., light/dark, masculine/feminine) is afforded more value. I would argue, therefore, that the characteristics defined as 'feminine' are perceived as holding less value for two reasons. The action of identifying them as features which should be rejected from the masculine subject in itself deems feminine characteristics less valuable as they are rejected from those persons who fulfil powerful roles in the public sphere, and are relegated to the domestic, private environment. But, maybe more significantly, the method of defining what is feminine against a pre-existing masculine ideal shows, as Irigaray argues, that woman is the sex which is not one because femininity cannot exist without the established masculine 'norm'.³⁶ De Lauretis develops Irigaray's argument by suggesting that women are a paradox in discourse because they are often spoken about, but are inaudible as

³⁴ Moi (1999), p. 103.

³⁵ Jaggar (1983), p. 28.

³⁶ As discussed in Butler (1990), p. 103.

subjects in their own right. Their being is 'simultaneously asserted and denied, negated and controlled'.³⁷

Analysing the ways in which duality informs and restricts perceptions of women and femininity has been very productive for feminists. Irigaray, for example, points to the importance of wholeness for masculine identity. She argues that the fear of death and disintegration causes men to transfer images of disintegration and absence onto women and that this is one reason why female bodies are often perceived as fragmented.³⁸ She suggests that while male bodies are seen as unified, female bodies are often thought of as a collection of disconnected parts.³⁹ Butler supports this argument, contending that clearly defined, autonomous, masculine beings constitute political subjects.⁴⁰ Femininity, on the other hand, symbolises a subject who exists before the 'law', and who does not have the same legitimacy.⁴¹ In the terms of de Lauretis' theory this means that the male hero may begin his quest as a young boy, unsure of his identity, but he is expected to emerge from the feminised space having marginalised the fragmented, feminised aspects of himself thus becoming established as 'human being and as male ... the active principle of culture'.⁴² This image of a male character with a fragmented, split, or confused sense of self who works towards a more integrated personality, a self which has resolved its internal contradictions, recurs repeatedly throughout the texts I discuss in subsequent chapters. For example, at the beginning of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Pierre Bezuhov lives a disordered life, with no real sense of direction, but he explores the intellectual and spiritual ideas of Freemasonry, and journeys across Russia to battlefields where he is captured and comes close to death. The end of the narrative sees him settled and leading a domestic life, having resolved the deep philosophical questions which occupied him as a young man. Likewise, Babel's *Red Cavalry* portrays a central male character, Lyutov, who travels with a group of Cossacks. He is a sensitive, intellectual man who is both drawn to the Cossacks' intuitive,

³⁷ De Lauretis (1990), p. 1.

³⁸ Discussed in Whitford (1991), p. 107.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Butler (1990), p. 2.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴² De Lauretis (1984), p. 119.

unreflective way of living and also repelled by their brutality and violence. I will argue that the text of *Red Cavalry* can also be seen as driven by the male character's desire to resolve inconsistencies within his own self and understand himself as having a single, coherent identity.

The importance of masculine intellectual understanding points to another significant duality in patriarchal thought, namely, the association of women with the body and men with the mind. This duality is at the root of biological determinism which assumes that a woman's most important role is maternal and that she is fixed in this position both by social expectations, and, as psychoanalysts may argue, as a psychological response to penis envy. Rosemarie Tong, for instance, summarises Sigmund Freud's argument: 'at first the girl desires to have her father's penis, but gradually she begins to desire something even more precious – a baby, which for her is the ultimate penis substitute'.⁴³ The association of women with their physical bodies is also important sexually as it reinforces the masculine desire for women as objects of sexuality. Fixing women in this static role as objects of the male gaze works to reinforce perceptions of women, as other aspects of their personalities (for example, intellect and creativity) are overlooked. It also presents women as being in need of relationships with others in order to affirm their individual subjectivity.

This is another example of the 'splitting' of female personalities which predicates the progress of male characters towards unified, whole masculine identities. The dualistic division of qualities into masculine and feminine categories is also significant because it indicates the way in which subjects gain social legitimisation. By this I mean that it is necessary to function in a particular way in order to be considered as an individual, autonomous person in the public sphere. Braidotti, for example, points to Freud's definition of a 'rational subject' as one who is able to influence the ways in which he is perceived by others, to gaze at others (seeing them as objects) and ignore the affective,

⁴³ Tong, p. 133.

libidinal and conscious bases governing his relation to knowing.⁴⁴ This implies that rational subjects must have a degree of philosophical distance from those who are the objects of their ‘gazing’.

De Beauvoir has suggested that men assume a ‘universal’ status in this way. By being seen as the original state of humanity, and the standard by which women are compared and defined, they are assumed to represent universal principles.⁴⁵ Women, and the ‘feminine’ on the other hand, are seen to represent the ‘fixed’ aspects of human experience, which are rooted in time and space and particular to certain situations. This is reflected in arguments that emphasise the primacy of the female body and the experience of women of being trapped and restricted by their bodily experiences. One pertinent example of this, which resonates throughout the texts under discussion, is the persistence of coercion and sexual abuse in the stories of female characters. For example, as a young girl, Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina is dependent on her aunt and she is persuaded for financial reasons to marry a man who is many years older than her. Dostoevsky’s Sonya is forced to work as a prostitute to support her siblings, and both Nastasya in *The Idiot* and Maslova in Tolstoy’s *Resurrection* are sexually taken advantage of when they are young women. Their unequal sexual experiences have profound consequences for the rest of their lives. These themes continue in twentieth-century works. Babel describes rape as a seemingly natural, unremarkable aspect of day-to-day life, and Pasternak portrays Lara as a victim of Komarovsky’s aggressive sexuality.

This persistent theme of female vulnerability to masculine sexuality reinforces patriarchal images of women as rooted to their bodily experiences and unable to transcend them. Masculine characters, on the other hand, are more rarely portrayed as victims of physical or sexual assault, and when they are, there is little evidence in the texts I discuss that experiences of assault define

⁴⁴ Braidotti, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Discussed in Butler (1990), p. 9.

the personality of male characters. Instead their focus on intellectual freedom enables them to move beyond the body.

As part of the process of maintaining a masculine personality, then, the subject must continually engage in a process of identifying and purging 'feminine' and feminising aspects of his self. Arguably this process is reflected in literature as the symbolic entrance into feminine spaces, emergence from the space and, ultimately, the reward of a female 'prize' when the hero's journey ends. In this way, the development of masculine characters may be seen as a continuous practice. As de Lauretis argues: "'femininity' and 'masculinity' are never fully attained or fully relinquished'.⁴⁶ However, as we have seen, the power to define what is masculine, and therefore, what is 'other' or 'feminine', lies with male subjects. Rosi Braidotti argues convincingly from this viewpoint, suggesting that the crisis of modernity is really a crisis in the masculine subject's self-perception.⁴⁷ The 'subject' constructed by Western philosophy is based on masculine characteristics, such as cerebralism and rationalism, and this is achieved by 'othering' feminine characteristics and thus eliminating them from the philosophical subject. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White point out that dominant groups try to reject and eliminate undesirable groups to enhance their prestige and status, but paradoxically find that they are dependent on these qualities for their own identity, as they define themselves in comparison to these 'others'.⁴⁸ This psychological dependence on those who are opposed and excluded at a social level is reflected in the marginalised aspects of the male psyche which are identified and highlighted under the gaze of feminists. This, argues Braidotti, creates a sense of crisis as the subject becomes aware of the aspects of his personality it is necessary to marginalise in order to maintain a unified, whole masculine persona.⁴⁹ She likens this process to that of psychoanalysis in which the conflicts which underpin the patient's psyche are identified and discussed.

⁴⁶ De Lauretis (1984), p. 142.

⁴⁷ Braidotti, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Stallybrass and White, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Braidotti, p. 35.

The image of masculine subjects as striving to be whole and coherent is used by Cixous to suggest that writing can be thought of as gendered. She argues that unified subjects can be found in texts which are generally written from a single, clearly defined, phallogocentric viewpoint.⁵⁰ This form of writing arguably marginalises feminine creativity and the tendency to speak from many voices and gives prominence to masculine rationality and transcendence. Cixous therefore theorises about the importance of developing feminine forms of writing. She points to the portrayal of the female body as fragmented, in comparison to the male phallus, which is seen as whole and unified.⁵¹ This perception of sexual organs is also used to understand narrative structure, with ‘phallic’ writing being understood as linear and coherent, while ‘feminine writing’ is free-flowing and cyclical rather than linear, often including a variety of narrative voices and operating on different temporal and spatial levels.

The desire which drives writing itself, and narrative, can therefore be perceived as masculine. De Lauretis clearly associates the patriarchal formation of meaning with the ability of masculine heroes to move physically and symbolically through narrative. Masculine characters can produce meanings and identifications through their transgression of boundaries, while women, as a result of their static roles, have no access to these semiotic laws and therefore cannot transform them.⁵² Just as patriarchy controls which subjects are accepted as valid and able to function in society, her implication seems to be that, by the same mechanism, plots and texts are recognised as valuable only if they conform to a preconceived notion of what a ‘plot’ or a ‘text’ is. This would explain why the plot of masculine development seems to dominate so many narrative works, precluding a more diverse range of narrative structures.

⁵⁰ Discussed in Ives, p. 84.

⁵¹ Moi (1988), p. 67.

⁵² De Lauretis (1984), p. 35

Propp contended that folklore could be likened to language in so far as it is invented by no one person and it changes in a regular way.⁵³ He also highlighted the importance of perception in the development of folklore arguing that ‘characters behave in one way or another not because things actually happened so, but because this is how they were perceived according to the laws of primitive thought’.⁵⁴ This suggestion seems to anticipate Michel Foucault’s theory of the role of discourse. The discursive role of narrative is a key concept in this thesis as I will consider the ways in which the typical narratological structure makes some actions seem possible to characters, while other roles and actions are forbidden. It is perhaps only possible to see how structured narrative is, and how fixed male and female literary roles are, when a number of texts are viewed together from this perspective.

Foucault’s work is problematic for many feminists because it does not acknowledge the impact of gender on power. Even in his analysis of sexuality Foucault does not reflect upon the way women’s bodies and sexualities are constructed in different ways from those of men, seemingly assuming that power subjugates everyone in similar ways.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Jana Sawicki points to the relevance of Foucault’s arguments for a consideration of the ways in which power works in subtle, cultural ways, to form identities and behaviours. She argues that Foucault’s suggestion that all positions are maintained by suppressing differences and uncertainties is a useful theoretical standpoint for feminists.⁵⁶

Any consideration of texts from a post-modern feminist perspective must address the concerns of feminists who argue from an Anglo-American perspective. Brenda Lyons refers to this debate as the ‘standard split’ in feminist literary thought.⁵⁷ For the purposes of my thesis, it is useful to frame

⁵³ Propp (1984), p. 7.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁵ Discussed in Sawicki, p. 49.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.102.

⁵⁷ Lyons, p. 340.

this complex debate in the different approaches to marginalised characters employed by proponents of these perspectives. Feminists described as Anglo-American, such as Showalter, are concerned primarily with the political and economic rights of female literary characters, and they discuss the ways in which characters are able to determine their own destinies.⁵⁸ For example, Showalter demonstrates how water symbolism is used in Victorian literature to give a sense of how women struggled to feel in control of their lives and emotions.⁵⁹ This approach has clearly been informed by the struggle for political and economic rights for 'real' women. In this way, the traditional patriarchal value system is not critiqued. It is accepted that self-control and independence are good qualities and attempts are made to demonstrate that female characters are as self-controlled, as independent, as powerful as their male counterparts, or at least that within their socio-economic context, they assert themselves in a courageous way that pushes boundaries. Lyons refers to this approach as 'bourgeois, traditional-humanist'.⁶⁰

Post-modern feminists, however, base their arguments on psychoanalytical readings and argue that the approach of Anglo-American feminists does not sufficiently challenge the existing construction of political subjects and citizens. They question the assumption that the most productive approach to ensure true freedom and liberation for women is to grant them the same rights as men. Instead, they argue that by questioning the semiotic order and the laws which define and value masculine and feminine characteristics, women may be able to discover a new, truly feminine way of 'being' and engaging with the world. In this way, femininity and previously negated values are recognised as having value and being equal with the characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity. The debate between the post-modern and Anglo-American feminist schools of thought is discussed in detail by Moi, who is critical of the theoretical approach taken by Anglo-American feminists, because of their uncritical acceptance of liberal humanism.⁶¹ Moi singles out Showalter in

⁵⁸ Moi (1988), p. 6.

⁵⁹ Showalter (1987), p. 131.

⁶⁰ Lyons, p. 340.

⁶¹ Moi (1988), p. 8.

particular, claiming that her suggestion that the reader should remain detached from the narrative strategies employed by female writers (to concentrate instead on the actions and destinies of the characters) equates to not reading texts at all.⁶²

One of the strengths of de Lauretis' narratological framework is that it provides a way to consider these two strands of feminist thought in a complementary and interconnected way, and not as two opposing approaches. Its focus on underlying symbols and patterns fits naturally alongside work by Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixous, and together with these theorists, it will enable me to analyse the symbolic role that female characters play in the development of masculine heroes. The fixed, static quality of many female characters is linked to their lesser economic and political power, however, and I will aim to demonstrate that it is also reinforced and endowed with a repetitive quality by the symbolic role women play in narratives. Despite my focus on a post-modern feminist approach, I hope also to demonstrate that this approach is enhanced by using it in conjunction with an understanding of the way social, economic and political elements of women's lives are expressed in literature. As Foucault argues, maintaining that there is a strict distinction between literary and philosophical institutions is 'to be fundamentally mistaken about how power functions.'⁶³ This dissertation will explore how patriarchal patterns in the portrayal of gender in narrative are made possible and reinforced by the easily recognisable image of women as prostitutes, mothers and wives. The importance of deconstructing the link between biological sex and gender characteristics is highlighted by Dorothy Dinnerstein's work on the importance of sharing caring roles for children so that girls and boys can learn equally from both sets of gender characteristics.⁶⁴ She argues that changing the roles which are traditionally played by men and women could help to stop ambivalence about carnality and mortality being projected onto women.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., p. 10.

⁶³ Discussed in Braidotti, p. 62.

⁶⁴ Dinnerstein, pp. 59-66.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

For example, the inter-connectedness of the two theoretical perspectives influences my analysis of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* where I suggest that while Nastasya is able to exert more influence than most female characters on the novel's plot, to argue that this is a victory for feminism is problematic because she is ultimately murdered at the hands of a man, Rogozhin. This juxtaposition between seeming female power and male violence towards women is a recurring theme. It also occurs in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* in which Sonya is endowed with the spiritual authority to persuade Raskolnikov to confess his crime. The novel's plot is, however, driven by the brutal murder of two women. While I accept Moi's criticism of Anglo-American feminism, I am also concerned to highlight the possibility that an over-reliance on post-modern feminist approaches may detract attention away from the violence and oppression that female characters must face in their quotidian lives.

De Lauretis' framework is therefore useful in drawing links and highlighting commonalities between different feminist approaches and arguments. This connection between the social situation of women, their intellectual freedom and their ability to express themselves artistically is explored by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, but it has not fully been addressed in the current criticism of works by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Babel, Bulgakov and Pasternak. It is, arguably, crucial to feminism to begin viewing women as whole beings, having social and private, internal lives and not as 'fetishised', divided creatures, described by Mulvey.⁶⁶ De Lauretis' work enables us to draw links between fictional women's sense of their intellectual wholeness and freedom (compared to their male counterparts) and their experiences in the 'real' world of the text – namely sexual exploitation, pressure to marry, and lives driven by the roles of wives and mothers.

I also believe that de Lauretis' approach should be applied to my selection of texts because her theory raises the question of *why* female characters are sometimes shown as having power. The

⁶⁶ Mulvey, p. 22.

ability of masculine authority both to marginalise feminine characteristics and also to define what is valuable and authentic in women's experience, is crucial in an analysis of the way in which male characters interact with their female counterparts. It allows them to perceive women both as static spaces for them to enter and transgress, and as helpmates rather than as equals. This is demonstrated in work by both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Dostoevsky's Sonya is a spiritual influence on Raskolnikov and enables him to confess his crime, seek forgiveness and embark on a new life. Tolstoy's Pierre has an encounter with a peasant, Platon, which causes him to re-evaluate his life. This experience is linked to re-birth because it follows on directly from Pierre's mock execution. While Platon is a male character, his spirituality can be seen as feminised and closely connected with physicality. I will return to this idea of feminised male characters and masculinised female characters later in this Introduction. Both Sonya and Platon could be described as strong, powerful feminine characters. However, in this thesis I consider whether this analysis masks the freedoms that the masculine heroes are granted in contrast to the fixed, static nature of their feminine counterparts. I highlight the importance de Lauretis' theory implicitly attaches to the concepts of freedom and independence. Although women and feminised characters are frequently portrayed in positive ways in the texts I discuss, they are overwhelmingly positioned as helpmates in narratives which focus on masculine development. In other words, I question whether positive, strong women are described in these fictional works as strong, knowledgeable, spiritual or confident *for their own sake*, or because these are the qualities their male counterparts need in order to achieve their aims. De Lauretis' argument that masculine desire drives narrative therefore asks feminists to fully interrogate the presence of a 'strong' woman in a text; to consider whether the actions of 'strong' female characters support her own intellectual and spiritual development, or suggest she is acting only as a hero's helpmate.

Post-modern feminism also provides a useful analytical perspective because the point is often made that female characters sometimes exhibit masculine characteristics and that male characters sometimes have feminine qualities. As my dissertation is concerned with the ways femininity and

masculinity function as qualities, I will use the technique of ‘floating the signifier’ as Moi terms this use of femininity and masculinity as independent from biologically-sexed bodies.⁶⁷ I think that this is a valuable approach because it allows us to consider the powerful symbolic role of gendered qualities in determining the actions of characters within plots. In particular, this technique will enable me to analyse the role of the feminine in Dostoevsky’s characterisation of Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* and Pasternak’s portrayal of Zhivago in *Doctor Zhivago*. Conversely, I will consider ways in which Anna Karenina acts as a masculine hero in Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*. ‘Floating the signifier’ and considering femininity and masculinity as not necessarily associated with female and male bodies is valuable because it allows us to examine closely the way in which these two gendered positions are defined in relationship with each other. Rando, for instance, argues that the concept of gender is defined in terms of relationships and counter-distinctions.⁶⁸ Thus, femininity and masculinity cannot exist as concepts without each other. This is an important point, although, as we have seen, most feminist thinkers go further and argue that rather than being equal concepts, femininity is dependent on masculinity in the sense that it is the repository of the qualities which are rejected or marginalised from the definition of masculinity. In patriarchy, qualities which are valued are attributed to men and viewed as masculine, while those which are not seen as important or valuable are labelled as feminine.

Nonetheless, the dependence of gender on relationships is crucial because it is the interaction of (fictional) men and women with each other and with members of the same sex that is the site of this process of forming characters. This involves learning to play the gender roles that are assigned to each person or character by their biological sex. Butler, for example, points to the way that the gendering of characteristics performs the function of establishing and reinforcing heterosexuality.⁶⁹ This is an important argument because heterosexuality, that is the relationship between the main female and male characters in a text, underpins de Lauretis’s narratological theory. Her portrayal of

⁶⁷ Discussed in Kelly, p. 7.

⁶⁸ Rando, p. 51.

⁶⁹ Butler (1990), p. 17.

a masculine character both descending into a feminised space and then gaining a woman as a prize rests on the assumption of heterosexuality. As femininity and masculinity are positions which must be constantly re-affirmed the relationship between the two, that is, heterosexuality, is fundamental to the process of defining both positions. Butler's contention that presumed heterosexuality is oppressive, particularly for women, is valuable because it shows how patriarchy is continually embedded in real life intimate relationships. If women are given no alternatives to heterosexuality, but move straight from being under the authority of their father, to their husband, it is perhaps unsurprising that patriarchy is so deeply rooted in Western culture.⁷⁰ For this reason, Monique Wittig highlights the role of lesbianism in transgressing the social code which fixes women in the role of 'prizes' for men in patriarchal exchanges.⁷¹

Although Butler writes about the value of lesbianism as a sexual relationship, I think that for the purposes of my dissertation it is important to extend her concept to female relationships with other women, whether or not there is a sexual element. This is pertinent to the texts I will study because many of the female characters who fulfil the role of 'boundary' or 'space' for the male characters are isolated from the support of female friends or family members. Dostoevsky's Sonya, for example, lacks a positive maternal relationship, as her own mother died when she was young, and her step-mother goaded her into prostitution to help the family survive financially. Anna becomes increasingly alienated from female characters such as Dolly, and Lara appears to have no contact with her mother after her marriage to Pasha and subsequent travels around Russia. This lack of female support is significant for an analysis of female characters from de Lauretis' narratological approach because it shows how, without strong, supportive relationships, female characters are less likely to be able to develop strong personalities and a definite sense of self which would enable them to withstand masculine attempts to objectify them as a 'space' or 'boundary'.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 40-1.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 113.

Throughout this thesis I consider the significance of being 'parentless'. I explore how this is experienced differently by male and female characters. In descriptions of the development of masculine characters, the lack of parents might signify freedom and independence associated with a lack of constraints and the ties of the past. However, for women, as Kristeva's work indicates, the lack of positive mother-daughter relationships is less likely to lead to female characters having a sense of freedom to re-invent, and transform, themselves.⁷² Indeed the absence of supportive mothering relationships might be one reason why female characters are less likely to develop individual, unique personalities. In this thesis I demonstrate that the characterisation of female protagonists in the texts under discussion reinforces this cultural tendency. I also debate whether the characterisation of women in literature as alike, or sharing essential qualities, enables the plot of masculine development because this focuses narrative attention on the hero's journey and particularly on his freedom to continue moving beyond feminine constraints.

The difficult relationship between mothers and daughters is an important feminist concern, particularly for Kristeva. She argues that in order to become a whole, masculine, transcendent subject (and enter the symbolic order), it is necessary to reject the mother's body as it carries a set of meanings which are prior to culture.⁷³ Within this thesis, I point to the drive to kill, or otherwise suppress the female, sometimes maternal, body in masculine narrative. Sometimes this is brutal murder, in the case of the elderly pawnbroker whom Raskolnikov kills, or the violent death of Nastasya at Rogozhin's hands. Sometimes women are simply absent from the text, as in *Red Cavalry* which features very few female characters. Those who are there are ignored by powerful male characters. Characters such as Lara support the male hero to the end of his quest and then narratologically disappear when they are no longer needed. Others, such as Sonya and Margarita, share the fate of the male hero, both acting as his reward and, in effect, continuing their roles as helpmates.

⁷² Kristeva in Moi (1986), pp. 187-213, here p. 205. See also Cornell (1991), p. 7.

⁷³ Discussed in Braidotti, p. 80.

In the 'real' world, outside of literature, feminist theorists arguing from a psychoanalytic perspective suggest that this drive to reject the maternal body is harmful for developing female personalities. For Butler, it places girls in an impossible position as they must constantly choose whether to identify with the maternal body, with which they naturally identify as it is similar to their own, or with the phallus, which is foreign to them, but allows access to the symbolic order.⁷⁴ Cixous has also suggested that in the current patriarchal order it is very difficult for women to have equal, reciprocal relationships with each other because they are in constant competition for affirmation.⁷⁵ She argues for a feminist approach to otherness, rejecting the masculine tendency to think in terms of hierarchies. Daly agrees that patriarchy's approach to 'othering' is problematic:

The image of the person in authority and the accepted understanding of 'his' role has corresponded to the eternal masculine stereotype which implies hyper-rationality (in reality, frequently reducible to pseudo-rationality), 'objectivity', aggressivity, the possession of dominating and manipulative attitudes toward persons and the environment, *and the tendency to construct boundaries between the self (and those identified with the self) and 'the Other'* (emphasis mine).⁷⁶

The interconnected themes outlined above recur frequently in my analysis of nineteenth- and twentieth-century works of fiction. The texts I have chosen to examine include key Russian works by well-known writers which, with the partial exemption of Babel's *Red Cavalry*, have been the subject of much critical scholarly attention in the English-speaking world. This has enabled me to

⁷⁴ Butler (1990), p. 47.

⁷⁵ Cixous in Marks and de Courtivron, p. 248.

⁷⁶ Daly (1973), p. 15.

reflect upon the fresh insights de Lauretis' narratological approach can offer, even in areas which are already well-trodden.

Applying de Lauretis' approach to Russian texts, rather than English or American texts, seems particularly apt as her theory develops Propp's work on folktales which was written within the context of Russian cultural history. One of the ways Propp distinguishes folklore from literature is by arguing that while works of literature have a single, recognisable author, folklore is a verbal tradition and does not have a single originator.⁷⁷ Maitland has recently reflected on how tales evolve and change with each new telling, as the storyteller adds elements, or emphasises different aspects to reflect their own opinions and experiences, or the needs of the audience to whom they are recounting the story.⁷⁸ Despite the changes that each tale undergoes as it is retold time and time again, Propp highlights the 'distinctive poetics' of folklore, and the repetitions and patterns which can be traced in the stories when large samples are systematically compared.⁷⁹ Russian fiction is a rich arena for applying theories based on symbols, images and tropes. This is demonstrated by the enduring power of images of the 'superfluous man' in Russian literature and by Rutten's publication in 2012 of her analysis of the image of Russia as a bride caught in a 'love triangle' with the West as a suitor and the Russian state as a 'superfluous man'.⁸⁰

The texts chosen for my thesis demonstrate the recurrence of particular roles, or 'functions' to use Propp's terminology, performed by characters. Similar roles appear to be played by male and female characters in texts as chronologically far apart as Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. Characters also appear to perform 'gendered' roles as 'hero' and 'helpmate' in texts separated by great social change and cultural attitudes. Comparing Russian

⁷⁷ Propp (1984), pp. 6 and 7.

⁷⁸ Maitland, p. 15.

⁷⁹ Propp (1984), p. 6.

⁸⁰ Rutten, p. 4.

works from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrates the persistence of these patterns of gendered characterisations, despite other profound changes in cultural outlooks.

The selection of texts I analyse throughout this dissertation were chosen originally because they have particularly religious, or spiritual, themes. I intended to investigate the ways in which female characters enable male heroes to achieve religious wholeness and unity. This theme does recur throughout the following chapters, but only as part of a broader discussion of the intellectual and personal development of masculine heroes. I found during my research that de Lauretis' ideas had not been incorporated into debates about the gender portrayals of these texts to any great extent.⁸¹

The realisation that this particular theoretical perspective had not yet been fully examined led me to trace the ways in which de Lauretis' image of male characters entering into female spaces and emerging reborn recurs throughout the works under discussion. Rather than compare works by both male and female writers, as I originally intended, I have focused instead on works by five male writers. I had anticipated that a comparison between the work of male and female writers would show that female authors had a greater sensitivity towards the development of female characters and would use their experiences to portray the ways in which women change and grow into maturity. I originally intended to use work by nineteenth-century writers such as Gan and Tur, together with poetry written by the twentieth-century poet Akhmatova, to question whether feminine growth and development were perceived, and portrayed, differently by male and female writers. I also anticipated that these writers would enable me to consider in detail whether female characters are generally seen as having closer, more dependent and interlinked emotional relationships with each other. I wanted to examine the possibility of portraying a strong, independent female character who was committed to her own development and growth, while also fulfilling a supportive and nurturing role within her family and social network. This kind of well-rounded, developed feminine character is, as this thesis will show, rarely portrayed, as the needs of the masculine characters are often given primacy, relegating female characters to positions of

⁸¹ With the exception of Andrew (both 1993 and 2007).

‘helpmate’. Studying the work of female writers to establish whether this theme also appears in female-authored work would be a very valuable area for future research.

Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Bulgakov and Pasternak have been the subjects of a large body of academic research, and while there has arguably been less scholarly interest in Babel, his work is known and studied in detail by eminent academics such as Angela Livingstone and Patricia Carden. By focussing on writers who are the subjects of an extensive body of criticism, available in English, I have been able to build upon existing theories and analyses to suggest ways in which de Lauretis’ framework can bring new explanations and understanding to the narratives. In many cases I have slightly extended arguments that have already been made, demonstrating that de Lauretis’ theory represents a continuation of these theoretical points. This, I believe, validates her ideas as it places her contribution within the context of an existing, recognised body of work. Some of the work I refer to is written by feminist scholars, although I also draw on work by critics who would not identify themselves as ‘feminists’.

The second reason for my focus on canonised (male) writers, is that their influence on each other’s work sheds light on the process of intertextuality, by which themes and patterns recur in a way that might, perhaps, be seen as similar to the development of tropes in the oral folktales studied by Propp. In written works of literature, however, it is easier, though by no means straightforward, to assess the various influences on an author. My first two chapters consider works by two important nineteenth-century writers – Dostoevsky and Tolstoy – whose work influenced future generations of writers both in Russia and in the Western world. This influence is significant, because it helps to show how ideas about the roles of the masculine and the feminine in narrative become such a deeply embedded part of discourse that they are no longer noticed. In ‘Quests, Journeys and Trials: Dostoevsky’s Use of Female Spaces and Bodies in his Development of Masculine Characters’ I show how in *Crime and Punishment* Raskolnikov engages in a masculine quest, defined by

masculine goals, and encounters Sonya as both a helpmate (or ‘donor’ to use Propp’s term) and as a prize. After analysing this narrative which features the murder of a woman in the pursuit of the male hero’s goals, I move on to consider Myshkin’s characterisation in *The Idiot*, another novel which portrays the violent death of a female character. Myshkin is a feminised character, while Nastasya can in some ways be seen as a masculine character, although the sexual exploitation she experienced as a young woman shows her embodiment as a female character, especially as this abuse seems to contribute to some of her character traits, such as her unpredictability. In this first chapter I reflect on the consequences of Myshkin’s femininity for his development as a character who can act clearly and decisively. In my second chapter, ‘Female “Heroes” and Self-determination: Tolstoy’s Portrayal of Women in his Major Novels and Short Stories’, I draw examples from a diverse range of Tolstoy’s works, including short stories and major novels, to highlight the persistence of images of static female characters in his work. *Family Happiness* and *The Kreutzer Sonata* are examples drawn from near the beginning and approaching the end of Tolstoy’s creative life, but both show how the desires of female characters are negated in order to ensure that the masculine characters’ needs for security and stability are met through their marriages. I also consider ways in which the development of masculine heroes drives narratives such as *War and Peace*, *Resurrection*, and *Father Sergius*. In these narratives I reflect on how male characters change and develop throughout the texts, in their searches for intellectual understanding, spiritual peace, or absolution from their pasts. The theme of spiritual peace also recurs in *Anna Karenina* in the story of Levin, which is juxtaposed with that of Anna. I ask whether there is value in considering Anna as a masculine hero, and whether her quest can be said to be successful in any way.

In the second part of this thesis I show how images of masculine quests and female spaces are portrayed in twentieth-century texts. I begin, in my third chapter, ‘Making Sense of Chaos: The Role of Cerebral Understanding in Babel’s Development of the Male Hero’, by considering Babel’s cycle of short stories, *Red Cavalry*. I argue that the narrator, Lyutov, can be seen as a central male

character who unifies the otherwise fragmented narrative. Viewing Babel's work in this way will enable me to demonstrate how he uses his encounters with the Cossacks, and with other feminised characters, to develop and 'move' intellectually towards a unified personality. This is a critical chapter and its position at the mid-point of my thesis is significant because it highlights a change in the focus of masculine quests between the nineteenth- and the twentieth-century texts. In the texts by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the focus seems to be on the action male heroes are able to undertake, and their ability to use relationships with other characters in order to transform themselves. In some cases, their quests involve the murder of women, or attempts to protect women from harm, as in *Resurrection* and *The Idiot*. In *The Master and Margarita* and *Doctor Zhivago*, however, artistic expression and the ability to create long-lasting texts give male heroes a sense of purpose and form their quests. *Red Cavalry* seems to sit astride these two types of quest, with Lyutov aspiring to achieve both physical and artistic aims.

My chapters on Bulgakov's and Pasternak's novels will shed light on the way masculine characters are shown to develop their personalities in texts written in Soviet Russia. This period was characterised by the persecution of artists and writers and provoked intense fear and anxiety as can be seen in the biographical writings of Nadezhda Mandelstam and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.⁸² I point to the importance of artistic expression and freedom for both Bulgakov's Master and for Pasternak's Yuri Zhivago. In 'Fantastic Flights: The Role of Feminine Supernatural Powers and the Endurance of a Male-Authored Text in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*', I consider Bulgakov's portrayal of Margarita as a strong, confident female character, reflecting on the extent to which her characterisation remains dependent on the male hero's needs, despite her relative strength when she is compared to other women in this study. In my final chapter, 'Immortality Through Poetry: Male Journeys and Female Nurturing in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*', I show similarities between the relationship between Lara and Zhivago and Dostoevsky's characterisation

⁸² For example, Mandelstam, N. *Hope Abandoned* (1972) and *Hope Against Hope* (1975) and Solzhenitsyn, A. *Gulag Archipelago*.

of Sonya as a helpmate or donor for Raskolnikov. This will enable me to demonstrate the persistence of the image of masculine heroes entering into feminine spaces, and emerging re-born. The twentieth-century works will also evidence changes in the focus of masculine quests in the texts I discuss. Lyutov is an intellectual and he uses stories and vivid, imaginative metaphors to record his experiences, but he also wants to learn to ride a horse and he craves the ability to kill. However, Yury Zhivago's entire quest seems to be his capacity to communicate authentically through his poetry, and the Master's quest lies in his completion of his novel.

As I discuss each of these five writers in chronological order, I will identify the ways in which a patriarchal view of gender is repeated in these texts, recognising the tendency to perform the same gender roles mimetically. As Braidotti argues, there is a need to undo the meaning of texts, to pursue them 'beyond their purported reasons to secrets, silences, limits, margins of the production of meaning'.⁸³ By considering the ways in which texts place women as the space for masculine characters to pass through, and also as prizes for men when they complete their quests, this dissertation will try to locate the feminine in each work. I will consider in particular how narrative works discursively to construct masculine characters as the normal, dominant form of subject. This construction requires a constant process of marginalisation, not only of women and female characters, but also of femininity itself.

⁸³ Braidotti, p. 99.

1. Quests, Journeys and Trials: Dostoevsky's Use of Female Spaces and Bodies in his Development of Masculine Characters

Crime and Punishment was written by Dostoevsky in 1866 and is the story of a poor, alienated student who murders a pawnbroker and her sister. In this chapter, I argue that Raskolnikov sets a quest for himself, inspired by the idea that some people are extraordinary and are able to transgress the boundaries imposed by society's conventions and rules. The text shows how Raskolnikov becomes confused and ill after the murders, descending into a feminine, womb/death space, ultimately emerging as a changed man through his relationship with a young woman, Sonya.

The Idiot was written in 1868 and portrays a spiritual, but childlike, man who seems to be unable to fit into the society around him. Myshkin is largely misunderstood by the other characters, and does not seem to be able to respond to the social situations in which he finds himself. While in *Crime and Punishment* Raskolnikov develops as a character through his encounter with the physicality of women's bodies, Myshkin's quest is spiritual in nature. He appears as a Christ-like character whose inherent goodness and child-like innocence is in stark contrast to the complicated lives of the more 'embodied' characters around him. My analysis of this text will focus particularly on the relationship between Myshkin and Nastasya, a passionate and sexualised character whom Myshkin wants to save and protect.

Both Raskolnikov and Myshkin can be understood within a broader context of 'superfluous men' in nineteenth-century Russian literature, such as Pushkin's Evgeny Onegin and Turgenev's Rudin. These men were highly educated and capable, and yet were unable to act, either to effect positive changes in their societies or to return the love of the heroines. This chapter will demonstrate that while Raskolnikov moved and developed as a masculine hero, Myshkin's introduction into the text as an already formed character with few inconsistencies or internal crises to resolve meant that he

was unable to engage effectively with the other characters. Both characters could be described as superfluous men, alienated from the societies around them.

It is particularly productive to analyse texts by Dostoevsky in view of de Lauretis' post-structural theoretical framework because of the value Dostoevsky himself placed on freedom. George Panichas highlights the importance of the theme of transformation for the inner lives of Dostoevsky's characters, describing the author's understanding of freedom as an 'endless adventure in self-assertion'.⁸⁴ This interest in the freedom of the individual to develop her/his personality and independence and to 'move' symbolically, will be considered in detail in this chapter. My feminist analysis will also highlight the limitations of the discourse of 'freedom' as defined by mainstream patriarchal culture. The freedom of masculine characters, as I shall demonstrate through an analysis of these two texts, only seems to be possible if feminine characters are available to support them in their quests for freedom, to act as midwives (or 'donors' in Propp's terms) in their re-births, and to be the space, or the boundary, that they transgress or overcome. That is, the freedom of male characters depends on constraints being placed on the development and autonomy of their female counterparts.

I hope to show that, although it might seem to be anachronistic to assess the value of Dostoevsky's texts with regard to modern feminist literary theory, the characterisation of his main protagonists shows the value of de Lauretis' theoretical perspective. Considering Dostoevsky's texts in the light of modern developments in feminist thought is particularly valuable because of his technique of allowing his characters to develop naturally and without him insisting on a pre-decided authorial path for them.⁸⁵ In this way, we can see the (probably unconscious) influence of deep-seated cultural assumptions about women and femininity on the author as we consider how Western concepts of narrative are influenced by, and influence, perceptions of gender.

⁸⁴ Panichas, p. 17.

⁸⁵ Pelikan Straus, p. 4.

In my analysis of *Crime and Punishment*, I will look first at the characterisation of Raskolnikov, arguing that he is a good example of the development of a masculine hero who experiences a re-birth. Raskolnikov's re-birth takes place partially as a result of his encounter with Sonya who leads him to confess to his crime and receive forgiveness. The Christian and mythical theme of resurrection is an important aspect of the narrative project of developing unified, whole masculine heroes. Lotman argues that:

in spite of the fact that historically-specific ideas are transmitted by means of the linear plot mechanism, the mythical or eschatological schema continues to be imposed on the secular identity of literary characters; the recurrence in modern texts of themes like fall-rebirth, resurrection, conversion or enlightenment, bears witness to its presence.⁸⁶

The theme of resurrection had particular personal importance for Dostoevsky himself as he experienced his last-minute reprieve from the death sentence felt as a miraculous resurrection.⁸⁷ Dostoevsky also describes the prison where he spent four years as an exile as 'заживо мертвый дом, жизнь',⁸⁸ ('the house of the living dead'⁸⁹). At the end of his account of prison life, when he describes a convict's release, Dostoevsky continues the metaphor of death and rebirth: 'свобода, новая жизнь, воскресенье из мертвых ... экая славная минута!'⁹⁰ ('freedom, a new life, resurrection from the dead ... what a glorious moment!'⁹¹). This theme of death and rebirth is very

⁸⁶ Lotman, cited in de Lauretis (1984), p. 120.

⁸⁷ Frank, p. 51.

⁸⁸ Dostoevsky, F. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Nauka, Leningrad, 1972-1990), vol. 4 *Zapisky iz Myortvogo doma* (1972), p. 9.

⁸⁹ Dostoevsky, F. and McDuff, D. (trans.) *The House of the Dead* (Penguin, London 2003) p. 27.

⁹⁰ Dostoevsky, F. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Nauka, Leningrad, 1972-1990), vol. 4 *Zapisky iz Myortvogo doma* (1972), p. 232.

⁹¹ Dostoevsky, F. and McDuff, D. (trans.) *The House of the Dead* (Penguin, London 2003) p. 357.

significant in my analysis of *Crime and Punishment*, not only because of its centrality for Dostoevsky, but also because it is highlighted as a key moment in the development of masculine heroes by de Lauretis. The idea of resurrection from the dead has clear and powerful religious significance, and this is reflected in Sonya's religious belief in the transformative power of confession.

Before he achieves his new life Raskolnikov must undergo a quest. Like the heroes in the folk tales studied by Propp, Raskolnikov creates an ordeal for himself as a means of asserting his independence and freedom. Although this ordeal does not make him free (as he had hoped) but results in feelings of guilt and distress, he nonetheless experiences a re-birth. After considering the ways in which Raskolnikov's development reflects the path of literary heroes as laid out by Propp and de Lauretis, I will turn my attention to Sonya. I will demonstrate that Sonya is characterised only in relation to Raskolnikov and therefore has little potential for developing her own personhood, existing as she does primarily to aid Raskolnikov's spiritual resurrection.

I will show that de Lauretis' feminist development of Propp's narratological theory can lead to new interpretations of Dostoevsky's work. For example, her contention that narrative is driven by the movement of a masculine character through feminised spaces can be seen as the male character transgressing the mores of a society. Propp argues that the hero's behaviour does not always accord with society's moral code⁹² and this has clear relevance for an analysis of Raskolnikov's thoughts and his subsequent murders. De Lauretis' argument that gender plays a key role in our understanding of the behaviour and characterisation of heroes leads to a greater insight into the ways in which Raskolnikov's transgression of society's rules and morality is driven by his need to assert his masculinity. De Lauretis' theory also sheds new light on Raskolnikov's relationship with Sonya and the change that occurs in Raskolnikov's worldview as a result of that relationship.

⁹² Propp, p. 28.

Sonya's spirituality and compassionate nature may be interpreted as providing an effective comparison with Raskolnikov's personality and values. His encounter with Sonya therefore becomes a space into which he enters, and then emerges reborn.

Raskolnikov has been described by several critics such as Richard Peace and Nina Pelikan Straus as having a divided personality. Pelikan Straus remarks that Raskolnikov does not seem to have a single, unitary personality (as is suggested by his name's origins in the Russian word for 'split'). In Bakhtin's terms, his personality seems to be made up of many voices.⁹³ Peace argues that Raskolnikov's error is to mistake his rational side for the whole of his personality and to force himself to believe in a 'monistic' view of human nature.⁹⁴ His desire for a united personality, without contradictions and divisions is linked to his need to master his own self, before being able to exert control over others.

Raskolnikov's decision to murder the pawnbroker clearly demonstrates that he was motivated by the importance of mastery. When he confesses to Sonya he explains:

Штука в том: я задал себе один раз такой вопрос: что если бы, например, на моем месте случился Наполеон и не было бы у него, чтобы карьеру начать, ни Тулона, ни Египта, ни перехода через Монблан, а была бы вместо всех этих красивых и монументальных вещей просто-запросто одна какая-нибудь смешная старушонка, легистраторша, которую еще вдобавок надо убить, чтоб из сундука у ней деньги стащить (для карьеры-то понимаешь?), ну, так решился ли бы он на это, если бы другого выхода не было? ... я промучился ужасно долго, так что ужасно стыдно мне стало, когда я, наконец, догадался

⁹³ Pelikan Straus, p. 21.

⁹⁴ Peace, p. 34.

(вдруг как-то), что не только его не покорило бы, но даже и в голову бы ему не пришло, что это не монументально ... я ... вышел из задумчивости ... задушил.⁹⁵

(It was like this: I once asked myself the question: what if Napoleon, for example, had been in my position, and instead of having a Toulon, and an Egypt, and a crossing of Mont Blanc to begin his career with, what if instead of all those beautiful and monumental things he had quite simply had nothing but an absurd old woman, a petty bureaucrat's widow, whom he was also going to have to murder, so he could steal all the money out of her chest (to help his career, do you see?) – well, would he have been able to bring himself to do it, if there had been no other way out? ... I really felt horribly ashamed of myself when I finally realized (it came to me all of a sudden) that not only would the lack of monumentality not have jarred on him - it wouldn't even have entered his head: what was so jarring about it? ... I gave up my thinking ... I strangled her.)⁹⁶

Raskolnikov's self-assertion seems to be two-fold. Firstly, he attempted to demonstrate his own integral independence of thought by asserting his own intellectual understanding of society's problems as he saw them. This reflects Braidotti's definition of a 'rational subject' as one who grasps the world with his/her gaze and governs its representations.⁹⁷ Raskolnikov was able to define and categorise the world around him and to interpret it according to his own narrative. Secondly, by asserting his own interpretations, he tried to act as an 'author', controlling the destinies of other

⁹⁵ Dostoevsky, F. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Nauka, Leningrad, 1972-1990), vol. 6 *Prestuplenie i Nakazanie* (1973), p. 319. All future quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

⁹⁶ Dostoevsky, F. and McDuff, D. (trans.) *Crime and Punishment* (Penguin, London 1991), p. 483. All future English translations of quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

⁹⁷ Braidotti, p. 19.

characters. This is a theme I will return to in my chapters on the twentieth-century texts of Babel, Bulgakov and Paternak, which feature male characters writing creative texts and literally ‘authoring’ the lives of their characters. However, the desire of a male character to exert this kind of influence on the personalities around him is clearly shown in Dostoevsky’s portrayal of Raskolnikov who accomplished this control in the most final and dramatic of ways. The pawnbroker is a powerful character who has financial resources and a strong, independent personality. Killing her could be understood as an ordeal Raskolnikov tried to pass through in order to demonstrate the validity of his own hero status, and thus that he had the authority to influence others’ lives as an ‘author’.

I will discuss the significance of the physicality of the pawnbroker’s female body later in this chapter, but it is worth noting that just as Raskolnikov’s quest to demonstrate his masculine abilities is rooted in a female body, so too is the justification for his quest. The sexual and economic exploitation of women which Raskolnikov witnesses in the early chapters of the novel prompts his thoughts about injustice and re-distribution of the pawnbroker’s wealth. Marmeladov described to Raskolnikov how Sonya was forced into prostitution to support her family, as a result of both her father’s alcoholism and her step-mother’s verbal abuse (pp. 17/49).⁹⁸ Soon after this, Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother which gives the story of Svidrigaylov’s treatment of his sister, Dunya, and her subsequent engagement to Luzhin. These two accounts have a deep impact on Raskolnikov and he sees the similarities between the two situations:

Сонечка, Сонечка Мармеладова, вечная Сонечка, пока мир стоит! Жертву-то, жертву-то обе вы измерили ли вполне? Так ли? Под силу ли? В пользу ли? Разумно ли? Знаете ли вы, Дунечка, что Сонечкин жребий ничем не сквернее жребия с господином Лужиным? (p. 38).

⁹⁸ In this and all subsequent incidences, where I refer to both an original Russian text and an English translation, the first page number relates to the Russian text, and the second to the English edition.

(Sonechka, Sonechka Marmeladova, eternal Sonechka, for as long as the world lasts! Are you completely aware of the size of the sacrifice you're making? Is it right? Is it being made under duress? Will it do any good? Is it sensible? Do you realize, Dunechka that Sonechka's fate is in no way any uglier than the one you're contemplating with Mr Luzhin? [p. 78])

This emphasis on female suffering acts both to fix women in the static position of passive victim, and also reflects the patriarchal tendency to view women as either good or bad, virgin or whore.⁹⁹ While Sonya and Dunya are portrayed as innocent, suffering victims, the pawnbroker is perceived to be the cause of injustice. One of Raskolnikov's most important arguments to support the murder of the pawnbroker, therefore, is an economic response to the suffering he sees around him: 'Убей ее и возьми ее деньги, с тем чтобы с их помощью посвятить потом себя на служение всему человечеству и общему делу' (p. 54), ('kill her and take her money, in order with its help to devote oneself to the service of all mankind and the common cause' [p. 101]).

The role rationality played in Raskolnikov's formation of his solution to the societal problems he saw around him is pertinent as rationality is often seen by feminists as a masculine quality, which is privileged over characteristics coded as feminine. Alison Jaggar, for example, suggests that Western liberalism came to value the rational mind over the body as a result of the sexual division of labour which meant that women were tied to domestic tasks because of their childbearing role while men were more able to develop intellectual pursuits.¹⁰⁰ Tong argues that as a result of these traditional roles, 'all liberals, male or female, nonfeminist or feminist, tend to accept as truth the priority of the

⁹⁹ Warner (1976), p. 225.

¹⁰⁰ Jaggar (1983), p. 117.

mental over the bodily, even when their own daily experiences contradict this belief'.¹⁰¹ In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov's objective and rational explanation of the poverty and suffering he sees around him leads him to develop a very rationalist solution. He values rationality so highly that his rational solution to inequality leads him to place objectivity above the pawnbroker's right to life.

Raskolnikov's belief that he has the right to 'author' the lives of other characters, may help to explain how he comes to accept extreme violence as a possible solution to society's problems. The role of author implies a sense of distance from the characters being acted upon, just as it is necessary to be distanced from a situation in order to think rationally about it. Jones, for example, suggests that there is a clear distinction between Raskolnikov's humanitarian views and feelings (which are associated with Napoleon) and a genuine, intuitive sympathy for another person who is suffering.¹⁰² Jones argues that the former is characterised by abstract, theoretical humanitarian ideas, while the latter involves compassion for individual people.¹⁰³ I would contend that the value Raskolnikov placed on abstract theoretical thought can be understood from a feminist perspective as a way of distancing himself from the tangible, quotidian experiences of those around him. This is in direct contrast to Sonya's feminine response to the suffering and poverty she sees around her. Sonya refuses to judge others or try to change and re-shape the world, but she does make personal sacrifices and works extremely hard to provide for her family and care for those around her. Even the pawnbroker lives a life that is entwined with someone else's. She lives together with her sister, and although she treats her harshly, there is a sense of domesticity, a marriage-like relationship with shared responsibilities, that contrasts with Raskolnikov's solitary existence. For example, while the pawnbroker controls the sisters' income, Lizaveta undertakes all of the domestic tasks such as cleaning and washing for both sisters (pp. 53/100).

¹⁰¹ Tong, p. 38.

¹⁰² Jones, M. (1976), p. 77.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Unlike Sonya and Lizaveta who are emotionally and practically involved in the daily lives of those around them, Raskolnikov distances himself and this distancing is deeply gendered. Female characters are portrayed as the ‘other’ in so far as both the suffering Raskolnikov is moved by, and also his proposed solution, are situated in female bodies. On the one hand, he is horrified by the sexual exploitation of women who are economically disadvantaged, but on the other hand, he sees the murder of the female pawnbroker as part of the solution to the inequalities of his society. The pawnbroker’s femininity is emphasised throughout the text and she is even described as a ‘степва ужасная’ (p. 53), (‘horrible old cow’¹⁰⁴ [p. 100]) by the officer who discusses the pawnbroker and her sister with Raskolnikov. In this way, women are fixed as ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’ in Raskolnikov’s mind and objectified as problems to be solved or obstacles to be overcome. This has the effect both of obstructing genuinely deep, emotionally satisfying relationships between Raskolnikov and the female characters and also of causing him to hate the women in the narrative, even if he only has these feelings of hatred temporarily. For example, in his delirium following the murders, Raskolnikov reflects on his complex emotions for his mother and sister: ‘Мать, сестра, как любил я их! Отчего теперь я их ненавижу? Да, я их ненавижу, физически ненавижу, подле себя не могу выносить (p. 212), (‘my mother, my sister – how I have loved them! Why now do I hate them? Yes, I hate them, physically hate them, cannot endure their presence close to myself’ [p. 329]). It is as though Raskolnikov blames the financial neediness of his mother and sister for the situation in which he finds himself, despite the fact that his solution to their vulnerability was not suggested or endorsed by his mother or sister in any way. Likewise, he also fleetingly hates Sonya when he perceives the similarity between her and Lizaveta: ‘и вдруг странное, неожиданное ощущение какой-то едкой ненависти к Соне прошло по его сердцу’ (p. 314), (‘suddenly a strange, unexpected sensation approaching a caustic hatred of Sonya passed through his heart’ [p. 476]).

¹⁰⁴ ‘Степва’ should more accurately be translated as a general term of abuse meaning ‘a nasty person’, or as a more vulgar term, ‘a shit’. It also has the original, although now obsolete, meaning of ‘dead animal’ or ‘carion’.

The way in which Raskolnikov's deep love of the women around him, and sympathy for their suffering led him to perform acts of extreme violence on female bodies, which then produced his feelings of intense guilt and hate and led him to blame the women he loved, seems driven by his sense of being separate from 'ordinary' people. The patriarchal emphasis on the division of people into hierarchies influenced his conclusion that the murder of the pawnbroker would ameliorate some of the suffering and injustice he saw around him. As we saw from the earlier quotation, when Raskolnikov confesses to his crime to Sonya he describes the pawnbroker as a 'смешная старушонка, легистраторша' (p. 319) ('absurd old woman, a petty bureaucrat's widow' [p. 483]) using this description to explain how he came to view her murder as permissible. Feminists, such as Kristeva, point out that hierarchical relationships are, by their nature, based on power rather than a more equal and empowering understanding of otherness which allows each personality to grow and develop in relationship to the other.¹⁰⁵ Raskolnikov, it has been argued, is characterised as being incapable of open, inter-subjective relationships.¹⁰⁶ He is described as avoiding other protagonists altogether 'except in combative or manipulative relationships in which the other is objectified'.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, he was concerned to divide humanity into two groups - a small group of 'extraordinary men' like Napoleon, who could exert power over a larger group of 'вшей' (p. 211), ('lice' [p. 329]) and 'тварь' (p. 212) ('creatures' [p. 329]). The power given to the extraordinary men would allow them to transcend normal boundaries and act in brutal, violent ways in order to achieve their aims.

However, Raskolnikov's argument is circular, as are the criteria he uses to define what makes a person 'extraordinary'. In Raskolnikov's thinking, those who have the capacity to be extraordinary, Napoleon-like men, demonstrate this by acting autonomously, freely and by transgressing society's boundaries. It is as though they cannot know whether they are truly exceptional until they have successfully passed this test, and so they must take the risk and commit the act of transgression

¹⁰⁵ As discussed in Cornell, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ Jones, M. (1980), p. 83.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

before knowing whether they have the ‘right’ to do so.¹⁰⁸ The actions of the masculine hero therefore drive the narrative as he takes the initiative and tests his ability to make changes to his external environment. Rzhevsky supports this contention by arguing that ‘man is not a real presence in the world unless he exerts his existence by moral action in the concrete life of society’.¹⁰⁹ In the case of *Crime and Punishment*, it appears that Raskolnikov is defined as a masculine character by his ability to act effectively. By this I mean that it does not seem to be so important that the hero’s actions are perceived as moral by the other characters, but that he can act according to his own narrative and understanding of the world to effect changes in the lives of those around him.

This argument is supported by Peace’s suggestion that Raskolnikov’s view of humanity as divided in ordinary and extraordinary people reflects his inner struggle.¹¹⁰ For Raskolnikov, the idea of two categories of people was not just an abstract, philosophical or sociological theory; it had personal implications for his sense of his own identity. According to this argument, Raskolnikov is portrayed as having a divided character which is split between the two extremes represented by his dualistic way of thinking.¹¹¹ Peace contends that Raskolnikov is deeply concerned to overcome the side of his personality which he regards as ‘ordinary’ by acting forcefully in an aggressive, ‘extraordinary’ way.¹¹² This is further evidence of the intellectually distanced stance of the masculine hero. Craig Owens notes how binarism, the hierarchical opposition of two terms is the dominant form of representing difference and justifying its subordination in society.¹¹³ This is problematic not least because of the distance which must be maintained between the subject - modern man - and the object(s) he judges.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Yarmolinsky, p. 209.

¹⁰⁹ Rzhevsky, p. 94.

¹¹⁰ Peace, pp. 35 and 38.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 35 and 38.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Owens in Foster, p. 62.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

As well as showing Raskolnikov's desire to master and order the world he saw around him, and highlighting the distance between Raskolnikov and the objects of his theory, this analysis of his ideas is important because they motivated the murders which drive the narrative. Jones goes so far as to suggest that the ideas themselves form the plot of the novel, while the murders Raskolnikov commits provide the dramatic focus of the text.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, identifying Raskolnikov's thinking as rooted in patriarchal discourse allows us to see more clearly the difference between Raskolnikov's way of relating to the 'other' and Sonya's approach. The ideas Raskolnikov articulated also had significance for Dostoevsky because they highlighted one of his key concerns – to promote the importance of personal freedom,¹¹⁶ but also to explore the limits of that freedom. While Dostoevsky placed a high value on personal freedom, he was also concerned that rebellion against the state and against God was comparable to parricide and could lead to terrible consequences.¹¹⁷ These consequences of unlimited freedom are outlined in *The Brothers Karamazov* in which Ivan's rebellion against God inspires his half-brother to murder their father.

The factors which limit masculine freedom may be conceptualised as feminine, as the enclosed space which de Lauretis refers to. In the case of *Crime and Punishment*, we have seen that the pawnbroker and her sister represent the conceptual boundaries which stood between Raskolnikov and the exercise of free movement. De Lauretis' point about the significance of binary oppositions and the hero's need to cross boundaries seems particularly relevant to the intellectual and spiritual journey Raskolnikov embarks on:

If the work of the mythical structuration is to establish distinctions, the primary distinction on which all others depend is not, say, life and death, but rather sexual difference ... opposite pairs such as inside/outside, the raw/the cooked, or life/death

¹¹⁵ Jones, M. (1976), p. 75.

¹¹⁶ Boyce Gibson, p. 46.

¹¹⁷ Monas, in Jones, M. and Terry, pp. 67-95, here p. 68.

appear to be merely derivatives of the fundamental opposition between boundary and passage; and if passage may be in either direction, from inside to outside or vice versa, from life to death or vice versa, nonetheless all these terms are predicated on the *single* figure of the hero who crosses the boundary and penetrates the other space (emphasis in original).¹¹⁸

While the single, male hero undertakes his quest alone, as the ‘mythical subject’ and ‘active principle of culture’, women have multiple roles in the narrative of *Crime and Punishment*.¹¹⁹ The pawnbroker acts as the boundary or space, which must be transgressed and Sonya is Raskolnikov’s helpmate on his journey and also the prize awaiting him at the end of his ordeal.

It is perhaps significant that Raskolnikov’s ordeal - his boundary-crossing - depended on his violating a female body. The testing of his masculine, rational approach is thus seen as more important than the basic right of the female body to existence. The vulnerability of the female body is emphasised repeatedly in the text. The pawnbroker is shown to be ‘подозрительна и одна’ (p. 61), (‘suspicious and alone’ [p. 111]) when Raskolnikov arrives at her apartment, and she touches the door with ‘осторожный шорох рукой’ (p. 61), (‘the cautious whisper of a hand’ [p. 112]). Lizaveta’s physicality is also demonstrated by the description of her as ‘девица, и собой ужасно нескладная, росту замечательно высокого ... (она) поминутно была беременна’ (pp. 53-4), (‘not married, and was terribly awkward, of remarkable height ... (she) was constantly pregnant’ [pp. 100-1]). Raskolnikov’s brutal murder of both women in order to test his ideas illustrates the primacy of masculine values over feminine physicality in patriarchal culture. The murder scenes depict very graphically the assertion of abstract reasoning over female bodies, especially as the previous descriptions of the pawnbroker and her sister focus on physical accounts and minimise any reference to their personalities and histories. ‘Он вынул топор совсем, взмахнул его обеими

¹¹⁸ De Lauretis (1984), p. 119.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

руками, едва себя чувствуя, и почти без усилия, почти машинально, опустил на голову обухом' (p. 63), ('he took the axe right out, swung it up in both hands, barely conscious of what he was doing, and almost without effort, almost mechanically, brought the butt of it down on the old woman's head' [p. 114]). Raskolnikov's absence of emotion is made clear in this passage, and his emotional distance from the pawnbroker is evident in the 'mechanical' nature of his actions. The dying woman is depicted as an object as 'кровь хлынула, как из опрокинутого стакана, и тело повалилось навзничь' (p. 63), ('blood gushed out as from an upturned glass, and her body collapsed backwards' [p. 114]).

Despite murdering both the pawnbroker and her sister, following his ideas through to their logical conclusion, Raskolnikov's ordeal is only partially successful. He is tormented by guilt and does not begin to act like an extraordinary man. He is unable to protect his sister, and rather than using the pawnbroker's money profitably, he hides it. Maybe more significantly for an analysis of the development of his masculinity, Raskolnikov is unable to explain his actions clearly to Sonya while he is confessing. He gives a number of different explanations for the murder which all seem to cancel each other out.¹²⁰ This confusion contrasts with the clarity with which he had defined his ideas and his plan at the beginning of the novel¹²¹ and it also shows that Raskolnikov has become less able to think clearly and rationally (in a masculine way) than he was at the beginning of the novel. His growing disillusionment and sense of confusion demonstrate, therefore, that either he made a mistake in the design or planning of his ordeal, or that he was not, after all, an extraordinary man. Raskolnikov's confusion and illness may even be seen as feminising him, as he becomes dependent on those around him, such as his mother, sister and, in particular, his friend Razumikhin. Razumikhin's name is derived from the Russian word meaning 'reason' or 'rationality', and he provides a contrast to Raskolnikov's increasingly fragmented mental and physical state. Raskolnikov becomes prone to sudden fainting fits and bouts of emotional delirium and fever. His

¹²⁰ Danow (1991), p. 112.

¹²¹ Holquist, p. 89.

inability to follow his ideas through to their logical conclusion by using the pawnbroker's money in the ways he had intended may be caused by his physical symptoms or by the confusion and guilt he feels. Instead of using the pawnbroker's money to alleviate suffering, Raskolnikov hides it in a cavity under a stone out of fear that he may be discovered as the perpetrator of the murders. He is relieved to get rid of the money that was the original motivation for his crime: 'схоронены концы! И кому, кому в голову может прийти искать под этим камнем? ... А хоть бы и нашли: кто на меня подумает? Все кончено! Нет улик' (p. 86), ('The evidence is buried! And who would ever think of looking under that block? ... And even if the things are found: who would ever think of me? It's finished! There's no evidence' [p. 151]).

Although Raskolnikov expected his quest to help him form his identity and give him confidence that he was an 'extraordinary man', able to transcend the boundaries that restricted other people, it instead leads to a fragmentation of his personality into delirium and confusion. Nonetheless, his development as a masculine hero continues to drive the narrative. Paris claims that Dostoevsky sympathised with Raskolnikov and his struggle to develop a free, autonomous self, and wanted the reader to have a similar attitude towards him as the magistrate, Porfiry, has.¹²² Porfiry understood that Raskolnikov was guilty of the crime early in their encounter, but waited before confronting him with his knowledge because he understood Raskolnikov's need to confess his guilt and to come gradually to see his actions in a different light. His knowledge about Raskolnikov and his crime was based on an objective analysis of the situation and Raskolnikov's behaviour. Porfiry and Sonya both have roles as helpmates, or donors, for Raskolnikov as he completes his 'journey', but they fulfil very different roles. In Karl Jung's terms, their roles seem similar to those of the archetypal father and mother. Like the father archetype, Porfiry fulfils the role of ruler, elder and law-giver, while Sonya represents mother nature, the Goddess of fertility, the womb of life and dispenser of nourishment.¹²³ Porfiry is not emotionally close to Raskolnikov and he is not present for much of

¹²² Paris, p. 67.

¹²³ Stevens, p. 52.

the text, unlike Sonya whose compassion and patience are rooted in a more spiritual, emotional response to Raskolnikov's crime. Sonya is both emotionally close to Raskolnikov and physically present intermittently throughout the novel.

Although Dostoevsky sympathised with Raskolnikov and his desire to act decisively in society, Sonya represented most closely Dostoevsky's own beliefs about the value of Christian faith in preventing individuals from thinking in nihilist ways.¹²⁴ Sonya's spirituality, which was representative of the Orthodox Christian beliefs and practices of ordinary Russian people, reflected Dostoevsky's own beliefs. I argue here that her role in the novel was to bring Raskolnikov around to thinking in the same way and to recognise the value of the constraints imposed by a spiritual view of the world.¹²⁵ Joe Andrew has highlighted Dostoevsky's belief that without a faith in God, the world could seem meaningless, as he saw morality as stemming exclusively from God.¹²⁶ Dostoevsky did not believe that individuals could rely on rationality as a guide to morality, suggesting that murder was a 'logical' consequence of a morality which was based only on human reasoning.¹²⁷ As Dostoevsky believed that unlimited freedom could lead to symbolic (or literal) parricide and rebellion against God and the state, he valued religion and spirituality as a way of setting boundaries on the freedom of the individual.

As a deeply religious character whose compassion and concern for Raskolnikov eventually leads him to confess to his crime and to receive forgiveness, Sonya can be seen to have a powerful role in the novel. She represents Dostoevsky's view that injunctions and prohibitions are not enough to uphold the moral order, but that mystic spiritual experiences are also important.¹²⁸ In this way, Sonya is able to bring a determined murderer around to confession and re-birth. She is even able to

¹²⁴ Davison, p. 1.

¹²⁵ Contino, p. 68.

¹²⁶ Andrew (1984), p. 89.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Mackiewicz, p. 118.

persuade him, just by looking at him, to return to the police station and confess to his crime (pp. 409/608). Sonya's role in Raskolnikov's development is similar to the role of a mid-wife, acting as a guide for the male character through his quest and supporting his re-birth as a strong, whole masculine hero. I would, however, argue that she is not conceived as a character and a personality in her own right, but can only exist as a character in relation to Raskolnikov. Her personality reflects the traits that Raskolnikov has rejected within himself, such as emotion and spirituality, and she seems therefore to be a repository of these negatively defined aspects. As Moi points out, Jacques Derrida has highlighted the patriarchal focus on the whole, unified and simple form of the phallus.¹²⁹ The primacy given to this symbol of masculine desire then renders everything which is 'different', as 'chaotic, fragmented, negative or non-existent' and therefore as 'feminine'.¹³⁰ Part of Raskolnikov's rebirth is an acceptance of these aspects which he has alienated from himself in order to recover from his feminising illness and internal confusion to become a unified, masculine hero.

While Raskolnikov is able to develop his intellectual ideas and to try to define his own personality and destiny, Sonya's characterisation reflects a variety of societal assumptions which feminists would describe as oppressive. The portrayal of Sonya's spirituality is influenced by historical-cultural patriarchal constructions of religion. For example, medieval religious women and female saints were associated with suffering and extreme fasting¹³¹ and this is reflected in Dostoevsky's portrayal of Sonya who lives in extreme poverty and struggles to meet the basic material needs of her family. She is also portrayed as a virtuous, innocent woman who seems 'morally unscathed by the depravity on which her life (and those of her family) depend'.¹³² This description reflects Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity's view of the Virgin Mary as being without sin. It reinforces a religious ideal of pure women in which these women are seen as already perfect, and not in a state of change and development. This serves the purposes both of emphasising the sinful

¹²⁹ Moi (1988), p. 67.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Bynum, p. 25.

¹³² Danow (1991), p. 99; see also Tussing Orwin (2007), p. 144.

state of 'ordinary' women,¹³³ and of placing women in a static idealised role, allowing the masculine character's journey of self-development to drive the narrative.

In addition, Sonya's spirituality and religious devotion reinforce patterns of a masculine deity. In the gospel story which Sonya reads to Raskolnikov, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and the power to bring new life is identified with the male word. Sonya is thus caught in a narrative whereby she is promoting an all-powerful, masculine God for the salvation of a man who has tried to exercise god-like power in other people's lives. Sonya's religious perspective cannot, therefore, actually be seen to give her much independent power. She is advocating a male-focused religion which grants her only the permission to speak what is accepted dogma.

Gary Saul Morson reminds us that Sonya's name derives from the Greek word 'sophia' which means wisdom.¹³⁴ He suggests that this is significant because Sonya's name represents Raskolnikov's conversion from a worldview defined by rationality to one which recognises the importance of spiritual wisdom.¹³⁵ Within a Christian understanding of the Trinity, Sonya is therefore associated with a feminine, intuitive spirituality which is represented by the Holy Spirit's role in the Trinity.¹³⁶ Janet Martin Soskice points out that the Holy Spirit, although an accepted part of the Trinity, is often less valued in Western religious culture, in comparison to the figures of the Father and the Son.¹³⁷ She connects this with the gendering of the Holy Spirit as feminine and the more active Father and Son as masculine. Within *Crime and Punishment*, this dichotomy may be seen in the comparison between Porfiry's role and Sonya's. Porfiry is embedded in the power structure of his society and has the power to arrest Raskolnikov and so, to an extent, is able to

¹³³ This comparison reflects the contrast Warner draws between Mary and Magdalene, who are both perceived in sexual terms – Mary as a pure virgin, while Magdalene is associated with the 'dangers and degradations of the flesh.' See Warner (1976), p. 235.

¹³⁴ Morson, p. 52.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ As discussed in Frank Parsons, p. 143.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

decide Raskolnikov's fate. Peace argues that he represents the temporal power of the Orthodox church.¹³⁸ The sense of masculine judgement inherent in Porfiry's role contrasts sharply with Sonya's compassionate, emotional stance, which according to Peace, mirrors the church's spiritual power.¹³⁹

Sonya's emotional and compassionate nature reflects the qualities which were necessary for Raskolnikov's rebirth and she also represents many of Dostoevsky's values and beliefs. Frank, for instance, argues that Dostoevsky valued the emotional, intuitive faith of the Russian people, over the more cerebral, intellectual faith of the educated, wealthier members of the gentry.¹⁴⁰ Sonya's portrayal as a representative of the spirituality of the Russian people and as having the power to initiate Raskolnikov's re-birth has the effect of making her seem like an icon. The concept of the Russian Orthodox icons is, according to Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, rooted in the humanity of Mary and the belief that both divine and human natures were equally present in Christ.¹⁴¹ As Christ's mother had a body which could be represented visually, so Christ also could be represented.¹⁴² The physicality of the female body is, therefore, an important element in the iconic tradition. Icons were also very symbolic in Dostoevsky's fiction. As Sophie Ollivier points out, Dostoevsky often associated icons with young women, as for example in *The Meek One*, in which the pawnbroker's wife falls to her death clutching an icon.¹⁴³ Her description of the role of icons in Dostoevsky's texts as protecting the Russian people from evil and expressing the renewal of creative forces through suffering reflects the role Sonya plays as Raskolnikov's help-mate and spiritual guide.¹⁴⁴ However, as an icon, Dostoevsky gave Sonya little individualism of her own, as her function was to act as a channel for Raskolnikov to experience spiritual truths about himself. While the humanity of the Mother of Christ, and Christ's human nature, provide the context and a

¹³⁸ Peace, p. 45.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Frank, p. 55.

¹⁴¹ Ouspensky and Lossky, p. 32. See also Lossky (1978), p. 29.

¹⁴² Ouspensky and Lossky, p. 32.

¹⁴³ Ollivier in Pattison and Oenning Thompson, pp. 51-68, here p. 62.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 64.

partial explanation of the iconic tradition, the purpose of icons is not to focus the viewer's attention on the physical depiction, but instead to promote deeper spiritual understanding.¹⁴⁵

Dostoevsky's portrayal of Sonya as a prostitute is significant because it seems to be in direct opposition to her religious beliefs and her representation as an icon. Both prostitution and iconography emphasise physicality and bodily experience, but they have little else in common. Although her prostitution is portrayed as necessary to keep her family clothed and fed, it seems to fit uneasily with her faith and the reader's difficulties in reconciling the two aspects of Sonya's life are further compounded by the fact that she is not described during her work as a prostitute. She is described as being dressed 'по-уличному, под вкус и правила, сложившиеся в своем особом мире, с ярко и позорно выдающейся целью' (p. 143), ('in the manner of the streets, in accordance with the tastes and conventions that have developed in a peculiar world of their own, with a gaudy and shameful purpose that is all too obvious' [p. 231]) when she visits her dying father, but he does not recognise her (pp. 145/233). This suggests that her family also struggled to associate her with the realities of her profession. However, Sonya's prostitution serves an important function for Raskolnikov, and this may explain why Dostoevsky imagined her as a prostitute, even if this seems inconsistent with other aspects of her characterisation.

Prostitution, by its nature, highlights the female body as a site of vulnerability. Sonya's body was used to fulfil male sexual desires just as the murder of the pawnbroker and her sister was an attempt to fulfil Raskolnikov's psychological desire for independent action. In both situations, female bodies were shown to be vulnerable to male attack and penetration.¹⁴⁶ Sonya's closeness to Lizaveta, and Raskolnikov's perception of their closeness, is portrayed in the scene in which he confesses to Sonya:

¹⁴⁵ Ouspensky and Lossky, p. 30.

¹⁴⁶ Shiach, p. 20.

Он смотрел на нее и вдруг в ее лице как бы увидел лицо Лизаветы. Он ярко запомнил выражение лица Лизаветы, когда он приближался к ней тогда с топором ... Почти то же самое случилось теперь и с Соней: так же бессильно, с тем же испугом, смотрела она на него несколько времени (p. 315).

(He looked at her, and suddenly in her face he saw the face of Lizaveta. He had a vivid memory of the expression on Lizaveta's features as he had approached her with the axe ... almost the same thing took place with Sonya: it was with the kind of helplessness and fear that she looked at him for a time [p. 478]).

Sonya's portrayal as Lizaveta's closest friend has also been highlighted by Meyer, who contends that both women are characterised as being innocent but, at the same time, sensual.¹⁴⁷ I would suggest that the way Sonya shared Lizaveta's, and her sister's, vulnerability positions Sonya in an optimum place both to persuade Raskolnikov of his need to confess, but also to offer him forgiveness. Sonya, after all, highlights her closeness to Lizaveta when she reads the story of Lazarus to Raskolnikov from the Bible Lizaveta gave her. She acts again as an icon, channelling the voice of another by vividly reminding Raskolnikov of Lizaveta.

This argument is also supported by the portrayal of Sonya as a representative of the Russian people. She is shown to be living in poverty and to struggle with the responsibility of caring for her younger siblings and for her alcoholic father. Dostoevsky is known to have formed a great respect for the spirituality of Russian people, especially since his time in exile.¹⁴⁸ He believed the faith of the

¹⁴⁷ Meyer (1991), p. 239.

¹⁴⁸ Frank, p. 55.

Russian people to be innate and instinctive, and valued this above the more intellectual religious thought of the educated classes.¹⁴⁹ Sonya's exhortation to Raskolnikov to confess in public and to kiss the ground, supports the contention that she in some ways represents the Russian people. This mode of confession is an appropriate counter-point to Raskolnikov's aggressive independence and assertion that he could prove whether he was an extraordinary man by murdering a woman he perceived as less than human. Offord points to Raskolnikov's pride and arrogance towards those he perceived as 'ordinary' mortals,¹⁵⁰ and this view is supported by the way in which the ideas Raskolnikov expressed in his article and his murder of the pawnbroker and her sister objectified them, thus positioning them in a hierarchy, in which Raskolnikov was superior as the one who was able to objectify others. He emphasised his own rationality, a valued masculine quality, while focusing on their (feminised) bodies. Raskolnikov was able, by developing this approach, to distance himself from others and to act in an independent way, changing and 'authoring' their lives. His confession re-established his link with broader society and his responsibilities to ensure the well-being of those around him and to engage with them as equals. As Ivanits contends, the voice of the people counters rationalistic theories, and so Raskolnikov's re-integration into human community was an essential part of his re-birth.¹⁵¹ Ivanits' contention seems to support the argument that it is only possible for masculine characters to view the world from an entirely abstract, rational perspective by separating themselves from the physical lives and needs of those around them.

An understanding of Sonya as a representation of the spirituality of everyday Russian people highlights again her function not as a free, independent character, but as a character specifically conceived to provide for the needs of the masculine hero. It also highlights the practice of using female characters to represent something else; something other than themselves. While Raskolnikov represents only himself – a masculine hero – Sonya does not speak for herself, but is made to stand

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Offord in Jones, M. and Terry, pp. 41-66, here p. 54.

¹⁵¹ Ivanits, p. 341.

for the views and needs of the 'Russian people' and 'Christianity'. In this way, her characterisation diverts attention away from the embodied experience and voice of the female protagonist, and towards the development of the male hero, who drives the narrative. The male hero's, Raskolnikov's, contradictory needs for authentic spiritual experience, and also a deep connection with the realities of the day-to-day lives of the people around him helps to explain the two seemingly conflicting aspects of Sonya's life – her work as a prostitute and her deep religious beliefs.

Dostoevsky's use of Sonya as a prize for Raskolnikov is problematic beyond the feminist argument that this leaves her in a subordinate position relative to the masculine hero and reinforces the cultural assumption that women can be objectified helpers for men and rewards for them when they successfully complete their journeys. It could also be argued that Sonya's acceptance of Raskolnikov and her willingness to travel to Siberia with him in some way validates his actions. Sonya is generally understood not as condoning Raskolnikov's murder of the pawnbroker, but as encouraging him to confess his sins and accept his punishment. However, this focus on the spiritual benefits of confession and resurrection does seem to rest on a great deal of female sacrifice and suffering. I am not referring only to the sudden and violent deaths of both the pawnbroker and her sister (who was entirely unconnected with injustices Raskolnikov associated with the pawnbroker's actions) but also to the rupture of the supportive relationship Sonya and Lizaveta shared. Johae shows the deep spiritual significance of Sonya and Lizaveta exchanging crosses.¹⁵² It is not clear from the novel how Sonya is able to reconcile her intimacy and friendship with Lizaveta with her sympathy and compassion for Raskolnikov, but her distress is portrayed clearly here:

Как бы себя не помня, она вскочила и, ломая руки, дошла до середины комнаты; но быстро воротилась и села опять подле него, почти прикасаясь к

¹⁵² Johae in Pattison and Oenning Thompson, pp. 173-225, here p. 175.

нему плечом к плечу. Вдруг, точно пронзенная, она вздрогнула, вскрикнула и бросилась, сама не зная для чего, перед ним на колени (p. 316).

(Almost unaware of what she was doing, she leapt up and, wringing her hands, got as far as the middle of the room; but she quickly came back and sat down beside him again, almost touching him shoulder to shoulder. Suddenly, as though she had been cut to the marrow, she shuddered, uttered a cry and, without knowing for what reason, fell on her knees in front of him [p. 479]).

This demonstrates how difficult her decision to accompany Raskolnikov to Siberia must have been, to say nothing of the separation from her family which the journey entailed and any fear she may have felt at leaving her family to accompany a man who had confessed to the violent murder of two women. The lack of detail Dostoevsky gives about Sonya's feelings about her decision to accompany Raskolnikov to Siberia demonstrates his two-dimensional portrayal of Sonya. She is characterised as Raskolnikov's helper and the prize awaiting him at the end of his quest, but not as a rounded character whose story is interesting and worth telling in its own right.

The fact that Raskolnikov gained Sonya as a symbolic prize, even though his ordeal did not succeed in its aims, raises the question of whether, in de Lauretis' framework, the hero is rewarded in direct proportion to his quest's success, or simply because he is a male hero. I would argue that the ordeal is deeply significant because of its role in defining the masculine psyche and that this can be seen in the way Raskolnikov's ordeal creates the impetus for his relationship with Sonya. It is, as we have seen, his need to confess and receive forgiveness that creates and defines his dialogue with Sonya.

It also creates the opportunity and the necessity for Raskolnikov to confront and learn from those characteristics which were feminised and expelled from his masculine psyche. Thus, it is not success in the ordeal as defined by the masculine character that counts, so much as the development of the male character through the lessons he learns from the quest.

The new life that Raskolnikov gains at the end of *Crime and Punishment* may therefore be interpreted as part of the narratological pattern of descending into a feminised space and being re-born. We have seen how Sonya can be seen as acting as a midwife to Raskolnikov and also as the prize he gains by engaging in a quest. Andrew points out that this process of symbolic resurrection is reflected in the language Dostoevsky uses at the end of the novel, highlighting that his description of Raskolnikov's new life reflects the terminology of 'entry into a closed space and emergence from it' used by Lotman.¹⁵³

Sutherland points to the hope of the 'dawn of a new future' for Raskolnikov at the end of the novel, but it is not clear from the text whether this new life includes resurrection for Sonya.¹⁵⁴ Jones argues that she is in need of spiritual resurrection, although he does not comment on whether this need will be met.¹⁵⁵ This belief that Sonya also needs to be re-born is echoed by other critics, such as Blake, who refers to Sonya's sexual history, and the opportunity for her to experience a new life with Raskolnikov.¹⁵⁶ However, it would seem that the promise of new life refers mainly to Raskolnikov as Sonya does not change, or 'move' as a character throughout the novel and therefore does not experience the rebirth that follows the crossing of boundaries. She is closely associated with female bodies, representing the static, closed space which the masculine hero transgresses, and is a helper in the male quest for self-definition. But she cannot be re-born as she herself does not transgress boundaries.

¹⁵³ Andrew (2007), p. 144.

¹⁵⁴ As discussed in Griffiths, p. 25.

¹⁵⁵ Jones, M. (1976), p. 83.

¹⁵⁶ Blake, p. 269.

This reading of *Crime and Punishment* shows some of the nuances of Dostoevsky's view of freedom and the constraints within which it should operate. While supporting the need for characters to operate freely and to effect change on their environments, Dostoevsky uses Raskolnikov's failed quest to show the need for 'authentic revolt'. This is a concept developed by Davison in his study of Ivan's rebellion in *The Brothers Karamazov*. He suggests that 'authentic revolt' allows all the parties involved the opportunity to respond to their challengers and to change and develop as a result of the encounter.¹⁵⁷ This corresponds to feminist ideas of otherness, and in particular to Irigaray's image of 'two lips', which can be seen as a symbolic representation of the way in which mothers and daughters can be in relation to each other.¹⁵⁸ In contrast to the patriarchal image of sons having to replace their fathers, mothers and their daughters may be able to act as distinct personalities, but always in a symbiotic relationship with each other.¹⁵⁹ Thus Raskolnikov's revolt in *Crime and Punishment* was 'inauthentic' as he acted to annihilate and silence those who would disagree with his grievances. His encounter with Sonya, and his ongoing relationship with her, enabled him to move beyond his 'inauthentic revolt' and begin to engage with other characters and personalities. However, as I will go on to show with other pairings, for example Pierre Bezuhov and Natasha Rostova, the Master and Margarita, and Yury Zhivago and Lara Guishar, the relationship between Raskolnikov and Sonya was not based on the partnership of two equals, but was constructed in a way which privileged the masculine hero's developmental needs.

Further evidence of the importance of the ordeal, and the significance given to the development of the masculine hero can be found in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*. It is productive to consider *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* together because, as Sutherland argues, *The Idiot* shows a morally good, idealised male character and can be read as an expression of the 'new life' promised at the end of

¹⁵⁷ Davison, p. 131.

¹⁵⁸ Ives points to Irigaray's emphasis on openness, rather than reductionism; multiplicity rather than hierarchy; and immanence rather than transcendence (Ives, p.100). Irigaray's image of 'two lips' subverts patriarchal hierarchies, emphasising the importance of circularity and reciprocity (Ives, p. 89).

¹⁵⁹ Whitford (1991), pp. 172 and 182.

Crime and Punishment.¹⁶⁰ I will first consider the extent to which Myshkin conforms to the image of a rational, independent male hero. I will argue that, although his characterisation is problematic in that it does not easily fit into this framework, his profound self-sufficiency and inherent unity (traditionally masculine traits) are arguably what makes relations with the other characters difficult. I will also continue to reflect upon the importance of otherness in this text, considering the value of dialogue between characters in terms of their development into unified personalities.

Several critics, such as Murav, argue that Myshkin is a femininised character.¹⁶¹ He is feminised both by his illness, and by his intense spirituality.¹⁶² For Pelikan Straus Myshkin's feminisation is very significant for an analysis of Dostoevsky's work. She suggests that Dostoevsky's experiment in 'the feminine' marks *The Idiot* off from his other novels.¹⁶³ Young, on the other hand, points to Nastasya's almost masculine ability to exert her own influence on the narrative by making her bold actions and unpredictability the forces which drive the narrative.¹⁶⁴ This ability is very rare in Dostoevsky's portrayal of women and I will return to discuss Young's argument in more detail later.

However, the femininity of Myshkin and aspects of Nastasya's characterisation which appear to reflect the portrayal of masculine literary heroes, present challenges to a gendered reading of this work. Both characters seem to shift between performing feminine and masculine roles. I will, therefore, consider the text from two feminist perspectives. I will first consider the ways in which Myshkin can be seen as a (failed) masculine hero, who is faced with a quest at which he is unable to succeed. I will then consider how Nastasya can be seen as acting the part of the masculine hero, who rejects the compassion offered by the spiritual, feminine character. Considering the text from

¹⁶⁰ Sutherland in Griffiths, p. 25.

¹⁶¹ Murav in Hoisington (1995), pp. 44-57, here p. 56.

¹⁶² Pelikan Straus, p. 62.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁶⁴ Young, p. 33.

these two perspectives will lead to a clearer understanding of the prevalence of the hero-quest plot, even in texts which do not have a clear, masculine hero who is developed in a 'classical' way such as Raskolnikov. My argument will show that masculine characters are so commonly assessed by their abilities to influence their surroundings and the lives of other characters, that it is difficult or impossible for characters in *The Idiot* to judge Myshkin in any other way.

The narrative of *The Idiot* begins with Myshkin entering the new, unfamiliar environment of St Petersburg. He is first experienced by the reader in contrast to Rogozhin, when they are sitting on the train. Myshkin seems feminised from the outset as he appears ethereal and other-worldly in comparison to Rogozhin's sensuality. Myshkin is:

Молодой человек, тоже лет двадцати шести или двадцати семи, роста немного повыше среднего, очень белокур, густоволос, со впалыми щеками и с легонькою, востренькою, почти совершенно белую бородкой. Глаза его были большие, голубые и пристальные; во взгляде их было что-то тихое, но тяжелое ... лицо молодого человека было, впрочем, приятное, тонкое и сухое.¹⁶⁵

(A young man, also twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, somewhat above average in height, with very fair, thick hair, with sunken cheeks and a thin,

¹⁶⁵ Dostoevsky, F. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Nauka, Leningrad, 1972-1990), vol. 8 *Idiot* (1973), p. 6. All future quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

pointed, almost white beard. His eyes were large, blue, and intent ... the young man's face was ... pleasing, delicate and lean.)¹⁶⁶

In addition to his physical appearance, Myshkin's epilepsy is feminising because it leaves him vulnerable to his body and weakens him. When Rogozhin attacks him with a knife, for example, Myshkin is saved, not by matching Rogozhin's masculine strength and aggression, but by an epileptic fit which leaves him falling down the steps 'от конвульсий, биения и судорог' (p. 195), ('from the convulsions, thrashings and shudders' [p. 255]). His epilepsy can also be seen as contributing to his deep spirituality as the auras he experiences at the beginning of a fit have a religious dimension to them.¹⁶⁷ For these reasons, Myshkin's feminine portrayal is multifaceted and an integral part of his characterisation. However, as I will show, viewed from the perspective of Lotman's and de Lauretis' theories, there is an implicit expectation that Myshkin will change and develop throughout the novel, notwithstanding his unusual characterisation as a feminised, spiritual man from the beginning.

Myshkin's entrance into the social world of St Petersburg is the start of his quest to locate himself in the social sphere and to begin to act in the way his society expected a man of his age and economic position to act. He has previously been isolated from society as he grew up in Switzerland, where he received treatment for his epilepsy. This formative experience and education may help to explain his naivety and innocence. Prince Myshkin is so unaccustomed to the hierarchies of nineteenth-century Russian society that when he first arrives at General Yepanchin's home he strikes up a conversation with the valet:

¹⁶⁶ Dostoevsky, F. and Brailovsky, A. and Garnett, C. (trans.) *The Idiot* (Random House, New York, 2003) p. 4. All future English translations of quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

¹⁶⁷ Scanlan, p. 46.

Опытный камердинер не мог не почувствовать что-то, что совершенно прилично человеку с человеком и совершенно неприлично гостю с *человеком* ... то и камердинеру зашло в голову, что тут два дела: или князь так, какой-нибудь потаскун и непременно пришел на бедность просить, или князь просто дурачок и амбиции не имеет (p. 18, emphasis in original text).

(The experienced attendant could not but feel something that is utterly proper from man to man but utterly improper between guest and *man* [servant] ... it came into the attendant's head that it was a matter of two things: either the prince was some kind of sponger and had certainly come to beg, or the prince was simply a bit daft and had no self-respect [p. 20, emphasis in original text]).

Although Myshkin seems feminised and childlike - Rogozhin tells him: 'ты точно как ребенок какой, захотелось игрушки – вынь да положи, а дела не понимаешь (p. 302), ('you're like a child; you want a plaything – and you must have it at once, but you don't grasp the business' [p. 396]) - his attitude to Nastasya's portrait is masculine and patriarchal. He is struck by her beauty and look of suffering, but many commentators point out that Nastasya is effectively objectified by this encounter. Leatherbarrow, for example, suggests that Myshkin is acting as an author, 'writing' Nastasya's perception of her situation (her look of suffering) and defining the terms of his relationship with her, which will be based on compassion and pity.¹⁶⁸ Nastasya is powerless to influence this initial encounter as she is positioned statically and cannot answer back to Myshkin's impression of her. This first impression of Nastasya is significant because Myshkin never really moves away from it throughout the novel.

¹⁶⁸ Leatherbarrow, p. 113.

Just as in *Crime and Punishment* Raskolnikov seemed to distance himself from those around him by viewing them in abstract theoretical terms, Myshkin also seems to be estranged from the other characters. Myshkin's difference gives him the independence and objective distance to judge other characters in a masculine way, despite other aspects of his characterisation that seem to feminise him. He shares this sense of being set apart from the other literary characters with twentieth-century male heroes such as Babel's Lyutov, Bulgakov's Master and Pasternak's Yuri Zhivago, all of whom stood existentially alone, and alienated, to varying degrees, from the characters around them. Mochulsky suggests that Myshkin's portrayal as a 'nobleman torn away from the Russian soil' leads him to imagine that he loves Nastasya.¹⁶⁹ Mochulsky's argument supports the suggestion that masculine characters often create a sense of emotional distance between themselves and other protagonists, as he goes on to contend that Myshkin views Nastasya as an intellectual project rather than as a person who inspires his romantic love.¹⁷⁰ I would suggest that part of the way in which Myshkin related to Nastasya as an intellectual project was by acting in an authorial way, attempting to interpret her personality and life in the terms of his own narrative.

Feminist thinkers, such as Battersby, suggest that to act as an author is to act from an inherently patriarchal viewpoint, as the author is situated in a position of power from which he guides the fate of objectified characters.¹⁷¹ The position of the author can be understood as a culturally masculine position, characterised by freedom to move intellectually and philosophically through characters who have relatively static, determined personalities. As we have seen, this viewpoint implies a sense of distance from the other characters and a sense that their destinies can be planned and foreseen. Young also supports this contention, comparing the author-character relationship to the relationship between God and humanity, and suggesting that the role of author carries a similar sense of power, authority and omniscience.¹⁷² This expression of powerfulness is part of the reason

¹⁶⁹ Mochulsky, p. 367.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Battersby, pp. 29 and 70.

¹⁷² Young, p. 142.

Cixous gives for the predominance of masculine writing and the need for women to develop feminine writing.¹⁷³ She suggests that in a male-defined world it is difficult for women to affirm their powerfulness, by writing as well as in other ways.¹⁷⁴

The power and authority a text's author has, however, been challenged by Barthes who argues that the author has little or no control over the way the text is read and interpreted by readers.¹⁷⁵ Barthes contends that texts do not have a single 'theological' meaning, but a multiplicity of readings, and that interpreting texts only in terms of their author can close off many of these readings and meanings.¹⁷⁶ Barthes' view of the relationship between a text's author and readers is important for understanding the ways in which Myshkin acts as an 'author' in his relations with the other characters. The emphasis on the multiplicity of readings of a text shows how characters who are not perceived as 'authors' through their characterisation can subvert this and enforce a different meaning on the narrative given by the 'author' character.

By assuming the position as 'author' when he views Nastasya's portrait, Myshkin seeks to endow her personality with the meanings which fit his particular narrative.¹⁷⁷ Nastasya is, in this way, perceived to be a vulnerable woman who needs to be saved by his compassion. On the other hand, Burkin argues that Myshkin is a passionate, true lover because he refuses to exert his own interpretations on the other characters in order to achieve his own happiness.¹⁷⁸ The comparison between Dostoevsky's portrayal of Raskolnikov as acting violently towards other characters in order to demonstrate the efficacy of his theories, and his characterisation of Myshkin shows the value of Burkin's argument. Myshkin does not act with overt aggression towards the other characters, but he does still objectify them, particularly Nastasya, by positioning them in ways that

¹⁷³ As discussed in Wilcox, McWaters, Thompson and Williams, p. 23.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Barthes, p. 148.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁷⁷ Leatherbarrow, p. 109.

¹⁷⁸ Burkin, p. 165.

emphasise their vulnerability and need to be 'saved'. For example, when Myshkin proposes to Nastasya, he refers to his desire to protect her from the gossip of the other characters and to meet her financial needs: 'Я вас ... Настасья Филипповна ... люблю. Я умру за вас, Настасья Филипповна ... Я никому не позволю про вас слова сказать, Настасья Филипповна ... Если мы будем бедны, я работать буду, Настасья Филипповна' (p. 138), ('I ... Nastasya Filippovna ... I love you. I would die for you, Nastasya Filippovna. I won't allow anyone to say a word about you, Nastasya Filippovna ... If we shall be poor, I will work, Nastasya Filippovna' [p. 176]). In this way, he creates a role for himself as the 'good' masculine hero who can save the woman by his understanding and compassion, echoing the way he improved Marie's fate by persuading the village children to respond compassionately to her (pp. 61/78). Just as Sonya is defined in relation to Raskolnikov's needs, Myshkin also tries to define Nastasya in ways which support his desire to help and, potentially, save her.

I do not mean to argue that Nastasya is not suffering or in pain. However, I would suggest that Myshkin takes this one aspect of her personality and defines her almost entirely by it. This process attempts to fix her in the role of a suffering, pitiful character and takes focus away from her autonomy and ability to define her own future. She may have a limited degree of autonomy compared to her male counterparts because of the social, economic, and political constraints on women in nineteenth-century Russia. But nonetheless, Myshkin's objectification of her from the moment he sees her portrait draws the reader's attention away from the ways in which Nastasya does demonstrate her freedom and desire for self-determination. His emphasis on Nastasya's position as a wronged, suffering, fallen woman has the effect of constructing her as an enclosed space, differentiated from Myshkin. This creates a boundary for the masculine hero to transgress.

Nastasya, however, has a history of refusing to perform the role that her patriarchal society tried to impose on her. She holds loud parties, and associates with people who are unacceptable to the

gentry, for example at her birthday party when Rogozhin arrives with other drunk men described by the maid as ‘совсем ... безобразные’ (p. 132), (‘utterly disgraceful’ [p. 167]). The encounter between the other guests and the newly arrived group of Rogozhin’s friends had clearly been planned by Nastasya as the narrator notes:

Гости продолжали изумляться, шептаться и переглядываться, но стало совершенно ясно, что всё это было рассчитано и устроено заранее и что Настасью Филипповну, - хоть она и, конечно, с ума сошла, - теперь не собьешь (p. 132).

(The guests continued being astonished, whispering and exchanging looks, but it became perfectly clear that all this had been calculated and arranged beforehand, and that Nastasya Filippovna – though she had certainly gone out of her senses – could not be put off her course now [p. 168]).

Nastasya also demonstrated her independence and strength of character by refusing to be manipulated by Totsky into keeping quiet about his abuse of her. She manages to place Totsky in the position of having to negotiate with her before he can propose to one of the General Yephanchin’s daughters, firstly through her reluctance to marry Totsky: ‘он вдруг, по одному случаю, убедился, что если бы даже он и сделал предложение, то его бы не приняли’ (p. 39), (‘he was suddenly convinced by something that happened that, even if he made the offer he would not be accepted’ [p. 47]) and secondly by her unwillingness to be bought off ‘на интерес тоже не поддавалась, даже на очень крупный’ (p. 39), (‘she was not susceptible to mercenary considerations either, not even very large ones’ [p. 48]). As part of the ensuing discussion between Nastasya, General Yephanchin and Totsky, Nastasya asks the men what exactly they would like her

to do and Totsky replies, tellingly, that: ‘он так напуган еще пять лет назад, что не может даже и теперь совсем успокоиться, до тех пор пока Настасья Филипповна сама не выйдет за кого-нибудь замуж’ (p. 40), (‘she had given him such a scare five years before that he could not feel entirely at ease even now until Nastasya Filippovna married somebody herself’ [p. 49]). This quotation demonstrates the importance of marriage in patriarchy as a way of controlling women and their sexuality. Totsky’s assumption seems to be that Nastasya would be unable to remain independent and unpredictable (and therefore threatening and uncontrollable) if she were married. Given how problematic women such as Nastasya were for Dostoevsky’s society to deal with, I would suggest that Myshkin’s task or ordeal is to categorise this sexualised, passionate woman and to impose some sort of constraint upon her. This may help to explain why he attempts to marry her, despite her statements that she is sexually involved with Rogozhin (pp. 138/176). In the solution he presents to Nastasya, therefore, Myshkin demonstrates that despite his child-like innocence, as a fundamentally masculine character operating in a patriarchal society, he ultimately cannot imagine a future for Nastasya in which she is free and independent, and not married to a man.

Myshkin’s attempt to contain Nastasya’s sexuality and her freedom of movement can be seen in the way he tells her: ‘Разве вы такая, какою теперь представлялись’ (p. 99), (‘you are not like that, like you were just pretending to be’ [p. 126]). Coates points to Bakhtin’s concept of the ‘penetrative word’, which she defines as ‘a word capable of actively and confidently interfering in the interior dialogue of the other person, helping that person to find his own voice’.¹⁷⁹ Bakhtin argued that Myshkin was the first of Dostoevsky’s characters to use this technique suggesting that his utterance is a ‘penetrative word’ which enables Nastasya to understand herself in a new way.¹⁸⁰ Nastasya acknowledges the truth in Myshkin’s perception that she behaves in a way which reinforces the view of her as ‘shameless’. She ‘подошла к Нине Александровне, взяла ее руку и поднесла ее к губам своим. “Я ведь и в самом деле не такая, он угадал,” прошептала она быстро’ (p. 100),

¹⁷⁹ Coates, p. 75.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

(‘went quickly up to Nina Alexandrovna, took her hand and raised it to her lips. “I really am not like this, he guessed it” she whispered quickly’ [p. 126]). Thus, Myshkin’s assertion opens up the possibility for Nastasya to see herself not just as a fallen woman, but instead as a woman who can move beyond her past abuse and play a full role in her society. Myshkin’s proposal of marriage would also have worked to make this possible as she would be financially and socially provided for.

This example of Myshkin speaking a ‘penetrative word’ and Nastasya responding by confessing, is very significant for our understanding of both of their characters, but it is also a highly unusual episode within the novel. Danow, for instance, argues that the whole novel is notable for the lack of real communication between the characters.¹⁸¹ Even the powerful example of penetrative speech we have just discussed is limited in its effect, as only Mrs Ivolgin and Varya heard Nastasya’s response to Myshkin’s statement. The others didn’t realise why Nastasya returned to the room: ‘Видели только, что она пошептала что-то Нине Александровне и, кажется, руку ее поцеловала’ (p. 100), (‘they only saw that she had whispered something to Nina Alexandrovna and, it seemed, kissed her hand’ [p. 126]).

I think that the main cause of this lack of communication is Myshkin’s portrayal as a unified character from the very beginning of the text. He appears to be already fully formed and so does not use dialogue with the other characters as part of the development of his character. While Coates argues that we have an aesthetic need for dialogue with others in order to view ourselves as agents who can act on the world, Myshkin appears to have no need for this kind of self-affirmation.¹⁸² He is feminised and child-like at the beginning of the text and remains so, despite his interactions with other characters throughout the text. A logical extension of this argument would be the contention that Myshkin does not feel a personal need for the other characters - perhaps this reflects a self-sufficiency learned from his childhood years growing up in isolation because of his illness. It also

¹⁸¹ Danow (1991), p. 55.

¹⁸² Coates, p. 66.

reflects his characterisation as a Christ-like being, who is therefore set apart from the other protagonists. Both of these characteristics are mirrored in the portrayal of other male characters discussed throughout this thesis. Characters such as Pierre Bezuhov (in *Crime and Punishment*) and Lyutov (in *Red Cavalry*) search for spiritual meaning and truth, while Pasternak's Yury Zhivago has many Christ-like characteristics, comparable to Dostoevsky's portrayal of Myshkin. Parentless masculine characters also recur throughout the texts under discussion. The parents of Pierre Bezuhov and Yury Zhivago, for example, die while their sons are in childhood. I discuss the significance of being parentless for the development of masculine heroes in detail in my chapter on Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*; however, it is notable that the persistence of this theme of orphaned central characters shows that the writers under discussion, including Dostoevsky, persistently created heroes who had the independence and freedom from familial ties which enabled them to define their lives and destinies in new and original ways.

In *The Idiot* however, it becomes clear that Myshkin's character and personality have been 'set' outside the narrative frame of the novel. He has entered the text as an already-unified character who will not transcend the boundaries posed by female characters, or create quests for himself, in order to develop his personality. He is unable to succeed in either of his two attempts to marry Nastasya and does not realise that he has to act to prevent Rogozhin from pursuing her despite Aglaya's warning to Myshkin after he finds out that the two women have been exchanging letters. Myshkin tells Aglaya that he will do everything he can to stop Nastasya writing to her again and Aglaya replies:

Если так, то вы человек без сердца! ... неужели вы не видите, что не в меня
она влюблена, а вас, вас одного она любит! Неужели вы всё в ней успели
заметить, а этого не заметили? ... вы думаете, она в самом деле замуж за

Рогожина выйдет, как она пишет здесь в письмах? Она убьет себя на другой день, только, что мы обвенчаемся! (p. 363)

(If that's so, then you're a man without a heart ... can you really not see that she's not in love with me, but with you; it's you alone she loves! Can you really have managed to notice everything in her, but did not notice that? ... do you suppose she'd really marry Rogozhin, as she writes here in her letters? She'll kill herself the very next day, as soon as we are married! [p. 472])

Panichas also argues that Myshkin, as a Christ-like character, feels no need to find and to prove himself and so he can act only as a compassionate presence in the world.¹⁸³ However, I have tried to demonstrate that Myshkin's compassion was ultimately not enough to save Nastasya because it fixed her in the static position of needing a masculine hero to rescue her. It also contributed to the static nature of Myshkin's character and overwhelmingly defined his relationship with Nastasya, inhibiting the possibility of genuine, meaningful dialogue between the characters.

I will now consider the argument that Nastasya herself can be read as trying to achieve masculine self-hood in her quest to live her life independently and not in a way defined by other characters. Young builds on Bakhtin's concept of uttering the 'final word' about the 'other' pointing to the fundamental impulse of characters to gain control over the way in which they are perceived.¹⁸⁴ This impulse and the actions characters take to gain control over their image are described by Young as 'scripting'.¹⁸⁵ She strongly contends that Nastasya is the most successful character in the novel at 'scripting' as she is able to determine the course of the narrative in a way that no other character

¹⁸³ Panichas, p. 56.

¹⁸⁴ Young, p. 12.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

can, to such an extent that in the middle part of the novel, when she is absent, the narrative seems aimless and lacks focus. Young suggests that Nastasya even manages to surpass the narrator's, and author's, intentions for her by persistently taking the focus away from Myshkin in her own attempts to define herself rather than passively accepting others' views of her.¹⁸⁶

Leatherbarrow also makes this argument when he writes about Nastasya's unwillingness to fit into the role that is assigned to her (as a fallen woman) and points out that she consistently asserts her own otherness and independence, regardless of attempts by Myshkin and the other characters to fix her in that role.¹⁸⁷ Her unpredictability and intensely passionate nature force other characters to respond either by accepting the challenges she poses, or by retreating. For example, Nastasya insists on throwing a pile of money into the fire at the party as a test for Ganya to see if he will put his hands into the fire to retrieve it. She seems to be taunting him when she says: 'А я на душу твою полюбуюсь, как ты за моими деньгами в огонь полезешь' (p. 144), ('and I shall get a good look at your soul, seeing how you climb into the fire after my money' [p. 184]). The money Nastasya throws into the fire was paid to her by Rogozhin in return for spending a night with him. By destroying it she problematises the idea that she is forced into the role of 'Rogozhin's woman' for financial reasons. She also uses the money to test the lengths Ganya will go to in order to obtain the money for himself, trying to transform him into the one who is 'looked at', a position generally occupied by women, who are the focus of the male gaze.¹⁸⁸ Most of the money, however, is burned – Ganya refuses to pull it out of the fire. Nastasya is unable to force him to act, although he is humiliated by the experience.

Despite the force of her character, and her unpredictability, Nastasya can only author herself and her own plot, and not that of the other characters. It should also be highlighted that Nastasya is only

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 103 and 166.

¹⁸⁷ Leatherbarrow, p. 110.

¹⁸⁸ Mulvey, p. 25.

effective in authoring negative, self-destructive narratives for herself. She twice refuses, for example, to marry Myshkin, when this marriage could have provided her with the stability and social acceptance she seemed to need. Like Sonya, a prostitute who is also deeply religious, Nastasya has a powerful split in her personality. At the last moment, just as she was getting out of the carriage to meet Myshkin she ‘вскрикнула и бросилась с крыльца прямо в народ ... в пяти, в шести шагах от крыльца показался вдруг Рогожин. Его-то взгляд и поймала в толпе Настасья Филипповна’ (p. 493), (‘uttered a cry and rushed from the steps straight into the crowd ... five or six paces from the steps suddenly appeared Rogozhin. It was his eyes Nastasya Filippovna had caught in the crowd’ [p. 643]). Nastasya is profoundly, and self-destructively, attracted to Rogozhin and ultimately rejects the ‘redemption’ a marriage to Myshkin might offer her.

I think that these are powerful arguments and that it is important to see how female characters, as well as their male counterparts, can be interpreted as following de Lauretis’ process of descending into a dark, feminised space and then emerging reborn as a unified, developed hero. However, considering Nastasya’s narratological power in this way, and seeing her only symbolically as part of a structural analysis does not adequately address crucial aspects of the novel’s plot. Namely, I am concerned that praising the characterisation of Nastasya as a strong narratological character may minimise, and distract attention away from the fact that she is ultimately murdered by a violent male character.

Nastasya does, indeed, show her independence and ‘moves’ through the text in a greater way than many of the other characters, but her movement is defined and motivated by the oppression she has experienced at the hands of male characters. Totsky, for example, sexually abused her and it was this sexual abuse and the way in which she was perceived by nineteenth-century Russian society as a result, which propelled her movement. She also ran between Rogozhin and Myshkin, causing them to define their characters in counter-distinction to each other, but her movement was limited

and constrained in the sense that her only option for self-development was to choose between male ‘protectors’. She only had the choices offered by these two men, although she was successful at attaining as much independence and autonomy as possible for herself while she went between them, making her choices.

While Young argues that Nastasya’s death deprives Myshkin and Rogozhin of their self-hood and that this is further evidence of her symbolic power as a character, I would suggest that this conversely demonstrates that Myshkin and Rogozhin also used their encounters with Nastasya as the space in which to develop their own sense of self-hood.¹⁸⁹ I would question Young’s assumption that Nastasya is in a position of power because of the male characters’ inability to retain unified, masculine selves in her absence. It is significant that Myshkin not only regresses into a sense of confusion and disintegration following Nastasya’s death, but that he appears to align himself with Rogozhin during the scene in which they both sit beside Nastasya’s body: ‘он прилег на подушку, как бы совсем уже в бессилии и в отчаянии, и прижался своим лицом к бледному и неподвижному лицу Рогожина; слезы текли из его глаз на щеки Рогожина’ (p. 507), (‘he lay down on the pillow as though in utter helplessness and despair, and pressed his face to the pale and motionless face of Rogozhin; tears flowed from his eyes onto Rogozhin’s cheeks’ [pp. 662-3]). Myshkin’s apparent closeness to Rogozhin in this scene may be partly explained by Mochulsky’s suggestion that they are ‘accomplices’ in Nastasya’s murder.¹⁹⁰ Mochulsky argues that they both killed Nastasya with their ‘love’, but it is difficult to see how Myshkin can be equally responsible for Nastasya’s death.¹⁹¹ While he argues convincingly that Myshkin was, like Rogozhin, unable to move beyond objectifying Nastasya, ultimately, Nastasya died as a result of Rogozhin’s violence.¹⁹² Myshkin’s failure to save her does not make him equally culpable, but does indicate his inability to recognise her individual needs, and therefore his failure to communicate with her effectively.

¹⁸⁹ Young, p. 134.

¹⁹⁰ Mochulsky, p. 379.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

Williams attributes this failure to Myshkin's 'changelessness' and static nature which means that he does not adapt his own self in response to his interactions with other personalities.¹⁹³

While Williams notes Myshkin's failure as a 'saviour', Panichas suggests that the presence of a Christ-like figure in Dostoevsky's texts makes tragedy and existence meaningful and redeeming.¹⁹⁴ However, Myshkin's inability to imbue meaning into Nastasya's death seems to be further evidence either of his failure as a masculine character, or as evidence of his feminised portrayal. If Panichas' argument has value, and the presence of a Christ-like figure has the power to bring meaning to tragedy, it should be noted that critics such as Pelikan Straus suggest that it is Nastasya who appears to be Christ-like in the scene in which Myshkin and Rogozhin sit by her dead body.¹⁹⁵ Pelikan Straus contends that Nastasya resembles Christ in that she is 'de-feminised, de-eroticised and neutered'.¹⁹⁶

Knapp highlights Radomsky's suggestion that Myshkin carried his forgiveness and compassion for Nastasya so far that it seemed like approval for her self-destructive behaviour in returning repeatedly to Rogozhin.¹⁹⁷ This seems to me to reinforce the argument that Myshkin's passivity was not unambiguously positive for Nastasya. Just as Myshkin's acceptance of Rogozhin, and failure to judge his actions in terms of their harm to Nastasya, contributed to her death, his acceptance of her behaviour worked to reinforce patterns of female suffering. As Radomsky argued, citing the Biblical encounter between Jesus Christ and the woman caught committing adultery: 'во храме прощена была женщина, такая же женщина, но ведь не сказано же ей было, что она хорошо делает, достойна всяких почестей и уважения?' (p. 482), ('in the temple, the woman – just such a woman – was forgiven, but then she wasn't told that she'd done well, that she was deserving of all

¹⁹³ Williams, p. 48.

¹⁹⁴ Panichas, p. 20.

¹⁹⁵ Pelikan Straus, p. 59.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Knapp, pp. 191-215, here p. 202.

respect and honour, was she?’ [p. 629]). I think that in this sense it can be shown that Myshkin’s ultimate failure as a character was linked to his refusal to engage with feminised space, in this case portrayed in the character of Nastasya. His refusal to form, and to articulate (act on), opinions about the other characters and their behaviour showed that he was a ‘cultural sponge’ who was ultimately unable to help the women he encountered.¹⁹⁸

This argument is quite significant in terms of feminist theory, because it shows how *The Idiot* reinforces a patriarchal view of women needing to be rescued by male heroes. Placed within this context, where men are expected to test their status as heroes through their relations with women, this analysis of Nastasya’s relationship with Myshkin suggests that masculine passivity can be almost as destructive for feminine characters as outright aggression. Myshkin has an inherent goodness, but this goodness does not compel him to act, and his actions cannot therefore drive the novel’s narrative. The vacuum left by Myshkin’s failure to act is filled by another male character, the masculine and violent Rogozhin.

In conclusion, therefore, I have tried to show that both Sonya and Nastasya are portrayed as ultimately fixed in their roles. Despite the vast differences in their characterisations, both women are ultimately unable to move beyond an understanding of themselves which is tied to their bodies. Sonya is portrayed only as Raskolnikov’s helpmate and even Nastasya, who has a more forceful personality, cannot move beyond her characterisation as a ‘fallen woman’.

On the other hand, Dostoevsky shows the importance of movement for masculine characters and the narratological drive towards unified, free male heroes. In *Crime and Punishment* he shows how Raskolnikov moves through a quest, by his encounter with the materiality of the female bodies of

¹⁹⁸ Pelikan Straus in Knapp, pp. 105-129, here p. 110.

the pawnbroker and her sister, and then is re-born and emerges as a whole, unified male hero through his confession to Sonya. In *The Idiot*, however, Myshkin refuses to engage with Nastasya in this way. He defines her as in need of protection, and fixes her as a suffering, needy woman. However, his ultimate refusal to act allows another man, Rogozhin, to murder Nastasya. Myshkin also, like Raskolnikov who does not follow his ideas through by re-distributing the pawnbroker's money, fails in the task or quest he has set himself. Unlike Raskolnikov, however, Myshkin does not move intellectually and develop as a hero.

My analysis of both texts has emphasised that despite neither hero being entirely successful in his quest, it is not success in the ordeal as defined by the masculine character that counts, so much as the development of the male character through the lessons he learns from the quest. The success of both texts as narratives seems to depend on the effectiveness of the masculine hero in driving the action of the plot. Raskolnikov succeeds in this to a much greater extent than Myshkin, largely as a result of Myshkin's 'changelessness'.

The narrative of *Crime and Punishment* is driven by the quest narrative as laid out by de Lauretis, and that it shows clearly how masculine characters are developed through participating in a quest and then gaining a woman as a prize. *The Idiot*, however, is problematic when considered in view of this theory. I have contended that Myshkin's unwillingness, or inability, to act contributes to the fragmented nature of the narrative of *The Idiot* and therefore demonstrates the validity of de Lauretis' argument that the development of masculine heroes defines and drives narrative. I have also argued that Nastasya is only able to gain control and power over the narrative because of Myshkin's failure to act and that therefore her ability to script some of the narrative is not as empowering as some critics (such as Young) would claim. Her drive for independence and self-determination is ultimately thwarted by a violent, aggressively masculine character who, unlike Myshkin, is able to act decisively.

2. Female ‘Heroes’ and Self-determination: Tolstoy’s Portrayal of Women in his Major Novels and Short Stories

Leo Tolstoy portrayed a range of female characters in his fictional works, and used his novels and short stories as a forum to express his strong and controversial views on the role of women both in domestic life and in wider society. In this chapter I draw on examples from three of Tolstoy’s major novels, *War and Peace* (1869), *Anna Karenina* (1877) and *Resurrection* (1899), as well as short stories such as *Family Happiness* (1859), *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889) and *Father Sergius* (1898). This selection of texts from various periods of Tolstoy’s life demonstrates the way his complex views about women altered throughout his life. Portrayals of female characters continued to play a central role in Tolstoy’s writing until his death and still inspire lively academic debate about characterisations of gender relations. Significant for this study, is the influence Tolstoy’s work has had on writers such as Babel, Bulgakov and Pasternak. All three of these twentieth-century writers discussed in the following chapters of this dissertation were familiar with the work of both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, but Tolstoy had a very particular influence. John Bayley argues, for example, that Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago* is a descendant of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, I analyse a range of Tolstoy’s works in this chapter because of his particularly strong views on women, his conscious use of fiction to express these opinions, and his powerful influence on later Russian writers.

The use of a narratological approach which was influenced by Propp’s and Lotman’s work is very pertinent to Tolstoy’s work. Propp and Lotman both considered the way plot lines often reflect ancient mythological plots and the protagonists can be seen to perform set roles (as donor, for example). Boris Eikhenbaum has argued that, like all writers, Tolstoy’s art was based on modification, rather than creation. That is, Tolstoy used existing concepts and plots and recreated

¹⁹⁹ Bayley (1997), p. 17.

them in his own way to reflect his own concerns and the world as he perceived it.²⁰⁰ Therefore, in this chapter, I focus on the conclusions which can be drawn about his characterisation of masculine heroes, and the roles of their feminine counterparts in supporting their development by reflecting on the texts in the light of de Lauretis' framework. I have chosen these texts because they show, so clearly, Tolstoy's developing views on the role and place of women in society, but maybe more significantly, in marriage. Marriage is an important theme for the purposes of this chapter because it acts as a microcosm of male-female relationships. It is also closely linked to the self-image of both partners and the dynamics of literary marital relationships can be revealing of wider societal attitudes towards gender, and artistic portrayals of gender relations.

Tolstoy's views about women are well-known. He idealised the memory of his mother, who had died in 1830 when he was not yet two years old. As late as 10th June 1908, only two years before he died and therefore eighty years after she had died, he wrote in his diary: '... thought about my mother, my 'mamma', whom I don't remember at all, but who remains for me a sacred ideal. I never heard anything bad about her'.²⁰¹ His daughter, Tatyana, also recalls how he loved and venerated the memory of his mother, drawing on his image of her to inspire and motivate himself during his darker moments of illness and depression.²⁰²

Despite, or maybe because of, this deep adoration of his mother, Tolstoy also held very strong, and complex, views about the place of women in society. He came to view all sexual behaviour as wrong and destructive, but seems to have been particularly concerned about female sexuality. Believing that women were suited to traditional roles of raising children and performing domestic tasks, Tolstoy despised those nineteenth-century women who were beginning to break into roles and professions that were previously seen as the domain of men:

²⁰⁰ Discussed in Wasiolek, p. 1.

²⁰¹ Tolstoy, L. and Christian, R. (trans. and ed.), *Tolstoy's Diaries* (Flamingo, London, 1994) p. 416.

²⁰² Tolstoy, T., pp. 50 and 147.

I look at women students with their books and notebooks running from lecture to lecture. Women painters, women musicians. They can do everything. And, like apes, they have copied everything from men. The one thing women can't do (girls still can) is to provide moral impetus (22nd December 1893).²⁰³

Tolstoy's suggestion here that adult women have lost the ability to 'provide moral impetus' that they had as children raises the question of what happens to the maturing female adolescent (in Tolstoy's view) to cause her to lose this ability. For Tolstoy, the question of women's morality was intrinsically bound up in his idealised role of women as mothers and the problematic issue of female sexuality.

Anna Berman understands Tolstoy's distrust of women and his belief that they were irrational and deceitful as part of his 'search for ideal motherly love'.²⁰⁴ Tolstoy held his mother in such high esteem that it was impossible for any living woman to fulfil his high expectations.²⁰⁵ As Judith Armstrong points out, the quotidian reality of a living wife is very different to idealising the memory of a mother.²⁰⁶ This idea that the memory of dead loved ones can be shaped by the needs of those left behind is supported by Tatyana Tolstoy's account of Tolstoy's image of his mother. She writes that her father was glad he only had a single, very small, silhouette of his mother because this meant he did not have to imagine her as a real, flesh and blood person, but as a pure spirit.²⁰⁷ For Berman, not only was it unlikely that any woman would be able to reflect the high spiritual ideals Tolstoy identified with his mother, but the sexuality of the women he associated with disturbed him.²⁰⁸ He could not reconcile their sexuality with the purity he felt his mother represented, and as a result female sexuality seemed degrading and destroyed his sense of feminine

²⁰³ Tolstoy and Christian, p. 276.

²⁰⁴ Christian (1994), p. 196.

²⁰⁵ Berman, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ Armstrong, J., p. 43.

²⁰⁷ Tolstoy, T., p. 146.

²⁰⁸ Berman, p. 2.

innocence.²⁰⁹ Tolstoy's wife, Sofia Andreevna, who mothered his thirteen children (only eight of whom survived to adulthood), struggled to meet his high expectations of women. For example, her decision to hire a wet-nurse in advance of the birth of her youngest daughter, Aleksandra, provoked an extremely angry and unsympathetic response from Tolstoy who believed that it was unnatural and disgusting for a woman to choose not to breastfeed.²¹⁰ William Nickell has documented some of the implications of the couple's complex marriage for the final days of Tolstoy's life.²¹¹ He highlights the difficulties caused by Tolstoy's attempts to re-organise the life of his large family in accordance with his increasingly moralistic and uncompromising views.²¹²

I would argue that Tolstoy's two opposing views of femininity can be understood within the context of de Lauretis' theory. Women may be seen simultaneously as the prize awaiting each little boy at the end of his journey towards masculinity, but also as the space which he must transcend. One part of this process of transcending the feminine may be understood as defining women - placing them into categories and therefore ordering them - in terms of pre-ordained roles. I will try to show how this process has the effect of stripping Tolstoy's women of their individuality to some extent. This makes it difficult for them to move beyond the roles of helper, carer or symbolic 'donor' for the masculine characters.

For critics such as Ruth Benson, Tolstoy's two icons of women, which she describes as 'devil and saint', both show his rejection of sexuality.²¹³ Portraying female characters as devilish and sinful by highlighting their sexuality clearly shows them in a very negative way, demonstrating Tolstoy's disgust. However, holding women to a non-sexual, saintly ideal is also oppressive as it represents a

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Porter in Tolstoy, S., p. xvii.

²¹¹ Nickell, pp. 21-3.

²¹² Ibid., p. 22.

²¹³ Benson, p. 10.

standard few women can actually achieve or would want to.²¹⁴ This tendency to present women in polarised ways shows how female characters are described to complement patriarchal perceptions of male heroes. Male heroes are expected to become increasingly more cerebral and less constrained by bodily needs and functions and this process necessitates the distancing of femininity from the masculine psyche.

De Lauretis puts it this way: ‘the story of femininity, Freud’s question, and the riddle of the Sphinx all have a single answer, one and the same meaning, one term of reference and one address: man, Oedipus, the human male person’.²¹⁵ Comparing this quotation with Benson’s reflection that ‘to displace the body from the center of her universe and therefore from the center of *man*’s universe is Tolstoy’s basic demand of women’ (emphasis Benson’s),²¹⁶ points to the deep seated cultural significance of these ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ roles. While female sexuality is shunned and seen as perverse, male characters are privileged and allowed the ability to distance themselves from the body and its needs and impulses. Negating female sexuality thus denies women’s claims to sexual autonomy and allows male sexual desires to dominate as these are the only desires granted legitimacy.

I will move on now to consider, in detail, the ways in which these important themes of Tolstoy’s thought are reflected in his fiction. I begin by analysing *Family Happiness*, which according to Benson, can be read as the first step towards the anguish of Anna Karenina’s story and the despair of *The Kreutzer Sonata*.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Warner (1976), p. 159.

²¹⁵ de Lauretis (1984), p. 133.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

²¹⁷ Benson, p. 43.

Significantly, rather than ending with a marriage, the marriage in *Family Happiness* occurs approximately a third of the way into the text. Marriage does not function solely as the hero's 'reward' at the completion of his quest, but is also critiqued as an institution which constricts and limits the participants' freedom and independence. Tolstoy's diary entry of 30th August 1894 shows how he associated marriage with the loss of freedom:

Novels end with the hero and heroine getting married. They should begin with that and end with them getting unmarried, i.e. becoming free. Otherwise to describe people's lives in such a way as to break off the description with marriage is just the same as describing a person's journey and breaking off the description at the point where the traveller falls into the hands of robbers.²¹⁸

While *Family Happiness* has been described as conforming to this conviction,²¹⁹ it is interesting that the character who seeks freedom and independence from the marriage is female, thus challenging the traditional patriarchal attribution of independence and autonomy to male characters. Following the death of her parents, the main female character in this text, Masha, marries a man who is much older than her. This story shows the emotional changes she experiences in the early years of her marriage as she moves from admiration and idealisation of her husband to boredom and disillusionment and then an acceptance of her new role as a wife and mother.

In some ways Masha does conform to traditionally feminine stereotypes. She deeply respects her husband, whom she has known since she was a young child, and wants to please him:

Только он один существовал для меня на свете, а его я считала самым прекрасным, непогрешимым человеком в мире; поэтому я и не могла жить ни для чего другого, как для него, как для того, чтобы быть в его глазах тем,

²¹⁸ Tolstoy and Christian, p. 283.

²¹⁹ Benson, p. 25.

чем он считал меня. А он считал меня первую и прекраснейшею женщиной в мире, одаренною всеми возможными добродетелями; и я старалась быть этою женщиной в глазах первого и лучшего человека во всем мире.²²⁰

(He was all that existed for me, and I considered him the most wonderful and flawless human being in the world; and so I was unable to live for anything else but him, to be in his eyes what he considered me to be, and he considered me to be the first and most wonderful woman in the world, endowed with all possible virtues.)²²¹

Masha's father dies when she was a young child and her mother died when she was seventeen, just before the narrative begins. Her husband was a friend of her father's and in some ways acts as a father-figure, taking on the role of her teacher and guardian. Their marriage is not an equal partnership, but reflects Tolstoy's belief that in an ideal marriage the husband should instruct his wife so that she becomes his 'creation'.²²² In this construction of marriage, the husband's role was to provide a safe and secure home where the wife would continue to be dependent on him.²²³

During the first part of the story, Masha is happy to accept her husband's guidance, trusting in his greater experience and knowledge, but later she becomes bored of their life in the country. She narrates: 'Мне хотелось движения, а не спокойного течения жизни. Мне хотелось волнений, опасностей и самопожертвования для чувства' (p. 116), ('I wanted movement, and not a calm flow of life. I wanted excitement, danger, and self-sacrifice for the sake of feeling' [p. 54]). Within

²²⁰ http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/01text/vol_3/01text/0022.htm, pp. 111-112. All future Russian quotations from this story will be taken from this online edition of the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's *Complete Works, Volume Three*. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

²²¹ Tolstoy, L. and McDuff, D. and Foote, P. (trans.), *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories* (Penguin, London 2008) pp. 1-92, here p. 49. All future English translations of quotations from this story will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

²²² Benson, p. 39.

²²³ Ibid.

de Lauretis' theoretical framework this could be explained as Masha's desire to transgress boundaries in order to develop. The importance of this desire to travel in the development of fairy tale heroes is also highlighted by Jack Zipes who reflects on the importance of images of the traveller 'in relation to the genesis and transmission of narrative structure'.²²⁴

After a period of time in St Petersburg, in which Masha is happy, society balls become a habitual part of her life and she continues to enjoy these experiences after the birth of her first child. Following her flirtation with an Italian marquis in Baden-Baden, however, she feels very guilty and returns to the rural life and occupations she had enjoyed with her husband in the early months of their marriage. Masha recalls that: 'Вся моя замужняя жизнь со дня переезда нашего в Петербург вдруг представилась мне в новом свете и укором легла мне на совесть' (p. 139), ('the whole of my married life from the day of our move to St Petersburg suddenly appeared to me in a new light, and lay on my conscience like a reproach' [p. 79]). Her act of self-determination is ultimately unsuccessful and she returns to become reconciled to her husband and to her traditionally feminine roles as a wife and mother. Her attempt to transgress this role and experience a different way of life results in her return to her previous role with a greater sense of devotion to her husband.

Masha's quest can, in some ways, be seen as unlikely to succeed from the start of the story. Her husband's knowledge and understanding are emphasised from the beginning of the plot, to such an extent that he seems to be almost omniscient: 'мне было немного неприятно, что он так слишком легко и ясно понимал все, что тайно для всех должно было быть в моей душе,' (p. 100), ('I found it slightly unpleasant that he understood too clearly and easily everything within my soul that ought to be secret from everyone' [p. 35]). This belief that her husband knew her deeply, even to the extent of being aware of those thoughts and feeling she had not expressed, shows what

²²⁴ Zipes, p. 75.

a powerful figure Masha perceived her husband to be. The suggestion is that Masha was not free, even in her own mind, to imagine her life apart from her husband, or to follow and develop her own thoughts and opinions. In this sense, her husband appears to be in the God-like, law-giving position Jung associated with the archetype of a father.²²⁵

The intellectual authority her husband exerts even seems to have a spiritual dimension as from the beginning of the narrative Masha feels compelled to ‘confess’ her actions to him: ‘Мне казалось необходимо подробно и особенно искренно сообщать ему все, что я делала хорошего, и признаваться, как на исповеди, во всем, чем он мог быть недоволен’ (p. 79), (‘It seemed to me that I was obliged to tell him in detail, and above all with frank sincerity, all the good things I had done, and to admit, as at confession, to all the things that might incur his displeasure’ [p. 12]). Masha lacks private, intellectual space – a ‘room of her own’, in Virginia Woolf’s terms.²²⁶ She is deprived of the cultural experiences and freedoms which would encourage her to develop her own independence and imagine a future for herself which was not dependent on her relationship with a male guardian.²²⁷

Despite the points I have made about *Family Happiness* from a feminist perspective, it should be noted that this text is often seen as a relatively positive portrayal of a marriage. The couple seem contented at the end of the story, even though there is a sense in which Masha is merely reconciled to her fate. Moreover, as we have seen, their marriage conforms to Tolstoy’s ideas of how an ‘ideal’ marriage should look. Although it could be argued, from a feminist perspective, that the marriage works at the expense of Masha’s freedom and autonomy, Tolstoy seems to have sincerely believed that the discipline of marriage was beneficial to women. His daughter recalls how he was

²²⁵ Stevens, p. 52.

²²⁶ Woolf (1998), p. 139.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

ridiculed within his family for being ‘womanophobic’,²²⁸ but that he maintained that women simply had different qualities from men. His views on women remained largely unchanged despite the development of his thoughts in many other areas as this extract from his diary from 1891 demonstrates:

If we expect of a woman what we expect of a man, we shall require it, and when we don’t find what we require, we shall be irritated, and ascribe to ill will what is the result of impossibility. So to regard women as what they are - weaker creatures spiritually - is not cruelty to women; to regard them as equals is cruelty (13th June 1891).²²⁹

Tolstoy believed that women living in accordance with traditional Christian values, and in compliance with society’s expectation that they should confine their sphere of influence to the home, should be praised and valued.²³⁰ However, he believed that it was wrong for women to partake in what he considered to be male activities.

This belief may be very attractive within patriarchy because it shows how easily women like Masha can be trapped within the expectations that they fulfil strictly pre-determined roles by family members who seem to be acting in their best interests. It was been pointed out by feminist scholars such as Adrienne Rich that heterosexuality is one important explanation for both the longevity of patriarchal oppression and its presence in most human cultures throughout history.²³¹ The strong personal and emotional links that individual women form with their male sexual partners (and also

²²⁸ Tolstoy, T., p. 154.

²²⁹ Tolstoy and Christian, p. 262.

²³⁰ Tolstoy, T., p. 155.

²³¹ Rich in Jaggar (1994), p. 488.

with other male relations such as brothers, fathers and sons) make it harder to resist patriarchal attitudes.

I have suggested in my Introduction and in my previous chapter that fixing women in a static position is important in the development of masculine heroes because the fixed, female boundaries provide a site for the hero to transgress, and also because the woman becomes the prize awaiting the successful hero at the end of his quest. I would also suggest that a further explanation for the importance of static, confined female characters in patriarchy is that the fixed nature of female characters emphasises the ability of the masculine character to move spatially and philosophically. By comparing himself with his wife, who is dependent on him and defined solely by her domestic role, Masha's husband can attach even greater importance to his experiences of travelling and academic learning. He has had a broad and full life before marrying Masha and now wants to stay at home. Masha, on the other hand, has not experienced these things.

Female characters can also be seen, to some extent, to be fixed within the confines of domestic roles in *War and Peace*. I will move on now to consider how female characters are portrayed in this way, and what this means for the self-perception of their male counterparts. This association between the position of women in nineteenth-century Russian society as primarily wives and mothers and the development of masculine ideas of self is important because it shows how interconnected feminist schools of thought are. While de Lauretis' narratological theory seems abstract and focused on philosophical concerns, I will use *War and Peace* to show that the construct of masculine heroes moving spatially across female-defined boundaries is supported and made possible by the idea that women are linked with home and domesticity. In this way, women are routinely constrained by the expectations of those around them that they should limit their interests to the narrow confines of things that are close at hand - family, children and care of the

home. Therefore, both the physical and the intellectual space available to them to move in and develop their characters are restricted.

In addition to gender, *War and Peace* is often seen as a novel of other dichotomies, in which for example the city is identified primarily as artificial and European, and the countryside is usually seen as natural and Russian.²³² Isaiah Berlin also points to the juxtaposition of political or historical events with the spiritual or 'inner' events which are personal to each of the characters.²³³ Berlin's insight into the novel is useful for my feminist analysis because of the clear divide between male and female societal roles. The political aspects of the novel can be interpreted as being represented by the male characters as only men were able to partake in the public, political aspect of Russian life. Women, on the other hand, can be seen to represent the spiritual aspects of the novel, as they are so closely linked with domesticity and religion, the realms of emotional and spiritual development. This interpretation reflects the value that Tolstoy placed on certain aspects of femininity, such as spirituality and intuition, and also demonstrates the importance of gender as a way of interpreting the novel. It also supports Frank Seeley's argument that *War and Peace* is an attack on power, highlighting Tolstoy's pet hatreds of rationalism and the image of the 'great man'.²³⁴ It is significant, however, that while the countryside and domesticity are marked as both 'good' and 'feminine', Tolstoy's view of women (like the women students) who seek to move out of these spheres is, as we have seen, rather more negative.

This seemingly paradoxical description of Tolstoy's understanding of women and femininity (as supremely valuable, but in need of confinement to narrow spheres of influence) may be demonstrated by Bayley's suggestion that to Tolstoy freedom meant discovering how life intended

²³² Wasiolek, p. 68.

²³³ Berlin (1978), p. 33.

²³⁴ Seeley in Jones, M. (1978), pp. 175-193, here p. 175.

to imprison one and accepting that imprisonment.²³⁵ To Tolstoy freedom was good, but, like sexuality, needed to be constrained. If women are conceived of as being in the category of those things that restrict the freedom of men, even if that restriction is seen as necessary, it is easy to see how women and domesticity become coded in the patriarchal mind as less valuable than the masculine sphere. This argument reflects psychological discussions of the role of mothers in setting boundaries which are pushed against and eventually transcended as part of the process of maturation.²³⁶

Pierre is an example of a masculine character who moves philosophically, exploring a variety of spiritual ideas and then emerging as a unified character, who has reconciled the contradictions and inconsistencies within himself. At the beginning of the novel, there are doubts about his status and sense of belonging which are demonstrated by his ‘illegitimacy’ in the eyes of the law, and his father’s attempts to have his legal status clarified by the emperor so that he will be able to inherit when his father dies.²³⁷ Despite the fact that his father ‘занимался его воспитанием’ (vol. 4, p. 50), ([took] great pains with his education’ [p. 42])²³⁸ he is portrayed as being undisciplined and not in control of his own behaviour and impulses. Guests at Anna Pavlovna’s soirée describe him behaving ‘неприлично’ (vol. 4, p. 49), ([in an] unseemly manner’ [p. 41]) following a drunken evening during which Pierre took part in tying a policeman to the back of a bear.

Much later in the narrative Pierre travels to St Petersburg having fought a duel with Dolokhov (whom he suspects of being Hélène’s, his wife’s, lover), and having signed much of his fortune

²³⁵ Bayley (1988), p. 21.

²³⁶ Chodorow in Neu, pp. 224-48, here p. 234.

²³⁷ <http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/toc.htm> All future Russian quotations from this novel will be taken from this online edition of the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy’s *Complete Works, Volumes Four to Seven*. The volume and page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

²³⁸ Tolstoy, L. and Edmunds, R. (trans.) *War and Peace* (Penguin, London 1982) p. 42. All English translations of quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

over to Hélène in the ensuing argument. On the journey, he is shown to struggle much more than any other character with big philosophical questions:

‘Что дурно? Что хорошо? Что надо любить, что ненавидеть? Для чего жить, и что такое я? Что такое жизнь, что смерть? Какая сила управляет всем’ – спрашивал он себя. И не было ответа ни на один из этих вопросов, кроме одного, не логического ответа, вовсе не на эти вопросы. Ответ этот был: ‘Умрешь – все кончится. Умрешь, и все узнаешь – или перестанешь спрашивать.’ Но и умереть было страшно (vol. 5, p. 70).

(‘What is wrong? What is right? What should one love and what hate? What is life for, and what am I? What is life? What is death? What is the power that controls it all?’ He asked himself. And there was no answer to any of these questions, except the one illogical reply that in no way answered them. This reply was: ‘One dies and it’s all over. One dies and either finds out about everything or ceases asking.’ But dying, too, was dreadful [p. 407]).

This intellectual analysis and exploration highlights the way in which Pierre’s quest for knowledge is characterised as a particularly masculine enterprise. He is not pursuing the means to meet basic physical needs, such as food, clothing and producing children (which characterises feminine preoccupations). Rather, Pierre seeks the satisfaction which comes from exploring existentialist questions and emerging as a transcendent, independent being who has confronted these issues and has found his own way to live with the philosophical and intellectual problems of existence. He is said to respect those characters who show will-power, such as Prince Bolkonsky whom he considered to be ‘образцом всех совершенств’ (vol. 4, p. 40), (‘a model of perfection’ [p. 32]).

His exploration of a variety of intellectual ideas, and his determination to witness a battle, are examples of his desire to prove to himself that he has ‘masculine’ qualities.

Just after the scene in which Pierre wrestles with these questions, he encounters Freemasonry, and describes the feeling that these ideas give him as ‘радостное чувство успокоения, обновления и возвращения к жизни’ (vol. 5, p. 75), (‘a joyous sense of comfort, regeneration, and return to life’ [p. 412]). This demonstrates how the themes of death and re-birth are part of Pierre’s philosophical journey even before the more dramatic re-birth he experiences later in the novel when he encounters Platon. His encounter with freemasonry may be interpreted as having followed a period of intellectually wrestling with the questions posed by death, struggling to come to terms with it and to reconcile himself to its inevitability. Freemasonry is, therefore, another stage in Pierre’s philosophical journey.

Another stage is his important experience of re-birth which occurs in Devichy Meadow where he meets the peasant, Platon Karatayev, after he has been captured by French soldiers. Robert Louis Jackson has shown the extent to which ideas of masculinity and femininity influence this scene. He points out that even the name of the field has female connotations as the word ‘devichy’ has its roots in ‘maidenly’.²³⁹

Platon seems to have the genuineness of feeling and ability to connect with others that is associated with femininity. Tolstoy describes how ‘такое выражение ласки и простоты было в певучем голосе человека, что Пьер хотел отвечать, но у него задрожала челюсть, и он почувствовал слезы’ (vol. 7, p. 50), (‘... there was so much kindness and simplicity in the sing-song voice that Pierre felt his jaw tremble and the tears rise to his eyes as he tried to reply’ [p. 1147]). W. Gareth

²³⁹ Jackson in Bloom (ed.), pp. 55-63, here p. 55.

Jones also notes the significance of Tolstoy's description of Platon as he describes his singing as an 'unconscious affirmation of self'.²⁴⁰ Jones highlights Tolstoy's interest in singing as a 'primitive, native' art, noting the difference between this type of natural, spontaneous self-expression and the kind of tutored, taught singing that is circumscribed by technique.²⁴¹ Platon's singing, understood as spontaneous and full of genuine feeling, reflects the way Tolstoy describes Natasha's dance as an expression of her feminine spontaneity and connection with nature:

Где, как, когда всосала в себя из того русского воздуха, которым она дышала, - эта графинечка, воспитанная эмигранткой-французенкой, - этот дух, откуда взяла она эти приемы, которые *pas de châte* давно бы должны были вытеснить? Но дух и приемы эти были те самые, неподражаемые, неизучаемые, русские, которых и ждал от нее дядюшка (vol. 5, p. 277).

(Where, how and when could this young countess, who had had a French émigrée for governess, have imbibed from the Russian air she breathed the spirit of the dance? Where had she picked up that manner which the *pas de châte*, one might have supposed, would have effaced long ago? But the spirit and the movements were the very ones – inimitable, unteachable, Russian – which 'Uncle' had expected of her [p. 439]).

Both Platon and Natasha therefore appear to be unconstrained by the expectations of those around them, expressing a naturalness that Tolstoy valued. This naturalness is reflected in the way Pierre learns to accept the way life is, to 'receive truth, rather than make it' as Edward Wasiolek puts it.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Jones, W. in Bloom (ed.), pp. 65-86, here p. 76.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 75.

²⁴² Wasiolek, p. 91.

This is, I think, another aspect of the new connectedness Pierre feels – and is similar to the way in which Sonya helped Raskolnikov reconnect with the Russian people in *Crime and Punishment*.²⁴³ He learns to trust, to some extent, in the perceptions of others and the ‘rightness’ of the world and this allows him to find some degree of peace and wholeness. According to Wasiolek, this experience involves Pierre breaking with his ‘false self’²⁴⁴ that has been developed by his immersion in an artificial social circle, focused on trivialities.

This emphasis on the value of basic, physical pleasures, as opposed to the individualistic, philosophical search Pierre undertakes in the first half of the novel, has been noted by R. F. Christian. He writes that the focal point of *War and Peace* is the sublimation of self and that ‘the solution to the problem is the sober acceptance of family responsibility at the sacrifice to some extent of the uninhibited individual personality, work which brings its own reward, and the pursuit of simple pleasures available to all.’²⁴⁵

In addition to Platon’s spontaneity, his pleasure in simple functions, such as eating, emphasises his physicality. He is also portrayed as being close to nature – he tells folk stories and is nicknamed ‘Falcon’. This connection with nature has been identified as the means by which feminine characters enable men in *War and Peace* to transcend the expectations of modern social life.²⁴⁶ The simplicity of feminine characters’ closeness to nature strips away the artificiality of society and allows for characters to experience deeper relationships with those around them. Not all characters benefit equally from this, however. As we will see, masculine characters significantly grow and develop, while feminine characters remain fixed in static roles.

²⁴³ This is mirrored in Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago*, discussed in the final chapter of this thesis, in which Lara also represents essential Russianness. This aspect of her characterisation is a key part of her role as Zhivago’s muse.

²⁴⁴ Wasiolek, p. 91.

²⁴⁵ Christian (1962), p. 106.

²⁴⁶ Moss, p. 574.

Despite the importance of Platon to Pierre's rebirth, and therefore to his development as a masculine hero, Pierre demonstrates the distance which remains between them when Platon falls ill and is unable to continue marching:

Каратаев смотрел на Пьера своими добрыми, круглыми глазами, подернутыми теперь слезою, и, видимо, подзывал его к себе, хотел сказать что-то. Но Пьеру слишком страшно было за себя. Он сделал так, как будто не видал его взгляда, и поспешно отошел (p. 393).

(Karataev turned on Pierre his kindly round eyes which at this moment were filled with tears, and there was unmistakable appeal in them – he wanted Pierre to come up so that he could say something to him. But Pierre was afraid for himself. He pretended not to see, and hastily moved away [vol. 7, p. 168]).

This would seem to suggest that although Platon has taught him to identify and connect with those around him, Pierre is either unable to extend that feeling towards Platon, or, possibly he has moved through the space identified with Platon, emerged, and now has no further need of him. Pierre has discovered a new life, and is keen to move forward, continuing his quest towards a whole, unified masculine identity. In de Lauretis' terms, masculine heroes move *through* spaces,²⁴⁷ which implies that they have no continuing relationship with boundaries or spaces once they have been overcome. In some ways, this seems paradoxical because Pierre emerged from his encounter with Platon more able to connect with those around him. Readers may then expect him to be more able to sympathise with Platon and care for him in his weakened state. However, I think that his attitude towards

²⁴⁷ de Lauretis (1984), p. 121.

Platon once he has completed his encounter with him, demonstrates that the quests male characters embark upon have aims defined and driven by patriarchal concerns. Berman, for instance suggests that Pierre learned to connect with others through his relationship with Platon so that he could enter into marriage and have children.²⁴⁸ I would suggest that, having reached this stage of his development, Pierre had no need to go further and learn to develop real empathy and a sense of inter-connectedness with those, such as Platon, who were not of his social class. Pierre continued to remember Platon fondly; in the final section of the novel, when Pierre is married to Natasha, she notes that ‘никого из всех людей ... он так не уважал, как Платона Каратаева’ (Epilogue, p. 305), (‘there was nobody whom ... he had held in higher regard than Platon Karataev’ [p. 1396]). However, as a masculine hero, he is unable to perform the ‘feminine’ task of supporting him while he struggles with illness. Instead, his affection for Platon takes the more ‘masculine’ form of intellectual regard.

Pierre’s journey is also mirrored in that of another male character, Andrey Bolkonsky. But whereas Pierre is described at the beginning of *War and Peace* as being very sociable and enjoying drinking and gambling, Andrey is portrayed as reserved and aloof. Andrey’s difficulties in relating to others are demonstrated in particular in his interactions with women. A. V. Knowles points out that Andrey abandons his wife, Liza, when she needs him most; he finds it impossible to relate affectionately to his sister Maria; and he cannot cope with Natasha’s youth and vitality.²⁴⁹

Andrey has been brought up by a demanding and cantankerous father who felt he:

²⁴⁸ Berman, p. 12.

²⁴⁹ Knowles, in Jones, M., (1978), pp. 39-62, here p. 54.

никого и ничего не нужно. Он говорил, что есть только два источника людских пороков: праздность и суеверие, и что есть только две добродетели: деятельность и ум ... Его выходы к столу совершались при одних и тех же неизменных условиях, и не только в один и тот же час, но и минуту ... князь был резок и неизменно (vol. 4, pp. 111-2).

(needed nothing and nobody. He was in the habit of remarking that there are only two sources of human vice, idleness and superstition; and only two virtues, energy and intelligence ... He always appeared at meals in precisely the same circumstances, and not only at the same hour but at the same minute ... the prince was sharp and inflexible [p. 99]).

This family background is a striking contrast to the Rostovs' home life. In the Rostov home there is music, singing, fortune-telling and hunting parties. Benson has argued that Andrey needed Natasha's 'warmth and quick responsiveness'²⁵⁰ and his staid upbringing by a demanding and rigid father may be one reason for this.

When Andrey hears Natasha and Sonya singing together when he is staying with the Rostovs, Natasha's joy and wonder at the beauty of the natural world has a profound effect on him: 'в душе его вдруг поднялась такая неожиданная путаница молодых мыслей и надежд, противоречащих всей его жизни' (vol. 5, p. 164), ('all at once such an unexpected turmoil of youthful thoughts and hopes, contrary to the whole tenor of his life, surged up in his heart' [p. 495]) and he 'чувствуя себя не в силах уяснить себе свое состояние' (vol. 5, p. 164), ('[was] incapable of explaining his condition to himself' [p. 495]). Christian's comments on this scene are

²⁵⁰ Benson, p. 53.

particularly pertinent to my analysis. He contends that this first encounter between Natasha and Andrey is described only in terms of the effect it has on Andrey, not on Natasha (who in any case is unaware that Andrey is witnessing the scene).²⁵¹ As this encounter is related only from Andrey's perspective, he is positioned as the character who benefits from the experience. As Laura Mulvey might term it, his male gaze projects the man's fantasy onto the female figure, who has been styled in a way that responds to his need.²⁵² In Andrey's case, he learns something about beauty and companionship and is helped to realise a vitality which may have been missing from his life previously.

It has been argued that female friendships, such as that between Sonya and Natasha, have the power to effect spiritual transformation because they are based on mutuality and care.²⁵³ Friendships between men, on the other hand, tend to encourage participants to develop and emphasise their own individuality.²⁵⁴ In sharp contrast to his father's isolation and traditionally masculine sense of independence, Natasha's and Sonya's duet draws Andrey towards a view of the world that values inter-connectedness. The day after the singing he thinks:

Мало того, что я знаю все то, что есть во мне, надо, чтоб и все знали это: и Пьер и эта девочка, которая хотела улететь в небо, надо, чтобы все знали меня, чтобы не для одного меня шла моя жизнь, чтобы не жили они так, как эта девочка, независимо от моей жизни, чтобы на всех она отражалась и чтобы все они жили со мною вместе! (vol. 5, p. 165).

²⁵¹ Christian (1962), p. 38.

²⁵² Mulvey, p. 19.

²⁵³ Moss, p. 574.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

(It is not enough for me to know what I have in me – everyone else must know it too: Pierre and that young girl who wanted to fly away into the sky; all of them must learn to know me, in order that my life may not be lived for myself alone while others, like that young girl, live so apart from it, but may be reflected in them all, and they and I may live in harmony together [p. 496]).

And later, when he visits the Rostovs before his proposal to Natasha he ‘чувствовал ... присутствие совершенно чуждого для него, особенного мира, преисполненного каких-то неизвестных ему радостей’ (vol. 5, p. 219), (‘was conscious of a strange world, completely remote from him and brimful of joys he had not known’ [p. 548]). Natasha is described as being the cause of this new sensation. According to Price, Natasha’s influence on Andrey helps him regulate his fluctuations between withdrawal and expansion.²⁵⁵ I would argue that this is because she is so natural and full of life (Bayley describes her as the novel’s most ‘significant vessel of life and vitality’²⁵⁶) that it is difficult for Andrey to maintain his image of strict reserve and self-sufficiency in her presence. The strange new world Natasha opens up for him may be so attractive to him because it is liberating and frees him to some extent from his father’s domineering influence, thus enabling him to develop a distinctive personality of his own, moving away from the imposing image of his father. In this way Natasha’s vitality and intuitive interactions cause Andrey, the son, to discover the possibility of thinking about himself and his future in a new light, thus beginning to release the over-bearing grip of his father’s image on his imagination.

Andrey’s battle injuries, however, deprive him of the opportunity to follow this path to its conclusion. His death scene is another powerful example of a masculine hero using a feminine space and boundary as part of his journey of self-knowledge and discovery. Wasiolek suggests that Andrey only discovers the truth when he has stopped trying to reach it either because he is ‘sick,

²⁵⁵ Price in Bloom (ed.), pp. 123-30, here p. 129.

²⁵⁶ Bayley (1988), p. 19.

exhausted or absent-minded'.²⁵⁷ Based on the analysis above, I would argue that Andrey's experience of growing spiritual awareness and self-discovery as he approaches death was part of a process of internal change that began before his fatal injuries, when he was on leave from the military. Nonetheless, Tolstoy's portrayal of Andrey's death can clearly be shown to support de Lauretis' contention that death is a feminised space.²⁵⁸ While he is dying, Benson argues, Natasha gives Andrey another occasion to overcome pride when she asks for his forgiveness.²⁵⁹ In the scene which depicts their final reconciliation, Natasha 'подошла к нему и быстрым, гибким, молодым движением стала на колени. Он улыбнулся и протянул ей руку' (vol. 6, p. 395), ('went up to him and with a swift, supple, youthful movement dropped on her knees. He smiled and held out his hand to her' [p. 1087]).

Bayley highlights Tolstoy's fascination with death and argues that his characters are judged by their responses to it.²⁶⁰ *War and Peace* is, he argues, dominated by the prevalence of death and the need to accept it.²⁶¹ This is one example of a strong argument made from a non-feminist perspective which can be developed and seen in a new light using de Lauretis' framework. De Lauretis has noted that death can be viewed as being associated with the feminine. The opposite pair 'life/death', is a boundary for the masculine hero to transgress, and death is a feminised space - a constant reminder of the power of physical constraints which also reminds us of our ultimate dependence on forces beyond our control.²⁶² The feminised nature of death is demonstrated in Tolstoy's account of Andrey's experience of death, which emphasises his early life and the care his nurse gave him:

После перенесенного страдания князь Андрей чувствовал блаженство, давно не испытанное им. Все лучшие, счастливейшие минуты в его жизни, в особенности

²⁵⁷ Wasiolek, p. 74.

²⁵⁸ de Lauretis (1984), p. 118.

²⁵⁹ Benson, p. 55.

²⁶⁰ Bayley in Bloom (ed.), pp. 7-39, here p. 26.

²⁶¹ Bayley (1988), p. 119.

²⁶² de Lauretis (1984), p. 119.

самое дальнее детство, когда его раздевали и клали в кроватку, когда няня, убаюкивая, пела над ним, когда, зарывшись головой в подушки, он чувствовал себя счастливым одним сознанием жизни (vol. 6, p. 266).

(After the agony he had borne Prince Andrey was conscious of a well-being such as he had not experienced for a long time. His imagination reverted to all the best and happiest moments of his life, especially his earliest childhood when he used to be undressed and put to bed, when his nurse had sung lullabies over him, and burying his head in his pillows he had felt happy in the mere feeling of being alive [pp. 966-7]).

The moment of death has also been described by Lampert as a time when hypocrisy falls away and only the authentic is left.²⁶³ In this sense, death can also be seen as having feminine overtones, as the artificiality of society gives way to the raw, unmediated experience of the individual.

If masculinity is associated with transcendence, and femininity with objectification, dying may also be seen as a feminising process, not in the positive sense of discovering what is true and untarnished by artificiality, but in the Sartrean sense of becoming an Other. Sartre wrote in *Being and Nothingness* that death is 'the triumph of the point of view of the Other'.²⁶⁴ This suggests that some of the power of death lies in the fact that the dead are no longer able to influence the way in which they are perceived, but their images are subject to the memories of others. Thus, death is a feminising process as the subject becomes less and less able to create their own image and identity.

²⁶³ Lampert in Jones, M. (1978), pp. 131-148, here p. 134.

²⁶⁴ Cited in Ellis, p. 189.

The perceived closeness of feminine characters, such as Platon and Natasha to nature, and their endowment with characteristics such as compassion and empathy, which are, in themselves, positive attributes, could be interpreted as reflecting the spiritual power held by these characters in Tolstoy's work, just as Sonya is sometimes seen as a powerful figure in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. However, I would suggest that this interpretation masks the freedoms that the masculine heroes are granted in contrast to the fixed, static nature of their feminine counterparts.

My argument is that feminine characters are often endowed with positive features, not because they are virtuous and intrinsically good qualities to have, but because these traits meet the needs of the masculine heroes who drive the narrative of the novel. It is known, for example, that Tolstoy's portrayal of Natasha did not change throughout his various drafts of the novel.²⁶⁵ She represented, to him, a sense of natural, unchanging Russianness.²⁶⁶ Jaggar contends that the assertion that women are somehow closer to nature than men is unhelpful.²⁶⁷ She criticises radical feminists for making these claims, arguing that they cannot be empirically proven and that radical feminists rely too much on intuition and other forms of knowledge which are difficult or impossible to verify.²⁶⁸ Others, such as de Beauvoir, contend that asserting that women are close to nature is a form of biological determinism and perpetuates patriarchal myths and hierarchies which associate men with intellect and women with physical or emotional aspects of life.²⁶⁹ We have already seen an example of a male hero associated with the intellect in Dostoevsky's characterisation of Raskolnikov, and female characters portrayed in terms of physicality and emotion in his characterisation of Sonya and Nastasya. We will see this pattern repeated in the work of Babel, Bulgakov and Pasternak as discussed in the next three chapters.

²⁶⁵ Christian (1962), p. 11.

²⁶⁶ Carden in Bloom (ed.), pp. 103-121, here pp. 104 and 111.

²⁶⁷ Jaggar (1983), p. 369.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ de Beauvoir, p. 501.

It may be that, within patriarchy, femininity is associated with nature, not because women are intrinsically closer to nature, but rather because closeness to the non-human world is something which men try to distance themselves from. Closeness to the natural world is, perhaps, a characteristic which patriarchy defines as feminine so that masculine heroes can define themselves as such through intellectual autonomy and dependence (characterised as qualities which oppose the instinctive and interdependent values associated with closeness to nature). Yet Berman suggests that Nikolay and Pierre place Maria and Natasha (respectively) on pedestals.²⁷⁰

This argument may explain, in part, why at the conclusion of the novel Natasha is preoccupied with the details of her domestic duties, while Pierre, according to Richard Price, achieves transcendence.²⁷¹ Both Pierre and Natasha seem contented with their family life and reflect on the harmony of their life together. But this satisfaction is not a new experience for Natasha. At the beginning of the novel, she was part of a happy, vibrant, contented family and in a sense the conclusion of *War and Peace* shows her taking the place of her mother as the matriarchal head of a happy family with young children. Pierre, on the other hand, has changed completely from the riotous, hedonistic young man he was at the beginning of the narrative, to a mature man who has transgressed philosophical and intellectual boundaries, travelled widely through physical spaces and emerged as a fully formed hero. Only after these processes of change and transformation, death and re-birth, is he equipped and ready to settle into family life.

I will move on now to consider how the themes of re-birth and movement through feminised spaces are present in *Anna Karenina*. Anna decides to abandon her husband and child to live with Vronsky, a man with whom she has fallen in love, and this ability to act makes it possible to think of Anna as a masculine hero who needs to transcend boundaries and develop her independence and autonomy. Part of her quest could be her drive to act in ways which are not usually associated with

²⁷⁰ Berman, pp. 1-15, here p. 7.

²⁷¹ Price in Bloom (ed.), pp. 123-130, here p. 130.

women in her society; for example, she tries to define herself in terms which are not restricted to that of a wife and mother. Making no attempt to hide her relationship with Vronsky is an open challenge to the attitudes of those around her who tolerate adultery, but expect those involved to avoid disrupting the stability of their existing marriages and family lives.

This argument is supported by critics such as Bayley, who argues that Anna needs to think of Karenin as an obstacle to her freedom.²⁷² He suggests that this is the reason why Anna refuses his offer of a divorce. I think that this is a valid argument as Karenin is generally portrayed as an essentially decent man, despite his preoccupation with bureaucracy and the sense that he is not able to respond to Anna in the emotional way she seems to crave, as we see here: ‘Каждый раз, когда он сталкивался с самою жизнью, он отстранялся от нее’,²⁷³ (‘each time [Karenin] had encountered life itself, he had drawn back from it’).²⁷⁴ But, despite his coldness he is willing to give Anna a divorce, visits her when she is ill, offers her his forgiveness and, significantly, takes care of Ani, Vronsky’s child, at the end of the novel.

Armstrong has developed the argument that Anna acts as a masculine hero in the novel.²⁷⁵ Firstly, she suggests that adultery is the ‘critical narrative tension in the novel’.²⁷⁶ Although Dolly and Stiva seem to rehearse this plot at the beginning of the novel, it is Anna’s relationship with Vronsky that drives one of the two principal plot lines of *Anna Karenina*.²⁷⁷ As we have seen, de Lauretis argues that it is male desire that drives narrative, ‘the desire is Oedipus’s, and though its

²⁷² Bayley (1988), p. 231.

²⁷³ <http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/toc.htm>, vol. 8, p. 159. All future Russian quotations from this novel will be taken from this online edition of the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy’s *Complete Works, Volumes Eight to Nine*. The volume and page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

²⁷⁴ Tolstoy, L. and Pevear, R. and Volokhonsky, L. (trans.) *Anna Karenina* (Penguin, London, 2001) p. 142. All future English translations of quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

²⁷⁵ Armstrong, J., p. 121.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

object may be woman ... its term of reference and address is man'²⁷⁸ and this may be an important indicator of where the power and authority lie in a text. As the narrative is driven by Anna's actions, the reader is compelled to consider her point of view and the merit of her actions with a scrutiny which is not reflected in the attention Kitty or Dolly command.

Secondly, Armstrong contends that Anna has the qualities of a masculine hero because she ultimately takes her own life.²⁷⁹ Armstrong compares this act of self-determination with the murder of Pozdnyshev's wife in *The Kreutzer Sonata* and with Vronsky's failed suicide attempt.²⁸⁰ Her suggestion is that Anna both chooses the manner of her own death, and has the courage to see her decision through and that in so doing she insists on her own desire and right to control her own life.

However, Anna is not 'reborn' as a whole, unified masculine hero. Her death is physical and absolute, and shows no trace of the spiritually enlightening, 'heroic' deaths that masculine literary heroes undergo. Even Andrey, who physically dies, experiences a spiritual re-birth as part of the process of dying. He has a sense of well-being and he resolves his inner conflict, by hearing Natasha acknowledge her feelings of guilt and by offering her forgiveness. In contrast to Andrey's development, Anna's quest for self-determination results in madness and confusion, and as such it is not clear whether her death is intended to be a sign of her independence or a consequence of the distress and alienation she feels.

One of the reasons for this striking difference between the impulses of male and female characters to transgress boundaries and strive for independent identities is the response of characters around them. The sense of community and connection women are said to feel towards other women, seems

²⁷⁸ de Lauretis (1984), p. 112.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

in *Anna Karenina* to be comforting and supportive for women like Dolly and Kitty who fulfil conventional female roles, but it is less helpful for Anna, who tries to act independently. Her characterisation as a nineteenth-century woman may not equip her to live in a way driven by her own needs and desires, but I would suggest that Anna is further hindered by the lack of understanding she faces from the other characters, and the female characters in particular.²⁸¹ When rumours of Vronsky's and Anna's relationship first start to become public the response of many women in their social circle is motivated by envy:

большинство молодых женщин, завидовавших Анне, которым уже давно наскучило то, что ее *называют справедливою*, радовались тому, что они предполагали, и ждали только подтверждения оборота общественного мнения, чтоб обрушиться на нее всею тяжестью своего презрения. Они приготавливали уже те комки грязи, которые они бросят в нее, когда придет время (emphasis Tolstoy's, vol. 8, p. 193)

(The majority of young women, envious of Anna and long since weary of her being called *righteous*, were glad of what they surmised and only waited for the turnabout of public opinion to be confirmed before they fell upon her with the full weight of their scorn. They were already preparing the lumps of mud they would fling at her when the time came [emphasis Tolstoy's, p. 174]).

Even the women who are close to Anna seem distant from her by the end of the text. When Anna visits Dolly and Kitty just before her death they are lost in a world of domesticity to which Anna cannot relate. The intimacy of the image of Dolly and Kitty discussing breastfeeding together

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 119.

makes a striking contrast with Anna's isolation. No other female character shares her determination to live autonomously and no male character, except for Vronsky, seems to sympathise with her, or spend extended periods of time with her. Ultimately, however, not even Vronsky can share Anna's intense, all-consuming passion for their relationship. Moss goes so far as to argue that this isolation is so significant that Anna's final, unsuccessful, visit to Dolly demonstrates not only her exclusion from the community of female friendship, but also from life itself.²⁸²

While Anna is isolated in her passion for Vronsky, and eventually finds herself excluded from companionship with other women, Levin's relationship with Kitty is partly built on intuitive understanding. Their ability to communicate by using only the first letter of words during Levin's proposal of marriage to Kitty remains a poignant scene despite the way the couple are less able to communicate with each other later on in their marriage.²⁸³ Even though Levin does not share some of his deepest thoughts with Kitty and sometimes finds her and her body 'mysterious', he continues to be emotionally close to her while Anna becomes increasingly alienated from those around her.²⁸⁴ Vronsky's cousin, Princess Elizaveta Fyodorovna Tverskaya (Betsy), for example, visits Anna, but does so as an act of charity, as we see here: 'Она, очевидно, гордилась своею смелостью и желала, чтоб Анна оценила верность ее дружбы' (vol. 9, p. 109), 'she was obviously proud of her courage and wished Anna to appreciate the faithfulness of her friendship' (pp. 528-9).

Anna's intense passion for Vronsky and her alienation from other characters seem to be treated separately in most of the critical literature about the novel. I would contend, however, that these two aspects of her characterisation are interconnected and reinforce each other. It is Anna's all-consuming relationship with Vronsky that leads to her isolation. Just as the characters in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* were perplexed by a male character who was unable to act decisively, as a

²⁸² Moss, p. 581.

²⁸³ Jones, M. (1978), p. 94.

²⁸⁴ Alexandrov, pp. 152-3.

female character trying to transgress society's boundaries Anna finds herself alone. Her life with Vronsky became much more socially limited and constricted than her previous life with Karenin had been. She tried, for example, to visit the opera but returned early after being humiliated by Princess Varvara's unwillingness to sit in the neighbouring box. When Vronsky returns home Anna has 'слез[ы] отчаяния и злости в голосе' (vol. 9, p. 130), ('tears of despair and anger in her voice' [p. 549]). She says of the evening: 'ужасно! Сколько бы я ни жила, я не забуду этого' (vol. 9, p. 130), ('terrible! I won't forget it as long as I live [p. 549]).

Tatiana Kuzmic argues that while nineteenth-century men can join, or withdraw from, society as they feel they need to, women were tied to the movements of men.²⁸⁵ Therefore, while Levin could imagine himself to be free spiritually, because he was physically about to travel - to return to his estate, for example – Anna could ultimately only choose death in her search to be free.

As I mention above, Anna's death seems to have a different meaning than Andrey's. Her death is described as a tragedy which commentators try to explain with reference to madness,²⁸⁶ or the constraints imposed by society,²⁸⁷ whereas Andrey dies as a hero who has fought courageously for his country. This distinction is important because it highlights the hierarchies of meanings imposed by patriarchy in which playing a role in warfare or political life has a greater value than the nurturing of children or the performance of other domestic tasks usually expected of women. Anna's death could be seen as a consequence of her failure to fulfil this kind of domestic role and as the result of her inability to maintain romantic relations in the way society expected of nineteenth-century Russian women. Tolstoy's strong views on the role of women, as laid out at the beginning of this chapter, and his didactic, Biblical epigraph to *Anna Karenina*, 'мне отмщение, и аз воздам', ('Vengeance is mine, I will repay'), support the contention that Anna's death is the

²⁸⁵ Kuzmic, pp. 1-14, here p. 13.

²⁸⁶ Meyer (1995), p. 245.

²⁸⁷ Armstrong, J., p. 119.

direct consequence of her search for an identity that was independent of her role as a wife and mother.

In contrast to Anna's failed quest to develop her personality as a masculine hero would, Levin is successfully reborn spiritually. Christian argues that Levin is unable to live either with the religion he inherited or with no religion at all.²⁸⁸ This desire to find meaning in life, I would argue, forms part of his 'quest' in which Kitty has an important role to play. Armstrong points out that Levin's relationship with Kitty is significant as she is both a desired erotic object, and, having previously rejected him, she confirms all his self-doubt.²⁸⁹ I would build on this to argue that, in de Lauretis' terms she also becomes the prize waiting for Levin at the end of his journey.²⁹⁰ The fact that she initially rejects him, but then comes to loves him, actually strengthens the argument that she can be viewed as Levin's prize. It is as though she is his reward for patiently continuing to love her and for maintaining his search for an authentic sense of meaning in his own life.

Another important comparison between Anna and Levin is in the depth of their rebellions. Patricia Meyer argues that while Levin only flouts society's conventions, Anna flouts both society's conventions and the wisdom of God.²⁹¹ On one level this comparison highlights the value that Tolstoy placed on religious morality and his disdain for the more artificial, materialistic mores of society. On another level, this also raises questions for a feminist analysis of the text about why it was important that the character attempting to transcend the boundaries of both society and religious morality should be female. Does Anna's quest fail simply because breaches of God's law must be punished (as implied by the novel's epigraph)? Or does it fail because she is a woman? The second of these questions implies that a man, rather than being driven to suicide by the pain

²⁸⁸ Christian in Jones, M. (1978), p. 10.

²⁸⁹ Armstrong, J., pp. 38-9.

²⁹⁰ de Lauretis (1984), p. 133.

²⁹¹ Meyer (1995), p. 256.

caused by the path Anna chose may even have been viewed as a powerful, strong individual, valued for his authenticity and independence of spirit.

The link commonly made between the sexual behaviour of Anna and her brother, Stiva, is a powerful argument in support of the view that Anna fails because of her gender. Bayley, for instance, suggests that the characters' judgemental response to Anna's infidelity, while Stiva's indiscretions are accepted, reflects the subjugated position of women in society.²⁹² Dolly's criticism of Anna's attitude to contraception is also clearly linked to her gender, and to the belief that women's role is to produce and nurture children. C. J. Turner argues that Anna is punished for her egoism as she is unwilling to contribute to the continuation of the species,²⁹³ while Bayley writes sympathetically that: 'it is as if her maternal instinct, and its natural immediacy, has been burnt or bled out in some way, not only by the force of her new passion but by the suffering and deprivation that it has entailed.'²⁹⁴ Bayley almost seems to be implying here that the suffering Anna experiences as a result of acting in an un-feminine way results in her growing inability to feel emotions and desires which are often associated with womanhood.

The different conclusions of Anna's and Levin's journeys may also be explained by the ways in which both characters are influenced by cultural interpretations of meaning. As a masculine hero, who can transgress boundaries, Levin relies on himself as the arbiter of value and meaning throughout the novel.²⁹⁵ Anna, on the other hand, is unable to assert her meaning and interpretation of events in a convincing way. The weight of expectations of female behaviour is so great, and reinforced by such powerful forces, such as the judiciary and the church, that she cannot, on her own, reverse conventional beliefs about marriage, motherhood and contraception.

²⁹² Bayley (1997), p. 35.

²⁹³ Turner, p. 101.

²⁹⁴ Bayley (1997), p. 35.

²⁹⁵ Alexandrov, p. 162.

In *The Kreutzer Sonata* Tolstoy continues to describe the problematic relations between men and women as he sees them. The text begins with a discussion between passengers on a train about the nature of love and marriage. The main character, Pozdnyshev, reflects Tolstoy's increasingly pessimistic view of marriage when he tells the others: 'вы говорите про то, что считается существующим, а я говорю про то, что есть',²⁹⁶ 'you're talking about the way things are supposed to be, but I'm talking about the way things actually are.'²⁹⁷ This assertion takes on a particularly sinister meaning as it emerges that Pozdnyshev has murdered his wife whom he suspected of being unfaithful. He goes on to tell his listeners that marriage usually

выходит или обман, или насилие. Когда обман, то это легче переносится.

Муж и жена только обманывают людей, что они в единобрачии, а живут в многоженстве и в многомужестве (p. 131).

(ends either in infidelity or violence. Infidelity is easier to put up with. The husband and wife simply pretend to everyone that they're living in monogamy, when in actual fact they're living in polygamy and polyandry [p. 106]).

The assumption that all marriages are characterised by violence or infidelity, with even those seemingly happy couples simply pretending to be faithful to each other, is clearly a polemical generalisation as is Pozdnyshev's earlier confident statement that he knows the truth about marriage. Benson also highlights Pozdnyshev's tendency to use his subjective experiences to draw

²⁹⁶ http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/01text/vol_12/01text/0284.htm, p. 130. All future Russian quotations from this story will be taken from this online edition of the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's *Complete Works, Volume Twelve*. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

²⁹⁷ Tolstoy, L. and McDuff, D. and Foote, P. (trans.) *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories* (Penguin, London, 2008) p. 105. All future English translations of quotations from this story will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

broad conclusions about the rest of society when she points out that he does not refer to his wife by her name.²⁹⁸ This has the effect of drawing attention away from her personality and making her indistinguishable from any other woman.²⁹⁹ Pozdnyshev's focus on women as a group, rather than on any one individual woman seems to have been a part of his conception of romance from his adolescence: 'невступно шестнадцать лет ... женщина, не какая-нибудь, а женщина, как сладкое нечто, женщина, всякая женщина, нагота женщины уже мучала меня' (p. 134), ('before my sixteenth birthday ... woman – not any woman in particular but woman as a sweet, ineffable presence – woman, any woman, the nakedness of woman already tormented me' [p. 110]).

The conceptualisation of women as a group, while men are generally understood as distinct individuals is an important part of the patriarchal portrayal of women. It reinforces the image of woman as an (empty) space which is penetrated by a masculine, highly individualised, character. I have already discussed how the sense of a community of women is important in *Anna Karenina*. Vladimir Alexandrov also argues that Tolstoy made more existentialist claims about women than about men, seeing them as being more driven by pre-determined traits than their male counterparts.³⁰⁰ Tolstoy's characterisation of women as sharing more essential qualities than their male counterparts enables the plot of masculine development because it renders literary women less interesting and dynamic as individual personalities than their male partners. This focuses attention on the hero's journey and particularly on his freedom to continue moving beyond feminine constraints.

An example of Pozdnyshev's tendency to view his wife in terms of his needs can be seen in his memory of the consummation of their marriage. Bayley points out that sex is shown to be a hostile

²⁹⁸ Benson, p. 120.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Alexandrov, pp. 266-7.

act which resembles murder because of the indifference he shows to his wife's reality.³⁰¹ Pozdnyshev recalls: 'я предавался животным излишества, не только не стыдась их, но почему-то гордясь возможностью этих физических излишеств, не думая притом нисколько не только о ее духовной жизни, но даже и об ее физической жизни' (p. 151), ('I abandoned myself to animal excesses, not only quite unashamedly, but even taking pride in the fact that it was possible for me to indulge in them, without ever once taking thought for her spiritual or even her physical well-being' [p. 131]). Paradoxically, Pozdnyshev reflects that it was only as she was dying that 'в первый раз увидел в ней человека' (p. 195), ('for the first time I saw her as a human being' [p. 188]).

Father Sergius is a short story about a man who goes through four distinct phases which could be seen as rebirths, or as part of his philosophical, spiritual journey. Each phase is arguably symbolised, or triggered, by the presence or actions of a woman. The narrative of this story in itself makes it a valuable text to consider in the light of de Lauretis' framework, but Tolstoy's portrayal of the role and characteristics of the female characters is also worthy of note. Benson argues, for instance, that the women in *Father Sergius*, like Pozdnyshev's wife in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, are portrayed as having demonic powers.³⁰²

If women are seen as demonic and powerful because of the impact they can have on the spiritual and moral life of the masculine hero, this should be read within the context of Sergius' attitudes and relations with others. He loves the Tsar, for example, and Tolstoy compares this love with romantic love: 'Касатский испытывал восторг влюбленного, такой же, какой он испытывал после, когда встречал предмет любви',³⁰³ ('Kasatsky felt the rapture of a lover, the same feeling

³⁰¹ Bayley (1988), p. 286.

³⁰² Benson, p. 119.

³⁰³ http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/01text/vol_12/01text/0293.htm, p. 343. All future Russian quotations from this story will be taken from this online edition of the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's *Complete Works, Volume Twelve*. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text. Kasatsky is the original surname of Father Sergius.

he experienced later on meeting the woman he loved).³⁰⁴ However, this love is exclusive and Sergius could only see people as they existed for him, in terms of his relationship with them. He could not accept that others may feel the same way, or have relationships of which he was not a part. This is, I would suggest, one reason why he could not marry his fiancée, Mary, when he discovered her affair with the Tsar. It was not only that she was not a virgin, but that she had been the Tsar's lover (when Sergius had imagined he had a unique relationship with both of them) that so disgusted him.

Nonetheless, leaving aside the particularities of who exactly had been Mary's lover, Tolstoy shows an idealised view of women in this scene: 'Мэри была особенно хороша в белом кисейном платье. Она казалась олицетворением невинности и любви' (p. 346), ('Mary was looking more than usually pretty in a white muslin dress and seemed a picture of innocence and love' [p. 255]). This is also an example of Sergius' sexual double standard, which was, of course, a commonly held understanding of the differences between the morality of men and women. Tolstoy writes: 'Касатский принадлежал к тем людям ... которые, сознательно допуская для себя и внутренне не осуждая нечистоту в половом отношении, требовали от жены идеальной, небесной чистоты' (p. 346), ('Kasatsky was one of those men ... who, while consciously allowing themselves to be unchaste in sexual matters and inwardly seeing nothing wrong with it, nonetheless expected their wives to possess an ideal celestial purity' [p. 255]).

The disappointment of Sergius' expectation that his wife would be sexually pure prompts him to withdraw from the secular world and become a monk. This religious decision is not portrayed positively as a spiritual re-birth, but it is understood by his sister in these terms:

³⁰⁴ Tolstoy, L. and McDuff, D. and Foote, P. (trans.) *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories* (Penguin, London, 2008) p. 252. All future English translations of quotations from this story will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

Поступая в монахи, он показывал, что презирает все то, что казалось столь важным другим и ему самому в то время, как он служил, и становился на новую такую высоту, с которой он мог сверху вниз смотреть на тех людей, которым он прежде завидовал (p. 348).

(By becoming a monk he was showing his scorn for all those things which seemed so important to others and which had seemed so important to him when he was an officer; he was placing himself on a new eminence from which he could look down on the people he had previously envied [p. 258]).

This response to the knowledge of Mary's previous love affair is striking as it makes an almost direct link between women's fidelity and purity and the perceived status of men. It is as though, if Sergius cannot be superior to Mary because he has what is valued by patriarchy – more (sexual) freedom than women – he must express his superiority in another way. Showing that he can demonstrate a high degree of self-control and discipline over his sexual desires becomes part of the next stage of his journey. As Tolstoy writes, his life as a hermit was marked by conflict caused by 'сомнение и плотская похоть' (p. 356), ('doubt and carnal desire' [p. 267]).

Sergius' ability to withstand the temptation presented by women is tested by the arrival of Makovkina, 'разводная жена, красавица' (p. 355), ('[an] attractive divorcée' [p. 265]) who visits him as part of a bet. It is significant that Sergius associates women with sinful behaviour to such an extent that he refuses to even stay in the same room as Makovkina, or to try to hold a conversation with her.

When she feigns illness in an attempt to persuade him out of his room, just at the moment that he is feeling overcome with desire for her, he decides to cut off his finger as a way either to resist temptation, or to punish himself for his physical desires. The following description of his actions is interesting as it focuses, in an almost abstract way, on the physicality of his act:

взяв топор в правую руку, положил указательный палец левой руки на чурбан, взмахнул топором и ударил по нем ниже второго сустава. Палец отскочил легче, чем отскакивали дрова такой же толщины, перевернулся и шлепнулся на край чурбана и потом на пол (р. 363).

(taking the axe in his right hand, he laid his left forefinger on the block and with a swinging blow of the axe struck it below the second joint. More lightly than a piece of wood of its thickness the finger flew off, turned and with a thud dropped first on the edge of the block, then to the floor [p. 274]).

Sergius' self-mutilation, alongside his ability to resist Makovkina's charms, appears to allow him to feel that he has the capacity to reject his body's needs and desires, as a good monk should. This objective description of his finger comparing it to 'a piece of wood' suggests that he is able to separate his mental and physical body, subjecting his (feminised) physicality to the will of his (masculine) will.

After Sergius' encounter with Makovkina, there are two further incidents in which women could be described as help-mates on his quest towards re-birth. First a merchant's daughter draws his

attention because ‘она имела веру в него, и тем еще, что предстояло опять на ней подтвердить свою силу исцеления и свою славу’ (p. 372), (‘she had faith in him, and because she presented him with an opportunity to give further proof of his powers of healing and to bolster his reputation’ [p. 285]). Once again, Tolstoy’s text is quite explicit about Sergius’ view of women. He is not concerned with the merchant’s daughter as an individual, nor with the suffering she experiences. His sole concern is the prestige and status her healing could bring him.

The text ends with Sergius travelling to the home of an older woman, Pashenka, whom he had known when they were young and who ‘представлялась ему спасением’ (p. 376), (‘seemed to him a means of salvation’ [p. 288]). The image of female spirituality as healing and able to facilitate a sense of re-birth in masculine heroes is particularly significant in Sergius’ story because he has himself lived a largely religious life. Nonetheless, he confesses to Pashenka:

пожалуйста, слова, которые я скажу тебе сейчас, прими как исповедь, как слова, которые я в смертный час говорю перед богом. Пашенька! я не святой человек, даже не простой, рядовой человек: я грешник, грязный, гадкий, заблудший, гордый грешник, хуже, не знаю, всех ли, но хуже самых худых людей (p. 379).

(I want you to take what I am about to say as a confession, as what I would say to God in the hour of my death. Pashenka, I am no saint. I am not even a simple, ordinary person. I am a sinner, a puffed-up, foul, loathsome, lost sinner, whether the worst in the world I do not know, but I am the lowest of the low [p. 292]).

Father Sergius ends, therefore, with the masculine hero changing completely. He descends into remorse and penitence, and the implication is that this self-knowledge will lead to a new, more authentic, life for Sergius.

In *Resurrection*, the last work under discussion, Tolstoy shows how aware he was of the traditional re-birth plot, as later outlined by Lotman. The story demonstrates Tolstoy's mistrust of the government's military and judicial institutions - according to Christian, he had been wary of these institutions since his unsuccessful defence of a soldier in a military court.³⁰⁵ Sarah Hudspith also points to Tolstoy's horror at the 'senselessness' of the courts and belief that attempts at human justice are wrong.³⁰⁶ Instead of relying on the courts to determine morality, he believed that individuals should establish their own sense of right and wrong. He wrote in his diary: 'crime is not a particular action, but a particular relationship towards the conditions of life. To kill one's mother might not be a crime, but to eat up a piece of bread might be a very great crime' (14th, 15th, 16th October 1859).³⁰⁷

Tolstoy uses Nekhlyudov to voice these opinions about the injustices of the Russian criminal justice system. In a process similar to Raskolnikov's, Nekhlyudov develops his own views on morality and the causes of Maslova's crimes. But while Raskolnikov sees blame in other people and develops a theory in which he is 'extraordinary' and therefore entitled to act outside of the usual rules in order to correct the wrongs he sees around him, Nekhlyudov blames himself for Maslova's prostitution and thefts. He feels intensely guilty for his seduction of Maslova, despite being reassured by others that his treatment of her had little or nothing to do with her alleged crimes. His aunts, for example, blame Maslova alone for her pregnancy, saying that 'она

³⁰⁵ Christian, in Tolstoy and Christian (1994) pp. 153-5, here p. 153.

³⁰⁶ Hudspith, pp. 15-23, here p. 19.

³⁰⁷ Tolstoy and Christian, p. 139.

испортилась и была развращенная натура, такая же, как и мать',³⁰⁸ ('she had gone from bad to worse because she was a thoroughly bad lot like her mother').³⁰⁹ But Nekhlyudov is convinced that his actions triggered the series of events which ultimately led to Maslova's unjust imprisonment for a crime there was little evidence that she had committed.

The narrative shows Nekhlyudov's determination to follow Maslova, and to marry her, although she is reluctant as she understands that Nekhlyudov's love for her is based on his idea of justice and his need to atone for his previous faults, rather than being rooted in his knowledge of her as an individual person. Nekhlyudov's various encounters with Maslova as he follows her to Siberia lead to changes and developments in his character as he grows in self-awareness and also becomes passionate about the need for social reform. On one of his visits to Maslova 'он почувствовал, что теперь, сейчас, совершается нечто самое важное в его душе, что его внутренняя жизнь стоит в эту минуту как бы на колеблющихся весах, которые малейшим усилием могут быть перетянуты в ту или другую сторону' (p. 156), ('he felt that now, at this very moment, something of huge importance was happening to him in spirit, that his inner life was, so to speak, trembling in the balance, which could tip one way or the other at the slightest touch' [p. 172]).

As well as petitioning officials for Maslova's release, Nekhlyudov also takes on the cases of a number of other prisoners and his growing social awareness impacts on all the aspects of his life as he becomes convinced that 'он отказывался от пользования правом земельной собственности' (p. 227), ('he must give up any right to the private ownership of land' [p. 251]). He also becomes very sensitive to the artificiality of his own social class. This is particularly evident in his reflections on Missy's mother, Princess Sofya 'с своей искусной, притворной, совершенно похожей на натуральную, улыбкой, открывавшей прекрасные длинные зубы, чрезвычайно

³⁰⁸ http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/tocvol_13.htm, pp. 70-1. All future Russian quotations from this novel will be taken from this online edition of the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's *Complete Works, Volume Thirteen*. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

³⁰⁹ Tolstoy, L. and Briggs, A. (trans.) *Resurrection* (Penguin, London, 2009) p. 76. All future English translations of quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

искусно сделанные, совершенно такие же, какими были настоящие' (p. 100), ('with her forced pretence of a smile, almost indistinguishable from a real one, revealing her magnificent long teeth, artificial but so beautifully made that they were almost indistinguishable from the real thing' [p. 109]).

The profound changes Nekhlyudov undergoes as a result of his relationship with Maslova bring him great happiness as we see: 'И он испытывал чувство радости путешественника, открывшего новый, неизвестный и прекрасный мир' (p. 372), ('He was feeling the surge of joy that comes to a traveller when he discovers a new, unknown world full of beauty' [p. 413]). Maslova's feelings are different, however, and she is not interested in being part of Nekhlyudov's re-birth. She seems aware that he only wants to make atonement so that he can redeem his past, and not because he really loves her, or wants to know her. Tolstoy shows how:

И в ней вдруг поднялось опять прежнее озлобление к нему, захотелось бранить, упрекать его ... не позволит ему духовно воспользоваться ею, как он воспользовался ею телесно, не позволит ему сделать ее предметом своего великодушия (p. 254).

(And once again the old bitterness towards him welled up inside her, and all she wanted was to curse him and blame him ... she wouldn't let him use her spiritually as he had once used her physically, or let him set her up as an object of his charity [p. 282]).

Bayley suggests that she is aware that his attachment is not only inspired by philanthropy but that he also wants to ‘appear remarkable in his own eyes’.³¹⁰ This seems to echo Myshkin’s love for Nastasya and his desire to save her. A similar theme recurs in Pasternak’s description of Zhivago’s relations with Tonya, Lara and Marina. His friends accuse him of treating women as ‘бесплотные идеи, носящиеся в твоей голове в произвольных сочетаниях’³¹¹ (‘disembodied ideas for him to juggle around with’),³¹² rather than as real people.

Nekhlyudov changes profoundly through the narrative, reforming his financial arrangements by handing his land and estates to the peasants, ending his romantic ties to Missy, and rejecting the ‘artifice’ and luxury of his previous life. In contrast, the changes Maslova experiences are linked to her material circumstances rather than to developments in her character. Her situation is undoubtedly improved by Nekhlyudov’s interventions. She is allowed to travel with the political prisoners and her sentence is eventually reduced to deportation rather than hard labour. But these improvements do not indicate a change in her personality or a development of her inner life. Maslova is presented as being essentially good throughout the narrative and not in need of atonement in the same way as Nekhlyudov. Even when she resorts to alcohol and tobacco, this is seen as a sign of her despair at her situation and the influence of more corrupted prisoners, rather than a flaw in her own essential character.

Resurrection ends with the following paragraph, which emphasises the re-birth Nekhlyudov experiences at the end of his quest:

³¹⁰ Bayley (1997), pp. 55 and 57.

³¹¹ Pasternak, B., *Doktor Zhivago* (Troika Publishing House, Moscow, 1994), p. 390.

³¹² Pasternak, B. and Hayward, M. and Harari, M., (trans.) *Doctor Zhivago* (Vintage, London, 2002), p. 432.

С этой ночи началась для Нехлюдова совсем новая жизнь не столько потому, что он вступил в новые условия жизни, а потому, что все, что случилось с ним с этих пор, получало для него совсем иное, чем прежде, значение. Чем кончится этот новый период его жизни, покажет будущее (p. 458).

(That night marked the beginning of a totally new life for Nekhlyudov, not so much because he had embarked on new personal circumstances, but because everything that happened to him subsequently came with an entirely new and different meaning. How this new period of his life will end only the future will show [p. 510]).

Just as in the epilogue to *Crime and Punishment*, the masculine hero is alone in gaining this philosophical, spiritual resurrection. The new life Maslova has ahead of her is more rooted in earthy realities. Her essential personality and character have not changed, but she has found a man who truly loves her for who she is as an individual and not for her ability to aid him on his personal quest. In a passage that sums up the motives of both men, Maslova's feelings are revealed here:

Нехлюдов предлагал ей брак по великодушию и по тому, что было прежде; но Симонсон любил ее такою, какою она была теперь, и любил просто за то, что любил ... Симонсон считает ее необыкновенной, отличающейся от всех женщиной, имеющей особенные высокие нравственные свойства (pp. 381-2).

(Nekhlyudov wanted to marry her out of charity and because of what had happened in the past, but Simonson loved her for what she was now; he loved her because he loved her ... Simonson saw her as an extraordinary woman, distinct from all other women, a person of special, high moral quality [p. 424]).

In conclusion, therefore, I would like to point to Amy Mandelker's argument that organising life experiences into narratives can mean 'that we risk the enclosure that constricts, the form that deforms, or the representation that misrepresents'³¹³ I think that Mandelker's comment about narrative reflects very well the way in which women are portrayed in the texts I have considered. Female characters are shown in each of these works to be (in de Lauretis' words) 'that which is not susceptible to transformation'.³¹⁴

The extent of authorial focus on the development of male, as opposed to female, characters is striking in Tolstoy's texts. It is overwhelmingly masculine characters who change and develop throughout the narratives as we have seen in the characterisation of Pierre, Andrey, Pozdnyshev, Sergius and Nekhlyudov. As the development of these characters is so crucial to the narratives we have discussed, female characters are not shown to move and develop throughout the texts. Rather, they are fixed in roles which support the needs of their masculine counterparts. One important consequence of this is that when female characters, such as Anna Karenina, attempt to define their own fate, they do not receive the same luxury of indulgence from the other characters. Instead of showing Anna's friends and family members sympathising with her need to transgress boundaries and imagine a new life for herself, Anna is alienated.

Anna may be an exception in many ways, as she, maybe more than any other female character in this thesis, consciously attempts significant changes to her life, which may be called a 'quest' in Propp's terms. However, she is not unique in the extreme physical suffering she experiences. While the male characters in Tolstoy's works often emerge at the end of the narratives existentially alone, as fully developed masculine heroes, female characters suffer death, in the cases of Anna and Pozdnyshev's wife, or deportation in the case of Maslova. I have shown that female suffering is portrayed as fundamentally different to male suffering as it does not result in spiritual insight or

³¹³ Mandelker, p. 103.

³¹⁴ de Lauretis (1984), p. 118.

change in female characters. In this analysis of Tolstoy's work, the only exception to this conclusion I have found is Masha in *Family Happiness*, whose insights following her experiences in St Petersburg lead her to devote herself more fully to her life with her husband and children.

3. Making Sense of Chaos: The Role of Cerebral Understanding in Babel's Development of the Male Hero

Isaak Babel began to write *Red Cavalry*, his collection of short stories, in 1921 following his experiences in the Soviet-Polish War of 1919-1921.³¹⁵ The stories which make up *Red Cavalry* were originally published individually as newspaper and journal articles between 1923 and 1925 before they were published as a book in 1926.³¹⁶ In this chapter I will show how the themes of masculine development and feminine objectification developed by de Lauretis can be used to produce fresh insights into Babel's work. I focus on Lyutov's struggles to create a coherent identity which incorporates both his admiration of the Cossacks' ability to act decisively and his artistic sensitivity and dislike of violence.

The majority of the *Red Cavalry* stories are told through the first person narration of Lyutov, a Jewish intellectual fighting alongside the Cossacks. In many ways Lyutov's experiences, personality traits and struggles mirror those of Babel. I will consider in particular how the themes of violence and religion influence Babel's development of Lyutov as a masculine hero. *Red Cavalry* is a collection of short stories which may be seen as fragmented. However, for the purposes of this chapter I point to the ways in which the stories can be read as a cycle and, in this way, as a 'unified whole'.³¹⁷ I will look in detail at the characterisation of Lyutov, arguing that as an example of a masculine character transcending boundaries, he embarks on a philosophical quest to understand and interpret the world in which he finds himself.

This chapter will highlight Lyutov's attraction to the virile, passionate Cossacks alongside his unease with their violent acts. Lyutov's attraction to abstract ideas or characteristics combined with

³¹⁵ McDuff, pp. xiv-v.

³¹⁶ Rogle, p. 5.

³¹⁷ Luplow, p. 7.

his repulsion at the tangible acts that are their outward manifestation is, I will argue, key to understanding de Lauretis' description of masculine heroes crossing boundaries. I start by outlining Lyutov's centrality as a developing masculine character and by reflecting on his relations with the Cossacks and his conflicting commitments to principles of religion, peace, justice and action. I then move on to discuss a selection of the stories in more detail, in order to show how Babel distils complex themes and ideas into the sparse, tightly constructed narratives of his stories.

I will focus in particular on 'Crossing the Zbrucz', 'My First Goose' and 'The Rebbe's Son'. I have chosen these stories both because of their positions within the cycle and for thematic reasons. In 'Crossing the Zbrucz', the first story in the cycle, Lyutov recounts his experience of being billeted with a Jewish family. He is woken in the night by a pregnant Jewish woman because he is moving around restlessly, and, as the daughter says, 'толкаете'³¹⁸ ([you are] 'disturbing'³¹⁹) her father. Lyutov realises to his horror that the man he thought was asleep beside him is in fact the woman's dead father. In 'My First Goose', Lyutov tries to win the admiration of the Cossacks by killing a goose. This violent act seems to be an inadequate response to the exhortation by the billeting officer to 'а испортъ вы даму, самую чистенькую даму' (p. 26) ('lay a finger on ... the properest lady that ever there was' [p. 120]), but it is nonetheless enough to gain a degree of acceptance from the Cossacks. Finally, in 'The Rebbe's Son', the final story of the first published collection of the stories, Babel gives an example of a male character who, unlike Lyutov, seems to have resolved the potential conflict between the ways of peace and violence by accepting and valuing both.³²⁰ The story begins with Lyutov's vivid memories of Sabbath prayers with a Rebbe and his son Ilya, then continues to describe how Lyutov encounters Ilya, fatally injured, four months later. When he

³¹⁸ Babel, I. *Konarmiya* (Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994) p. 2. All future quotations will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

³¹⁹ Babel, I. and McDuff, D. (trans.) *Collected Stories* (Penguin, London, 1994) p. 120. All future English translations of quotations from this short story collection will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

³²⁰ Babel wrote 'Argamak' as a new ending to *Red Cavalry* in 1932, six years after the original collection of the stories was published in 1926. See Charyn, p. 85.

collects Ilya's belongings Lyutov is moved to find a wide range of mementos and keepsakes which express a diversity of interests and passions.

As noted, 'Crossing the Zbrucz' is the first story of the cycle and 'The Rebbe's Son' was the last story until Babel added 'Argamak' in the 1932 edition. By considering these two stories alongside 'My First Goose', which is placed towards the beginning of the collection, I hope to show how the theme of masculine movement through feminised space recurs throughout the cycle.

The stories of *Red Cavalry* are set during the period of the Soviet-Polish War and the chaos and upheaval of these years are vividly portrayed. One of the most significant questions raised by *Red Cavalry* is the role of violence, and in particular, whether the pursuit of ideals can ever justify its use. Carol Luplow points to the official Russian government's attempts to justify violence in the struggle against capitalism as 'revolutionary humanism'.³²¹ In this discourse, violence was seen as necessary to attain a new and better future³²² and, as Charles Rougle argues, many Russians at the time were not aware of the disparity between humanist and revolutionary ideals.³²³ However, Yury Shcheglov highlights the recurrence in early Soviet fiction of heroes who were drawn to the Revolution, but were dismayed by the contradiction between its ideals of peace and harmony and the reality of the violence used to achieve its aims.³²⁴

Babel worked as a newspaper correspondent during the conflict, fighting alongside General Budyonny's Cossack regiment in 1920.³²⁵ He had famously been told by Gorky in 1916 to 'go out

³²¹ Luplow, p. 5.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Rougle, p. 8.

³²⁴ Shcheglov, p. 657.

³²⁵ Trilling, p. 16.

into the world'.³²⁶ The stories which make up *Red Cavalry* are based on Babel's diary entries from this period. Roughton points out that by comparing the stories with Babel's diary we can see that the stories are based on the events he witnessed.³²⁷

However, the genre of fictionalised eye witness accounts (of which *Red Cavalry* is an example as well as *The Sevastopol Tales* by Tolstoy) raises important questions about our understanding of truth. In *The Sevastopol Stories*, for instance, Tolstoy draws heavily on his personal experiences of the Crimean War, but his fictionalised account allows him the authorial freedom to interpret the events using his own subjective world view. For example, the narrative is interspersed with passionate reflections on the futility and seemingly never-ending nature of war:

И эти люди – христиане, исповедующие один великий закон любви и самоотвержения, глядя на то, что они сделали с раскаянием не упадут вдруг на колени перед тем, кто, дав им жизнь, вложил в душу каждого, вместе со страхом смерти, любовь к добру и прекрасному, и со слезами радости и счастья не обнимутся, как братья? Нет! Белые тряпки спрятаны – и снова свистят орудия смерти и страданий, снова льётся невинная кровь, и слышатся стоны и проклятия.³²⁸

(It might be supposed that these men – Christians, recognising the same great law of love – see what they have done, they will instantly fall to their knees in order to repent before Him who, when he gave them life, placed in the soul of each, together with a fear of death, a love of the good and the beautiful, and that they will embrace one another with tears of joy and

³²⁶ Charyn, p. 10.

³²⁷ Roughton, p. 15.

³²⁸ Tolstoy, L. *Sevastopol' v dekabremesyatse, Sevastopol' v mae* (Bristol Classical Press, London 1994), p. 56.

happiness, like brothers. Not a bit of it! The scraps of white cloth will be put away – and once again the engines of death and suffering will start their whistling; once again the blood of the innocent will flow and the air will be filled with their groans and cursing.)³²⁹

Tolstoy's account of the Crimean War does not therefore claim to be objectively factual, he has a strong political motivation for writing *The Sevastopol Tales* – to help persuade his readers of the futility of violence and the need to work for longlasting, peaceful solutions to conflicts. Just as Tolstoy used actual historical events in his fiction, Babel also situated his narratives in the context of a war. However, Christopher Luck points out that the *Red Cavalry* stories are sometimes very different from the corresponding diary entries.³³⁰ The *Red Cavalry* stories cannot be read as historically accurate, but Roughton draws a distinction between this kind of 'external' truth and artistic truth, which he defines as 'internal'.³³¹ 'Internal' truth for Roughton refers to the sense that Babel was true to himself and accurately reflected his own perceptions in his text. To Roughton, this means that Babel focused his artistic attention on the ways violence affects human life, its morals and culture.³³² This focus on individual subjectivity, and the use of fragmented short stories, rather than a traditional linear plot, suggest that *Red Cavalry* is part of the cultural departure from nineteenth-century realist texts.

Through the character of Lyutov, Babel portrays the subjective and very individual perceptions, attitudes and feelings of one man trying to make sense of a changing and complex environment. By locating his narrator in a particular historical context, Babel creates a striking contrast between the personal and the public and raises important questions about the place of the individual during periods of great social upheaval. However, in this chapter, I will try to move beyond simply

³²⁹ Tolstoy, L. *The Sevastopol Stories* (Penguin, London 1986), p. 108.

³³⁰ Luck, p. 57.

³³¹ Roughton, p. 16.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

analysing this contrast, to ask what it means for the portrayal of Lyutov as a masculine hero. I continue to apply Irigaray's contention that to be male is to be seen as a whole, unified being in contrast to the perception that the female body is fragmented.³³³ In order to move towards this idealised state of unity, the male hero must reconcile conflicting ideas and identities within himself.

Conflict and dichotomy are key aspects of Babel's writing and critics such as Richard William Hallet and James E. Falen trace Babel's sense of being split back to his childhood. He was born into a Jewish family in Odessa in 1894 and his *Tales of Odessa* suggest that he was sensitive to the contrast between the old, traditional world of his extended Jewish family, and the 'new' cosmopolitan world of Odessa.³³⁴ Carden has argued that while Babel experienced these two worlds as the contrast between feeling confined within his family, or free in the larger outside world, he also knew that his family signified safety and security, while the larger environment of Odessa could bring its own dangers.³³⁵ Ultimately, however, despite the affection Babel had for his family, especially the lifelong devotion he felt for his mother,³³⁶ and his nostalgia for the Jewish rituals of his past, Babel's desire for space and freedom led him to move beyond his family life and eventually beyond Odessa itself.³³⁷ The conflicts Babel experienced during this formative period permeate his literary output. For example, Luck highlights the 'collisions' between the past and the present in the story 'Gedali',³³⁸ in which Babel affectionately describes Gedali's old curiosity shop:

Эта лавка — как коробочка любознательного и важного мальчика, из которого выйдет профессор ботаники. В этой лавке есть и пуговицы, и мертвая бабочка. Маленького хозяина ее зовут Гедали ... Он вьется в лабиринте из глобусов, черепов и мертвых цветов, помахивает пестрой

³³³ Whitford (1991), p. 107.

³³⁴ Hallet, p. 13.

³³⁵ Carden, p. 7.

³³⁶ Falen, p. 4.

³³⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

³³⁸ Luck, p. 68.

метелкой из петушиных перьев и сдувает пыль с умерших цветов (pp. 22-3).

(This is a shop like the specimen box of a solemn and inquisitive boy who will one day be a professor of botany. In this shop there are both buttons and a dead butterfly, and its little owner is called Gedali ... he hovers in a labyrinth of globes, skulls and dead flowers, waves a multi-coloured feather duster and blows the dust off the dead flowers [p. 117]).

Lyutov stumbles upon Gedali's shop opposite an 'ancient' synagogue, which he has nostalgically gone to on the eve of the Sabbath. Gedali tells Lyutov how his beard was pulled out by a Pole, and the violence he recounts seems particularly horrifying because Gedali is a peaceful man who has studied the Talmud, the commentaries of Rashi and the books of Maimonides. The story ends with Gedali going to the synagogue to pray. Although Lyutov has a strong nostalgic attraction to Jewish ritual, community and history, he also admires the Cossacks he is fighting alongside. The Cossacks are active, virile and magnificent, while Lyutov is shown to conform to their perception of intellectuals as unable to act. This is especially apparent in 'The Death of Dolgushov' in which Lyutov is unable to kill Dolgushov although he is fatally injured and asks to be shot. Another Cossack, Afonka, is scathing in his reaction to Lyutov: 'Уйди, - убью! Жалеете вы, очкастые, нашего брата, как кошка мышку' (p. 38) ('Go away...or I'll kill you. You four-eyed lot have as much pity for us as a cat has for a mouse.' [p. 135]).

The Cossacks, on the other hand, have no doubts about the rightness of their actions and do not spend time justifying their violence. In 'A Letter', Vasily Timofeich Kurdyukov gives his mother a dispassionate, almost casual, account of how his brothers 'кончали' (p. 9) ('put an end to' [p. 100]) their father. On the other hand, he expresses great concern for his favourite horse, begging his

mother: ‘обмывайте ему беспрерывно передние ноги с мылом, которое я оставил за образами’ (p. 7), (‘be sure to wash his forelegs with the soap I left behind the icons’ [p. 97]).

Babel depicts the Cossacks in a similar way to nature, as though they follow their own rhythms and are uncontrollable by the philosophical questions of right and wrong which preoccupy Lyutov. The ‘natural’, intuitive life of the Cossacks can be seen particularly in the close affinity they share with their horses. In the story ‘The Konzapas Commander’, Dyakov shows a deep understanding of the horses in his care and is able to accurately predict their behaviour. His way of talking warmly, naturally and affectionately to the horses echoes Babel’s reflection in his 1920 diary that ‘a Cossack’s horse occupies a quarter of his day’.³³⁹ Just as the Cossacks display a close understanding of the natural impulses of the horses they share their lives with, they instinctively use violence to resolve difficulties. They are not burdened by moral or ethical dilemmas when they are faced, for example, by a fatally wounded comrade as in ‘The Death of Dolgushov’, or a woman who has lied to obtain privileges as in ‘Salt’. In these episodes, as in many other incidents throughout the cycle of stories, the Cossacks appear to view death as a natural part of everyday life, and do not suffer the same cerebral agonies of conscience that another character, such as Lyutov, might experience in the same position.³⁴⁰ As Judith Deutsch Kornblatt argues, Cossacks have been seen throughout Russian cultural history as being able to transcend the constraints which others are bound by.³⁴¹ In this way, she argues, they are often likened to birds to emphasise their boundlessness.³⁴²

The Cossacks demonstrate their freedom by operating according to their own moral code despite being officially on the side of the revolutionaries. Sometimes the revolution appears to motivate

³³⁹ Babel, ‘Selections from 1920 Diary’, in Rougle, pp. 137-163, here p. 142.

³⁴⁰ Examples of other intellectual, reflective characters include Dostoevsky’s Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, Tolstoy’s Pierre in *War and Peace*, and Pasternak’s Zhivago in *Doctor Zhivago*.

³⁴¹ Kornblatt, p. 49.

³⁴² Ibid., p. 80.

their actions, as Balmashev shows in 'Salt' when he tells a woman who had deceived him that 'вы, гнусная гражданка, есть более контрреволюционерка, чем тот белый генерал, который с вострой шашкой грозит нам на своем тысячном коне' (p. 65), ('you, vile woman, are more of a counter-revolutionary than the White general who threatens us with a sharp sabre, riding a horse that cost thousands' [p. 166]). The Cossacks are also sometimes inspired by Lenin as in Surovkov's response to the article Lyutov reads aloud in 'My First Goose': 'Правда всякую ноздрю щекочет ... да как ее из кучи вытащить, а он бьет сразу, как курица по зерну' (p. 27), ('truth tickles every nostril ... and how is a man to pull it from the pile, yet Lenin hits it at once, like a hen pecking a grain of corn' [p. 123]).

However, despite these examples of Cossacks siding with revolutionary aims and expressing approval for its leaders, it is not the only motivation for their actions and, as Stephen Brown argues, they regularly use it as a cover to achieve their own ends.³⁴³ The Cossacks are accustomed to using violence to settle scores and will, it seems, murder and plunder without needing political justification. Prishchepa, for example, returns to his childhood home where neighbours seized his parents' property after they were taken hostage by the Whites. Lyutov recounts how Prishchepa 'ходил от одного соседа к другому, кровавая печать его подошв тянулась за ним следом' (p. 52), ('went from one neighbour to another, and the bloody imprint of his boot soles stretched after him' [p. 51]).

Babel does not explicitly interrogate the Cossacks' motivations, which adds to the impression that they act spontaneously and without analysing the reasons for their own behaviour. Falen convincingly points out that Babel may have avoided analysing the motives behind Cossacks' actions too thoroughly because of the potential psychological analysis has to diminish and expose

³⁴³ Brown, p. 39.

heroes.³⁴⁴ Thus, by preserving the image of Cossacks acting freely and spontaneously, Babel's Cossacks appear as a stark contrast to his intellectual narrator, Lyutov.

The motivations of the Cossacks is just one of the *Red Cavalry's* many themes. As we have seen, Babel also discusses religion, freedom and the role of violence amongst other issues. The constantly changing focus of the stories contributes to the sense that there is a lack of narrative continuity. Falen, for example, suggests that plot and unity of theme play such a small part in the stories that they often resemble lyrical poems more than traditional narratives.³⁴⁵ Danuta Mendelson finds that metaphorically the structure of *Red Cavalry* reflects the nature of the Reds' revolutionary struggle.³⁴⁶ She argues that both Babel's text and the revolution itself were characterised by chaos, but had a clearly defined aim.³⁴⁷

The central aim of the cycle of stories is to portray Lyutov's spiritual search for understanding.³⁴⁸ In *Crime and Punishment* Raskolnikov's actions are motivated by his intellectual 'solution' to a problem, and in *War and Peace* Pierre attempts to find answers to his philosophical concerns. Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* also portrays a male character using violence to re-order his world (by murdering his wife) in accordance with his own need for certainty about his wife's faithfulness. Likewise, in *Red Cavalry* a male hero posits the key questions which are intellectual and cerebral rather than emotional or intuitive. In this way, de Lauretis' narratological framework can be used very effectively to contribute to our understanding of Babel's work. As the character who 'poses, investigates, and grapples with the main historical, ethical, and philosophical issues of the cycle',³⁴⁹

³⁴⁴ Falen, p. 134.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 50.

³⁴⁶ Mendelson, p. 115.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Hodgson makes a similar point about the poetry of Khlebnikov and Mayakovsky, suggesting that these poets used their writing to interpret and understand the violence and war around them. Unlike Babel, Khlebnikov and Mayakovsky used mythic worlds in their texts. See Hodgson in Howlett and Mengham, pp. 65-76, here p. 70.

³⁴⁹ Luplow, p. 8.

the desire driving the narrative can clearly be said to be Lyutov's. With some small exceptions, the reader views most of the world of the text from Lyutov's viewpoint.

Falen has argued that *Red Cavalry* is in part Babel's 'dialogue with himself'.³⁵⁰ This argument reflects the importance of understanding and knowledge in the development of heroes. Babel's struggle to locate himself between the seemingly conflicting Jewish and secular worlds of his Odessa upbringing is mirrored in Lyutov's philosophical search for meaning and value in the political upheaval and violence of the war. However, I think that the relationship in *Red Cavalry* between the author (Babel) and his narrator (Lyutov) is deeper than the influence of Babel's biographical details on his development of the personality of Lyutov. Carden argues, for instance, that there is not a clear distinction between Babel and Lyutov.³⁵¹ Unlike other texts written in the first person, such as Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*, the author and narrator in *Red Cavalry* appear to be so similar that it is sometimes not apparent to the reader whose voice is 'speaking' during each section. Carden suggests that this closeness between author and narrator functions to claim the reader's belief.³⁵² I would agree that this device certainly adds a degree of authenticity to the text, and it may be that this is necessary in order to make some of the most shocking, and possibly otherwise unbelievable, stories credible.

It has also been suggested by Mendelson that Babel used skaz elements to add authenticity to what may otherwise have read as a subjective autobiographical account.³⁵³ Skaz is narration told in the first-person which reflects the style in which the character would speak.³⁵⁴ It particularly features colloquial vocabulary and syntax as in the Kurdyukov's correspondence with his mother in *A*

³⁵⁰ Falen, p. 126.

³⁵¹ Carden, p. 124.

³⁵² Ibid., p. 125.

³⁵³ Mendelson, p. 114.

³⁵⁴ Lodge, p. 18.

Letter.³⁵⁵ Kurdyukov's letter includes elements of formality such as: 'Во вторых строках сего письма спешу вам описать за папашу, что они порубали брата Федора Тимофеича Курдюкова тому назад с год времени' (p. 7), ('In the second bit of this letter I hasten to tell you about Papasha, that he killed my brother Fyodor Timofeich Kurdyukov with his sabre about a year ago' [p. 97]). However, the writer then goes on to describe Fyodor's death using more colloquial expressions, describing the events vividly and without moderating his account out of concern for his mother's feelings:

И Папаша начала Федю резать, говоря – шкура, красная собака, сукин сын и разню, и резали до темноты, пока брат Федор Тимофеич не кончился (p. 7).

(And Papasha began to slash Fyodor with his sabre, saying: 'Mercenary, Red dog, bitch's brood', and various other things and he went on slashing him until it was dark, and then my brother Fyodor Timofeich died [p. 97]).

These quotations show that *skaz*, as Rougle suggests, is often an incongruous mixture of styles in which uneducated speakers, such as Cossacks, attempt to use 'bookish' or more formal language.³⁵⁶ The *skaz* episodes give the reader an insight into the individual personality, history and motivations of their Cossack narrators, preserving, in Mendelson's terms, the 'highly personal character of the work'.³⁵⁷ It may have been important for Babel to emphasise the individuality of his Cossack characters to guard against the tendency to see them as one single amorphous group, as a straightforward, dichotomous division of the characters into two groups of either Jews or Cossacks

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Rougle, p. 24.

³⁵⁷ Mendelson, p. 114.

is not adequate.³⁵⁸ Babel shows that there are both sympathetic and unsympathetic characters in both groups. Andrew also argues that the use of skaz privileges the (male) ‘voice of violence’ as hearing the stories recounted directly from the Cossacks’ perspective gives the reader a powerful insight into the motivations behind their violent acts.³⁵⁹

But despite the presence of skaz elements in the cycle of stories, arguments about the centrality of Lyutov’s role remain valid. The skaz stories are often included in the work because of their relationship to the narrator. By this I mean that they have been told to Lyutov, or have some other significance for him. ‘A Letter’, for example, was dictated to Lyutov by its sender and he claims that ‘оно не заслуживает забвения’ (p. 6), (‘it does not deserve oblivion’ [p. 96]).

Babel’s use of metaphor is another device for decentring Lyutov as the text’s sole narrator. In her important study of metaphors in *Red Cavalry*, Mendelson contends that:

through their metaphoric usage, Babel’s characters display many personal traits which otherwise would have to be described by the author or the narrator in an “authorial” commentary. At the same time, by presenting the external world not as an ‘objective phenomenon’ but as it appears to, and is experienced by, the individual characters, Babel is able to create a diversity of points of view.³⁶⁰

This argument is supported by Luck who also points to the distinctive imaginative appeal of metaphors and the way in which they demonstrate the personality of their user.³⁶¹ However, despite

³⁵⁸ Carden, p. 121.

³⁵⁹ Andrew (1989), p. 18.

³⁶⁰ Mendelson, p. 80.

³⁶¹ Luck, p. 118.

their acknowledgements of the role of other speakers in the narratives of the stories, both Luck and Mendelson conclude that Lyutov is the character who unites the stories, giving them some degree of coherence as a single cycle. Luck goes so far as to argue that Lyutov is ‘the lynchpin, the hub around which all else revolves and through whom everything, or almost everything, is viewed.’³⁶²

The importance of Lyutov as the text’s key point of reference, even for some of the *skaz* stories, reinforces his position as a developing masculine hero. His search for both knowledge and understanding could be seen as a particularly masculine search as it involves placing himself at a distance from the subjects of his observation and defining himself positionally in relation to them. Brown has pointed to the sense within *Red Cavalry* that the narrator is an outsider who provides the opposing voice in each story.³⁶³ Luplow goes further than this, arguing that the philosophical distance between the narrator and the other characters and the strangeness of the environment to the narrator, is what maintains the tension of each episode.³⁶⁴ We have already seen how the text is driven by Lyutov’s desire, and need, to find meaning in the chaos around him – to somehow understand himself in relation to all the facets of his changing environment. This way of considering Lyutov’s characterisation is inspired by Jean-Paul Sartre’s concept of the self which is ‘for-itself’ or ‘pour-soi’, engaging with the world of beings around it which can be characterised as ‘en-soi’ or ‘in-itself’.³⁶⁵ In the example of *Red Cavalry*, I would argue that Lyutov is in the position of the observer, a subject who tries to conceive of the Cossacks around him in a way which enables him to draw conclusions about his own attributes. This fixes the Cossacks in the feminine role of the ‘other’, as the objects the developing masculine hero uses to define his own self and to understand his freedom to act in the world.

³⁶² Ibid., p. 122.

³⁶³ Brown, p. 36.

³⁶⁴ Luplow, p. 14.

³⁶⁵ As discussed by Wood, in Sartre (2000), pp. vii-xx, here p. xvi.

Almost as if to further emphasise the significance of understanding for *Red Cavalry*, David Danow suggests that the need for understanding itself is what separates Lyutov from the Cossacks.³⁶⁶ Danow draws attention to the contrast between Lyutov's 'overwhelming desire to understand' and the sense of confidence the Cossacks seem to feel in the rightness of their actions, even when their actions are extraordinarily violent.³⁶⁷ However, as I have argued above, it is not so much that the Cossacks reflect on their actions and judge them to be appropriate and proportionate. Instead the question does not seem to arise; they are portrayed as acting spontaneously and impulsively and are not burdened, as Lyutov is, by the weight of self-doubt.

I would contend, however, that Lyutov's pursuit of understanding is more than a way to distinguish his personality from that of the Cossacks around him. As an intellectual, Lyutov finds the extreme violence of the war particularly shocking. Lionel Trilling suggests that *Red Cavalry* is an example of 'the powerful and obsessive significance that violence has for the intellectual'.³⁶⁸ Danow also refers to the 'compelling need to understand' which is created by sudden violence.³⁶⁹ Lyutov may feel that as an intellectual he should be able to conceptualise and make some sort of theoretical sense of the events he witnesses. It is as though part of his quest in his journey of masculine development is to prove his credentials as a member of the intelligentsia by showing he can understand the actions of the Cossacks he has come to know well.

However, Lyutov wants more than mentally to understand the violence he sees around him. He admires the Cossacks so much that he wants to act like them. In particular, he wants to ride a horse competently and, significantly, to be able to kill. In 'After the Battle', Lyutov goes into battle with an unloaded gun and is found out by Akinfiyev who confronts him angrily. Although Lyutov cannot explain his action to Akinfiyev (pp. 110/221), earlier in the story he has used his role as narrator to

³⁶⁶ Danow (1994), p. 48.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ As discussed in Hallett, p. 55.

³⁶⁹ Danow (1994), p. 43.

explain to the reader that ‘мне сделалось тошно от близости смерти и от тесноты ее’ (p. 110), ([I] ‘felt nauseous from death’s proximity and its narrowness’ [p. 219]).

Luck describes Lyutov’s feeling of impotency at his inability to act in times of crisis,³⁷⁰ but I think there is evidence in the text that Lyutov felt almost as though his very existence depended on mastering his reluctance to kill. This quotation is taken from the last sentence of ‘After the Battle’:

Деревня плыла и распухала, багровая глина текла из ее скучных ран. Первая звезда блеснула надо мной и упала в тучи. Дождь стегнул ветлы и обессилел. Вечер взлетел к небу, как стая птиц, и тьма надела на меня мокрый свой венец. Я изнемог и, согбенный под могильной короной, пошел вперед вымаливая у судьбы простейшее из умений – умение убить человека (p. 111).

(The village was floating and swelling, purple clay flowed from its dismal wounds. A first star gleamed above me and fell into clouds. Rain whipped the white willows and spent its force. The evening flew up towards the sky, like a flock of birds, and the darkness laid its wet wreath upon me. I was exhausted and, bent under the sepulchral crown, moved forward, begging fate for the simplest of abilities – the ability to kill a man [pp. 221-2]).

Lyutov is so distraught at his continuing failure to kill that he perceives nature in metaphors that emphasise death or injury. To Lyutov, even the stars are falling, the rain has spent its force, and the village is wounded. He seems to imagine himself to be dying, as he is crowned with a wreath. It is

³⁷⁰ Luck, p. 100.

as though Lyutov feels that he will die himself if he cannot learn to kill.

Despite the constant development of ‘quests’ such as learning to kill, learning to ride a horse, and gaining understanding of the Cossacks, which Lyutov does not quite succeed at, he expresses himself in extremely artistic and original ways. The quotation above, for instance, demonstrates how metaphors in *Red Cavalry* project the personal vision of the person to whom they belong.³⁷¹ Mendelson’s description of the significance of metaphors, however, makes it clear that they have a feminine quality to them which, I would argue, is unlikely to be valued as useful to heroes on the path to masculine development. Mendelson points to metaphors as being a very personal, intimate expression of personality with links to early childhood and to sensory cognition.³⁷² We have already seen that Lyutov struggles to repress his emotional response to killing and to develop the kind of active masculinity he sees the Cossacks demonstrating.

Lyutov’s beautiful and intuitive ways of self-expression are not the only symbolically feminine obstacle on his path to developing a unified masculine character. He is burdened by his physicality, and in particular by his physical need to eat. Hallet has noted that only hunger leads Lyutov to violence, and this occurs just twice - in ‘The Song’ and in ‘My First Goose’.³⁷³ Danow agrees with this analysis, arguing that food in *Red Cavalry* is ‘frequently a primary factor in dislocating character’.³⁷⁴

These themes are illustrated in each of the three stories I discuss in detail. ‘Crossing the Zbrucz’ is the first story of the *Red Cavalry* cycle and it has been suggested that it is structurally crucial to the whole cycle as Babel poses all of his key questions within this story.³⁷⁵ The discoveries he makes

³⁷¹ Mendelson, pp. 46-7.

³⁷² Ibid., p. 46.

³⁷³ Hallet, pp. 47-8.

³⁷⁴ Danow (1994), p. 45.

³⁷⁵ Carden, pp. 50-1.

in 'Crossing the Zbrucz' are then restated in other ways throughout the cycle.³⁷⁶ That is to say that Lyutov does not make any new discoveries after this story. The structure of the story, like many others in the cycle, follows the pattern described by Lotman in which the hero enters an enclosed space and is reborn. Rougle notes the symbolism of the act of crossing the threshold from the 'normal world' into a space characterised by torment and fragmentation.³⁷⁷

Babel's use of imagery changes dramatically as the Cossack regiment crosses the river. Before they cross the boundary the scenery is tranquil and almost pastoral: 'Поля пурпурного мака цветут вокруг нас, полуденный ветер играет в желтеющей ржи, девственная гречиха встает на горизонте, как стена дальнего монастыря. Тихая Волынь изгибается' (p. 1), ('fields of purple poppies flower around us, the noonday wind is playing in the yellowing rye, the virginal buckwheat rises on the horizon like the wall of a distant monastery. The quiet Volyn is curving' [p. 91]). Here Babel seems to emphasise a sense of purity and even child-like playfulness as he describes how the wind 'играет' ('plays') in the rye and portrays the buckwheat as девственная ('virginal'), comparing it to a monastery's wall.

This quiet, serene atmosphere is quickly dispelled as the regiment cross the river: 'Запах вчерашней крови и убитых лошадей каплет в вечернюю прохладу. Почерневший Збруч шумит и закручивает пенные узлы своих порогов' (p. 1), ('the odour of yesterday's blood and of slain horses drips into the evening coolness. The Zbrucz, now turned black, roars and pulls tight the foamy knots of the rapids' [p. 91]). Rougle's description of the new world entered by Lyutov at this point as 'fragmented and tormented', seems apt as Lyutov's new environment is characterised by violence and death.³⁷⁸

The contrast between these two descriptive passages show how Lyutov has moved rapidly from an environment in which he felt reasonably secure and in which he could reflect on the beauty and

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Rougle, p. 35.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

peacefulness of the flowers and the flowing river, to one in which he is confused and potentially in danger.³⁷⁹ The river threatens to engulf the Cossacks as first the horses ‘по спине уходят в воду’ (p. 1), (‘sink into the water up to their backs’ [p. 91]) and then ‘кто-то тонет и звонко порочит богородицу’ (p. 1) (‘someone sinks and resolutely defames the Mother of God’ [p. 91]).

This sense of danger and confusion is significant because it brings into focus the conflict between the ‘split, hesitant intellectual [and] the monolithic mentality of the man of action.’³⁸⁰ A large part of Lyutov’s quest on his path towards masculine development is the ability to act decisively, yet a disorientating tone of degradation and destruction seems to permeate his surroundings.

Lyutov’s isolation is emphasised in the story, as if to highlight the individualism and independence expected of masculine heroes. He is left alone in his billet with a pregnant Jewish woman and three other Jews – one of whom is seemingly already asleep with his back to Lyutov. The Cossacks he has been traveling with are no longer mentioned after the regiment has arrived in Novograd. The Jews are portrayed as dehumanised and ‘other’ - they are unnamed, and are ‘рыжих ... с тонкими шеями’ (p. 1), (‘red-haired ... with thin necks’ [p. 91]); ‘они прыгают ... по-обезьяньи, как японцы в цирке’ (p. 2), (‘they hop about ... monkey-like, like Japanese in a circus’ [p. 92]).

It is significant that these descriptive passages are told from Lyutov’s viewpoint as this supports de Lauretis’ argument that the desire driving narrative is often that of the masculine character. However, it has also been suggested that this story is an example of a peaceful domestic scene contrasted with the brutality of war.³⁸¹ Askoldov’s film *The Commissar* (1967) features a similar plot, in which a female commissar is billeted with a Jewish family for the duration of her pregnancy. In the film, the peaceful domestic environment is repeatedly used as a contrast to the

³⁷⁹ Lyutov’s movement across this boundary reflects similar incidents of boundary-crossing in the texts I have already discussed. Pierre, for example, leaves the city to travel to battlefields, Myshkin arrives in St Petersburg from a remote clinic in Switzerland, and Anna transgresses society’s moral code by leaving her husband.

³⁸⁰ Rougle, p. 37.

³⁸¹ Andrew (2007), p. 33.

Commissar's previous life. While she is giving birth to her son, a montage of images of soldiers pushing carts through mud and other images of battles show the memories and experiences she draws on to help her through the pain and fear of childbirth.

The implication of the Jewish family's previous, peaceful life together provides a striking contrast to the violence of the Soviet-Polish War. The domesticity of the family, their daily lives and shared experiences pre-date Lyutov's arrival and therefore occur outside of the text. These facets of their lives remain undeveloped by Babel, and this contributes to a sense that the family members are two-dimensional archetypes rather than fully developed characters. This has the effect of keeping the focus of the narrative fixed on the central male hero and his perceptions of the conflict and his responses to the distress and trauma it causes.

The family with which Lyutov is billeted differs significantly from the family in *The Commissar* because of the evidence of violence and degradation in their home. In the room that he is to sleep in Lyutov describes 'развороченные шкафы ... обрывки женских шуб на полу, человеческий кал и черепки сокроенной посуды, употребляющейся у евреев раз в году – на пасху' (p. 1), ('ransacked wardrobes, on the floor scraps of women's fur coats, pieces of human excrement and broken shards of the sacred vessels used by the Jews once a year, at Passover' [pp. 91-2]). This description points to the trauma that this family has experienced already as a result of the conflict, and challenges any associations the narrator or reader may have made between domestic life and feelings of security and safety. Instead the violence, chaos and degradation of the fighting have clearly intruded even into the supposed safety and sanctity of a religious family's home.

Despite his isolation and disorientation, Lyutov must find ways to interact with the family he is billeted with and to respond in some way to his situation. Babel has already stated that 'мосты разрушены' (p. 1), ('the bridges have been destroyed' [p. 91]), which indicates that there is no easy way out of the enclosed space Lyutov finds himself in. Even the moon, which was earlier described as 'величавая' (p. 1), ('majestic', [p. 91]) seems to be a casualty of the all-pervading

desolation: ‘все убито тишиной, и только луна, обхватив синими руками свою круглую, блестящую, беспечную голову, бродяжит под окном’ (p. 2), (‘all has been murdered by silence, and only the moon, clasping her round, shining, carefree head in blue hands, plays the vagrant under the window’ [p. 92]).

In the enclosed space of Novograd, in which even the moon seems to be homeless and dislocated, Lyutov tries to act as an existentially free individual, making sense of, and changing, his environment. But, while the ‘space’ he finds himself in is physically enclosed and shut off, Lyutov’s spiritual and psychic world is also constricted. His conflicting allegiances function to make it hard for him to respond to his environment in a consistent way. He tries to draw, for instance, on his allegiance to the Cossacks and his determination to act like them. Rougle suggests that his insensitivity towards the pregnant woman is demonstrative of his perception of himself as part of the Cossack collective.³⁸² He does not respond sympathetically to the intrusion of the violence into their presumably peaceful previous lives, but simply orders the woman to clean up and tells them that ‘грязно живете’ (p. 1), ([you live] ‘dirty lives’ [p. 92]).

Addressing the family in this way may reflect the way the Cossacks would respond to the situation, rather than the way Lyutov might have responded to the family if he had drawn on his upbringing. But Rougle also argues that the fact that Lyutov recognised the broken crockery as being that used to mark the Jewish Passover feast points to the continuing importance of his Jewish identity.³⁸³ So, however Lyutov may try to identify with the Cossacks and act like them, he cannot forget the culture in which he has been raised and he cannot fail to notice the significance of the broken crockery and this powerful image of the desecration of a Jewish home.

Lyutov’s religious upbringing, and continuing sense of identification with Jews, may be one reason for the tone of admiration he uses to relate the ending to the story. The woman wakes him in the

³⁸² Rougle, p. 27.

³⁸³ Ibid.

middle of the night because he is shouting and moving around in his sleep. It then becomes clear to Lyutov that the man who he thought was sleeping beside him is in fact the woman's dead father who was murdered by the Poles. Lyutov is awoken from his fitful sleep to another reminder of the horror caused by the conflict. The man's 'глотка ... вырвана, лицо разрублено пополам, синяя кровь лежит в его бороде, как кусок свинца (p. 2), ('gullet has been torn out, his face has been cleft in two, dark blue blood clings in his beard like pieces of lead' [p. 92]).

Despite Lyutov's earlier insensitivity to the woman's plight, he now recounts her description of her father's bravery and consideration for her: 'поляки резали его, и он молился им: "убейте меня на черном дворе, чтобы моя дочь не видела, как я умру"' (p. 2), ('the Poles were murdering him and he begged them: "Kill me out in the backyard so that my daughter doesn't see me die"' [pp. 92-3]). It is clear that Lyutov was not the first participant in the conflict to treat the family with disdain as the woman goes on: 'но они сделали так, как им было нужно, – он кончался в этой комнате и думал обо мне' (p. 2), ('But they did what suited them. He died in this room, thinking about me' [p. 93]).

In 'Crossing the Zbrucz', then, the narrator enters the enclosed physical and emotional space of the home and while he is there changes his perception of the characters around him. This change is effected largely through the actions of the woman who allows him to sleep next to her dead father (although he is a stranger and she clearly loves her father and treasures his memory). The tropes of sleep/death and re-awakening/re-birth are also extremely important in this short narrative as they mark the boundaries between the attitude Lyutov held towards the family at the beginning of his encounter with them and his realisation of its members' strength and devotion to each other.

The role played by the unnamed Jewish woman is therefore significant in de Lauretis' terms as she contributes to the sense of constriction and domesticity which confine Lyutov and force him to respond. She also plays the role of Lyutov's helper, or midwife, as he is re-born and changed by his encounter with the family. These themes of quest, death and rebirth are addressed again in 'My

First Goose'. Rougle has described this story as the first one in which the reader witnesses Lyutov's active attempts to win the approval of the Cossacks.³⁸⁴ Images of death permeate this story, as Andrew has already noted. He highlights the significance of death in 'My First Goose' by pointing to repeated references to darkness and dying.³⁸⁵ The story is set in the evening, for example, and the way in which the narrator is left at the boundary to the yard by the billeting officer is reminiscent of heroes descending into the 'world of the dead'.³⁸⁶

Babel again uses metaphoric descriptions of nature to convey a sense of atmosphere and to communicate the mood of his narrator. As Lyutov and the billeting officer arrive at the yard, Babel writes that: 'круглая и желтая, как тыква, умирающее солнце испускало на небе свой розовый дух' (pp. 25-6), ('in the sky, round and yellow as a pumpkin, the dying sun breathed its rosy last' [p. 120]). This description captures both the sense of innocence being lost – the sun is 'розовый' ('rosy') – and also a sense of melodramatic finality. If the sun itself is dying, rather than sleeping for example, this conveys a feeling that the world itself is ending. Although the narrator does not explicitly state that he is frightened or feels that the events in this story mark a decisive turning point, his use of metaphors clearly communicate these emotions.

The billeting officer hints that Lyutov might be in real danger from the Cossacks. He points to the physical and intellectual differences which set Lyutov apart from the Cossacks: 'Ты из киндербальзамов, – закричал он, смеясь, – и очки на носу. Какой паршивенький!' (p. 25), ("so you're a milksop, are you?" He shouted, laughing. "And with glasses on your nose, too, what a wretched little ...") [p. 120]). And significantly, the billeting officer goes on to state that: 'а тут режут за очки' (p. 25), ('they'll kill a man for glasses here' [p. 120]). Babel's melodramatic description of the sun breathing its last may, therefore, be intended to convey the sense of finality and danger felt by Lyutov.

³⁸⁴ Rougle, p. 40.

³⁸⁵ Andrew (1996), p. 223.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

Lyutov's awareness of the difficulty he will have in fitting in with the Cossacks is evident from the story's opening when he describes Savitsky, the Divisional Commander: 'Я удивился красоте гигантского его тела' (p. 25), ('I was astonished by the beauty of his gigantic body' [p. 119]). Then, the billeting officer also demonstrates his superior physical strength by carrying Lyutov's trunk, a fact that is clearly significant as, despite the sparseness of the text, Babel writes twice that the billeting officer is carrying the trunk (pp. 26/120) and then draws attention to this again by telling the reader when he puts it down (pp. 26/121).

Lyutov then, arrives at the yard having been confronted by a display of masculinity he knows that he cannot replicate, but also knowing that his life may be at risk if he cannot demonstrate his own abilities to the satisfaction of the Cossacks. He is told by the billeting officer that the way to demonstrate these abilities is to 'А испортъ вы даму, самую чистенькую даму, тогда вам от бойцов ласка' (p. 26), ('lay a finger on a lady, the properest lady that ever was, and our fighting lads will give you a fond caress' [p. 120]). Women are, therefore, even from the inception of Lyutov's 'quest' objectified as the means through which he can achieve a state of masculinity and acceptance with the Cossacks.

In a way, the promise of fond caresses may be interpreted as going beyond offering Lyutov acceptance. 'Fond caresses' are suggestive of familial, or maybe romantic and homoerotic affection, rather than the ambiguous acceptance of comrades. The overtones of intimacy may even suggest aspects of erotic submission as Lyutov will be receiving the affection from Cossacks who are feminised by giving intimacy that is usually provided by women. Lyutov is therefore promised more than the respect of the Cossacks - perhaps even the ability to command their favours - if he can seduce a lady.

There are, however, no 'pure ladies' in the scene. The woman who owns the house and the yard is 'старуха' (p. 26) ('old' [p. 121]), has eyes that are 'полуослепших' (p. 26) ('blind' [p. 121]) and is not in any way portrayed sexually. In another example of the overtones of death which pervade

the whole story, the old woman tells Lyutov that ‘от этих дел я желаю повеситься’ (p. 26), (‘all this business makes me want to hang myself’ [p. 122]).³⁸⁷

Andrew has pointed to the way in which most female characters in *Red Cavalry* are unnamed and marginal to the plot.³⁸⁸ The woman in ‘My First Goose’ is a good example of this. She is weak and powerless, unable to defend herself or to have any influence over events even in her own home. The only response left to her is to express her longing for death, which unlike Dolgushov’s desire, is left unheeded. Lyutov does not even respond sympathetically or acknowledge her distress in any way. His response to her has similarities with his initially dismissive treatment of the Jewish woman in ‘Crossing the Zbrucz’. After the woman has expressed her wish to hang herself he responds: ‘Господа Бога душу мать, – пробормотал я тогда с досадой и толкнул старуху кулаком в грудь, – толковать тут мне с вами’ (p. 26), (“Mother of the Lord God and my soul,” I grumbled in vexation then, and gave the old woman a shove in the chest with my fist. “Do I have to discuss it with you ...” [p. 122]). Lyutov both physically pushes the woman away from him, increasing the physical space between them, and also intellectually distances himself from her by refusing to engage in a dialogue about her desperate emotions.

Andrew argues that the nameless, marginalised women in *Red Cavalry* are often symbolic of ‘something in male destinies’.³⁸⁹ There are certainly similarities between the narrator and the old woman – they both wear glasses and they are both pushed around by those who are stronger than they are.³⁹⁰

It seems likely, given the billeting officer’s criticisms of Lyutov, his strong desire (and possible need) to win the respect of the Cossacks, and the similarities between himself and the old women that his actions towards her were motivated by his rejection of the characteristics he shared with

³⁸⁷ Andrew (1996), p. 223.

³⁸⁸ Andrew (1989), p. 1.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Andrew (1984), p. 76.

her. As Andrew has contended, by pushing her aside and ‘отвернувшись’ (p. 26), (‘turning away’ [p. 122]) from her, he was demonstrating his own unwillingness to be an ‘eternal victim’.³⁹¹ Just as Raskolnikov was unable to acknowledge the humanity of the pawnbroker, but killed her to fulfil his desire to prove he was extraordinary, Lyutov cannot engage with the old woman or her distress. He distances himself from her to demonstrate his otherness.

It may be arguable that Babel’s descriptions of the old woman as old and blind help to facilitate Lyutov’s rejection of the woman (and those aspects of his own self which he finds ‘undesirable’). She is represented as an archetypal victim figure,³⁹² but Andrew and Shcheglov also go further and suggest that elderly women are encoded as witches in Babel’s work.³⁹³

I would contend, therefore, that Babel’s characterisation of the old woman in this very specific way demonstrates the centrality of the masculine quest in ‘My First Goose’. The woman is central to Lyutov’s fate as he meets her at the ‘symbolic crossroads of his life’ and as such she is characterised in a way that meets his needs.³⁹⁴ Her association with death helps the hero to define and express his own vitality in opposition to her failing body and her despair gives him the opportunity to demonstrate his ‘manly’ disassociation with emotions and sentiment by responding harshly to her need.

The central event in the narrative, Lyutov’s killing of the goose, therefore takes place against the background of his rejection of the old woman.³⁹⁵ He turns away from the woman, sees ‘чужую саблю, валявшуюся неподалеку’ (pp. 26-7), (‘someone else’s sword lying on the ground’ [p. 122]) and a ‘строгий гусь шатался по двору и безмятежно чистил перья (p. 27), (‘stern goose ... wandering about the yard, serenely preening its feathers’ [p. 122]). Lyutov’s use of another man’s sword may indicate that he is about to do something uncharacteristic, while Babel’s

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid., p. 75.

³⁹³ Andrew (1989), p. 12. See also Shcheglov (1994), pp. 666-7.

³⁹⁴ Andrew (1984), p. 75.

³⁹⁵ Andrew (1996), p. 223.

description of the goose suggests a coquettish femininity. It is preening itself and appears to take that task very (comically) seriously. Lyutov kills the bird in a sudden display of violence: ‘Я догнал его и пригнул к земле, гусиная голова треснула под моим сапогом, треснула и потекла. Белая шея была разостлана в навозе, и крылья заходили над убитой птицей’ (p. 27), (‘I caught up with it and bent it down to the ground; the goose’s head cracked under my boot, cracked and overflowed. The white neck was spread out in the dung, and the wings began to move above the slaughtered bird’ [p. 122]).

The death of the goose seems to be a direct response to the billeting officer’s exhortation to Lyutov to ‘испортъ вы даму’ (p. 26), (‘to lay a finger on a lady’ [p. 120]) and as such it seems to be a partial success in that it wins Lyutov the Cossacks’ acceptance. As Carden suggests, killing the goose is an alternative to raping a woman, and the presence of rape as an undertone to the story gives it a sinister edge.³⁹⁶ Rogle also notes that the killing is a heroic deed which has elements of sexual conquest.³⁹⁷ However it also serves as an example of Lyutov’s ultimate inability to kill people, and as Rogle suggests, its relatively trivial nature makes a ‘mockery’ of Lyutov’s ‘manhood’.³⁹⁸ In fact, the killing of the goose is as far as Lyutov ever comes to learning to kill. By the end of the *Red Cavalry* cycle of stories Lyutov has only killed the goose and some bees.³⁹⁹ Nonetheless, despite its shortcomings, Lyutov’s act of killing the goose does provoke a change both in the way the Cossacks respond to him and also in the way he perceives the natural world. Although the Cossacks ‘сидели недвижимо, прямые, как жрецы, и не смотрели на гуся’ (p. 27), (‘sat unmoving, straight as priests and had paid no attention to the goose’ [p. 122]) when Lyutov returns to the yard ‘томясь’ (‘in torment’) having left briefly to clean the sword (pp. 27/122) their attitude towards him has changed: ‘Братишка – сказал мне вдруг Суровков, старший из казаков, – садись с нами снедать, покеле твой гусь доспеет (p. 27), (““Brother”, Surovko, the most senior of the Cossacks, said to me all of a sudden, “sit down and have some of our grub until

³⁹⁶ Carden, p. 100.

³⁹⁷ Rogle, p. 40. See also Andrew (1984), p. 75.

³⁹⁸ Rogle, p. 40.

³⁹⁹ Andrew (1989), pp. 19-20.

your goose is ready” [p. 122]).

The Cossacks’ acceptance of Lyutov is meaningful as they now embrace some of those traits, such as his intellectualism, that they initially rejected. As they eat, one of the Cossacks asks Lyutov to read a newspaper article aloud and Lyutov complies ‘громко, как торжествующий глухой’ (p. 27), (‘loudly like a deaf man triumphant’ [p. 123]). Lyutov’s attempt at violent masculine action seems to have been successful to the extent that he has won the Cossacks’ affection.

It is noteworthy that, in addition to the femininity of the old woman and the goose, images of the feminine are also significant at the end of Lyutov’s ‘quest’. He describes how: ‘вечер завернул меня в живительную влагу сумеречных своих простынь, вечер приложил материнские ладони к пылающему моему лбу’ (p. 27), (‘The evening tucked me up in the life-giving moisture of its crepuscular sheets, the evening placed its motherly palms on my burning forehead’ [p. 123]). Since he has killed the goose, the natural world no longer reminds of the Lyutov of finality and mortality. Instead Lyutov is comforted and nurtured by the evening which reminds him of a mother. De Lauretis, as I noted in my Introduction, argues that ‘the boy has been promised, by the social contract he has entered into at his Oedipal phase, that he will find a woman waiting at the end of his journey’ (*italics de Lauretis*).⁴⁰⁰ However, I would develop de Lauretis’ argument slightly to suggest that the successful hero does not find just any generic woman awaiting him at the end of his quest. Instead he finds a woman who has the particular characteristics that he needs or desires.

In the case of Lyutov, at the end of ‘My First Goose’ for example, the comforting, reassuring sensations he attributes to a feminised image of nature may be seen as remedying his earlier fear and disorientation when he arrived at the yard. Lyutov’s new feelings of comfort and security are reflected in the final paragraph of the story in which he also describes an intimacy with the

⁴⁰⁰ de Lauretis (1984), p. 133.

Cossacks which he could not have imagined at the outset of the narrative: ‘Мы спали шестеро там, согреваясь друг от друга, с перепутанными ногами ... Я видел сны и женщин во сне’ (p. 27), (‘Six of us slept [in the hayloft], warming one another with our bodies, our legs tangled together ... I had dreams and saw women in my dreams’ [p. 123]). Yet, despite the seemingly peaceful conclusion to the story, Babel hints that Lyutov remains haunted by his act of relatively minor violence. His heart is ‘обагрённое убийством’ (p. 27), (‘stained crimson with murder’ [p. 123]).

The final story I will analyse in detail is ‘The Rebbe’s Son’, in which the eponymous character shows that he values both his Jewish heritage and the ability to fight for a cause. In this way he provides a stark contrast to Lyutov who cannot completely overcome his inability to kill. ‘The Rebbe’s Son’ was originally the last story of the *Red Cavalry* cycle until Babel added ‘Argamak’ in 1932.⁴⁰¹ One theory offered by Falen is that ‘Argamak’ was added to provide a less sombre ending than ‘The Rebbe’s Son’.⁴⁰² In ‘Argamak’ Lyutov is shown riding his horse confidently and in a way that does not single him out from the Cossacks:

Я еду мимо них, они не поднимают на меня глаз ... Равнодушие их обозначает, что ничего особенного нет в моей посадке, я езжу, как все, нечего на меня смотреть. Я скачу своей дорогой и счастлив (p. 118).

(I rode past them, they did not raise their eyes to me ... Their indifference signified that there was nothing special about my manner of sitting in the saddle, I rode the way everyone else did, there was no reason to look at me. I galloped on my way and was happy [p. 229]).

This final story ends with Lyutov expressing his satisfaction at the measure of acceptance he has

⁴⁰¹ Carden, p. 49.

⁴⁰² Falen, p. 199.

attained: ‘Сон мой исполнился. Казаки перестали провожать глазами меня и мою лошадь’ (p. 121), (‘My dream was fulfilled. The Cossacks stopped following me and my horse with their eyes’ [p. 233]).

This sense of resolution, however, is not complete as although Lyutov fulfils his ambition of learning to ride a horse, he is not shown in this story resolving the many other questions about his identity with which he has grappled throughout the cycle.⁴⁰³ His relationship with his Jewish upbringing and his attitudes towards love and women, for example, are discussed in more detail in ‘The Rebbe’s Son’. The other reason for my decision to treat this story rather than ‘Argamak’ as the final narrative of the cycle is that the questions about Lyutov’s identity are addressed in a similarly nuanced and ambiguous way in ‘The Rebbe’s Son’ as in the rest of *Red Cavalry*. That is, the seemingly sudden sense of resolution offered in ‘Argamak’ appears to reflect Babel’s desire to comply with literary convention and to make his work feel complete in the eyes of his readers. ‘The Rebbe’s Son’ seems to be a more fitting end to the cycle as it offers a partial resolution, but as with so many of the other *Red Cavalry* stories, also raises questions and gives the sense that Lyutov will continue developing.

The story begins with Lyutov reminiscing about a Sabbath he had marked with a Rebbe - Gedali - and his son. This poignant scene is set against a backdrop of war, but Lyutov describes details such as Rebbe Motale Bratslavsky ‘вцепившись в талес истлевшими пальцами’ (p. 115), (‘clutching his prayer shawl in his worn fingers’ [p. 225]) and ‘смешной’ (p. 115) (‘absurd’ [p. 225]) Gedali ‘раскачивал петушиные перышки своего цилиндра в красном дыму вечера’ (p. 115), (‘waving the cockerel feathers of his top hat in the red smoke of the evening’ [p. 225]). Rougle argues that this story shows Lyutov searching again for contact with his Jewish identity.⁴⁰⁴ This return to the religion of Lyutov’s (Babel’s) childhood would explain the emotive and nostalgic tone of the opening passages of ‘The Rebbe’s Son’.

⁴⁰³ Sicher, p. 12.

⁴⁰⁴ Rougle, p. 54.

Despite the positive imagery of the scene, Lyutov's description of the prayers shows that he still feels a degree of ambiguity towards Judaism. The candles are said to have 'хищные зрачки' (p. 115), ('predatory eyes' [p. 225]) and the Jews bending over prayer books 'глухо стонали' (p. 115), ([were] 'groaning hollowly' [p. 225]). While Lyutov may be feeling drawn to his religion and the comfort and sense of moral guidance associated with it, he still seems unconvinced by its vitality. The light of the candles is described as 'похоронном' (p. 115), ('funereal' [p. 225]) and death is evoked again in Lyutov's memory of Ilya, whose face is described as 'безжизненное, покорное, прекрасное' (p. 115), ('lifeless, submissive, handsome' [p. 225]). By referring to Ilya as 'сына рабби, последнего принца в династии' (p. 115), ('the Rebbe's son, the last prince of the dynasty' [p. 225]) Lyutov also suggests that this may be a religious community that is unlikely to be able to sustain itself beyond the next generation.

Ilya, however, provides a contrast to Lyutov's constant sense of being torn between two identities. Four months after the Sabbath prayers, Lyutov encounters Ilya, who is fatally wounded, and cares for him until he dies. Aspects of Ilya's life experiences and his attitudes emerge during the conversations he has with Lyutov and through the collection of items Lyutov finds in his possession. Milton Ehre argues that Ilya found a way not to reconcile contradictions, but to accept and live with them.⁴⁰⁵ For example, Ilya's strongly held religious beliefs do not stop him fighting. He left his mother to join the Red Army, telling Lyutov that 'мать в революции – эпизод' (p. 116), ('in a Revolution a mother is a minor episode' [p. 227]).

However passionately Ilya feels about the Revolution, however, he still keeps 'reminders of other ways'.⁴⁰⁶ This can be seen in the following quotation:

Здесь все было свалено вместе – мандаты агитатора и памятки

⁴⁰⁵ Ehre in Rougle, pp. 94-114, here p. 108.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 110.

еврейского поэта. Портреты Ленина и Маймонида лежали рядом. Узловатое железо ленинского черепа и тусклый шелк портретов Маймонида. Прядь женских волос была заложена в книжку постановлений Шестого съезда партии, и на полях коммунистических листовок теснились кривые строки древнееврейских стихов. Печальным и скудным дождем падали они на меня – страницы ‘Песни песней’ и револьверные патроны (p. 116).

(Here everything was dumped together – the warrants of the agitator and the commemorative booklets of the Jewish poet. Portraits of Lenin and Maimonides lay side by side. Lenin’s notorious skull and the tarnished silk of the portraits of Maimonides. A strand of female hair had been placed in a book of the resolutions of the Sixth Party Congress, and in the margins of communist leaflets swarmed crooked lines of the Ancient Hebrew verse. In a sad and meagre rain they fell on me – pages of the Song of Songs and revolver cartridges [pp. 226-7]).

As Ehre suggests, Ilya actively chooses to participate in the violent struggle of the Revolution alongside other men, but he also refuses to deny the feminine aspect of his nature.⁴⁰⁷ This argument is also supported by Luplow who highlights Ilya’s courage and ability to act decisively.⁴⁰⁸

In conclusion, then, I have shown how de Lauretis’ development of Lotman’s and Propp’s ideas can be used to explain elements of Babel’s characterisation of Lyutov as a masculine hero. Lyutov’s character unifies the cycle of short stories and provides the driving force behind the narrative. This is even true for many of the short stories which are not told through Lyutov’s first person narration, such as the skaz stories. As de Lauretis would argue the ‘desire’ is Lyutov’s, and

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Luplow in Roughton (1996), pp. 69-93, here p. 85.

the stories seem to be selected for inclusion in the cycle because they illuminate some aspect of his development. Lyutov's strong cerebral desire is to understand his surroundings and the motivations of the Cossacks and to somehow resolve the conflict between his experiences of the battlefield and his religious heritage. This powerful desire, which drives much of the narrative, could be interpreted from a feminist perspective as particularly masculine in its focus on abstract comprehension.

Lyutov is the only character shown to reflect on the violence and upheaval around him and to wrestle with issues of identity. Significantly he undertakes his metaphorical quest alone, with no other character acting consistently as his friend, travelling companion, or equal. He is an independent, existentially alone, masculine hero.

This analysis of *Red Cavalry* has also demonstrated that there are examples of female characters acting as 'helpers' for masculine cycles of death and rebirth in early twentieth-century Russian texts as well as in nineteenth-century works by Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. The unnamed Jewish woman in 'Crossing the Zbrucz' wakes Lyutov up and shows him the 'truth' of his situation, and the killing of the goose (which is coded as feminine) wins Lyutov acceptance amongst the Cossacks. The voices of these female characters or symbols are, however, marginal to the text. When they do express thoughts, opinions, needs or emotions (like the elderly woman in 'My First Goose') these are disregarded by the central male character whose desire is the focus of the narrative.

4. Fantastic Flights: The Role of Feminine Supernatural Powers and the Endurance of a Male-Authored Text in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*

In this chapter I consider how themes of creativity and the supernatural function in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* to influence the development of masculine heroes and the portrayal of female characters.⁴⁰⁹ The Stalinist society in which Bulgakov was writing had a profound influence on the text and in this chapter I consider the ways in which the particular oppression Bulgakov experienced shaped the theme of masculine heroes trying to create unified, coherent identities. The power to imagine alternative worlds and realities is crucial to this characterisation of the masculine quest in *The Master and Margarita*. I will show that although Margarita is arguably the female character with the greatest ability to move and transgress boundaries in my thesis, she remains fixed in the role of supporting the development of masculine characters.

I will, therefore, begin by looking in detail at the structure of *The Master and Margarita*, the role of magical realism as a feminine narrative strategy, and the novel's historical context, before moving on to look at the development of Bulgakov's characters with reference to all of these themes.⁴¹⁰ I will look first at Ivan Bezdomny, considering the ways in which he develops as a masculine hero throughout the novel, and then discuss the relationship between the Master and Margarita. Just as Margarita's role in the novel is defined in relation to the Master, another important feminine/masculine pairing in the novel is the juxtaposition of Pilate with the relatively feminised character of Yeshua. In the final section of this chapter I explore the encounter between Pilate and Yeshua, drawing parallels between the characterisation of Yeshua and that of Dostoevsky's Myshkin. Like the relationship between a strong masculine character, Rogozhin, and the feminised Myshkin in *The Idiot*, my discussion of the encounter between Pilate and Yeshua will provide another example of the pairing of two male characters who are portrayed as having opposing sets of feminine and masculine characteristics.

⁴⁰⁹ The complicated publication history of this text means that no definitive publication date can be given.

⁴¹⁰ The term 'magical realism' was coined in the mid-1950s. It is therefore applied to Bulgakov somewhat anachronistically, but demonstrates how innovative his technique was.

Bulgakov wrote *The Master and Margarita* during the 1920s and 1930s and was still editing the final draft when he died in 1940. A censored version of the text was published in the journal *Moscow* in 1966 and 1967 and Kalpana Sahni describes how this led to the ‘first resurrection’ of popular interest in Bulgakov.⁴¹¹ The ‘second resurrection’ came when *The Master and Margarita* was published in full in the Soviet Union in 1973.⁴¹² This gradual publication of the full text so many years after it was first written is significant. The novel’s popularity shows that its themes have the power to move and engage readers despite the profound changes that took place in Soviet society between the writing of the text and its eventual publication. Sahni goes so far as to argue that: ‘No novel has had such an impact on Soviet culture in the latter part of the twentieth century as *The Master and Margarita*.’⁴¹³

Bulgakov’s use of magical realism and the very unusual structure of *The Master and Margarita* are two elements which have been particularly influential on other writers, including writers outside Russia, such as Umberto Eco and Salman Rushdie.⁴¹⁴ Marianne Gourg, in particular, argues that the structure of a ‘book within a book’ is one of Bulgakov’s most characteristic devices.⁴¹⁵ The oppressive social context Bulgakov experienced in Russia during the 1920s and 1930s provided an environment conducive to the use of magical realism, as the interplay between the ‘real’ and ‘fantastical’ worlds of magical realist texts reflect the constrictive, ‘real’ world of Soviet society in which individuals tried to retain a sense of spiritual freedom in the inner lives. Against a background of fear and oppression writers had to find ways to express their ideas using satire, analogy and fantastical devices rather than publishing explicit criticisms of the regime.

The Master and Margarita was, therefore, written against this context of the persecution of writers and thinkers who disagreed with the regime. Bulgakov was deeply concerned about the independence of writers and their ability to write the truth as it appeared to them. Imagination was

⁴¹¹ Sahni in Milne (1995), pp. 201-10, here p. 201.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid., p. 203.

⁴¹⁴ Cornwell in Milne (1995), pp. 225-231, here p. 230. See also Milne (1990), p. 262.

⁴¹⁵ Gourg in Milne (1995), pp. 109-14, here p. 114.

an important part of the writer's ability to convey this truth, partly because of the ingenuity needed to use analogy and satire to convey messages and meaning through literature which was censored by the authorities. However, imagination was frequently stifled by the oppressive conformity expected of Soviet citizens. Yevgeny Zamyatin, whose creative career overlapped with Bulgakov's,⁴¹⁶ wrote about Onestate's attitude to imagination in *We* (1921): 'Фантазия. Это – червь, который выгрызает черные морщины на лбу. Это – лихорадка, которая гонит вас бежать все дальше – хотя бы это «дальше» начиналось там, где кончается счастье. Это – последняя баррикада на пути к счастью,'⁴¹⁷ ('Imagination: This is the worm that eats out black wrinkles on the brow. This is the fever that drives you to run farther and farther even though that "farther" began in the place where happiness ends. This is the last barrier on the path to happiness').⁴¹⁸

The way that Bulgakov wrote his great work in secret during the last twelve years of his life (at one point burning it, in an intriguing parallel to the actions of his protagonist),⁴¹⁹ the concealment of the document, its struggles with censorship and gradual publication, all reinforce the themes Bulgakov addresses within the text of the artist's struggle to write the truth and to be heard by his society. Imagination and creativity were important acts of resistance in this struggle. In rejecting the conformity imposed by the Soviet authorities, Bulgakov used magical realism to express his ideas. The shifting, fragmented nature of his text reflects Irigaray's description of women's sexuality as multiple and diverse.⁴²⁰ Madelon Sprengnether expounds Irigaray's ideas, arguing that her focus on the differences between female and male sexuality undermines the singular status and authority of the phallus.⁴²¹ This rejection of the phallus' singular status also involves a rejection of traditional narrative structure. As Serena Anderlini D'Onofrio shows, narratives have conventionally mirrored

⁴¹⁶ Curtis, p. 12.

⁴¹⁷ Zamyatin, Y., *My* (Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994) pp. 102-3.

⁴¹⁸ Zamyatin, Y., *We* (Penguin, London 1993), p. 173.

⁴¹⁹ Curtis, p. 2.

⁴²⁰ As discussed by Sprengnether in Sellers and Plain (eds.), pp. 235-62, here p. 246.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

male sexual experiences progressing from erection to interaction, then to climax and ejaculation.⁴²²

The Master and Margarita, however, challenges this conventional, linear form of narrative.

Sahni considers the use of time to be a defining aspect of magical realism, pointing to the way objective, historical time is negated in magical realist texts, and the events described are presented as ‘embodiments of eternal prototypes’.⁴²³ In magical realist texts characters and events are used to express myths in spatial form - that is, plots are influenced less by what is physically possible, likely or ‘realistic’, as by the power of what we want, *desire*, to be possible.⁴²⁴ Myths are here defined as narrative expressions of these ‘truths’ which people commonly, throughout history and in different cultures, believe to be constant. An example of such an ‘eternal truth’ may be that good will always, somehow, overcome evil. This use of plots, settings and characters to make broader points about what the author sees as eternal truths involves an ability to portray events and situations which are not objectively possible, but which seem to hold an artistic ‘truth’. For example, one of the main plots which drive the narrative of *The Master and Margarita* is the visit to Moscow of Woland and his entourage. Woland has a variety of supernatural abilities, such as the ability to predict Berlioz’s death (pp. 17-8/22-3), the capacity to appear and disappear suddenly (pp. 178/153) and significantly he is able to overcome the laws of time and space by witnessing, and describing in detail, events that occurred in Jerusalem at the time of Christ. For Milne, a large part of the significance *The Master and Margarita* holds for the cultural history of Soviet literature is its use of myth and fantasy.⁴²⁵ Bulgakov uses elements of myth and fantasy to discuss problems such as the place of art and the meaning of truth which are both eternal and universally relevant to human societies and had a specific relevance in Soviet Russia, where the ‘truth’ experienced by

⁴²² D’Onofrio, p. 166. See also de Lauretis’ discussion of Scoles in de Lauretis (1984) p. 108.

⁴²³ Sahni in Milne (1995), pp. 201-210, here p. 206. See also Musanga and Mutekwa (p. 1300) who discuss the use of magical realism from a post-colonial point of view. They argue that the understanding of time as linear and progressive is a culturally Western concept, based on the patriarchal ideas of the Enlightenment period. They point to texts such as Chenjerai Hove’s *Ancestors* (1996) in which linearity is subverted by the intrusion of spirits, and, as in *The Master and Margarita*, two interlocking, non-chronological narratives representing the past and the present make up the text (p. 1304).

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Milne (1990), p. 262.

individuals was often at odds with the official ideology, and where dissent was often punished severely.⁴²⁶

Fear and anxiety were pervasive in Stalin's Russia, as people were regularly taken away without explanation and frequently were never seen by their relatives or friends again. Isaac Babel, for example, is believed to have died in a Soviet camp in 1940.⁴²⁷ Osip Mandelstam also died in a camp (according to his death certificate, in 1938) after suffering years of persecution for his poetry.⁴²⁸ His wife, Nadezhda Mandelstam remembered how: 'We lived among people who vanished into exile, labour camps or the other world, and also among those who sent them there. It was dangerous to have any contact with people who still tried to go on working and thinking in their own way.'⁴²⁹

Magical realism arguably allows writers to express ideas and emotions that are either actively repressed by their society or culturally subjugated by the patriarchal dichotomous thinking that privileges the characteristics seen as 'masculine' while repressing those interpreted as 'feminine'. Magical realism in this way allows room for the 'other' to be expressed by destabilising the usual order of narrative. In this way it can be considered to be a feminine narrative strategy. Bulgakov's use of magical realism as a narrative strategy is pertinent because Soviet writers, as I have discussed above, relied on their creativity to express their views of Stalin's Russia, as they were unable to write frankly and explicitly about the restrictions and failures of the Soviet regime. They therefore relied on imaginative uses of plot and allegory to relay their meaning to readers. At the same time, as the quotation from Zamyatin's work illustrates, the use of imagination was itself seen as challenging the authority of the Soviet authorities which emphasised rationality and objectivity.⁴³⁰ However, when viewing literary works from the narratological framework suggested by de Lauretis, imagination and creativity can also be seen as ways in which masculine heroes develop. Imagination and the ability to form and create new worlds may be viewed as evidence of having the

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Charyn, p. 167.

⁴²⁸ Mandelstam (1975), p. 453.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

⁴³⁰ Pittman, pp. 13 and 33.

freedom to move philosophically and intellectually, resisting the constraints imposed by the external, physical world. The importance of understanding the world intellectually was crucial to the development of Babel's central masculine hero, Lyutov, whose artistic personality was evident in the narrator's use of unique metaphors to describe the natural world. This freedom of self-expression seems to be equally important in the development of Bulgakov's masculine heroes. The achievement of genuine intellectual and artistic expression, which transgresses the boundaries of the fixed rules and dogma of the Soviet authorities, may be described as the quest Bulgakov's heroes undertake.

Intellectual and artistic freedom was so significant to Bulgakov that Ericson has described it as his 'desideratum'.⁴³¹ The positive writers portrayed in *The Master and Margarita*, such as the Master and (to some extent) Bezdomny, are particularly potent examples of the liberating ability to construct new ways of being as they are not confined to realistic portrayals of the world, but transcend the usual rules of time and space. Given the constraints Soviet writers faced, and Bulgakov's particular preoccupation with the role of writers and the power of expressing the 'truth' as it appeared to creative individuals, Matt F.Oja's arguments about the power of literary works are especially relevant. Oja argues that literary works 'through the product of creative imagination, once created assume an independent existence that is no less real than the world of their creators'.⁴³²

In contrast to Bulgakov's characterisation of Bezdomny and the Master, other writers are shown, particularly at Griboyedov House, as being motivated by the promise of dachas and fine dining rather than by philosophical goals such as integrity and artistic freedom. Bulgakov writes that:

Всякий посетитель, если он, конечно, был не вовсе тупицей, попав в
Грибоедова, сразу же соображал, насколько хорошо живется
счастливым - членам Массолита, и черная зависть начинала

⁴³¹ Ericson, p. 77.

⁴³² Oja in Milne (1995), pp. 142-54, here p. 147.

немедленно терзать его. И немедленно же он обращал к небу горькие укоризны за то, что оно не наградило его при рождении литературным талантом, без чего, естественно, нечего было и мечтать овладеть членским массолитским билетом, коричневым, пахнущим дорогой кожей, с золотой широкой каймой, – известным всей Москве билетом.⁴³³

(Every visitor to Griboyedov, unless of course he were completely insensitive, was made immediately aware of how good life was for the lucky members of MASSOLIT and he would at once be consumed with black envy. At once, too, he would curse heaven for having failed to endow him at birth with literary talent, without which, of course, no one could so much as dream of acquiring a MASSOLIT membership card – that brown card known to all Moscow, smelling of expensive leather and embellished with a wide gold border.)⁴³⁴

One of my central arguments in this chapter is that the ability to construct a narrative that has the ‘independent existence’ of which Oja writes is an important sign of a developed masculine hero as it demonstrates the ability to act decisively to exercise control, not over the external world, but over the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of others. I also argue that characters such as Bezdomny and the Master develop as masculine heroes by exercising intellectual and imaginative freedom to liberate themselves from the constraints of the MASSOLIT.

⁴³³ Bulgakov, M. *Sobranie sochineniy, t. 5 Master i Margarita* (Azbuka-klassika, St Petersburg 2012), pp. 154-5. All future Russian quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

⁴³⁴ Bulgakov, M. and Glenny, M. (trans.), *The Master and Margarita* (Vintage, London, 2004), pp. 69-70. All future English translations of quotations from this novel will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

Bezdomny is an example of a male writer who changes and develops through the narrative. He has been described by Talbot as lacking any ‘completeness’ from the beginning of the novel.⁴³⁵ In contrast to Margarita’s memorable voice, Bezdomny’s voice is not described in Bulgakov’s text, and to Talbot this indicates that it belongs to a character who has no ‘roots, no past, no culture’.⁴³⁶ Indeed the name ‘Bezdomny’ literally means ‘someone who has no home’.⁴³⁷

When Bezdomny is first introduced to the reader at Patriarch’s Ponds at the beginning of the novel, he is in discussion with the editor Berlioz about an anti-religious poem he had been commissioned to write. The poem was intended to be a ‘большую анти-религиозную’ (p. 99) (‘long anti-religious’ [p. 15]) poem, but Berlioz ‘нисколько не удовлетворил’ (p. 99) (‘did not care for it at all’ [p. 15]) and wanted ‘всю поэму ... писать заново’ (p. 99) (‘the whole poem ... to be written again’ [p. 15]). The discussion between Berlioz and Bezdomny is significant because it sheds light on Bulgakov’s criticisms of the Soviet literary establishment, and in so doing, it raises questions about the role and value of ‘true’ art. The theme of genuine artistic creativity runs throughout the novel and is a particularly important aspect of the development of Bezdomny’s character. In the opening scene of the novel, during the conversation between Berlioz and Bezdomny, the narrator explains that:

Трудно сказать, что именно подвело Ивана Николаевича – изобразительная ли сила его таланта или полное незнание с вопросом, по которому он писал, – но Иисус у него получился, ну, совершенно живой, некогда существовавший Иисус, только, правда, снабженный всеми отрицательными чертами Иисус (p. 99).

(It was hard to say exactly what had made Bezdomny write as he had – whether it was his great talent for graphic description or complete ignorance of the

⁴³⁵ Talbot in Milne (1995), pp. 187-200, here p. 194.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., p. 195.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

subject he was writing on, but his Jesus had come out, well, completely alive, a Jesus who had really existed, although admittedly a Jesus who had every possible fault [p. 15]).

This ability to portray characters vividly is usually considered to be a sign of a great artist, but Berlioz was concerned less with artistic greatness and more with ensuring that Bezdomny's poem reflected the correct Soviet ideology. Не 'же хотел доказать поэту, что главное не в том, каков был Иисус ... а в том, что Иисуса-то этого, как личности, вовсе не существовало на свете и что все рассказы о нем – простые выдумки самый обыкновенный миф' (p. 99) ('wanted to prove to [Bezdomny] that the main object was not who Jesus was ... but that as a person he had never existed at all and that all the stories about him were mere invention, pure myth' [p. 15]). Berlioz is therefore shown to be uninterested in the value of artistic, subjective expression, but is focused entirely on using art to further the narrow aims of the atheist Soviet regime. He represents, as Curtis points out, all the characteristics of the MASSOLIT which Bulgakov found distasteful.⁴³⁸ Bulgakov may also have portrayed Berlioz negatively partly out of his dislike for atheism.⁴³⁹ Nonetheless, the comparison between Bezdomny's vivid artistic expression and Berlioz's representation of authoritarian dogma displayed in this episode illuminates many of the key themes in the rest of the novel.

Despite the great differences in their outlooks which are clear to the reader, Bezdomny is shown as a young, inexperienced poet, who is eager to learn from his editor. While Berlioz expounds on the writings of 'древних историков' (p. 100) ('ancient historians' [p. 15]) and 'блестяще образованного Иосифа Флавия' (p. 100) ('the brilliantly educated Josephus Flavius' [p. 15]), Bezdomny 'внимательно слушал ... уставив на него свои бойкие зеленые глаза' (p. 100) ('listened attentively ... fixing him with his bold green eyes' [pp. 15-6]). Oja describes Bezdomny's personality at this early stage of the novel as representing the writer as a 'hypocrite, sycophant and

⁴³⁸ Curtis, pp. 160-1.

⁴³⁹ Ericson, p. 59.

professional phoney'.⁴⁴⁰ This description of Bezdomny is supported by his respect for Berlioz's opinions and his initial failure to revise the high esteem in which he held the editor, despite Woland's probing attempts to instil doubt and questions in his mind.

The integrity of writers and their ability to pose questions and challenge the authorities are particularly highly regarded in Russian culture. Writers have traditionally held a place of moral and intellectual authority in Russian society, as Lesley Milne points out.⁴⁴¹ Milne suggests that the respect accorded to great writers in Russia is similar to, or in some cases superior to, that accorded to the state.⁴⁴² The conversation between Bezdomny and Berlioz at Patriarch's Ponds is set against the context of this expectation that writers would act with authority and integrity, and would be able to speak the 'truth' as they saw it is. However, Bulgakov portrays the conversation between the two men in a humorous way which undermines their dignity.⁴⁴³ Julie Curtis, for example, highlights the role of physical circumstances such as the intense heat, the warm apricot juice and their hiccups, in undermining the seriousness of their discussion.⁴⁴⁴ This comedic setting of the conversation between the two men seems incongruous given the deeply important issues of freedom and artistic expression within an authoritarian state. The use of comedy, even absurdity, demonstrates the power of imagination and creativity to provide an alternative vision of external realities.

However, at this early stage of Bulgakov's novel, Bezdomny is so immersed in the rational, atheistic ideology of the Soviet establishment as expounded by Berlioz, that he is not open to the spiritual freedom offered by imagination and creative thought. This is demonstrated by his refusal to accept Woland's true, supernatural, identity. As Woland reflects when he recalls their encounter in a conversation with the Master: 'Я имел удовольствие встретиться с этим молодым человеком на Патриарших прудах. Он едва самого меня не свел с ума, доказывая мне, что

⁴⁴⁰ Oja in Milne (1995), pp. 142-54, here p. 145.

⁴⁴¹ Milne (1995), pp. 60-73, here p. 71.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Curtis, pp. 160-1.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

меня нету!’ (p. 418) (‘I had the pleasure of meeting that young man at Patriarch’s Ponds. He nearly drove *me* mad, trying to prove I didn’t exist’ [p. 325, emphasis in Glenny’s translation]).

This denial of the possibility that Woland could have supernatural powers makes it impossible for Bezdomny to interpret the world around him as the ideology he has been taught to value cannot provide any explanation for Woland’s actions or abilities. He is presented with two opposing worldviews which base their claims to ‘truth’ in different sources of knowledge. The rational, Soviet approach favours knowledge which comes from sources which can be tested objectively, while the spiritual ‘truth’ Woland and his entourage believe in has its roots in subjective, intuitive experience. The main example in *The Master and Margarita* of this kind of spiritual ‘truth’ which crosses boundaries of space and time, is the narrative about Pilate’s encounter with Yeshua. The way in which the Master’s novel merges with Woland’s account suggests that the story has a universal truth that can be experienced by several people independently, but is impossible to verify in terms of historical fact. It would also be impossible to explain the phenomenon by which different characters independently experience the same story through their dreams or by another unconscious method.

A series of events, which are difficult to explain rationally, lead to Bezdomny being committed to a psychiatric clinic. He hears Woland’s account of Pilate’s meeting with Yeshua (which Woland claimed to have personally witnessed [pp. 139-40/55]), his correct prediction about Berlioz’s death (pp. 143-4/58-9), he sees Behemoth board a bus (and offer to pay [pp. 148/63]), and has his clothes stolen by an elderly man as he pursues Woland through Moscow (pp. 151/66). During much of the novel Bezdomny remains in this psychiatric clinic, metaphorically without an intellectual home, in a state of profound confusion and distress. The difficult and traumatic disintegration of his personality is a consequence of his inability to reject the idea that rationality can explain everything, despite experiencing events for which there is no rational explanation. Later in this chapter we will see that the difficulty Bezdomny experiences because he cannot reconcile the events triggered by Woland’s arrival with his rational worldview is not shared by Margarita. Margarita is portrayed as

intuitive and open to emotion and spirituality - the characteristics traditionally rejected by masculine characters - and she easily and naturally accepts Woland's identity, his invitation to host his ball and the use of a magic cream which transforms her and gives her the ability to fly.

However, Bezdomny enters the clinic to receive treatment. The clinic is an enclosed space, which although it lacks the warmth and dampness associated with feminine, womb-like spaces, could be interpreted as a feminised environment. Bezdomny seems to revert to childlike behaviour within the clinic, even though the poet Ryukhin, who accompanied Bezdomny to the clinic, privately feels that 'решительно никакого безумия не было у того в глазах' (p. 168) (there was not a trace of insanity in [his] eyes' [p. 83]). When he is first examined, Bezdomny is wearing only his underpants (pp. 167/82) and he 'сидел совершенно неподвижно, со злым лицом, сдвинув брови' (p. 167) ('[was] sitting completely immobile and scowling furiously' [p. 82]). His child-like behaviour continues as he shouts angrily at the doctor during his examination. Later, when he is sedated, Bulgakov describes Bezdomny in endearing, but infantilised, terms: 'зевнул еще раз, неожиданно прилег, голову положил на подушку, кулак по-детски под щеку, забормотал уже сонным голосом' (p. 172) ('[he] yawned again, lay down with his head on the cushion, his fist under his cheek like a child and muttered in a sleepy voice' [p. 87]).

After Bezdomny is taken to the clinic, he is visited in his room by a 'таинственный посетитель' (p. 242) ('mysterious visitor' [p. 154]), who is later revealed to be the Master. Unlike Bezdomny's earlier respect for Berlioz, which is portrayed as misguided, Bulgakov describes his instinctive trust in the Master sympathetically:

Почему-то испытывая доверие к неизвестному, Иван, первоначально запинаясь и робея, а потом осмелев, начал рассказывать вчерашнюю историю на Патриарших прудах ... Гость не рязил Ивана в сумасшедшие, проявил величайший интерес к рассказываемому и по мере развития этого рассказа наконец пришел в восторг (p. 244-5).

(For some reason Ivan felt that he could trust this stranger. Shyly at first, then gaining confidence, he began to describe the previous day's events at Patriarch's Ponds. His visitor treated Ivan as completely sane, showing the greatest interest in the story and as it developed he reached a state of near ecstasy [p. 156]).

Bezdomny's instinctive trust of this stranger who mysteriously appears in his room suggests that his belief in rationality is beginning to weaken. He is encouraged by the Master's sympathy and understanding to verbalise his recent experiences and therefore have his perceptions confirmed. Oja suggests that one of the strongest sources of frustration for Bezdomny during the novel is his awareness that his account of his experiences will not be believed.⁴⁴⁵ She compares this aspect of Bezdomny's experience to that of Soviet writers whose only readers often were the secret police and censors.⁴⁴⁶ In this way, what Oja calls 'the incompatibility between the audience and the artist' functions to constrain Bezdomny's self-expression and frustrate his vocation as a writer and artist.⁴⁴⁷ He is unable to convey the 'truth' of his subjective experience and must remain both physically constrained in the enclosed room of the clinic and also intellectually trapped by the unwillingness, or inability, of the police and doctors to believe his account of his meeting with Woland.

Moreover, in addition to the relief of being believed by the Master, Bezdomny also gains some degree of understanding when the Master tells him Woland's identity. Bezdomny asks the Master who Woland is and the Master 'веско и раздельно' (p. 246), ('slowly and gravely' [p. 157]) tells him that 'Вчера на Патриарших прудах вы встретились с сатаной' (p. 246), ('At Patriarch's Ponds yesterday you met Satan' [p. 157]). Bezdomny's need for cerebral knowledge about the strange man they assumed was an 'иностранец' (p. 101) ('[a] foreigner' [p. 16]) is shown by his

⁴⁴⁵ Oja in Milne (1995) pp. 142-54, here p. 152.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

insistence on being told his identity even though the Master is concerned that he may become violent.

Bezdomny is described as being ‘сильнейшим ошарашен’ (p. 246), (‘powerfully shaken’ [p. 157]) after hearing the news that he has met Satan, a Biblical being he had previously believed to be purely mythical. He also once more ‘сбитый с толку замолчал’ (p. 246), (‘[was] reduced to speechlessness’ [p. 157]). Bezdomny’s development from an unquestioning follower of the Soviet authorities, to a scholar who has to some extent incorporated elements of his experiences with the supernatural, is not linear. He does not descend into the ‘feminised’ enclosed space of the clinic, encounter the Master and then emerge as a fully developed hero, but instead, he continues to struggle with the imposition of the unpredictable supernatural influences in his previously ordered world. This is demonstrated by his return to speechlessness after being told Woland’s identity. Despite his growing awareness, and acceptance, of the role of the supernatural, when the Master and Margarita visit Bezdomny in the clinic near the end of the novel, Bezdomny still shows elements of childlike passivity. Margarita calls him ‘Бедный, Бедный’ (p. 519) (‘poor, poor boy’ [p. 421]) and acts maternally towards him: ‘Так, Так, - прошентала Маргарита и совсем склонилась к лежащему, - вот я вас поцелую в лоб, и все у вас будет так, как надо ... в этом вы уж мне поверьте, я все уже видела, все знаю’ (p. 519), (‘That’s right,’ whispered Margarita, bending right down to Ivan. ‘I’ll kiss you and everything will be as it should be ... believe me, I know ...’ [p. 421]). Ivan responds by allowing Margarita to soothe him as he ‘охватил ее шею руками, и она поцеловала его’ (p. 519) (‘put his arms round her neck and she kissed him’ [p. 421]). Bezdomny’s portrayal as a child is also reinforced by Bulgakov’s use of the diminutive of Ivan – Ivanushka – in this section.

Oja writes compellingly about Bezdomny’s attempts to make sense of his environment and the behaviour of other characters, such as Woland and his entourage. In Oja’s reading of the development of Bezdomny’s ‘split’ or ‘divided’ personality, Bezdomny and the Master are seen as

two versions of the same character, with the Master representing Bezdomny's alter ego.⁴⁴⁸ This possibility is supported by Riitta H. Pittman's contention that the personalities of creative individuals living under Stalin were prone to fragmentation.⁴⁴⁹ Pittman points to the deep scars the oppressive regime caused and suggests that the emotional and psychological strain could lead people to behave in strange and unusual ways.⁴⁵⁰

The suggestion that the Master is Bezdomny's doppelgänger is convincing in some ways because it provides a logical explanation for some of the mysterious aspects of the plot, for example, the way in which both the Master and Bezdomny write similar narratives about the encounter between Yeshua and Pilate. Viewing the Master as an imaginative creation of Bezdomny's confused mind may also help to explain some of the 'inconsistencies' of Bulgakov's text, for example, the way in which Margarita is shown to live two lives – one with her husband, and another with the Master. The Master and Margarita are also shown dying twice, in two different ways.⁴⁵¹ Bulgakov's use of characters who are difficult to distinguish from each other, and the shifting narrative centre that this entails, also demonstrates the modernist nature of this narrative. This technique is used in other notable modernist texts, such as Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931), which is narrated through the voices of six children as they grow into adulthood. In Woolf's text it is often difficult to fix the narrative voice to one particular child and this has led some critics to suggest that the voices may represent different parts of one personality.⁴⁵²

In addition, Oja's reading is supported by the timing of the Master's entrance into the text and the scene in which he visits Bezdomny in the clinic with Margarita towards the end of the novel. As Oja points out, the Master appears in the text at exactly the moment when Bezdomny's crisis is at its most severe.⁴⁵³ As I have discussed, the Master also provides validation of Bezdomny's

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 142 and 145.

⁴⁴⁹ Pittman in Milne (1995), pp. 157-70, here p. 169.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Amusin, p. 87.

⁴⁵² As discussed by Defromont in Bowlby, pp. 62-76, here p. 74.

⁴⁵³ Oja in Milne (1995), pp. 142-54, here p. 145.

experiences and provides some explanation of the identity of Woland (even if Bezdomny struggles to accept it). In this way, he could be seen as meeting Bezdomny's needs and it is therefore arguable that he has been constructed for this purpose, just as Sonya in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* is defined in relation to Raskolnikov's needs.

The close connection between the Master and Bezdomny is evident when the Master visits Bezdomny with Margarita. The Master says that, 'я пришел попрощаться с вами, потому что вы были единственным человеком, с которым я говорил в последнее время' (p. 518), ('I have come to say goodbye to you because you're the only person I have been able to talk to in these last days' [p. 420]). This hints at an element of intimacy and private communication that would support the idea that the two characters are very closely interconnected. In response, Bezdomny tells the Master: 'я тут пока лежал, знаете ли, очень многое понял' (p. 518) ('I have come to understand a lot of things since I've been lying here' [p. 420]) which could be seen as evidence that both characters grow and develop in parallel with each other. But perhaps the most compelling argument supporting the idea that the Master is Bezdomny's alter ego is that he and Margarita leave Bezdomny directly after this scene. The Master has prompted Bezdomny to write a sequel to his novel and Margarita gives him a kiss, described by Susan Amert as connoting healing and a sense of 'making whole'.⁴⁵⁴ As we will see, it is questionable whether Bezdomny is made completely 'whole', but this scene is a significant part of Bezdomny's development as a unified masculine hero.

Fruitful insights can be gained from viewing the Master as a part of Bezdomny's imaginative world, especially as this helps us to see how Bezdomny grows and changes with the Master's help. But for the purposes of this dissertation, despite the validity of Oja's interpretation of the Master as Bezdomny's alter ego, I will discuss him in the rest of this chapter as a character in his own right. Analysing the two male personalities as separate entities will enable me to show how they both develop through entering, and emerging from, feminine space. The relationship between the Master

⁴⁵⁴ Amert, p. 616.

and Margarita is particularly interesting when considered from the perspective of de Lauretis' framework and most of their interactions occur independently of Bezdomny, when he is confined to the clinic.

My interpretation of the Master's role in the text shows very clearly how Bezdomny develops through the narrative from being under the influence of the atheist and literary critic, Berlioz, to accepting the disorientating impact of the supernatural and spiritual. It is arguable that Bezdomny's intellectual movement from sympathising with Berlioz to a gradual, and partial, acceptance of the role of religion and the supernatural, is one of the most important plots driving the narrative of the Moscow chapters of the novel. However, Bezdomny does not fully emerge from the enclosed space of the clinic as a completely developed masculine hero. Bulgakov's tone seems to be ironic when he writes in the Epilogue that 'Ивану Николаевичу все известно, он все знает и понимает. Он знает, что в молодости он стал жертвой преступных гипнотизеров, лечился после этого и вылечился (p. 540) ('Ivan Nikolayich now knows and understands everything. He knows that as a young man he fell victim to some crooked hypnotists, went to hospital and was cured' [p. 441]). The next description of Bezdomny's inner life directly contradicts the assertion that he 'now knows and understands everything':

Но знает он также, что кое с чем он совладать не может. Не может он совладать с этим весенним полнолунием. Лишь только оно начинает приближаться, лишь только начинает разрастаться и наливаться золотом светило, которое когда-то висело выше двух пятисвечий, становится Иван Николаевич беспокоен, нервничает, теряет аппетит и сон, дожидается, пока созреет луна (pp. 540-1).

(But he knows that there is still something that is beyond his control. He cannot control what happens at the springtime full moon. As soon as it draws near, as soon as that heavenly body begins to reach that fullness it once had when it hung

in the sky high above the two seven-branched [sic] candlesticks, Ivan Nikolayich grows uneasy and irritable, loses his appetite, cannot sleep and waits for the moon to wax [p. 441]).

During the full moon, Bezdomny is compelled to return to Patriarch's Ponds. This compulsive, cyclical return suggests that his absolute trust in rational explanations has been shaken but he has not fully come to understand and resolve his experiences of the spiritual world into which the Master and Woland gave him an insight. The monthly cycle of Bezdomny's episodes of 'madness' has obvious links with the feminine body, but also echoes the Master's association with the lunar world of sleep and dreams (as I will discuss later in this chapter). Just as Margarita soothed Bezdomny with a kiss in the clinic, on the night of a full moon his wife watches over his restless sleep and calms him with an injection. Then 'Иван Николаевич после укола будет спать до утра со счастливым лицом и видеть ... возвышенные и счастливые сны' (p. 543), ('after his injection Ivan Nikolayich will sleep until morning with a calm expression and he will dream ... dreams that are sublimely happy' [p. 443]).

Bezdomny's periods of deep disturbance, when he relives his encounter with Woland at Patriarch's Ponds and dreams about Pilate and Yeshua, demonstrate that he has only been partially re-born. He is transformed to some extent – he no longer seems to be the dogmatic young man at Patriarch's Ponds who was eager to please the establishment, as personified in Berlioz. But on the other hand, he generally gives the outward appearance of accepting the official explanation that 'работала шайка гипнотизеров и чревовещателей, великолепно владеющая своим искусством' (p. 532), ('a gang of brilliantly skilful hypnotists and ventriloquists had been at work' [p. 433]). The partial resolution that Bezdomny finds at the end of *The Master and Margarita* has echoes of the 'покой не света' (p. 406), ('rest, but not light' [p. 406]) earned by the Master at the end of his quest.

The Master is identified by Bulgakov as the 'hero' of *The Master and Margarita* in the title of the chapter in which he first appears, to visit Bezdomny in his hospital room. 'Явление героя' ('Enter

the Hero') is the thirteenth chapter of the novel. The number thirteen has traditionally been seen as superstitious, dating back to the presence of twelve disciples and Christ at the Last Supper.⁴⁵⁵ From the moment the Master enters the plot therefore, his character has supernatural connotations and is also suggestive of Christ. The relatively late entrance of the main character is one of the many unusual aspects of the novel. Although the Master does not appear until the thirteenth chapter, Edward Einar Ericson contends that there are important parallels between Bulgakov and the Master.⁴⁵⁶ They are both novelists and Ericson points out that both Bulgakov and the character he created have a similar approach to their works of literature. Both write apologies for Jesus Christ, depict their heroes as representing humanity as a whole, and both Bulgakov's novel, *The Master and Margarita*, and the Master's novel end in the same way.⁴⁵⁷ Even if he is seen as the author's mouthpiece, the Master's late entrance contributes to the fragmented, feminine nature of the narrative of *The Master and Margarita*. The narrative is driven, not solely by the linear development of a masculine hero who is present at the beginning and end of the novel, but it is also moved forward by the movement and actions of other characters, some of whom (such as Yeshua and Pilate) are even acting in a different time and place.

The similarities between the Master and Bulgakov seem to suggest that Bulgakov identified with the Master and used him as a conduit for his own views. Curtis discusses the influence of the Romantic tradition on Bulgakov's conception of the artist and the creative process.⁴⁵⁸ Romanticism's emphasis on subjectivity, for instance, and the individuality of the artist's vision were particularly influential on Bulgakov.⁴⁵⁹ Curtis also refers to the technique used by Romantic writers who deliberately blurred the distinctions between themselves and their heroes in order to promote the subjective and individualistic character of their narrative works.⁴⁶⁰ Pittman points to the contrast between Bezdomny's writings and the Master's art, claiming that Bulgakov uses the two

⁴⁵⁵ Rhodes, pp. 32-3.

⁴⁵⁶ Ericson, p. 95.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Curtis, pp. 189-90.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

characters to set up a comparison between the ‘public writer’ personified in Bezdomny and the ‘genuine artist’ represented by the Master.⁴⁶¹ This comparison (which I will draw on later in this chapter) highlights Bulgakov’s portrayal of Bezdomny as a writer who is initially complicit with the authorities, but who develops throughout the novel into a character who has, to some extent, incorporated more complex ideas into his self. Juxtaposed to Bezdomny, is the Master whose namelessness suggests that his novel (and perhaps his quest as well) is universal.⁴⁶²

The Master does not have the appearance and demeanour of someone who is extraordinary, or who has written a great novel. Instead when he enters Bezdomny’s room he seems like another patient, as we see: ‘Тут увидел Иван, что пришедший одет в больничное. На нем было белье, туфли на босу ногу, на плечи наброшен бурый халат’ (p. 242), (‘Ivan noticed that the man was wearing hospital clothes – pyjamas, slippers and a reddish-brown dressing gown thrown over his shoulders’ [p. 154]). Even when the conversation turns to the Master’s work he seems to be torn between pride in his identity as a ‘master’ and self-effacement and a desire to avoid discussing his work or confronting the difficulties inherent in it. When Bezdomny asks if he is a writer, the Master ‘потемнел лицом и погрозил Ивану кулаком, потом сказал: “Я – мастер”’ (p. 248), (‘frowned, threatened Ivan with his fist and said: “I am a master”’ [p. 159]). These gestures and the sparseness of his statement point to a pride and determination to hold onto his position of literary and artistic authority, but Bulgakov’s next description suggests a humble, quotidian source of the Master’s status:

Он сделался суров и вынул из кармана халата совершенно засаленную черную шапочку с вышитой на ней желтым шелком буквой ‘М’. Он надел эту шапочку и показался Ивану и в профиль и в фас, чтобы доказать, что он – мастер. ‘Она своими руками сшила ее мне’, таинственно добавил он (p. 248).

⁴⁶¹ Pittman, p. 101.

⁴⁶² Ericson, p. 91.

(His expression hardened and he pulled out of his dressing gown pocket a greasy black cap with the letter 'M' embroidered on it in yellow silk. He put the cap on and showed himself to Ivan in profile and full face to prove that he was a master. 'She sewed it for me with her own hands', he added mysteriously [p. 159]).

It seems strange that the Master would use his cap to demonstrate his credentials as a literary master, rather than showing Bezdomny a novel or poem, but the cap and Margarita's implied faith in him suggest that the 'truth' of the Master's claim has an emotional, intuitive basis. As the source of the Master's authority is based in the Margarita's faith in him, this intuitive, spiritual quality to the Master and his work has a strong influence over his characterisation.

The Master's novel is both personal to him and influences the actions of other key characters in *The Master and Margarita*. The Master is defined almost entirely by his work – he has given everything up in order to devote himself to his novel. He tells Bezdomny 'с мрачным презрением' (p. 248), ('with grim contempt' [p. 159]) that 'У меня нет больше фамилии ... Я отказался от нее, как и вообще от всего в жизни. Забудем о ней' (p. 248), ('I no longer have a name ... I have renounced it, as I have renounced life itself. Let us forget it' [p. 159]). He is defined by the culturally masculine, phallic activity of writing a text.⁴⁶³ The Master's novel allows him to create a compelling new world that exercises control and influence over the perceptions and imaginations of others.

Yet, the universality of his novel, and its interconnectedness with the accounts of the other characters gives it a feminine quality. Feminists such as Cixous emphasise the circular, multi-

⁴⁶³ Virginia Woolf writes about the obstacles women have faced in writing fiction in her essay 'A Room of One's Own'. In the hypothetical exercise in which she imagines that Shakespeare had an equally talented sister, Woolf identifies some of these obstacles as the lack of education for women and their confinement within the home (1998, pp. 62-4). Woolf also points out that women must adapt the narrative techniques developed by men which may not be the most effective or useful techniques to express female experiences (1998, pp. 99-100).

faceted, non-linear quality of feminine writing. Cixous writes that ‘woman unthinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenises and channels, forces, herding contradictions into a single battlefield’.⁴⁶⁴ I would argue that, as in the *écriture féminine* described by Cixous, the influence other characters are able to have on the Master’s novel detract from the sense that it has been created by one strong masculine character exerting control over his creation. Donald Fanger contends that ‘by merging [the Master’s novel] with Woland’s account and Bezdomny’s dream, Bulgakov seems to be suggesting that truth subsists, timeless and intact, available to men with sufficient intuition and freedom from conventional perception.’⁴⁶⁵

The Master’s ability to act as a channel of communication for universal truths, capturing them in his novel so that they can be preserved and related to others, depends, according to Pittman, on his responsiveness to instinctive sources of inspiration and creativity. Pittman compares the Master with Bezdomny, arguing that, under the influence and guidance of Berlioz, Bezdomny tried to suppress these emotional and intuitive elements in his writing.⁴⁶⁶ One reason for the association of the Master with intuitive sources of creativity is his affinity with the world of sleep and dreams. Pittman points out that each time the Master appears in the text of *The Master and Margarita*, his entrance is accompanied by images associated with dreaming, memory, sleep or nighttime.⁴⁶⁷ For example, in Bulgakov’s first description of the Master: ‘вот-вот накроет сон Ивана, как вдруг ... на балконе возникла таинственная фигура, прячущаяся от лунного света’ (p. 225), (‘Ivan was just about to fall asleep when suddenly ... a mysterious figure appeared on the moonlit balcony’ [p. 138]). Then, later in the text, when the Master is reunited with Margarita after Woland’s ball, Bulgakov describes how ‘в далекой высоте открылась полная, но не утренняя, а полночная луна’ (p. 416), (‘high above appeared a full moon – not a setting moon, but the midnight moon’ [p. 323]).

⁴⁶⁴ Cixous in Marks and de Courtivron, pp. 245-64, here pp. 252 and 253.

⁴⁶⁵ Fanger, p. 118.

⁴⁶⁶ Pittman, p. 103.

⁴⁶⁷ Pittman in Milne (1995), pp. 157-79, here p.164.

The conversation the Master and Bezdomny have in the clinic can be described in Pittman's terms as a 'sincere dialogue' between a 'public writer' and a 'genuine artist'.⁴⁶⁸ The privacy and seclusion of the clinic enable Bezdomny to communicate with the Master and to reflect on his own beliefs and work. I would argue that this enclosed, feminine space gives him the opportunity to emerge as a reborn writer, and the potential to become a 'genuine artist' like the Master. Pittman argues that much of the value in the exchange between Bezdomny and the Master lies in the Master's association with instinctive creativity and with the world of sleep and dreams - the aspects which Bezdomny has worked hard to suppress in his own work.⁴⁶⁹ This is a compelling argument as it is supported by Bulgakov's negative portrayal of establishment writers previously in the text, and by the value Bulgakov placed on artistic freedom. However, I would suggest that the Master's creativity and spontaneity are characteristics Margarita helps and encourages him to develop. I think Margarita's key role in supporting the Master is often under-valued in comparisons between the Master and Bezdomny. Despite his portrayal as a central character whose work has universal significance, the Master's personality is characterised by passivity and he has also been described as 'weak'.⁴⁷⁰ His ability to write his novel and therefore, in some ways his identity, relies to a great degree on the encouragement he receives from Margarita. Margarita is a strong, confident character who is strikingly different to many of the other literary women I discuss in this thesis. In the following section I contend that one explanation for this is her different experience of sex and sensuality.

Andrew Barratt highlights the lack of an explicit sexual element in Margarita's relationship with the Master.⁴⁷¹ I would, however, argue that there are elements of sexuality in Bulgakov's description of her abandon, nakedness and spontaneity during her flight to Woland's ball as this quotation demonstrates:

⁴⁶⁸ Pittman, p. 101.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

⁴⁷⁰ Natov, p. 100 and Ericson, p. 93.

⁴⁷¹ Barratt (1987), p. 266.

Маргарита взвизгнула от восторга и вскочила на щетку верхом. Тут только у наездницы мелькнула мысль о том, что она в этой суматохе забыла одеться. Она галопом подскочила к кровати и схватила первое попавшееся какую-то голубую сорочку. Взмахнув ею, как штандартом, она вылетела в окно. И вальс над садом ударил сильнее (p. 357).

(Margarita whimpered with joy and jumped astride the broomstick. Only then did she remember in the excitement she had forgotten to get dressed. She galloped over to the bed and picked up the first thing that came to hand, which was a blue slip. Waving it like a banner she flew out of the window. The waltz rose to a crescendo [pp. 266-7]).

This passage emphasises Margarita's sexuality as she straddles the broomstick, as her maid, Natasha, will later straddle her neighbour who has been transformed into a pig. Margarita is naked and portrayed as confident in her nudity. Even when she becomes aware that she has forgotten to get dressed, she finds a slip and, rather than wearing it, she waves it – demonstrating that she is naked through choice and finds joy in this experience.

Like her mistress, Natasha, Margarita's maid, also uses some of Azazello's cream and follows Margarita's example in flying away from the house. The bond between the two women is so strong that even though Margarita offers Natasha all her worldly possessions (pp. 355/265-6), Natasha chooses to follow Margarita in using the cream and flying into the unfamiliar supernatural world. This close, joyful, feminine bond is not mirrored in any of the relationships between men in the novel.

Margarita's flight away from her domestic life with her husband is significant when contrasted with the attempts of other female characters to determine their own fates. Anna Karenina's flight away from her husband and son ultimately leaves her confused and isolated and her story ends with her

violent death. Dostoevsky's Nastasya also runs away from the prospect of a settled, domestic, life with Myshkin as she deserts him just before their wedding. Nastasya, like Anna, dies brutally, although her death is at the hands of a violent man rather than as the result of suicide. However, in contrast to these examples, Bulgakov shows Margarita transforming her life in a way that leads to new possibilities, and a sense of new life. One important reason for the difference between Margarita's fate and that of other female characters may be her deep relationship with Nastasha. While the other women are isolated and try to become existentially independent heroes, Margarita has deep and enduring relationships with others, such as the Master and Nastasha.

Just as Margarita flies away from her home, from the domesticity that has defined her life with her husband, Natasha's life is also dramatically changed by Azazello's cream. After she applies it, 'и с нею произошло то же, что с ее хозяйкой. В то время, как Наташа, хохоча от радости, упивалась перед зеркалом своей волшебною красой' (p. 368), ('the same transformation took place. Laughing aloud with delight, she was standing in front of the mirror admiring her magical beauty' [p. 278]). The cream has the same effect as it had on Margarita, giving both women an appreciation of, and confidence in, their naked bodies. Natasha's sexuality is enacted particularly powerfully as she smears some of the cream on her neighbour, Nikolay Ivanovich, who promptly turns into a pig. 'Через несколько секунд он, оседланный, летел куда-то к черту из Москвы, рыдая от горя' (p. 369), ('A few seconds later, with Natasha astride him, he was flying through the air away from Moscow, sobbing with chagrin' [p. 279]). The implied riding of Nikolay Ivanovich by Natasha shows how powerful she has become following her transformation. Her feminine sexuality dominates Nikolay Ivanovich, despite both his masculine gender and his high social position.

While Margarita and Natasha are shown acting in sexually assertive ways, the Master is not shown in a similar way. As I have previously noted, the relationship between the Master and Margarita is not described in sexual terms. Margarita's sexuality is not, therefore, subordinated to the sexuality of a strong masculine character. Not only is her relationship with the Master not shown to be sexual,

but she is also unlike many other female characters I have discussed in that she is not portrayed as having been the victim of sexual abuse or coercion. While she is characterised very strongly in terms of her physicality - in the sexual overtones of her flight, the physical impact on her body of her role as the host of Woland's ball and in her domestic role in creating a secure home for the Master⁴⁷² - Margarita is not shown as having suffered a physically or sexually abusive or exploitative past. This makes her unlike Sonya, Maslova (in Tolstoy's *Resurrection*), Nastasya and Lara (in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*) who are sexually exploited, and unlike Anna Karenina who is coerced into marriage because of her dependent status. It is arguable that this characterisation as a woman who is physical and sexual, but not constrained by these aspects of her personality leads to her comfortable, accepting attitude to her sexuality, and her ability to trust her own intuition and understand and value her emotions.⁴⁷³ Bulgakov writes that, when Margarita woke up on the day she was to meet Azazello she 'не заплакала, как это бывало часто, потому что проснулась с предчувствием, что сегодня наконец что-то произойдет. Ощувив это предчувствие, она стала его подогревать и растить в своей душе, опасаясь, чтобы оно ее не покинуло' (p. 339), ('did not burst into tears, as she frequently did, because she had woken up with a presentiment that today, at last, something was going to happen. She kept the feeling warm and encouraged it, afraid that it might leave her' [p. 251]). This passage shows how Margarita was partly passive, allowing her emotions and feelings to guide her, but that she also nurtured and actively encouraged feelings of hope.

Margarita's faith in her intuition enables her easily to accept Woland's identity. Her acceptance of the supernatural, and her willingness to be guided by it, contrasts with the difficulty characters such as Bezdomny have in accepting the identity of Woland and his entourage. By contrast, when

⁴⁷² I will demonstrate the physicality of Margarita's roles as host of Woland's ball and as a homemaker for the Master later in this chapter.

⁴⁷³ Extensive research undertaken throughout the second half of the twentieth century (for example, see Trickett and Putnam) highlights the links between sexual abuse or exploitation and persistent feelings of self-doubt and low confidence. This shows how the portrayals of abused women by writers such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Pasternak were based on trends they observed in real lives.

Margarita meets Azazello and he invites her to the ball and offers her the cream she hardly hesitates before telling him:

Я знаю, на что иду. Но иду на все из-за него, потому что ни на что в мире больше надежды у меня нет. Но я хочу вам сказать, что, если вы меня погубите, вам будет стыдно! Да, стыдно! Я погибаю из-за любви! ...
Согласна на все, согласна пролепать эту комедию с натиранием мазью, согласна идти к черту на кулички! (p. 351).

(I know what I'm letting myself in for. I'm ready to go anywhere and do anything for his sake, only because I have no more hope left. But if you are planning to ruin or destroy me, you will regret it. Because if I die for his sake I shall have died out of love ... I agree to everything, I'll go through the whole pantomime of smearing on the ointment, I'll go to the ends of the earth! [p. 262]).

This demonstration of her belief in the power of the supernatural world is significant because, as Ericson argues, *The Master and Margarita* can be read as a novel about beliefs, in which the responses of the characters to the spiritual world determine their fate.⁴⁷⁴ Margarita's natural, intuitive belief in the spiritual world is so strong that she is able to encourage other characters, particularly the Master and Bezdomny, and to intercede for the Master and for Frieda, who is consumed by guilt having killed her baby when she could not afford to feed him.

Just as Margarita's approach to emotions involves her both passively accepting them and actively encouraging them to guide her actions, her approach to domesticity also has aspects of both passively providing a home and actively nurturing the Master's creativity. Donald Fiene argues that almost every character in *The Master and Margarita* is either without home, seeking a new home or

⁴⁷⁴ Ericson, p. 56.

yearning for refuge in some another way.⁴⁷⁵ The Master finds a sense of security and domesticity in his relationship with Margarita. When he visits Bezdomny in the hospital, he describes his life with Margarita in these terms:

[Маргарита] готовила завтрак, и накрывала его в первой комнате на овальном столе. Когда шли майские грозы и мимо подслеповатых окон шумно катилась в подворотню вода, угрожая залить последний приют, влюбленные растапливали печку и пекли в ней картофель. От картофеля валил пар, черная картофельная шелуха пачкала пальцы. В подвальной слышался смех, деревья в саду сбрасывали с себя после дождя обломанные веточки, белые кисти (pp. 253-4).

([Margarita] cooked lunch and served it on an oval table in the living-room. When the May storms blew and the water splashed noisily past the dim little windows, threatening to flood their home, the lovers stoked up the stove and baked potatoes in it. Steam poured out of the potatoes as they cut them open, the charred skin blackened their fingers. There was laughter in the basement, after the rain the trees in the garden scattered broken branches and white blossom [p. 164]).

The detail with which Bulgakov describes the Master's and Margarita's daily life together highlights the importance of them finding both a physical and spiritual home in their relationship. Their contentment is significant, not only for their own happiness, but also because it enables the Master to write his novel. Bulgakov writes that 'Тот, кто называл себя мастером, работал лихорадочно над своим романом, и этот роман поглотил и незнакомку' (p. 254), ('the man who called himself the master worked feverishly at his novel and the book cast its spell over the unknown woman' [pp. 164-5]). The home Margarita provided therefore created the space and

⁴⁷⁵ Fiene in Milne (1995) pp. 125-39, here p. 127.

security which allowed the Master to produce his art. Margarita fulfils this domestic role for the Master despite the fact that she flew away from the home she shared with her husband. This suggests that it was her life with her husband she rejected and not her domestic role as a wife. Margarita is thus a diverse and versatile character. She is able to act decisively in rescuing the Master's manuscript and she can also be passionate and sexual as we see in her moonlit flight, however, she also devotes herself to domestic tasks such as hosting the ball and managing a household. This versatility and her willingness both to act and to retreat into passive, feminine tasks suggest that her role in the narrative is to meet the Master's wide variety of needs.

As the quotation in the paragraph above demonstrates, the period of domesticity shared by the couple helped Margarita to develop the passionate emotional attachment to the novel which would compel her to preserve and fight for it later on in Bulgakov's narrative. It is arguable that Margarita was so closely involved in the creation of the Master's novel that she acted as a kind of 'midwife' at its birth.⁴⁷⁶ The Master related to Bezdomny how the book 'поглотил' (p. 254), ('cast its spell over' [p. 165]) Margarita to the extent that 'временами [Мастер] начинал ревновать ее к нему' (p. 254), ('at times [the Master] actually felt jealous of it' [p. 165]). While the Master was writing his novel, Margarita 'без конца перечитывала написанное ... она подгоняла его и вот тут-то стала называть мастером. Она нетерпеливо дожидалась обещанных уже последних слов ... нараспев и громко повторяла отдельные фразы, которые ей нравились, и говорила, что в этом романе – ее жизнь' (p. 254), ('ceaselessly read and re-read the manuscript ... she drove him on and started to call him "the master", she waited impatiently for the promised final words ... reading out in a loud sing-song voice random sentences that pleased her and saying that the novel was her life' [p. 165]). This quotation demonstrates Margarita's role in recognising the value of the Master's novel and significantly, in naming him the Master. Within patriarchy, the role of naming

⁴⁷⁶ Although Propp's term for this role is a 'donor', the word 'midwife' seems more appropriate here given the nurturing, maternal aspects of Margarita's care for the manuscript.

and defining meanings is usually reserved for masculine characters, so the fact that Margarita performs this role highlights the unusual degree of power she holds in the text.⁴⁷⁷

However, while the Master creates his novel, Margarita's primary role is in preserving and protecting it.⁴⁷⁸ She recognises its significance and value and takes almost a maternal responsibility for ensuring its safety. In the house she shares with her husband she keeps 'единственно ценное, что имела в жизни' (p. 341) ('the one thing which she valued most of all' [p. 252]) in a chest in the attic. This object was

старый альбом коричневой кожи, в котором была фотографическая карточка мастера, книжка сберегательной кассы со вкладом в десять тысяч на его имя, распластанные между листками папиросной бумаги лепестки засохшей розы и часть тетради в целый лист, исписанной на машинке и с обгоревшим нижним краем (p. 341)

(an old album bound in brown leather, which contained a photograph of the master, a savings bank book with a deposit of ten thousand roubles in his name, a few dried rose petals pressed between some pieces of cigarette paper and several sheets of typescript with singed edges [p. 252]).

Margarita treasures these mementos of the Master and both carefully preserves them and seeks them out regularly to remind herself of the Master and his work. She 'просидела около часу, держа на коленях испорченную огнем тетрадь, перелистывая ее и перечитывая то, в чем после сожжения не было ни начала, ни конца' (p. 341) ('sat for about an hour, the burnt typescript on her knees, turning the pages and re-reading what the fire had not destroyed' [p. 252]).

⁴⁷⁷ De Lauretis (1984), p. 33. De Lauretis suggests that meanings are formed by the masculine subject and that semiotic values are constructed, read and located in history by masculine subject. See also Irigaray, p. 46. Irigaray argues that a crucial issue for feminism is the need for women to gain recognition of themselves as subjects.

⁴⁷⁸ Ericson, p. 93.

Margarita's portrayal as an intensely intuitive character does not mean that she is entirely passive. Traditionally Russian heroes and heroines are defined in terms of passive 'feminine' characteristics such as intuition and faith, and active 'masculine' attributes such as reflection and reason.⁴⁷⁹ Margarita, however, is not shown as stereotypically feminine. Barratt argues that while Bulgakov valued passivity to some extent (which may help to explain his identification with the character of the Master), he characterised Margarita so positively because to him she was the 'incarnation of purposeful action'.⁴⁸⁰ Margarita's ability to act decisively is one of the key differences between her and the heroine of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, Gretchen, from whom Bulgakov derived Margarita's name.⁴⁸¹ When Margarita saw the Master's precious novel burning in the fire, for instance, 'Все ее действия показывали, что она полна решимости и что она овладела собой' (p. 260), ('all her movements showed that she was a determined woman who was in absolute command of herself' [p. 170]).

In addition to the crucial role Margarita played in the novel's creation, she also demonstrated her ability to act by undertaking the responsibility of being hostess at Woland's annual ball (pp. 378/288). This is a role she accepts and plays with extraordinary grace. She holds a prominent position of power and authority at the ball, and is referred to as 'your majesty' and 'Queen Margot' (pp. 389/298) by the guests and by Woland's entourage. The Master is not shown in any comparable position of power or respect throughout the novel. Margarita, on the other hand, performs a role which makes her symbolically the 'Queen of Hell', a function which may reflect the tradition in Eastern Orthodoxy of Mary visiting hell with Christ.⁴⁸² Just as Mary can intercede in heaven, Margarita intercedes in 'hell'⁴⁸³ notably when she requests forgiveness for Frieda (pp. 414/321).

⁴⁷⁹ Makushinsky, translated and cited in Rutten, p. 38.

⁴⁸⁰ Barratt, p. 17.

⁴⁸¹ Ericson, p. 113.

⁴⁸² Ibid., p. 130.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p. 131.

Barratt suggests that while Margarita does show great courage, it is a different type of courage from the ‘arrogant, masculine’ courage shown by Goethe’s Faust.⁴⁸⁴ Barratt uses this comparison to demonstrate that Margarita’s courage has feminine qualities of selflessness, love and mercy.⁴⁸⁵ This argument reflects the way in which the courageous actions Margarita performs benefit characters other than herself. Margarita has nothing to gain by asking for forgiveness for Freida, and indeed this request has a great emotional cost to her as it was made at a time when she did not know whether she would see her beloved Master again. In a similar way, her actions to protect the Master’s novel were motivated by her selfless love for the Master and not by any hope for personal reward.

Although she has great spiritual authority, the physicality of Margarita’s quest seems to be significant as the impact on her body is frequently referred to by Bulgakov. Mirroring the physicality of her domestic role and her flight on the broomstick, he describes Margarita’s subjective experience of the ball in terms of her bodily sensations as ‘теперь [она] ежесекундно ощущал прикосновение губ к колену, ежесекундно вытягивала вперед руку для поцелуя, лицо ее стянуло в неподвижную маску привета’ (p. 398), (‘incessantly [she] felt the touch of lips to her knee, incessantly she offered her hand to be kissed, her face stretched into a rigid mask of welcome’ [p. 306]). This took its physical toll on her body as her ‘ноги ... подгибались, каждую минуту она боялась заплакать. Наихудшие страдания ей причиняло правое колено, которое целовали’ (p. 399), (‘legs were buckling and she was afraid that she might burst into tears at any moment. The worst pain came from her right knee, which all the guests had kissed’ [p. 307]) and later ‘не понимая, как это случилось, Маргарита оказалась в той же комнате с бассейном и там, сразу заплавав от боли в руке и ноге, повалилась прямо на пол’ (p. 400), (‘half-fainting, Margarita found herself beside the pool again where, bursting into tears from the pain in her arm and leg, she collapsed to the floor’ [p. 308]).

⁴⁸⁴ Barratt, p. 276.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

Ericson points to the primacy of the Master's goals and ambitions in his relationship with Margarita when he writes that while Margarita is a more active agent than the Master, she is depicted as his disciple.⁴⁸⁶ I would expand on this argument to suggest that Margarita performs physical quests such as flying away to host Woland's ball instead of the Master who is portrayed as being passive and unable to act decisively. Bulgakov's characterisation of the Master as passive reinforces his central male character's link with dreams and helps to make the spiritual realm of the novel more convincing as the Master's shifting, ephemeral character does not seem fixed or constrained to a specific time and place. As a passive character, open to spiritual 'truths' which are also experienced and expressed by other characters, such as Woland and Bezdomny, the Master has access to the story of Yeshua and Pilate although it occurred in historical reality around nineteen hundred years before the narrative of Bulgakov's text. However, I would argue that while passivity is key to this crucial aspect of the Master's characterisation it leaves a lack in his personality which is completed by Margarita. Margarita is able to act in ways that the Master cannot. Bulgakov's novel turns the usual patriarchal value system on its head, in that he privileged passivity over activity. Therefore, despite Margarita's ability to act instinctively and decisively, she is positioned as the Master's helper and disciple (to use Ericson's term). The passive, spiritual Master retains his privileged, masculine position relative to Margarita's subjugated position.

While Margarita helps the Master's masculine character to develop by performing tasks he is unable to perform himself, encouraging him to write his novel and physically protecting the text, the feminine character of Yeshua leads Pilate towards self-knowledge in a different way. In this next section I will argue that Pilate's encounter with Yeshua forces him to confront his weaknesses and vulnerabilities in a similar way to Pierre's experience in Devichy Meadow in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

⁴⁸⁶ Ericson, p. 93.

Pilate is a central character in *The Master and Margarita*, so much so that Fiene argues that Bulgakov gave other major characters attributes linking them to Pilate.⁴⁸⁷ The historical Pilate had a difficult role to fulfil, maintaining peace and political stability in Roman-occupied Galilee. When the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to him for judgement he faced competing pressures both to uphold Roman law and to maintain good relations with the Jewish leaders in a politically volatile situation. Bulgakov's fictional account of this episode draws on Pilate's military background and his reputation for bravery and courage. Lidiia Ianovskaia, for instance, highlights the military heroism of Pilate's ancestors and his own commendable military past.⁴⁸⁸ His reputation for courage and military action defines him as a strong masculine character who has achieved success and status in patriarchal terms.

Yeshua's portrayal is described as 'controversial' by Curtis as it does not reflect the traditional veneration with which Christ is treated⁴⁸⁹ and Alena Moravkova Baranova also argues that there are more differences than similarities between Yeshua and the Biblical Jesus.⁴⁹⁰ Instead of creating a powerful figure, like Dostoevsky's portrayal of Myshkin as a Christ-like figure who suffered from epilepsy in *The Idiot*, Bulgakov also emphasizes Yeshua's human traits and his vulnerability. The following description of Yeshua's treatment by Mark Muribellum, the Roman centurion, demonstrates his frailty:

Крысобою вынул из рук легионера, стоявшего у подножия бронзовой статуи, бич и, несильно размахнувшись, ударил арестованного по плечам. Движение кентуриона было небрежно и легко, но связанный мгновенно рухнул наземь, как будто ему подрубили ноги, захлебнулся воздухом, краска сбегала с его лица, и глаза обессмыслились (p. 114).

⁴⁸⁷ Fiene in Milne (1995), pp. 125-39, here p. 130.

⁴⁸⁸ Ianovskaia, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁹ Curtis, p. 156.

⁴⁹⁰ Baranova in Milne (1995), pp. 217-24, here p. 218.

([he] took a whip from the hands of a legionary standing by the plinth of a bronze statue and with a gentle swing struck the prisoner across the shoulders. The centurion's movement was slight, almost negligent, but the bound man collapsed instantly as though his legs had been struck from under him and he gasped for air. The colour had fled from his face and his eyes clouded [p. 29]).

The soldier's ability to crush Yeshua effortlessly, almost 'negligently', shows Yeshua's extreme passivity. He is also portrayed as fearful of pain as he tells Mark: 'Я понял тебя. Не бей меня' (p. 114), ('I understand you. Don't beat me' [p. 29]).

Nathalie M. Talbot describes Yeshua's voice as 'profoundly human' and suggests that one explanation for the reader's sense of identification with him is that he shares the destiny of all humanity as everyone is 'equal before death'.⁴⁹¹ In this way, the death sentence that Pilate may pass on the handcuffed prisoner and his portrayal as a man who is as vulnerable and powerless in the face of death as any 'ordinary' human being, highlight Yeshua's humanity. Apart from Yeshua's ability to read Pilate's mind, and to communicate fluently in both Latin and Greek, Bulgakov does not endow him with any other attributes which hint at his supernatural, divine power until the end of the text.

Physical, bodily pain is a theme of this section as, despite the very masculine connotations of Pilate's characterisation, he is also experiencing intense pain and is, therefore, weakened. The pain is described from Pilate's perspective as his internal monologue: 'О боги, боги, за что вы наказываете меня? ... Да, нет сомнений, это она, опять она, непобедимая, ужасная болезнь ... гемикrania, при которой болит полголовы ... от нее нет средств, нет никакого спасения ... попробую не двигать головой' (p. 112), ('Oh gods, what are you punishing me for? ... No, there's no doubt, I have it again, this terrible incurable pain ... hemicrania, when half the head aches ... there's no cure for it, nothing helps ... I must try not to move my head' [p. 27]). This pain is not

⁴⁹¹ Talbot in Milne (1995), pp. 187-200, here p. 191.

mentioned or discussed with the soldiers and aides around Pilate, which possibly has the effect of intensifying the reader's sympathy with Pilate. He is not only in pain, but he is portrayed as isolated, both by the difficulty of making complex decisions with far-reaching consequences, and by the necessity of dealing with his pain alone. The pain pre-occupies him and is mentioned again several times in the first chapter focusing on the Jerusalem narrative 'Понтий Пилат' ('Pontius Pilate'). He is described as 'Не удержавшись от болезненной гримасы' (p. 112), ('[not] restrain[ing] a grimace of agony' [p. 27]), later he 'был как каменный, потому что боялся качнуть пылающей адской болью головой' (p. 113), ('was like stone from fear of shaking his fiendishly aching head' [p. 28]), then he 'захотелось подняться, подставить висок под струю и так замереть. Но он знал, что и это ему не поможет' (p. 114), ('had a sudden urge to get up and put his temples under a stream of water until they were numb. But he knew not even that would help' [p. 29]). The references to Pilate's painful headache persist as Bulgakov describes how his 'больные глаза тяжело глядели на арестанта' (p. 116), ('pain-filled eyes stared heavily at the prisoner' [p. 31]).

The vulnerability and pain Pilate experiences during this early account of his encounter with Yeshua are significant because they emphasise his bodily experience and therefore add a degree of femininity to what might otherwise be a very masculine and aggressive character. He is a man who is used to exercising power over armies of soldiers but he suddenly finds that he cannot control his own mind. He thinks 'Мой ум не служит мне больше' (p. 118), ('my mind no longer obeys me' [p. 33]).

In contrast, Yeshua's speech to Pilate reveals a deep knowledge and understanding of the Procurator's position:

Истина прежде всего в том, что у тебя болит голова, и болит так сильно, что ты малодушно помышляешь о смерти. Ты не только не в силах говорить со мной, но тебе трудно даже глядеть на меня. И сейчас я

невольно являюсь твоим палачом, что меня огорчает. Ты не можешь даже и думать о чем-нибудь и мечтаешь только о том, чтобы пришла твоя собака, единственное, по-видимому существо, к которому ты привязан. Но мучения твои сейчас кончатся, голова пройдет (p. 118).

(At this moment the truth is chiefly that your head is aching and aching so hard that you are having cowardly thoughts about death. Not only are you in no condition to talk to me, but it even hurts you to look at me. This makes me seem to be your torturer, which distresses me. You cannot even think and you can only long for your dog, who is clearly the only creature for whom you have any affection. But the pain will stop soon and your headache will go [p. 33]).

Just as Myshkin directly spoke the truth about Nastasya's personality, Yeshua speaks confidently about the 'truth' of Pilate's subjective experience, which is astonishing as he is a beaten captive whose fate rests in Pilate's hands. His perception that he is torturing Pilate, rather than the other way around is also striking as it demonstrates Yeshua's unique and fresh outlook. He has a dramatically different way of viewing the world from Pilate's worldview, which is focused on power and physical domination over others. Pittman contends that Yeshua, unlike Pilate, 'follows the dictates of his own heart wherein his code of intuitive morality lies. He perceives of right (and wrong) as dictated by conscience, rather than as stipulated by legal statutes.'⁴⁹² Yeshua, for instance, tells Pilate, almost with a child-like simplicity (which also mirrors Dostoevsky's portrayal of Myshkin as innocent and child-like), that 'правду говорить легко и приятно' (p. 124), ('telling the truth is easy and pleasant' [p. 39]). He is able to maintain this calm assurance despite the seriousness of his situation and the judgements Pilate must make about his case partly, I think, because of his clarity about his own identity and his acceptance of death. He seems to be unafraid of his own death and this gives him the freedom to speak the 'truth' to Pilate, regardless of the physical consequences.

⁴⁹² Pittman, p. 160.

Pilate, on the other hand, cannot accept Yeshua's uncomplicated view of the scenario and responds: 'мне не нужно знать ... приятно или неприятно тебе говорить правду. Но тебе придется ее говорить. Но, говоря, взвешивай каждое слово, если не хочешь не только неизбежной, но и мучительной смерти' (p. 124), ('I do not want to know ... whether you enjoy telling the truth or not. You are obliged to tell me the truth. But when you speak weigh every word, if you wish to avoid a painful death' [p. 39]). Yeshua, as Colin Wright contends, demonstrates to Pilate the limitations of his earthly power.⁴⁹³ Although it seems that Pilate has the authority to choose whether or not to condemn Yeshua to death, he eventually acknowledges that his choices are restricted by the complex political environment. He asks Yeshua: 'Ты полагаешь ... что римский прокуратор отпустит человека, говорившего то, что говорил ты' (p. 126), ('Do you imagine ... that a Roman Procurator could release a man who has said what you have said to me?' [p. 41]). Pilate realises that the consequences of releasing Yeshua would be so great, that that choice seems impossible for him to make. His encounter with the feminised Yeshua compels him to address both his own bodily weakness and the limitations of his authority.

It is tempting to interpret Pilate's and Yeshua's personalities as diametrically opposed, but there are intriguing, subtle details in which their experiences and fates seem to mirror each other. The 'под левым глазом ... большой синяк' (p. 112), ('large bruise under [Yeshua's] left eye' [p. 28]) could be seen as mirroring Pilate's one-sided headache. Just before Pilate imagines 'жалобным голосом позвать собаку Банга, пожаловаться ей на гемикранию' (p. 117), ('calling for his dog Banga in a pitiful voice and complain[ing] to the dog about his hemicrania' [p. 32]) Yeshua mentions his fondness for dogs. He is describing how a man tried to insult him by calling him a dog, and elaborates: 'я лично не вижу ничего дурного в этом звере, чтобы обижаться на это слово' (p. 116), ('personally I see nothing wrong with that animal so I was not offended by the word' [p. 32]). Perhaps a much more powerful link between the two characters is that they both consider their own mortality during their exchange. Pilate is in so much pain that 'и мысль об яде вдруг

⁴⁹³ Wright in Milne (1995), pp. 38-49, here p. 45.

соблазнительно мелькнула в больной голове прокуратора' (p. 117), ('suddenly the tempting thought of poison flashed through [his] mind' [p. 32]), and later he tells Yeshua that his (Yeshua's) life 'висит на волоске' (p. 120), ('is hanging by a thread' [p. 35]).

This strange echoing of some characteristics seems to add to the intensity of the scene between Pilate and Yeshua, tying the two characters together very deeply. It is as though Bulgakov gives Pilate several opportunities to identify with Yeshua on a human level. Yeshua extends a very heartfelt invitation to Pilate:

Я советовал бы тебе, игемон, оставить на время дворец и погулять пешком где-нибудь в окрестностях, ну хотя бы в садах на Елеонской горе ... позже, к вечеру. Прогулка принесла бы тебе большую пользу, а я с удовольствием сопровождал бы тебя. Мне пришли в голову кое-какие новые мысли, которые могли бы, полагаю, показаться тебе интересными, и я охотно поделился бы ими с тобой, тем более что ты производишь впечатление очень умного человека (pp. 118-9).

(I would advise you, hegemon, to leave the palace for a while and take a walk somewhere nearby, perhaps in the gardens or on Mount Eleona ... later, towards evening. A walk would do you a great deal of good and I should be happy to go with you. Some new thoughts have just come into my head which you might, I think, find interesting and I should like to discuss them with you, the more so as you strike me as a man of great intelligence [p. 34]).

Although this discussion does not take place, and Yeshua is executed, *The Master and Margarita* ends with Bezdomny dreaming about the end of the Master's novel, in which 'молодой человек в разорванном хитоне и с обезображенным лицом' (p. 543), ('a young man in a torn chiton with a disfigured face' [p. 444]) walks beside 'человек в белом плаще с кровавым подбоем' (p. 543),

(‘a man in a white cloak with a blood-red lining’ [p. 444]). Yeshua reassures Pilate that the execution did not take place and Pilate acknowledges that crucifixion is ‘какая пошлая казнь!’ (p. 543), (‘a disgusting method of execution’ [p. 444]). Just as Bezdomny appears to be only partially ‘reborn’ as a masculine hero at the end of his quest, so Pilate, having initially declined the opportunity to communicate openly with Yeshua, seems to be granted comfort and reassurance, but not re-birth.

Bezdomny’s dream of Pilate and Yeshua walking together engaged in conversation is another example of the fluid nature of Bulgakov’s narrative which defies fixed, unchangeable endings. The dialogue between the two men is kept open, allowing both characters to continue moving and developing. In contrast to *The Idiot*, in which two male characters achieve symbolic union over the static, dead body of a violently murdered woman, in *The Master and Margarita* Yeshua, a feminised character, dies in the section of the novel which represents historical, objective reality but then returns in the spiritual and imaginative plane of dreams. Pilate needs his dialogue with Yeshua to continue as he feels guilty for his part in his death and the ongoing conversation allows him to change his position, giving him a kind of second chance. As Woland tells Margarita: ‘то видит одно и то же – лунную дорогу, и хочет пойти по ней и разговаривать с арестантом Га-Ноцри, потому что, как он утверждает, он чего-то не договорил тогда, давно, четырнадцатого числа весеннего месяца нисана’ (p. 527), (‘he always sees the same thing – a path of moonlight. He longs to walk along it and talk to his prisoner, Ha-Nostri, because he claims he had more to say to him on that distant fourteenth day of Nisan’ [p. 429]).

The Master, likewise, is rewarded with the ending that meets his needs. He is led to his eternal rest by Margarita in a scene which de Lauretis might explain as the masculine hero being rewarded with a woman as a prize awaiting him at the end of his quest.⁴⁹⁴ Margarita tells the Master:

⁴⁹⁴ De Lauretis (1984) p. 133.

Слушай беззвучие ... слушай и наслаждайся тем, чего тебе не давали в жизни, - тишиной. Смотри, вон впереди твой вечный дом, который тебе дали в награду ... Вот твой дом, вот твой вечный дом ... Ты будешь засыпать, надевши свой засаленный и вечный колпак, ты будешь засыпать с улыбкой на губах. Сон укрепит тебя, ты станешь рассуждать мудро. А прогнать меня ты уже не сумеешь. Беречь твой сон буду я (pp. 529-30).

(Listen to the silence and enjoy it. Here is the peace that you never knew in your lifetime. Look, there is your home for eternity, which is your reward ... It's your home, your home forever ... You shall go to sleep with your dirty old cap on, you shall go to sleep with a smile on your lips. Sleep will give you strength and make you wise. And you can never send me away – I shall watch over your sleep [p. 431]).

It is interesting that, despite her very different actions and personality, Margarita shares the same fate as the Master. The fact that this happens, despite the differences between the Master and Margarita supports de Lauretis' contention that women are often portrayed in the static position of prizes for masculine heroes. In other words, whatever they achieve, their fate is tied to the masculine hero and determined by his needs. Bulgakov seems to address this same point when he shows Woland telling Margarita about Banga, Pilate's faithful dog. Woland asserts that: 'ну что ж, тот, кто любит, должен разделять участь того, кого он любит' (p. 526), ('one who loves must share the fate of his loved one' [p. 428]). Despite the masculine pronoun used in this quotation, the female characters I discuss throughout this dissertation demonstrate that it is overwhelmingly women who share the fate of the men they love.

In conclusion, therefore, I have argued that Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* portrays three male characters - Bezdomny, the Master and Pilate - who descend into feminised spaces or have intense encounters or relationships with feminised characters. Bezdomny appears to be mad, enters

the feminised space of the clinic and becomes child-like and powerless. He meets the Master and gradually accepts the existence of the supernatural. However, when he emerges from the clinic Bezdomny is unable to fully integrate the conflicting realities of the 'real' world and the supernatural realm, and his personality remains divided.

The Master is an extremely significant character who unifies the plot of *The Master and Margarita*. Much of the novel's narrative involves either the story of the Master's novel's creation and preservation or Woland's account of the Jerusalem narrative which comprises this novel. However, the Master himself only earns rest and not light, and is shown at the chapter 'Прощение и вечный приют' ('Absolution and Eternal Refuge') in a peaceful domestic setting comparable to the stable home Margarita provides for him to enable him to complete his novel. He earns eternal rest and the opportunity to complete his novel with 'одною фразой' (p. 527), ('a single sentence' [p. 429]). Like Bezdomny and the Master, Pilate encounters the feminine but he initially rejects the opportunity Yeshua offers him to discuss their differing perspectives. Instead his actions lead to Yeshua's death, but he is granted forgiveness and a release from his guilt.

I have shown that however weak, flawed and ineffective Bulgakov's male heroes such as Bezdomny and the Master might be, his main female character, Margarita, provides support, bolstering them and enabling them to achieve their aims. The male heroes are so central to the development of the plot, despite their weaknesses, that the novel's main themes of artistic freedom and the power of imagination and creativity are voiced through them. Significantly, it is male characters, rather than female characters, who hold central roles in this novel. Woland's entourage has only one woman, one of the key plots is the relationship between two men, Yeshua and Pilate, and another central plot is the development of Bezdomny's character. Therefore, despite the use of narrative techniques such as magical realism (which might be seen as feminine, especially as it destabilises the established linear order) it is ultimately male characters who metaphorically debate and represent the central issues addressed in the novel.

Male characters, even passive male characters such as the Master, demonstrate the importance of imagination and in this way transgress the boundaries imposed by the oppressive Soviet authorities. While male characters represent and wrestle with these weighty issues, Margarita performs the role of a donor or helpmate in the masculine narrative. She is a powerful character who is able to accept transformation, she has confidence in her own intuition, and in her inner self and the wider spiritual world, and she is different to many other literary women in that she seems to control her own sexuality. Margarita also has an important role in recognising the value of the Master's text and in naming him as the 'Master'. It is arguable that she completes quests that the Master cannot and therefore acts decisively to ensure both his safety and the survival of his manuscript. Bulgakov's portrayal of Margarita as such a strong and confident woman, especially in comparison to the Master who is passive and doubts the value of his novel, is very significant as it shows how even in these circumstances it is still the story of masculine development that drives narrative.

5. Immortality through Poetry: Male Journeys and Female Nurturing in Pasternak's

Doctor Zhivago

In this chapter I further develop arguments about the centrality of male desire in driving narrative by focusing on Boris Pasternak's novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, which was the subject of wide-ranging political and cultural debate in the Western world following its publication in Italy in 1957⁴⁹⁵ and the award of the Nobel prize for literature the following year.⁴⁹⁶ I intend to show how, although Pasternak writes in a 'feminine', lyrical way with sketchily drawn characters and a focus on fate or coincidences, the development of the central male character proceeds along essentially traditional, masculine lines. The male hero's needs and desires influence the way other characters are portrayed and he remains at the centre of the text and the events of the plot.

I begin my discussion of *Doctor Zhivago* by reflecting on the similarity between themes discussed in the novel through the character of Yury Zhivago and the biography of his creator, Pasternak. I argue that the similarities between Pasternak and Zhivago are pertinent because they shed light on my key argument – that the narratives I have considered by all five writers discussed in this dissertation are driven by masculine desire (occasionally as in the case of *Anna Karenina* and *The Idiot*, female characters act in 'masculine' ways). *Doctor Zhivago* reflects, maybe more than any of the other texts I have considered, the close relationship between embodied male experience and the pleasure derived from phallic narrative structures.⁴⁹⁷ D'Onofrio argues that Aristotle's descriptions of mimesis and poetics, which have been extremely influential on Western understandings of art and literature, were profoundly influenced by the highly gendered nature of Greek society.⁴⁹⁸ As Aristotle taught only men, she argues, he used plays, and narrative patterns which were accessible

⁴⁹⁵ Barnes (1998), p. 330.

⁴⁹⁶ Fleishman, p. 287.

⁴⁹⁷ D'Onofrio, pp. 159, 164 and 165.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 159 and 164.

to his students, and this accessibility was directly related to the students' sex and their masculine embodiedness in particular.⁴⁹⁹

Doctor Zhivago provides the opportunity to explore these questions in detail as there appears to be close links between the biography of its creator and its main character. Neil Cornwell calls for a 'cautious, sophisticated understanding' of the relationship between Pasternak and Zhivago,⁵⁰⁰ pointing to the differences of opinion between critics such as Alexander Gladkov on the one hand who writes that Zhivago is 'by no means [Pasternak's] double' and Dimitri Segal on the other, who describes Pasternak's character as providing 'the alternative biography of the poet'.⁵⁰¹

Livingstone points out that while Zhivago's thoughts seem to be Pasternak's thoughts, and while his poems seem to be Pasternak's in terms of their style and subject matter, Zhivago is different to Pasternak in key biographical ways.⁵⁰² He is an orphan, while Pasternak was raised in a large, close family; he is a doctor; and he does not share Pasternak's Jewish heritage.⁵⁰³ Supporting Livingstone's contention that 'nothing seems to connect' Zhivago's parents with Pasternak's own mother and father,⁵⁰⁴ Ronald Hingley also finds the differences between Pasternak's and Zhivago's upbringings to be the most striking difference between them. He wrote that the writer seemed to make strenuous efforts to dissociate himself from his fictional hero and that endowing Zhivago with experiences and biographical characteristics which differed from his own was part of this attempt to distance himself from his character.⁵⁰⁵

However, in the aspects which matter most to Pasternak, and within his novel, that is the inner life of the artist and the influences on his development, Zhivago and Pasternak appear to be very

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 159. D'Onofrio draws attention to the similarity between narrative structure and male experience of sexual pleasure as linear, progressing from erection to interaction, then to climax and ejaculation (Ibid. p. 166). De Lauretis also refers to this argument, made by Robert Scholes, in her explanation of masculine desire in narrative (de Lauretis, 1984, p. 108).

⁵⁰⁰ Cornwell, p. 17.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Livingstone, p. 14.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Hingley, p. 203.

similar. The theme of artistic development was very important to Pasternak throughout his career and this is particularly demonstrated in his autobiographical work, *Safe Conduct* (1931). *Safe Conduct* outlines his development as a poet and is an unconventional autobiography in that its primary focus is on the gradual artistic awakening of the artist, his influences and various artistic pursuits, rather than on a factual account of his life and experiences. A very similar artistic and intellectual journey is described in *Doctor Zhivago*. Like his creator, Zhivago begins a career in a field unrelated to poetry, before rejecting it in order to pursue artistic goals. Pasternak was a talented composer and it is thought he could have had a successful future in this area, and he also studied philosophy at university and seemed likely to excel in this subject before he eventually devoted himself to poetry.⁵⁰⁶ His main character, Zhivago, trained as a doctor, but neglected this career in order to write poetry. Pasternak's initial pursuit of interests outside of literature suggests that his eventual choice to focus on poetry was motivated by a deep-seated passion that exceeded the passion he felt for music and philosophy. This desire for free, artistic expression is also reflected in the great personal risks Pasternak took throughout his life, and his sense of personal danger is portrayed in *Doctor Zhivago*, especially as Lara and Pasternak seek refuge at their home in Varykino and when Lara disappears at the end of the novel.

The key role played by women in *Doctor Zhivago* is influenced both by Pasternak's lifelong respect and sympathy for women, whom he idealised, and also by his own unconventional relationships with women.⁵⁰⁷ He married Evgenia Lourie in 1923, but according to Haywood this marriage had 'virtually collapsed' by 1929⁵⁰⁸ and Pasternak married Zinaida Neigauz in 1934.⁵⁰⁹ Pasternak also had a long affair with Olga Ivinskaya, who was imprisoned by the Soviet authorities between 1949 and 1953, apparently as a way to punish Pasternak for his refusal to comply with Soviet constraints on his writing.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁶ Pasternak, B. and Schimanski, S (trans.) *Prose and Poems* (Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1959), p. 69.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁰⁸ Haywood, in Ivinskaya, p. xxvi.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.

Pasternak gave Zhivago many of his own attitudes and views of both women and femininity. As I discussed above, Pasternak himself had complex relationships with the women in his own life, and Zhivago's relations with female characters seem in part to be modelled on Pasternak's own life experiences. Just as Pasternak maintained relationships with both his wife, Zinaida Neigauz, and his mistress, Olga Ivinskaya, Zhivago also loved two women, Tonya and Lara. At the end of the novel, he even marries another woman, Marina, while he is still married to Tonya. In a strange way, Zhivago's unorthodox romantic relationships appear to reflect the deep respect he had for women, rather than a desire to hurt them by his unfaithfulness. He learns from both Tonya and Lara and appears to avoid the conflict and upset that a clear choice between them would cause. This characteristic mirrors Pasternak's idealisation of women. His reverence for, or idealisation of, women and femininity is traceable back to his childhood, when the Pasternak family lived in poor areas of Moscow and witnessed first-hand the suffering of some residents. Hingley refers to his 'tender concern' for women and his childhood urge to attribute transcendental significance to their domestic and practical tasks.⁵¹¹

These ways in which the character of Zhivago mirrors Pasternak's own life are key to understanding how the masculine hero develops throughout the novel. *Doctor Zhivago* was an extremely personal work for Pasternak. He took great risks when writing it; by reading sections of it publicly to gauge opinions he risked imprisonment and execution.⁵¹² The Soviet authorities were aware of Pasternak's work on the text and its content was the subject of much of their interrogation of Olga Ivinskaya following her imprisonment.⁵¹³ When he handed the novel to Sergio D'Angelo, who worked for the Italian publisher who would publish the text in Italy, he is said to have remarked: 'I invite you to attend my execution.'⁵¹⁴ The great personal risks Pasternak took to ensure his novel was both written and published, seemed justified to him by the importance of the

⁵¹¹ Hingley, p. 14.

⁵¹² Ivinskaya, p. 268.

⁵¹³ Ibid., p. 104.

⁵¹⁴ Hingley, p. 189.

themes of artistic freedom and ‘truth’ which are central to the novel. These themes were important to Pasternak throughout his life, and he saw his novel as his ‘last testament’ to the world.⁵¹⁵

The text of *Doctor Zhivago* is driven by Zhivago’s desire for the understanding and sense of poetic identity he needs in order to communicate effectively through his poetry, and in this sense seems to mirror Pasternak’s own struggles to act authentically and with integrity in the oppressive climate created by the Soviet regime. Artistic freedom was extremely important to Pasternak. He said to Isaiah Berlin: ‘I understand that this is a meeting to organise resistance to Fascism. I have one thing to say to you: do not organise. Organisation is the death of art. Only personal independence matters.’⁵¹⁶ Although Berlin expresses a reservation about this quotation by writing that he cannot vouch for its accuracy as he was relying on his memory, rather than a written record,⁵¹⁷ Peter Levi suggests that it is consistent with other views expressed by Pasternak.⁵¹⁸

Both Pasternak’s autobiographical work and his poetry are noted for their lyricism, that is, their expressive, emotional nature which communicates the subjective, unique experience of the poet. The ‘lyric’ as opposed to the ‘epic’ approach to narrative does not draw broad conclusions about the poet’s experience, but simply aims to express his or her sensations and feelings as authentically as possible. This allows the writer to focus on the detail of a character’s inner world, and his or her individuality. As Katharine Hodgson points out, lyric poetry is associated, particularly in Russia in the 1950s, with values of sincerity and self-expression.⁵¹⁹ In his turn to prose, however, Pasternak turned his attention to the turbulent historical changes his society was undergoing and found the narrative structure of the novel to be a more useful tool in expressing his views and ideas about the role of the artist in post-revolutionary Russia.

⁵¹⁵ Berlin (2013), p. 529.

⁵¹⁶ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 528.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 529.

⁵¹⁸ Levi, p. 188.

⁵¹⁹ Hodgson, p. 38.

The opposition between lyric and epic traditions is important to my discussion of the role of masculine desire in Pasternak's work as these two traditions can be fruitfully considered from a feminist viewpoint. Northrop Frye writes that discursive writers of epic narratives write consciously and actively.⁵²⁰ These texts are narrated from a position of authorial distance, and validate the authority of the subject who narrates, and guides the reader through the action of the plot and the thoughts of the individual characters. The final section of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is an unusually didactic conclusion to a fictional work, but it clearly demonstrates this sense of narrative authority. Tolstoy uses this final section to reflect on questions of historical change and freewill, asking questions such as 'Какая сила движет народами?'⁵²¹ ('What is the force that moves nations?').⁵²² Judith Butler highlights the association of discourse with masculinity, and the passive surface, awaiting the penetrative act whereby meaning is endowed, with femininity.⁵²³ In this way, epic narratives which endow meaning and legitimate the authority of singular, rational narrators are coded as masculine.

Lyric or poetic texts with their focus on subjective experience and the inner life of individual characters, seem more suited to expressing 'feminine', non-linear experiences. Mdra Minich Brewer describes the 'new expressionism in women's writing that seeks to give voice to the feminine: the exploration and affirmation of woman's sexuality, her body, her desire, and her fictions'.⁵²⁴ Lyric writing may be seen as a potentially vibrant form of writing, which can destabilise the traditional, singular authority of epic narration and enable writing from the viewpoint of feminine subjects.⁵²⁵

On the other hand, it is not possible to simply identify epic as 'masculine' narrative and the lyric as 'feminine'. Although lyricism undoubtedly gives voice to more feminine, expressive and emotional

⁵²⁰ Frye, p. 98.

⁵²¹ http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/tocvol_7.htm

⁵²² Tolstoy, L. and Edmunds, R. (trans.) *War and Peace* (Penguin, London, 1982), p. 1404.

⁵²³ Butler (1993), p. 4.

⁵²⁴ Brewer, p. 1146.

⁵²⁵ Wittig argues that, since Proust, literary experimentation has been a key way to analyse subjects as this is the 'ultimate subjective practice'. See Wittig, p. 61.

experiences, Edith W. Clowes argues that it is also distinctive for its ‘monologism’.⁵²⁶ That is, epics may have the potential to show the emerging and conflicting world views of several characters in dialogue with each other throughout the text.⁵²⁷ Lyric novels, according to Clowes, demonstrate a single authorial worldview and dramatize the inner, private, spiritual experience of this single character in social space and historical time.⁵²⁸ The gendered implications of this analysis of narrative approaches is crucial to understanding the desire which drives *Doctor Zhivago*. Clowes’ analysis raises the possibility that while lyric novels may be seen to be feminine narratives in some respects, they may express only masculine desire in a monologic way that is unchallenged by other voices within the text. In addition, Frye argues that poets write creatively, not deliberately like discursive writers, and rather than ‘fathering’ poems, perform the role of ‘mid-wives’.⁵²⁹ This suggests that the poetry exists already, independent of the poet, whose role is not to create it, but to communicate it. As I will argue later in this chapter, Pasternak’s use of coincidences and his sense of a universal, elemental ‘truth’ is problematic from a feminist perspective as it reinforces the image of man as the representative of the universal. This negates female experience, rendering women culturally invisible.

For the purposes of this discussion, I am considering *Doctor Zhivago* to have elements of both the epic and the lyric. The key question about the role of masculine desire in driving the text of *Doctor Zhivago* is the question of whether Zhivago can be said to develop as a character throughout the narrative. Does Zhivago grow from a boy into a man, performing a series of quests, transcending boundaries and then ultimately emerging as an independent, autonomous being? Or does he undergo a series of death-rebirth cycles, but ultimately fail to change and develop? I would suggest that the ‘quest’ elements of the novel (in which Zhivago travels, transcending boundaries, and strives to prove himself) reflect epic traditions. On the other hand, his ultimate quest, for artistic and spiritual self-expression, relies on lyric values.

⁵²⁶ Clowes, p. 22.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Frye, p. 98.

I have already argued in my Introduction that simply being a biologically male or female character does not necessarily mean a character performs ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ functions in the text. This has been particularly true for characters such as Dostoevsky’s Myshkin, Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina, and Babel’s Lyutov, all of whom can be arguably have characteristics and functions more commonly associated with members of the opposite biological sex. This same principle of distinguishing between biological sex and cultural gender is fruitful to apply to Zhivago. His ‘feminine’ qualities have been discussed by a range of critics. For example, Henry Gifford highlights the importance Zhivago attaches to his perceptions and subjective experiences rather than to physical activity.⁵³⁰ Zhivago’s life, Gifford argues, is ‘disastrously incomplete’ without his poetry, and he habitually refrains from action in order to preserve his freedom to write poetry.⁵³¹

In comparison to male characters such as Strelnikov, and especially Komarovsky, Zhivago appears particularly feminised. While both Strelnikov and Komarovsky act decisively, Zhivago hesitates and often passively waits for events to take their course. Strelnikov leaves Lara and their child to go and fight with the Revolutionaries, and he is shown as a powerful figure. When Zhivago encounters him on the train to Yuryatin, Strelnikov ‘только что сюда вошедший прямыми, стремительными шагами’⁵³² (‘[had only just come in] with long, vigorous strides’).⁵³³ Zhivago is impressed and wonders

как мог он, доктор, среди такой бездны неопределенных знакомств не знать до сих пор такой определенности, как этот человек? ... этот человек представляет законченное явление воли, он до такой степени был тем, чем хотел быть, что и все на нем неизбежно казалось образцовым (p. 195).

⁵³⁰ Gifford, p. 182.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Pasternak, B. *Doktor Zhivago* (Troika Publishing House, Moscow, 1994) p. 195. All future quotations will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

⁵³³ Pasternak, B. and Hayward, M. and Harari, M. (trans.) *Doctor Zhivago* (Vintage, London, 2002) p. 224. All future English translations will be taken from this edition. The page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.

(How [it] was possible that he, a doctor, with his thousands of acquaintances, had never until this day come across a personality so well-defined as this man? ... this man was a finished product of the will. So completely was he himself, the self he chose to be, that everything about him struck one immediately as a model of its kind [p. 224]).

Komarovsky is also a strong, powerful masculine figure who has financial influence as well as the sexual power to seduce women such as Madame Guishar and Lara. He is a ‘мужчина, которому аплодируют в собраниях и о котором пишут в газетах (pp. 40-1) (‘man ... who was applauded at meetings and mentioned in the newspapers’ [p. 52]). Komarovsky’s abilities to act decisively are shown in stark contrast to Zhivago’s more reflective personality in the episode in which he appears in Varykino and Zhivago allows him to leave with Lara. I discuss this episode in detail later in this chapter.

However, just as Zhivago is portrayed as feminine in relation to the other male characters in the novel, he is masculine in relation to female characters such as Tonya and Lara. He has greater freedom to move, both physically and intellectually than the female characters and, whatever his feminine qualities may be, he is the central character of Pasternak’s novel. The novel is, after all, named after its principal character. In de Lauretis’ terminology, it is Zhivago’s desire that speaks through the narrative. Zhivago is the character who moves and changes, while Tonya and Lara help him along his journey. The roots of Zhivago’s name in the Russian word for ‘living’ or ‘alive’ have been seen as significant for critics such as Larissa Rudova, who suggests that this points to the importance of life-affirming principles in the novel.⁵³⁴ Although Olga Ivinskaya claims that Pasternak chose this name by chance, after he saw it as the manufacturer’s name on a manhole cover,⁵³⁵ Zhivago’s constant physical travelling, intellectual movement and search for authenticity, point convincingly towards the significance of the images of life and death for his characterisation.

⁵³⁴ Rudova, p. 149.

⁵³⁵ Ivinskaya, p. 196.

The novel begins, not quite with Zhivago's birth, but with his mother's funeral. This reflects Dostoevsky's work, *Netochka Nezvanova*, in which he examines the relationship between Netochka and her father-figure. Following the death of her father when she was two years old, she is brought up by her mother, who Andrew describes as a 'shadowy, dull' figure⁵³⁶ and her mother's husband, of whom Netochka says: 'судьба его очень замечательна'⁵³⁷ ([he] 'was destined to live a most remarkable life').⁵³⁸ Netochka's mother also dies when she is nine and she is subsequently abandoned by her step-father who has organised her life and the life of her mother around his own egotistical needs and his desire to be free to play his violin. Andrew argues that the narrative of *Netochka Nezvanova* is in effect an Oedipal quest for Netochka's lost father⁵³⁹ and shows how daughters are seduced into the patriarchal symbolic order.⁵⁴⁰ In *Doctor Zhivago*, Zhivago is just ten years old when his mother dies and, like the death of Netochka's mother, this is clearly a very formative event for the child. Zhivago's father dies in much more violent circumstances than his mother shortly afterwards.

Zhivago expresses his emotions powerfully and memorably at his mother's funeral, where he climbs on top of the mound covering the grave, 'он поднял голову ... шея его вытянулась ... закрыв лицо руками, мальчик зарыдал' (p. 7), ('raised his head ... stretched out his neck ... covered his face with his hands and burst into sobs' [p. 13]). Despite the child's evident distress, Zhivago's lack of parents is another key defining characteristic as it both elicits sympathy from the reader for Yury as a young child, and it also performs the function of providing the emerging masculine hero with freedom from parental or familial constraints as he matures so that he can freely choose his own path. The father archetype is associated with law-giving and the death of Zhivago's father therefore enables him to form his own identity, liberated from the Oedipal quest to

⁵³⁶ Andrew (1993), p. 220.

⁵³⁷ Dostoevsky, F. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Nauka, Leningrad, 1972-1990) vol. 2 *Netochka Nezvanova* (1972), p. 142.

⁵³⁸ Dostoevsky, F. and Kentish, J. (trans.) *Netochka Nezvanova* (Penguin, London 1985), p. 7.

⁵³⁹ Andrew (1993), p. 218.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

take his father's place.⁵⁴¹ While his status is to some extent precarious as he will always be a kind of an outsider in the home of his aunt and uncle, this lack of living parents or siblings supports Pasternak's portrayal of Zhivago as an independent, autonomous, free-thinking man who moves intellectually and physically in response to his own desires. Parentless central characters are a common tradition in Russian literature, and examples within this dissertation have included Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and Pierre Bezuhov. Karl Miller contends that parentless characters within literature have the potential for an internal duality because orphans can be portrayed as feeling at home, yet always away from home.⁵⁴² This internal struggle is evident in Zhivago's characterisation as the love he feels for Tonya and Lara can be understood as a manifestation of Zhivago's longing for the familiar, for home (Tonya) and his sense of being an outsider and wanting to find his own way (Lara). I will discuss Zhivago's relationships with these two female characters later in this chapter, but Miller's comments on the internal freedom orphans are imagined to have reflects the pursuit of intellectual freedom which characterises Zhivago. Miller argues that the literary orphan's 'favourite activity' is fleeing – triumphing over his adversary and using the seeming weakness of his circumstances to create his own destiny.⁵⁴³

The novel therefore starts with this image of a little boy, lost without his mother, and at the start of his journey to create his own identity – to become a man. The mother archetype, according to Jung, represents eros, the principle of love, intimacy and inter-connectedness.⁵⁴⁴ Losing his mother may therefore symbolise the child's loss of intimacy and sense of connection with others. At an early age he is confronted with his existential isolation and must begin to understand himself as an independent, self-contained being. The 'problem of self' is a theme which occupied many of Pasternak's poems,⁵⁴⁵ and in the character of Zhivago, it is also an important theme in his novel. Livingstone argues that Zhivago represents a certain 'way of being', and is not a character in the

⁵⁴¹ Discussed in Stevens, p. 52

⁵⁴² Miller, p. 40.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., pp. 45 and 48.

⁵⁴⁴ Discussed in Stevens, p. 52.

⁵⁴⁵ Levi, p. 49.

usual sense of having an individual voice and an idiosyncratic appearance and habits.⁵⁴⁶ It could be argued that this lack of detailed characterisation feminises Zhivago, as feminine characters are often sketchily drawn in relation to their masculine counterparts. In partnerships such as Raskolnikov's and Sonya's in *Crime and Punishment* for example, Raskolnikov is described in detail, while Sonya appears to be more two-dimensional, created to symbolise ideas of goodness and virtue rather than as a sharply defined character in her own right. However, in the case of *Doctor Zhivago*, all of the characters are described in an un-detailed, impressionistic way, and Zhivago is, in fact, the most well-defined character. Moreover, Gifford argues that the other characters are dependent on their relationship with Zhivago for their significance.⁵⁴⁷ That is, other characters only have a role to play in so far as they contribute to Zhivago's story. Gordon and Dudorov, for example, have been said to function as characters only to perpetuate Zhivago's memory.⁵⁴⁸

Thus, Zhivago's life is the focus of the narrative. Its crucial stages (including its beginning and its end) are mediated to the reader through Zhivago's subjective perspective and he is the narrative's consistent unifying theme until his death. His role appears to reflect Propp's description of the central character in folklore: 'action is performed in accordance with the movement of the hero and what lies outside this movement lies outside the narrative'.⁵⁴⁹ The final chapter contains a collection of poems written by Zhivago which demonstrates his talent as a poet, and also gives him a sense of immortality as his work lives on in the hands of his friends. De Lauretis suggests that narrative movement is 'that of a passage, a transformation predicated on the figure of a hero, a mythical subject'.⁵⁵⁰ The final chapter of the novel is critical to this transformation because it vividly demonstrates how Zhivago's identity changes from that of a destitute, slightly eccentric, man who has abandoned a promising medical career, deserted two families and married a second wife while his first wife is still living, into an accomplished poet who powerfully expresses his own

⁵⁴⁶ Livingstone, p. 68.

⁵⁴⁷ Gifford, p. 197.

⁵⁴⁸ Gillespie, p. 123.

⁵⁴⁹ Propp, p. 22.

⁵⁵⁰ De Lauretis (1984), p. 113.

thoughts, feelings and sensations in a way which deeply resonates with others. Zhivago's poems enable him to achieve the immortality he himself defines to his aunt, Anna Gromeko, as 'вашей душою, вашим бессмертием, вашей жизнью в других' (p. 56), ('your soul, your immortality, your life in others' [p. 70]).

Like Gordon and Dudorov, Tonya and Lara also function as help-mates for Zhivago at various stages of his journey, and their portrayal also points to a further parallel between Pasternak's life and that of Zhivago. Pasternak's wife Zinaida and his mistress Olga are often cited as influences on his characterisation of Tonya and Lara. Zhivago has intensely strong feelings for both Tonya and Lara, but is unable to remain committed to either, ultimately marrying another woman, Marina. Pasternak likewise had a complicated romantic life. Zinaida took charge of Pasternak's domestic life and despite her stern and over-bearing approach,⁵⁵¹ and Pasternak's affair with Olga, Hingley points out that he remained affectionate towards her until the end of his life.⁵⁵² While Zinaida's domesticity, stability and order suggest that she may have been the model for Tonya, Olga was, according to Hingley, the 'empress of [Pasternak's] heart'⁵⁵³ and the romantic and passionate character of their relationship suggests similarities between Olga and Lara. This assertion is supported by Ivinskaya's memoirs, in which she suggests that while both Tonya and Lara are 'composite images' who both have elements of Olga and Zinaida in their characterisation, there is more of Zinaida in Tonya's character and more of Olga in Lara's.⁵⁵⁴ Letters written by Pasternak at the time support this interpretation of Lara's character being based primarily, but not completely, on Olga. He wrote to Renate Schweitzer in May 1958: 'In the post-war years I got to know a young woman, Olga Vsevolodovna Ivinskaya ... She is the Lara in the work which I had just begun at that time ... she is the soul of cheerfulness and self-sacrifice. She gives no sign at all of all she has gone through in life ... she is privy to my inner life and to all my literary affairs as well.'⁵⁵⁵ Pasternak's letter to Anthony Brown a year later, in June 1959, points to a change in the way Lara is

⁵⁵¹ Hingley, p. 160.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ivinskaya, p. 198.

⁵⁵⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 198.

characterised in different parts of the novel: ‘the Lara of my youth is based on general experience. But the Lara of my late years is inscribed on my heart in her [Olga’s] blood and in her imprisonment’.⁵⁵⁶ This quotation is interesting firstly because it uses the first person to describe Zhivago, therefore demonstrating the closeness between Pasternak and Zhivago and the influence of Pasternak’s own autobiography, emotions and beliefs on the work. It also points towards the hard work and sacrifices of women in Pasternak’s own life and the centrality of suffering women in his art. Like Babel’s Lyutov in *Red Cavalry*, Zhivago stands intellectually apart from the other characters. His separation, maybe even alienation, can also be seen in Pasternak’s life.

Zhivago’s sense of alienation from his society is featured strongly in Pasternak’s own life as a Soviet writer. He was a prominent member of Russia’s artistic and literary world, influencing the literary theories of circles he was involved in such as the moderate futurist group, Centrifuge, which he joined in 1914⁵⁵⁷ and speaking at literary conferences such as the First Writers’ Congress of 1934.⁵⁵⁸ Before *Doctor Zhivago* was published, Pasternak was already a celebrated poet whose work was well-read and respected in Russia. His poetry collections included *My Sister, Life* (1922), *Themes and Variations* (1923) and *Second Birth* (1932), and he also published short prose works such as *The Childhood of Luvers* (1922) and *Aerial Ways* (1924). Pasternak’s literary output was such that he was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature six times before it was eventually awarded in 1958 – every year between 1946 and 1950 and again in 1957.⁵⁵⁹ As John Cohen points out ‘the great success of *Doctor Zhivago* did not create a new reputation, but vastly extended an old one’.⁵⁶⁰ *My Sister, Life* has been particularly acclaimed for its lyricism, and unusual descriptions of nature and the inner life of the poet.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Rudova, p. 11.

⁵⁵⁸ Fleishman, p. 187.

⁵⁵⁹ Barnes (1998), p. 339.

⁵⁶⁰ Cohen in Pasternak, B. and Schimanski, S (trans.) *Prose and Poems* (Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1959), p. 1.

However, Pasternak also experienced alienation from mainstream society, both personally as a result of the censorship he was subject to along with other writers working in Soviet Russia, and as a result of his familial Jewishness. The Soviet regime actively attempted to eradicate religion and very few of the other characters in *Doctor Zhivago* openly profess religious faith or beliefs. Pasternak understood the discrimination and hardship faced by those who professed religion themselves, or were simply born Jewish. His father, the eminent artist Leonid Pasternak, was only able to stay in Moscow when 20,000 other Jews were forced to leave because he had received higher education.⁵⁶¹ Leonid Pasternak continued to experience discrimination and hostility because of his Jewish heritage following his emigration to Berlin where editions of his anniversary album were destroyed in May 1933 at a ritual Nazi burning of Jewish publications.⁵⁶²

Although he was raised in a Jewish family, Pasternak is known to have been deeply influenced by Christianity. He wrote in a letter dated 2nd May 1959 that: 'It was the years 1910-12, more than at any other period of my life, that I lived inside Christian thought. It was then that my originality's roots and principal bases were formed, together with my vision of things, of the world, of life'.⁵⁶³ That Pasternak's art was influenced more by Christianity than Judaism is taken by Berlin as an example of his strong desire to be seen as a Russian writer, whose art was deeply embedded in the Russian soil.⁵⁶⁴ The association between Orthodox Christianity and a sense of Russianness is made by a range of Russian writers in the nineteenth century, such as Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. In Dostoevsky's *A Gentle Creature*, for example, the pawnbroker's wife grasps an icon while committing suicide by jumping out of a window. Writing in the twentieth century, Bulgakov was also influenced by this tradition when he used supernatural characters, such as Woland and his entourage, to demonstrate the limits of a worldview based only on rational atheism.

⁵⁶¹ Barnes (1989), p. 13.

⁵⁶² Barnes (1998), p. 79.

⁵⁶³ Hingley, p. 24.

⁵⁶⁴ Berlin (2013), p. 532.

Pasternak's identification with Christianity can therefore be interpreted as a sign of his allegiance to the Russian people despite the Soviet authorities' opposition to religion and despite his own upbringing as a Jew. As I will argue later in this chapter, key aspects of Christianity, such as the personality and mission of Christ, and themes of death and resurrection influence the way in which Pasternak characterises Zhivago as a masculine hero. However, Pasternak's professed Christian beliefs are also an example of his freedom of thought and unwillingness to be constrained by the religion of his family or by the dictates of the Soviet authorities.

In *Doctor Zhivago*, part of Zhivago's project of creating his own distinct identity is his religious affiliation. Despite the strong influence of Christianity at a formative time of Pasternak's artistic development, the Christianity he describes in *Doctor Zhivago* is unorthodox. The main spokespeople for Christianity are Zhivago's uncle, who is an unfrocked priest and Sima Tuntseva, who has a particular esoteric interpretation of the gospels. Pasternak associates nature with spirituality to a greater extent than is usual in traditional expressions of Christianity. His very individual approach to religion and spirituality may be due in part to his lack of exposure to formal Christian ritual and tradition. Hingley notes that apart from the letter of 1959 cited above, there is no other evidence of Pasternak's intense religious involvement during this period.⁵⁶⁵ Other biographers have also pointed to Pasternak's lack of formal religious observance despite the artistic inspiration he derived from Christianity.⁵⁶⁶ Nonetheless, despite his unfamiliarity with many aspects of formal liturgical Christianity, his portrayal of Zhivago as a Christ-like figure with a specific mission demonstrates that this is an aspect of Christianity he found evocative.

Pasternak endowed his central character with many Christ-like qualities. Zhivago becomes an isolated, destitute man, who travels primarily on foot and eats whatever he can find. Towards the end of the text, Pasternak describes him as 'в неказистой одежде' (p. 376), ('dressed in rags' [p. 416]), and he had 'первую, гораздо большую, часть прошел пешком (p. 376), ('covered the

⁵⁶⁵ Hingley, p. 24.

⁵⁶⁶ Barnes (1989), p. 117.

earlier and much longer part of the way on foot' [p. 417]). For a whole week Zhivago has eaten only hazel nuts he found growing in the woods and fields (pp. 377/418). Zhivago's journeys in general seem to be linked with his sense of poetic vocation, but his final journey to Moscow has particular spiritual significance – Pasternak writes that Zhivago felt 'что в лесу обитает Бог, а по полю змеится насмешливая улыбка дьявола' (p. 377), ('as if God dwelt in the woods and Satan were lurking in the fields' [p. 418]).

Zhivago's mission is primarily to express his sensations and experiences of the world to others and communicate effectively with those around him. However, his training as a doctor and his almost intuitive ability to treat physical illnesses may be seen as echoing Christ's ability to heal the sick, and the blind in particular. While Zhivago does not work miracles as such, he is admired for his skill as a physician. For example 'хотя Юра кончал по общей терапии, глаз он знал с доскональностью будущего окулиста' (p. 64), ('though he had qualified only in general medicine he had almost a specialist's knowledge of the physiology of sight' [p. 80]). There are several gospel stories of Christ miraculously healing the blind, including the blind man at Bethsaida.⁵⁶⁷ The juxtaposition in John's gospel of Christ's miraculous healing of a blind man with his revelation that he is the Son of God⁵⁶⁸ suggests the link between the restoration of physical sight and the understanding of spiritual truths. This association is also pertinent to the characterisation of Zhivago as both a doctor, with a particular interest in the physiology of sight, and as a poet with a passion for expressing deep truths about the world as he perceives it to be.

There are also other similarities to Christ, which when reviewed together contribute to the idea that Zhivago is characterised in a Christ-like way. For example, he is mysteriously protected by his half-brother, Yevgraf, in ways which seem to echo the Biblical image of 'ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation'.⁵⁶⁹ When Zhivago is recovering from typhus he is partially aware of eating food such as white bread, butter and sugared tea which were difficult

⁵⁶⁷ Mark 8:22-26.

⁵⁶⁸ John 9:1-41.

⁵⁶⁹ Hebrews 1:14.

to obtain. As he regains his health he asks Tonya where these luxuries came from and he is told Yevgraf brought them (pp. 163/189). Tonya tells Zhivago that Yevgraf has visited every day since he became ill. She says: 'он такой чудный, загадочный' (p. 163), ('he is a strange boy, he's a bit enigmatic' [p. 189]) and concludes 'по-моему, у него какой-то роман с властями' (p. 163), ('I think he must have some sort of connection with the government' [p. 189]). It is Yevgraf who suggests that the family should spend some time outside of the big towns for their safety and this suggestion leads Zhivago and Tonya to leave for Varykino. Having provided protection for Zhivago during his life, Yevgraf also appears with Lara at the end of Zhivago's life, to make the funeral arrangements (pp. 399/441) and to organise and preserve his work (pp. 400/442). Gifford suggests that Zhivago feels as though his half-brother's mysterious comings and goings and his help reveal the 'participation of a secret unknown power' in his life.⁵⁷⁰ This impression of Yevgraf's role is shared by Christopher Barnes who argues that he becomes a kind of fairy-tale helper or guardian following Zhivago's refusal to launch legal action against him at the beginning of the novel.⁵⁷¹ Yevgraf's protection and the sense that Zhivago is being watched over adds to his Christ-like image as it promotes the idea that, despite his physical appearance and destitution, he has a special, unseen value for someone in authority.

Like Christ following his death, Zhivago also disappears from his friends for a period of time, and is lost to them, as though he were dead. He then re-appears unexpectedly: 'в сопровождении своего молодого товарища худой рослый доктор в неказистой одежде походил на искателя правды из простонародья, а его постоянный провожатый на послушного, слепо ему преданного ученика и последователя' (p. 376), ('dressed in rags and accompanied everywhere by [Vassya], the tall, gaunt doctor looked like a peasant "seeker after truth" and his companion like a patient, blindly devoted and obedient disciple' [pp. 416-7]). Zhivago has changed over the years; he delays his return to medical practice, despite the desperate shortage of doctors in Moscow, and devotes himself to writing pamphlets and poetry, living an almost spiritual life which is

⁵⁷⁰ Gifford, p. 197.

⁵⁷¹ Barnes (1989), p. 505.

inexplicable to his friends who ask him to agree ‘что тебе надо перемениться, исправиться’ (p. 390), (to ‘change his ways’ and ‘reform’ [p. 432]).

Zhivago’s particular religious mission, similar to that of Christ, is evident in his sense of poetic vocation which drives him to make very significant sacrifices for his work and also in the actual text of some of his poems. Poetry has a long-established traditional role as a way of conveying prophetic truths in Russian culture. The role of Pushkin’s poetry in Russian literature has been described as ‘central and supreme’ by D. S. Mirsky who argues that it led to poetry becoming more universally popular in Russia in the 1820s than it had ever been previously.⁵⁷² Ed Weeda points to Prokopovich’s belief that poets should illuminate the universal truths that underpinned events addressed by epic writers and historians.⁵⁷³ According to Andrei Sinyavsky, Pasternak believed in this sense of a universal, unchanging truth.⁵⁷⁴ He believed that ‘the artist does not invent images; he comes upon them in the street, assisting nature’s creation by never supplanting it by his interference.’⁵⁷⁵ In this way, Zhivago mirrors the role of Christ. As Christ communicated the essence of God to humanity, Pasternak’s conception of the artist was of someone who could perceive the essence of life in the world around him and communicate that effectively to others.

Therefore, for Zhivago poetry holds an over-riding importance, and he gives it precedence above everything else, including his medical practice, family relationships, love and the historical changes which are happening around him. His devotion to poetry has strong religious overtones, especially as he is portrayed by Pasternak as a solitary male character who is motivated by unseen, artistic drives to express his intangible inner life. Like Pasternak’s, Zhivago’s Christianity is un-dogmatic and he seems more inspired by the spirituality he experiences through nature than by religious texts. In particular, he senses Lara’s presence when he sees a rowan tree:

⁵⁷² Mirsky, p. 102.

⁵⁷³ Weeda, p. 176.

⁵⁷⁴ Sinyavsky in Erlich, pp. 68-109, here p. 79.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 79.

Тот юношеский первообраз, который на всю жизнь складывается у каждого и потом навсегда служит и кажется ему его внутренним лицом, его личностью, во всей первоначальной силе пробуждался в нем и заставлял природу, лес, вечернюю зарю и все видимое преображаться в такое же первоначальное и всеохватывающее подобие девочки. “Лара!” – закрыв глаза, полушептал или мысленно обращался он ко всей своей жизни, ко всей божьей земле, ко всему расстилавшемуся перед ним, солнцем озаренному пространству (p. 273).

(The archetype, which is formed in every child for life and seems for ever after to be the inward image of his personality, arose in him in its full primordial strength and compelled the forest, the afterglow and everything else visible to be transfigured into a similarly primordial and all-embracing likeness of a girl. “Lara.” Closing his eyes, he whispered and thought, addressing the whole of life, all God’s earth, all the sunlit space spread out before him [p. 310]).

The role of Christianity in my interpretation of *Doctor Zhivago* is also significant because of the focus in Christian thought on the process of death, resurrection and new birth, especially demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To David Gillespie, Pasternak’s emphasis on the truth of Christ in human history is a key theme running through his novel and the poet’s immortality, guaranteed by his creativity, is an important aspect of this religious significance.⁵⁷⁶ Barnes supports this suggestion by contending that Pasternak’s religiosity and artistic sensitivities were closely inter-linked.⁵⁷⁷ Pasternak believed that the creation of both God and artists were intended to bring order and meaning and that, like God, the artist can only be known by studying his creation.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Gillespie, p. 4.

⁵⁷⁷ Barnes (1989), p. 117.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

Pasternak's portrayal of Zhivago's emotional and spiritual journey in terms of a series of death and re-birth cycles is seen in the prose narrative of *Doctor Zhivago* as well as in the religious poems which conclude the text. De Lauretis describes Lotman's 'simple chain of two functions'⁵⁷⁹ (the hero's 'entry into a closed space, and emergence from it') to be 'open at both ends and thus endlessly repeatable'.⁵⁸⁰ One example of this is chapter eleven, 'Forest Brotherhood', which describes Zhivago's time with the partisans. He is taken forcibly by the partisans and this period of his life (around two years [pp. 261/298]) is characterised by constraints on his freedom:

Границы этой неволи были очень неотчетливы. Место пленения Юрия Андреевича не было обнесено оградой ... Казалось, этой зависимости, этого плена не существует, доктор на свободе и только не умеет воспользоваться ей. Зависимость доктора, его плен ничем не отличались от других видов принуждения в жизни, таких же незримых и неосязаемых, которые тоже кажутся чем-то несуществующим, химерой и выдумкой. Несмотря на отсутствие оков, цепей и стражи, доктор был вынужден подчиняться своей несвободе, с виду как бы воображаемой (p. 261).

(The limits of his freedom were very ill defined. The place of his captivity was not surrounded by walls; no guard was kept over him and no one watched his movements ... it looked as if Yury's captivity, his dependence, were an illusion, as though he were free, and merely failed to take advantage of his freedom. His captivity, his dependence, were not in fact different from other forms of compulsion in life, which are often equally invisible and intangible, and which also seem to be non-existent and to be merely a figment of the imagination, a chimera. But although he was not fettered, chained, or watched, Yury had to submit to his unfreedom, imaginary though it appeared [p. 298]).

⁵⁷⁹ Discussed in de Lauretis (1984), p. 118.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

Although Zhivago is not physically imprisoned by the partisans, he tries to escape three times, but is repeatedly captured and returned to them (pp. 261/298). His feelings of powerlessness against seemingly ‘invisible and intangible’ constraints are reflected in his self-critical suspicion that he is ‘merely failing to take advantage of his freedom’. The dark, enclosed space of the forest evokes the Russia of legend⁵⁸¹ as well as the womb-like, feminine space described by de Lauretis ‘which the hero crosses or crosses to’.⁵⁸² Zhivago’s sensation of being trapped and unable to change his circumstances influence the way Pasternak describes the natural environment. He writes: ‘на минуту показалось стиснутое тучами солнце. Оно садилось. Его лучи темной бронзою брызнули во двор, зловеще золотя лужи жидкого навоза (p. 263), (‘hemmed in by the clouds, the setting sun peered out and splashed the yard with dark bronze rays, ominously gilding the puddles of liquid dung’ [p. 300]).

It is against this backdrop, where even the sun feels ‘hemmed in’, that Zhivago becomes caught up in the fighting. In an episode that mirrors Lyutov’s inability to shoot a man dying a painful, prolonged death in ‘The Death of Dolgushov’,⁵⁸³ Zhivago shows his reluctance to act decisively. The Whites who are attacking the partisans seem ‘знакомыми’ (p. 264), (‘familiar’ [p. 301]) to Zhivago – ‘Одни напоминали ему былых школьных товарищей. Может статься, это были их младшие братья? (p. 264), (‘some reminded him of his school friends and he wondered if they were their younger brothers’ [p. 300]). This sense of sympathy and identification with the Whites makes it hard for Zhivago to side unequivocally with the partisans, but as a member of the medical personnel, he is also not allowed to fight and so does not have a gun. Zhivago is, therefore, unequipped for this fight on two levels – he does not want to shoot the young men fighting on the side of the Whites, and he does not have his own rifle.

⁵⁸¹ Gifford, p. 189.

⁵⁸² De Lauretis (1984), p. 139.

⁵⁸³ Babel, I. and McDuff, D. (trans.) *Collected Stories* (Penguin, London, 1994), pp. 134 and 135.

For a time Zhivago ‘мирясь с двойственностью чувств’ (p. 265), (‘resign[s] himself to his divided feelings’ [p. 302]) and watches the fighting, feeling both too afraid to desert the partisans and unable to participate in the shooting. However, he finds that ‘созерцать и пребывать в бездействии среди кипевшей кругом борьбы не на живот, а на смерть было невыносимо и выше человеческих сил’ (p. 265), (‘to look on inactively while this mortal struggle raged all round was impossible, it was beyond human endurance’ [p. 302]). Zhivago takes a rifle from a dead soldier and shoots repeatedly at a tree. He tries hard to avoid shooting anyone, but does inadvertently shoot two men. Zhivago eventually manages to save one man’s life by disguising him in the uniform of a dead telephonist and nursing him back to health.

Zhivago’s actions in this episode demonstrate that even when he feels forced to act, he does so in unconventional ways which demonstrate his individuality and non-conformity. While the men around him are fighting, he acts as peaceably as possible, by shooting deliberately at a tree. His actions show his independence of thought and his determination to act in an idiosyncratic way, following the impulses of his inner life. To Livingstone, shooting the tree is an act which exemplifies the ‘greatest possible non-alignment’.⁵⁸⁴ Zhivago’s refusal to engage fully in the fighting is more striking when we compare his actions to those of the other men on the battle field. The young Whites, like Zhivago, were not professional soldiers, they were ‘мальчики и юноши из невоенных слоев столичного общества ... молодежь, студенты первокурсники и гимназисты-восьмиклассники, недавно записавшиеся в добровольцы’ (p. 264), (‘boys, recent volunteers from the civilian population ... youngsters, first-year students from the universities and top-form schoolboys’ [p. 301]). These fighters seem to him to be ‘близкими, своими’ (p. 264), (‘his own people, his own kind’ [p. 301]). And yet, despite this connection between Zhivago and the Whites, despite the apparent similarities in their backgrounds and histories, their responses to the situation they find themselves in are very different. For the recruits to the Whites, ‘служение долгу, как они его понимали, одушевляло их восторженным молодечеством, ненужным, вызывающим’ (p. 264), (‘their response to duty, as they understood it, filled them with an ecstatic bravery,

⁵⁸⁴ Livingstone, p. 75.

unnecessary and provocative' [p. 301]). For Zhivago, his actions are a reluctant response to a situation he did not choose to be in and cannot change.

Zhivago is unable to act in an assertive, masculine way, either on the battlefield or in his personal relations with women. However, he does feel a strong attraction to female characters. Like his creator Pasternak, he admires women for both having some kind of inexplicable transcendental spirituality which makes them seem closer to nature, and also having an unusual capacity for domestic work and the physical suffering associated, for example, with childbirth. Women are, in this conception, both linked with the unseen spiritual world while also having a robust practicality. This portrayal of women, from Zhivago's viewpoint, is not challenged by any strong female characters who speak with their own voice and are able to provide an alternative interpretation of women. The masculine hero is given the power to 'name' femininity, defining it in a way which provides a link between himself and the unseen, spiritual world he wants to express in his poetry.

Just as Pasternak could remember feeling inspired by femininity in his childhood, he describes the young Yury Zhivago in the garden of his aunt's and uncle's home soon after his mother had died:

Здесь была удивительная прелесть! Каждую минуту слышался чистый трехтонный высвист иволги, с промежутками выжидания, чтобы влажный, как из дудки извлеченный звук до конца пропитал окрестность. Стоячий, заблудившийся в воздухе запах цветов пригвожден был зноем неподвижно к клумбам ... Над лужайками слуховой галлюцинацией висел призрак маминого голоса, он звучал Юре в мелодических оборотах птиц и жужжании пчел. Юра вздрагивал, ему то и дело мерещилось, будто мать аукается с ним и куда-то его подзывает (p. 13).

(It was a wonderful place. Every other minute a yellow thrush made its three-note call, followed by a pause to let the whole of the clear, moist, fluting tune sink and soak into

the countryside. Flower smells, caught and dazed by the stagnant air, stood in still shafts over the beds transfixed by the heat ... Like an aural hallucination his mother's voice haunted the lawns, it was in the buzzing of the bees and the musical phrases of the birds. It made him quiver with the illusion that she was calling him to her, now here, now there [p. 20]).

From his childhood, then, Zhivago associates the natural world with his mother's comforting presence. And later, as an adult, women - Tonya and Lara in particular – continue to act as important helpers on his journey. The use of de Lauretis' image of a 'journey' undertaken by the developing masculine hero is particularly apt in this discussion of Pasternak's work because he was himself fascinated with journeys.⁵⁸⁵ His seminal poem, 'My Sister, Life', takes a train journey as its central image and concludes with the stanza:

Мигая, моргая, но спят где-то сладко,
И фатаморганой любимая спит
Тем часом, как сердце, плеща по площадкам,
Вагонными дверцами сыплет в степи.⁵⁸⁶

(Winking and blinking, somewhere folk sleep sweetly,
and like a mirage my beloved sleeps,
just as the heart, splashing along the train,
scatters the carriage doors about the steppe.)⁵⁸⁷

On Zhivago's journey, as he physically travels around Russia, and changes in response to his experiences, he associates Tonya and Lara with 'two circles' representing his 'old' and 'new' life.

⁵⁸⁵ Livingstone, p. 15.

⁵⁸⁶ Pasternak, B. and Struve, G. and Filippova, B. (eds.) *Stikhi i poëmy, 1912-1932* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1961) p. 6.

⁵⁸⁷ Pasternak, B. and Schimanski, S (trans.) *Prose and Poems* (Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1959), p. 261.

Looking back at the novel as a whole, it is possible to extend this idea to include Zhivago's second wife, Marina. Zhivago's three lovers came from different social backgrounds (large property owners, struggling business people and servants).⁵⁸⁸ I will, however, focus my analysis on his relationships with Lara and Tonya as these are the relationships with which Pasternak's text is primarily concerned. For example, when Zhivago tries to make sense of the confusing thoughts which 'роившихся' (p. 126), ('swarmed' [p. 148]) in his mind, keeping him awake, he divides his thoughts into 'two circles'. His thoughts about Tonya fell into the first circle and these included: 'доме и прежней налаженной жизни, в которой все до мельчайших подробностей было овеяно поэзией и проникнуто сердечностью и чистотою' (p. 126), ('their home and their former, settled life where everything, down to the smallest detail, had its poetry and its sincerity and warmth' [p. 148]). Zhivago's ordered, domestic life with Tonya is contrasted with the more elemental and intuitive 'new' world associated with the circle of thoughts centred around Lara. 'Это было не свое, привычное, старым подготовленное новое, а непроизвольное, неотменимое, реальностью предписанное новое, внезапное, как потрясение' (p. 126), ('These new things were not familiar, not led up to by the old; they were unchosen, prescribed by reality and as sudden as an earthquake' [p. 148]).

The opposing characters of Tonya and Lara can also be considered as part of Zhivago's Christ-like qualities. Just as the gospels relate how Christ inspired the devotion and affection of women such as Mary Magdalene and the sisters, Mary and Martha, Zhivago also draws women around him who love him passionately and meet his physical and emotional needs, leaving him free to pursue his spiritual and artistic quest. A comparison can be drawn between Lara and Mary Magdalene, who is traditionally believed to have been a prostitute before following Christ,⁵⁸⁹ as Lara has been sexually exploited as a young woman. Marina Warner argues that Mary Magdalene is presented in Christian tradition as the opposite of the Virgin Mary; while the mother of Jesus is represented as being pure,

⁵⁸⁸ Livingstone, p. 82.

⁵⁸⁹ De Boer, p. 30, however, notes that there is no compelling evidence in the Gospels to support this traditional belief.

submissive and motherly,⁵⁹⁰ Mary Magdalene is associated with the ‘dangers and degradations’ of physical, human life.⁵⁹¹ Like the traditional image of Mary Magdalene, Lara is portrayed as a flawed, sexual woman who disrupts the patriarchal status quo. Both women are seen as victims of aggressive male sexuality and act in unpredictable ways which challenge the patriarchal order. The woman who transgressed the moral code of her society by publicly washing Jesus’ feet with her tears and drying them with her hair has, for centuries, been interpreted to be Mary Magdalene.⁵⁹² Lara similarly confronts Komarovsky at a large gathering when she makes a very public attempt to murder him at a Christmas party (pp. 69/84). However, both women also challenge the tendency of their societies to reject and ostracise women like them, by demonstrating their deep spirituality and devotion to male heroes. Despite the pain that has been caused to both women by men, they are portrayed as finding satisfaction in demonstrations of affection which are rooted in their bodily sensations and actions. Zhivago’s poem ‘Magdalene II’ which describes Mary Magdalene’s very physical love for Christ and her devotion to him seems to mirror the relationship between Lara and Zhivago:

Ноги я твои в подол уперла,
Их слезами облила, Иисус,
Ниткой бус их обмотала с горла.
В волосы зарыла, как в бурнус (p. 444).

(I have planted your feet on the hem of my skirt, Jesus.
I have watered them with my tears, I have wound them round
With a string of beads from my neck,
I have cloaked them in my hair [p. 504]).

⁵⁹⁰ Warner (1976), p. 190.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., p. 225.

⁵⁹² The mistaken, but widespread, belief that the penitent woman who washes Jesus’ feet in Luke chapter 7 verses 36-50 was Mary Magdalene has been so influential that this reading is traditionally used as part of the liturgy on her feast day on 22nd July. See de Boer, pp. 5-6 and also Scott, pp. 577-9.

While Lara's relationship with Zhivago seems to be characterised by physical sexuality, because of the way in which Komarovsky's exploitation of her provokes his sympathy and because of the physical way in which Zhivago experiences her love, Tonya provides Zhivago with the opportunity to have a stable, settled, conventional home life. Although both women meet his emotional need for love and his practical domestic needs, life with Tonya is accompanied by social acceptance and approval.⁵⁹³ Lara, on the other hand is a more elemental, intuitive, free spirit. Pasternak uses the differences between Lara and Tonya to show Zhivago's development as a masculine hero. He feels torn between these two circles – on the one hand he felt anxious about his life with Tonya and 'желал ей целости и сохранности' (p. 126), ('wanted it to be safe and whole' [p. 148]), but on the other hand he feels drawn to Lara. Lara's intuition and sense of being 'at one' with the world around her seem to resonate deeply with Zhivago's own world-view. Pasternak, relating Zhivago's thoughts, describes her fondly: 'Антипова ... никого ни в чем не укоряющая и почти жалующаяся своей безгласностью, загадочно немногословная и такая сильная своим молчанием (p. 127), ('Antipova who never blamed anyone, yet whose very silence was almost a reproach, mysteriously reserved and so strong in her reserve' [p. 148]).

Just as the narrative structure of the text seems to be driven by Zhivago's poetic outlook and inner life, Pasternak's characterisation of both Tonya and Lara also seems to centre around the needs and perspectives of his masculine hero. Tonya is associated with Zhivago's childhood and youth – a period of time when he needed order and stability. Pasternak writes that: 'Оба прожили шесть лет бок о бок начало отрочества и конец детства. Они знали друг друга до мельчайших подробностей. У них были общие привычки, своя манера перекидываться короткими остротами, своя манера отрывисто фыркать в ответ' (p. 64), ('after six years of childhood and adolescence spent in the same house they knew everything there was to know about each other and had their own ways and habits, including their way of snorting at each other's jokes and their companionable silence' [p. 80]).

⁵⁹³ Clowes, p. 64.

One example of their closeness is the enthusiasm for Tolstoy's views on sexuality they shared during adolescence (pp. 35/46). This is a shared belief between them and their friend Misha, which is portrayed as special to them as a small group, not as part of a broader religious belief structure. Although Tonya is Zhivago's cousin, following the death of his mother they are raised in the same home, more like siblings than cousins. Within this context, their emotional closeness and discussions of chastity and, by implication, sex, seems unusual and maybe even incestuous. It is portrayed as unremarkable within the text, however, as is Zhivago's aunt's joining of the pair on her death bed. Anna Gromeko joins their hands and tells them: 'Если я умру, не расставайтесь. Вы созданы друг для друга. Поженитесь. Вот я и сговорила вас' (p. 58), ('If I die, stay together. You're meant for each other. Get married. There now, I've betrothed you' [p. 73]).

Significantly, Anna's suggestion changes the way Zhivago perceives Tonya: 'Тоня, этот старинный товарищ, эта понятная, не требующая объяснений очевидность, оказалась самым недостижимым и сложным из всего, что мог себе представить Юра, оказалась женщиной' (p. 65), ('To Yura, his old friend Tonya, until then a part of his life which had always been taken for granted and had never needed explaining, had suddenly become the most inaccessible and complicated being he could imagine. She had become a woman' [p. 80]). This mysterious and almost magical transformation changes Tonya from the play-mate Zhivago needed as a child, and the friend he needed as an adolescent, into a mature woman who has the mystery (and implicitly the sexual allure associated with 'mysterious' female bodies) to perform the role as his wife. As de Beauvoir argues, the male subject 'succeeds in finding himself only in estrangement, in alienation; he seeks through the world to find himself in some shape, other than himself, which he makes his own'.⁵⁹⁴

Tonya's roles as Zhivago's companion when he is growing up, and then as his wife, can be interpreted within de Lauretis' framework as her fulfilment of the masculine hero's needs along his

⁵⁹⁴ De Beauvoir, p. 88.

journey from a boy to a man. Her characterisation is driven by his needs and desires and she has little, if any personality traits, or activities beyond those required by Zhivago's needs. Possibly the most powerful example of the way Pasternak's characterisation of Tonya is driven by Zhivago's needs and attitudes is the scene following the birth of their son. She is described only from Zhivago's perspective:

Тоня возвышалась посреди палаты, как высилась бы среди бухты только что причаленная и разгруженная барка, совершающая переходы через море смерти к материку жизни с новыми душами, переселяющимися сюда неведомо откуда. Она только что произвела высадку одной такой души и теперь лежала на якоре, отдыхая всей пустотой своих облегченных боков. Вместе с ней отдыхали ее надломленные и натруженные снасти и обшивка, и ее забвение, ее угасшая память о том, где она недавно была, что переплыла и как причалила (p. 84).

(To Yury she seemed like a barque lying at rest in the middle of a harbour after putting in and being loaded, a barque which plied between an unknown country and the continent of life across the waters of death with a cargo of new immigrant souls. One such soul had just been landed, and the ship now lay at anchor, resting in the lightness of her empty flanks. The whole of her was resting, her strained masts and hull, and her memory washed clean of the image of the other shore, the crossing and the landing [p. 101]).

Despite having just given birth to her first child, with all the complex emotions and feelings this inspires, Tonya is not portrayed as having any thoughts or reflections of her own. As Heldt argues, Pasternak emphasises her cries and physical suffering and reserves reflection for the child's father.⁵⁹⁵ Heldt points out that: 'to [Zhivago] is transferred the childbirth experience, which he

⁵⁹⁵ Heldt, p. 147.

converts into Art'.⁵⁹⁶ It is perhaps significant that the meaning Zhivago gives to his wife's exhaustion relates to the theme of journeys. He imagines that Tonya has travelled across the 'continent of life' carrying a cargo of souls. The metaphor of a journey is used repeatedly by Pasternak throughout his novel, especially in relation to trains.⁵⁹⁷ Zhivago himself travels throughout the text, moving repeatedly between the city and the countryside. It is pertinent, then, not only that Zhivago performs the traditionally masculine role of attributing meaning to the events, while the woman remains silent (or at least unheard) but also that the meaning he gives to the scene is reflective of his own interests and desire for movement. The suggestion that Zhivago's interpretation of Tonya's labour pains takes precedence in the text is reinforced by Gillespie's observation that Pasternak's description of Tonya screaming – 'как кричат задавленные с отрезанными конечностями, извлеченные из-под колес вагона' (p. 83), ('like the victim of an accident who was being dragged with crushed limbs from under the wheels of a train' [p. 100]) – reflects the manner of Zhivago's father's death.⁵⁹⁸ This was a very formative event for Zhivago, but would naturally hold less significance for Tonya. That Pasternak chose to use this particular image to describe the inherently female sounds and sensations of childbirth demonstrates how the desires and memories of the masculine hero drive the narrative of *Doctor Zhivago*. This particular image may also indicate Zhivago's ability to move beyond the negative association of trains with his father's death and construct his own, positive, interpretation of journeys and trains in particular, as a way to assert himself and find his own identity.⁵⁹⁹

To return to the role female characters play in supporting Zhivago in his quest, Gillespie goes so far as to argue that both Tonya and Marina, Pasternak's second wife, are 'sketchily drawn' and exist in

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Gifford, p. 80.

⁵⁹⁸ Gillespie, p. 107.

⁵⁹⁹ Pasternak's portrayal of train journeys as a positive part of his central character's development also represents a departure from Tolstoy's negative association of trains with dangerous modernity. The tale of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, for example, is related to a traveller on a train. Anna Karenina committed suicide by throwing herself under a train and this seems to be mirrored in Pasternak's description of Tonya's childbirth pains. Unlike Anna Karenina's suicide, Tonya's labour is connected to images of new life, and a new identity for Zhivago as he becomes a father.

the narrative only as images of domesticity and to produce children for Zhivago.⁶⁰⁰ I would add that Tonya also plays a significant role in acting as a counter-point to Lara, aiding Zhivago's development by forcing him to define himself in terms of the choices he makes (or does not make) about to which woman, and to which 'circle', he wants to devote his life. Nonetheless, whatever the exact nature of the functions Tonya fulfils for Zhivago, she does appear to exist only to aid the masculine hero. Maybe the strongest evidence for this assertion is the farewell letter she writes to Zhivago, which, even though he abandoned her with a young son in the turmoil of revolutionary Russia, does not reveal any anger or blame Zhivago in any way for her circumstances:

А я люблю тебя. Ах, как я люблю тебя, если бы ты только мог себе представить!
Я люблю все особенное в тебе, все выгодное и невыгодное ... я не знаю человека лучше тебя ... Дай перекрещу тебя на всю нескончаемую разлуку, испытания, неизвестность, на весь твой долгий, долгий, темный путь. Ни в чем не виню, ни одного упрека, сложи жизнь свою так, как тебе хочется, только бы тебе было хорошо (p. 335).

(As for me, I love you. If only you knew how much I love you. I love all that is unusual in you, the inconvenient as well as the convenient ... I know of no one better than you in the world ... let me make the sign of the cross over you and bless you for the years ahead, for the endless parting, the trials, the uncertainties, for all your long, long and dark way. I am not blaming you for anything, I am not reproaching you, make your life as you wish, only so that you are alright [p. 374]).

Tonya's letter emphasises her love and acceptance for Zhivago and, interestingly, re-iterates the images of quests and journeys, showing her support for his drive for an independent, 'authentic' understanding of the world. Despite the great personal cost to herself – the anxiety of caring for a child on her own in an unfamiliar environment, and the emotional effects of feeling abandoned and

⁶⁰⁰ Gillespie, p. 123.

maybe rejected – Tonya herself is focused on the needs of the masculine hero. In this way, her self-sacrifice seems to reflect Dostoevsky’s portrayal of Sonya as willing to sacrifice her own life in St Petersburg to follow Raskolnikov to Siberia. Tonya’s claim to ‘know of no one better than [Zhivago] in the world’ would suggest that she shares Zhivago’s understanding of the value of being independent, experiencing the world for oneself rather than relying on ‘official’ explanations, and communicating this understanding, through art, to others.

Lara, representing the second ‘circle’ in Zhivago’s mind, also supported the male hero in his quest, but rather than representing stability and order, part of Lara’s attraction for Zhivago was her originality and the disruption this represented. Gillespie has argued that Zhivago’s relationship with Lara was more important than his relationship with Tonya because of the value he placed on inner truth, consisting of sincerity, freedom and love.⁶⁰¹ This inner truth was achieved by Lara and Zhivago through their relationship as they were able to communicate fully and openly with each other. The full and open communication they shared, contributed, I would argue, to Zhivago’s development as a poet. The primary concern of both Pasternak’s and Zhivago’s poetry is to communicate deeply emotional, lyrical aspects of the poet’s experience with the reader. Danow suggests that Lara is Zhivago’s most constant source of poetic inspiration.⁶⁰² As Zhivago is so defined by his role as a poet and has made so many sacrifices to pursue this vocation, Lara’s role as his ‘poetic inspiration’ is an important part of his quest towards forming his identity.

Amongst other roles Lara plays in Zhivago’s life, one of her most important functions is to maintain the link between him, as a masculine hero on a dangerous, unpredictable quest, and the image of the Russia he wants to remember:

Ларе приоткрыли левое плечо. Как втыкают ключ в секретную дверь
железного, вделанного в шкаф тайничка, поворотом меча ей вскрыли лопатку. В

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., p. 114.

⁶⁰² Danow (1981), p. 893.

глубине открывшейся душевной полости показались хранимые ее душою тайны.

Чужие посещенные города, чужие улицы, чужие дома, чужие просторы потянулись лентами, раскатывающимися мотками лент, вываливающимися свертками лент наружу (p. 293).

(Lara's left shoulder was half open. Like a key turning in the lock of a safe, the sword unlocked her shoulder-blade and, opening the cavity of her soul, revealed the secrets she kept in it. Memories of strange towns, streets, rooms, countrysides, unrolled like a film, like a skein, a bundle of ribbons tumbling out [p. 331]).

Pasternak's description of the towns, streets and countrysides is vague and suggests that these concrete realities are ephemeral, which makes these images appear abstract, rather than associated with any particular street, town or part of countryside in particular. Arguably, these images point to nostalgic, comforting memories of Russia before the violence and terror associated with the Soviet era. As well as noting that Lara is characterised in a way which associates her with Russia, Pasternak's association between her and a spiritualised image of Russia suggests that the masculine hero requires some secure sense of connection to a place, even if he rejects the domesticity offered by Tonya.

Pasternak believed strongly in the importance of artists having connections to their homelands and chose to remain in Russia despite the hardships he experienced, even when he was offered the opportunity to emigrate. He argued: 'A person should live the life of his country. He should live an intense, natural life, and then his works will contain internal naturalness – and if a person is cut off from his native environment, then new creative juices will not come to him'.⁶⁰³ This statement was reinforced by Pasternak's letter published in *Pravda* in November 1958. The only phrase believed to be written by Pasternak himself, rather than by Olga Ivinskaya, her daughter Irina, or Viacheslav Vsevolodovich Ivanov reads: 'I am tied to Russia by birth, by life, and by work, I cannot imagine

⁶⁰³ Cited in Fleishman, p. 293.

my fate separated from and outside of Russia.’⁶⁰⁴ Zhivago, therefore, echoes his creator’s belief in the importance of one’s country of birth for the artist and sees Lara’s naturalness and freedom as being intrinsically linked to Russia. While Tonya’s family have emigrated to Paris, Lara remains tied to Russia’s fate. This aspect of her characterisation contributes to her function of being a supportive help-mate for Zhivago’s artistic quest as he sees aspects of the Russia which inspires him in her.

Pasternak’s strong commitment to remaining in Russia may have been linked to his feeling of obligation to communicate not only with members of the intelligentsia, but also with ordinary Russians. However, Italo Calvino argues that Pasternak’s focus on the views and judgements of one central character – Yury Zhivago – reflected his own ‘private, family-centred individualism’, characterised by a deep identification for those who were inside his familiar circle.⁶⁰⁵ Calvino argues that in *Doctor Zhivago* Pasternak shows his compassion and support for members of the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, while more proletarian characters speak in a ‘childish, folksy’ way.⁶⁰⁶ They are depicted two-dimensionally, as types, while the interior lives of more highly educated characters are portrayed in more detail. Zhivago relates to the educated characters and, despite his (and Pasternak’s) natural sympathy for members of the working classes, it is characters like Pasha, the school teacher, and Zhivago, the doctor, who are portrayed developing and changing throughout the novel.

In addition, Pasternak’s sympathy for the quotidian suffering of the majority of Russian people, seems to conflict with his focus on describing the inner life of Zhivago, a poet who has abandoned his life as a doctor (which could alleviate the physical suffering of many people) to devote himself to the pursuit of abstract goals. This in effect emphasises the other-ness of ordinary Russians, and particularly women, for Zhivago. Ordinary people, who are not given authentic voices within the text are separated from the hero, in the role of ‘viewed’ or ‘other’. Ultimately, while Zhivago is

⁶⁰⁴ Cited *ibid.*, p. 297.

⁶⁰⁵ Calvino, p. 187.

⁶⁰⁶ Fleishman, p. 297.

attracted to the 'folksiness' of Lara, to use Calvino's phrase, and the authenticity of Tonya's embodied experiences as she gives birth to their son, Zhivago stands apart from them and has his own particular mission. The characters who must frequently fulfil the role of 'other' for Zhivago throughout the novel are women, Tonya and Lara, who are both characterised by their femininity.

However, Pasternak himself was raised in a working-class area of Moscow and eye-witness accounts of his conduct when he visited soldiers on the Briansk Front in August 1943 problematise the impression of Pasternak given by Calvino.⁶⁰⁷ As the 'Premier Soviet Poet' he impressed soldiers with his lack of snobbishness and his simplicity and accessibility.⁶⁰⁸ Both Pasternak's concern for the reality of life for the majority of Russians and his concern for suffering women can be seen in his portrayal of Lara. She is the daughter of a struggling businesswoman who becomes embroiled in a relationship with an older man, Komarovsky who takes advantage of her youth and inexperience. Interestingly, Komarovsky is the lawyer who contributed to Zhivago's father's death. Misha tells him: 'Это тот самый, который спаивал и погубил твоего отца' (p. 51), ('he's the one who made your father drink and caused his death' [p. 65]). This coincidence is one of many in the novel and reinforces the sense that the text deals with broad truths which are applicable to all times and places. As Rudova argues, Pasternak's prominent use of coincidence draws the reader's attention to the presence of another, spiritual, realm operating beneath the 'real', tangible events of the plot.⁶⁰⁹ Rudova builds on Gleb Struve's assertion that Pasternak's use of coincidence suggests 'the themes of predestination and of intertwined destinies' to argue that this narrative strategy implies that the characters' experiences are never completed, but remain open-ended.⁶¹⁰ This impression is given because the improbable, and therefore mysterious, nature of coincidences connects the characters with a greater narrative of good and evil forces. In this way, Komarovsky can be understood as similar to a fairy-tale villain, sketchily drawn and with mysterious evil powers.⁶¹¹ While the coincidence of Komarovsky's negative involvement in both Zhivago's and Lara's formative years

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 235.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 236.

⁶⁰⁹ Rudova, p. 57.

⁶¹⁰ Struve discussed in Rudova, p. 170.

⁶¹¹ Raku, p. 51.

is significant in these discussions about Pasternak's use of coincidence and fairy-tale plots in *Doctor Zhivago*, I would also suggest that this particular 'coincidence' also performs another function. The similar role Komarovsky has played in both Zhivago's life, contributing to his father's suicide, and then in Lara's life, where he exploits her sexually, and possibly contributes to her mother's suicide attempt, powerfully links the characters of Zhivago and Lara.

Pasternak described Lara reflecting that 'если мама узнает, она убьет ее. Убьет и покончит с собой' (p. 39), ('if Mama got to hear of [her relations with Komarovsky] she would kill her. She would kill her and then she would kill herself' [p. 50]). This would seem more like an exaggeration in the mind of young woman than a serious threat, except for the fact that her mother's suicide attempt is again linked in Lara's mind to her affair with Komarovsky after the doctor has treated her mother's overdose:

Улыбка усталости, появившаяся у нее на лице, заставляла девушку полужакрывать глаза и наполовину разжимать губы. Но на насмешливые взгляды мужчины она отвечала лукавым подмигиванием сообщницы. Оба были довольны, что все обошлось так благополучно, тайна не раскрыта и травившаяся осталась жива (p. 51)

(a tired smile puckered her eyes and loosened her lips, but in answer to [Komarovsky's] amused glance she gave him a sly wink of complicity. Both of them were pleased that it had all ended so well – their secret was safe and Madame Guishar's suicide attempt had failed [p. 64]).

Zhivago meets Lara for the first time in a chapter significantly called 'Девочка из другого круга', ('A Girl from a Different World'), which describes him attending Madame Guishar's attempted suicide as a medical student. This event has a powerful impact on Zhivago, partly because seeing Madame Guishar in this context introduced him to a new way of viewing women, and also because

of the sexual relationship he observed between Lara and Komarovsky. Following Madame Guishar's treatment after she has tried to poison herself, Pasternak describes how Zhivago had:

успело поразить, как в некоторых неудобных, вздыбленных позах, под влиянием напряжения и усилий, женщина перестает быть тем, чем ее изображает скульптура, и становится похожа на обнаженного борца с шарообразными мускулами в коротких штанах для состязания (p. 50).

(seen enough to be impressed by the fact that in certain clumsy, tense positions, in moments of strain and exertion, a woman ceases to be as she is represented in sculpture and looks more like a wrestler with bulging muscles, stripped down to his shorts and ready for the match [p. 63]).

This quotation shows how Zhivago had previously associated women with their representation in classical artistic mediums such as sculpture, but it also suggests that the femininity Lara and her mother exposed him to was a more robust, resilient way of being. Madame Guishar and Lara live their daily lives navigating the harsh reality of working to pay debts and negotiating with workers who are becoming swept up in the Revolution, while also experiencing the sexual advances of Komarovsky who is pursuing intimate relationships with both mother and daughter.

Although Lara does not necessarily perceive herself as a 'victim', there is something about Lara's vulnerability and victimhood that attracts Zhivago to her.⁶¹² He tells her: 'Я думаю, я не любил бы тебя так сильно, если бы тебе не на что было жаловаться и не о чем сожалеть. Я не люблю правых, не падавших, не оступавшихся. Их добродетель мертва и малоценна. Красота жизни не открывалась им' (p. 321), ('I don't think I could love you so much if you had nothing to complain of and nothing to regret. I don't like people who have never fallen or stumbled. Their virtue is lifeless and it isn't of much value. Life hasn't revealed its beauty to them' [p. 359]). I think

⁶¹² Livingstone, p. 58.

that part of Lara's appeal for Zhivago is his drive to transform her suffering, and by extension the suffering of Russia (represented by Lara), into beautiful poetry which will begin to redeem Russia from the violence and upheaval caused by the Revolution. Lara's characterisation as a woman who has been trapped in an oppressive environment is supported by Pasternak's description of how her brother's, Pasha's, gambling debts contributed to the financial hardship Lara and her mother experienced (pp. 60/75). Lara must work to pay these debts off, and she has also previously sent money to Pasha's father in Siberia, which delayed her debt repayments (pp. 61/76). As Pasternak describes Lara's feelings: 'Она чувствовала себя заложницей по вине этой глупой Родькиной растраты и не находила себе места от бессильного возмущения' (p. 62), ('She felt that she was a hostage – all through [her brother's] stupid fault – and ate her heart out in helpless exasperation' [p. 77]).

Lara knows what it is to be financially trapped in a situation, and to be forced to live within the confines of a variety of social and familial expectations as well as being sexually exploited. This sensation of feeling (and maybe actually being) trapped and unable to move freely, may give Zhivago the opportunity to define himself in opposition to the feminine. Despite the deep emotional connection between them, he is able to move relatively freely and has a much wider scope of opportunities than Lara. She is so suited to the role of his muse, and she meets his needs so well, that Zhivago even reflects that it is as though Lara has been created for this purpose. He thinks:

О, как он любил ее! Как она была хороша! *Как раз так, как ему всегда думалось и мечталось, как ему было надо!* Но чем, какой стороной своей? Чем-нибудь таким, что можно было назвать или выделить в разборе? О нет, о нет! Но той бесподобно простой и стремительной линией, какою вся она одним махом была обведена кругом сверху донизу творцом и в этом божественном очертании сдана на руки его душе, как закутывают в плотно накинутую простыню выкупанного ребенка (pp. 293-4).

(How well he loved her, and how lovable she was, *in exactly the way he had always thought and dreamed and needed*. Yet what was it that made her so lovely? Was it something that could be named and singled out in a list of qualities? A thousand times no! She was lovely by virtue of the matchlessly simple and swift line which the Creator at a single stroke had drawn round her, and in this divine outline she had been handed over, like a child tightly wound up in a sheet after its bath, into the keeping of his soul [emphasis mine, p. 331]).

This quotation shows how, despite the sense of mystery that Pasternak often associated with femininity, a large part of Lara's appeal for Zhivago is her simplicity. He also identifies her with God (being drawn by the Creator), complete (drawn by a single stroke) and at once childlike, pure and constricted. She is imagined as an infant, clean after a bath but 'tightly wound up'. Zhivago's reflection on his love for Lara both opens and closes with the sense that she belongs to him - she has been created, it seems, in response to Zhivago's thoughts, dreams and needs and she has now been handed over to him by God himself.

Lara meets Zhivago's needs as a poet by acting as his inspiration through evoking images of Russia and by reinforcing his spirituality. She also meets his physical needs by caring for him when he is ill and by creating a domestic sanctuary for him at Varykino, when the two lovers are isolated and Zhivago is able to work productively. His physical and spiritual needs are interlinked as he experiences illness and recovery as part of a cycle of death and rebirth. When he becomes ill at Yuryatin, Zhivago is incapacitated by his illness – 'при первой же попытке приподняться на локте он убеждался, что у него нет сил пошевелиться, и лишался чувств или засыпал' (p. 316), ('as soon as he so much as raised himself on his elbows he realised that he was incapable of moving, and fainted or fell asleep' [p. 354]). In his delirium he hears voices 'и он упал духом, решив, что это начало помешательства. В слезах от жалости к себе он беззвучным шепотом роптал на небо, зачем оно отвернулось от него' (p. 317), ('and was terrified, imagining that he was going mad. Crying with self-pity, he complained that Heaven had abandoned him' [p. 354]).

Zhivago's illness therefore takes away two crucial aspects of masculine identity; both his freedom to move physically across space, and also his coherent sense of his own identity. The masculine hero is both physically weakened and also fears that he is going mad. However, this quotation also reinforces Zhivago's Christ-like characterisation as he associates his sickness with being abandoned by Heaven. His exclamation: 'Вскую отринул мя еси от лица Твоего, свете незаходимый, и покрыла мя есть чуждая тьма окаянного!' (p. 317), ('Why hast Thou cast me off, O Light everlasting, and cast me down into the darkness of hell?' [p. 354]) echoes both Christ's cry moments before he died - 'my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'⁶¹³ - and the traditional Christian belief that Christ descended into hell before rising again.⁶¹⁴

Just as Christ's miraculous resurrection was sudden and unexpected by his followers, Zhivago also recovers from his intense illness suddenly. His transformation from sickness to health is intrinsically linked to the care he receives from Lara:

И вдруг он понял, что он не грезит и это полнейшая правда, что он раздет, и умыт, и лежит в чистой рубашке не на диване, а на свежепостланной постели, и что, мешая свои волосы с его волосами и его слезы со своими, с ним вместе плачет, и сидит около кровати, и нагибается к нему Лара. И он потерял сознание от счастья (p. 317).

(Suddenly he realised that he was neither dreaming nor delirious but that, in sober truth, he was lying, washed and in a clean shirt, not on the sofa but in a freshly made bed, and that the person who was crying with him, sitting beside him, leaning over him, her hair mingling with his and her tears falling with his own, was Lara; he fainted with joy [p. 354]).

⁶¹³ Matthew 27:46.

⁶¹⁴ Kreeft, p. 78.

This episode, together with descriptions of domesticity at Varykino, has strong similarities with Bulgakov's portrayal of the home Margarita created for the Master to enable him to work on his novel. However, unlike the Master, Pasternak's central male character wavers between two women. While Pasternak remained married to Zinaida and in contact with Olga until his death, his fictional creation, Zhivago, let both the women he loved go. Tonya emigrated and he did not follow her, and later in the novel he persuaded Lara to leave Varykino with Komarovsky, promising to follow behind. By showing Zhivago's passivity in allowing both women to leave him, Pasternak highlights a key difference between his intimate relationships and those of Zhivago, but he also demonstrates Zhivago's alienation.

In allowing Lara to leave Varykino with Komarovsky, Zhivago is motivated both by a desire to keep Lara as safe as possible (fearing that she is more likely to be arrested if she stays with him) and by the force of Komarovsky's stronger, more masculine, decisive personality:

Кого-то из нас наверняка лишат свободы и, следовательно, так или иначе все равно разлучат. Тогда, правда, лучше разлучите вы нас и увезите их куда-нибудь подальше, на край света. Сейчас, когда я говорю вам это, все равно дела идут уже по-вашему. Наверное, мне станет невмоготу, и, поступившись гордостью и самолюбием, я покорно приползу к вам, чтобы получить из ваших рук и ее, и жизнь, и морской путь к своим, и собственное спасение ... Сообщенная вами новость ошеломила меня. Я раздавлен страданием, которое отнимает у меня способность думать и рассуждать. Может быть, покоряясь вам, я совершаю роковую, непоправимую ошибку, которой буду ужасаться всю жизнь, но в тумане обессиливающей меня боли единственное, что я могу сейчас, это машинально поддакивать вам и слепо, безвольно вам повиноваться (p. 362).

(One or other of us is certain to be arrested, so we'll be parted anyway. At that rate it might indeed be best that you separate us, and take them away, as far away as possible.

I am saying this but it doesn't make much difference, things are happening your way. Probably in the end I'll break down and crawl to you and beg you for Lara, and life, and safety, and a sea passage to my family and be happy to receive it all at your hands ... I am completely overwhelmed by what you've told me. I am crushed and dazed and I can't think or reason properly. It may be that by giving in to you I am making a disastrous, irreparable mistake which will horrify me all my life. But all I can do now is to agree blindly and obey you as if I had no will of my own [p. 402]).

Komarovsky has presented the more feminine Zhivago with a compelling plan and his feelings of being 'crushed and dazed' and unable to 'think or reason properly' show how overwhelming he finds Komarovsky's practicality and sense of dominance and authority. Komarovsky has been involved in some of the most distressing and formative experiences of both Zhivago's and Lara's lives, and his motivations for travelling to Varykino to spirit Lara away are unclear. This appears to be a test of Zhivago's ability and willingness to fight for what he believes in, maybe to preserve the domestic haven of his life with Lara for as long as possible.

Yet Zhivago's decision to allow Komarovsky to leave Varykino with Lara has been interpreted as evidence of the passivity which defines his character. Raku, for instance, argues that Zhivago 'cedes Lara to Komarovsky'.⁶¹⁵ However, Zhivago had to take action in order to enable Komarovsky to leave with Lara – he had to lie to Lara, and persuade her that he was planning to follow behind. Both Komarovsky and Zhivago knew that Lara would not leave Varykino without this promise. It is striking that despite Zhivago's misgivings and his awareness demonstrated in the quotation above that he may be 'making a disastrous, irreparable mistake which will horrify [him] all [his] life' (p. 402), he does not discuss his intentions with Lara, despite the impact his decision will have on her. This might have given Lara the opportunity to voice her own views on what should happen to her and to her daughter. Zhivago's action in colluding with Komarovsky made it almost impossible for Lara to exercise the limited options she had. It also resulted in Lara returning

⁶¹⁵ Raku, p. 51.

to her adolescent state of being dependent on Komarovsky, in a sense reliving her mother's experience of depending on Komarovsky's money and protection.

When Lara leaves with Komarovsky, Zhivago experiences a period of deep grief and mourning for her, but even this intensely difficult, emotional time has elements of re-birth in which the hero's abilities are returned to him; 'Душевное горе обостряло восприимчивость Юрия Андреевича. Он улавливал все с удесятенною резкостью. Окружающее приобретало черты редкой единственности, даже самый воздух. Небывалым участием дышал зимний вечер, как всему сочувствующий свидетель' (p. 364), ('Grief had sharpened Yury's vision and quickened his perception a hundredfold. The very air around him seemed unique. The evening breathed compassion like a friendly witness of all that had befallen him' [p. 404]). This episode seems to reflect very clearly Lotman's image of 'the most ancient mythological concept of entry into darkness, gloom or a cave as death, and emergence into the light as subsequent re-birth.'⁶¹⁶

The quotation above demonstrates that although Zhivago misses Lara, his ability to draw comfort from the natural world means that he is not dependent on one specific woman for love and support. This drive towards abstraction is revealed in his writing as 'но Лара его стихов и записей, по мере вымарок и замены одного слова другим, все дальше уходила, от истинного своего первообраза, от живой Катенькиной мамы, вместе с Катей находившейся в путешествии' (p. 365), ('the more he crossed out and rewrote what he had written, the more did the Lara of his poems and notebooks grow away from her living prototype, from the Lara who was Katya's mother, the Lara who was away on a journey with her daughter' [p. 405]). This intellectual, emotional and artistic movement away from the actual, real character of Lara, and towards the abstract images and feelings she evoked in him demonstrates the ability of the masculine hero to move and develop in ways which are not accessible to feminine characters.

⁶¹⁶ Lotman, p. 172.

Pasternak describes Zhivago's work in this period in this way: 'дымящееся и неостывшее вытеснялось из стихотворений, и вместо кровоточащего и болезнетворного в них появлялась умиротворенная широта, подымавшая частный случай до общности всем знакомого' (p. 365), ('the steaming heat of reality was driven out of his poems and so far from their becoming morbid and devitalised, there appeared in them a broad peace and reconciliation which lifted the particular to the level of the universal and accessible to all' [p. 405]). While Zhivago is able to use his new solitude to create the texts which will ensure his immortality in the hearts and minds of his friends, the reader is unaware of Lara's fate; all we know is that she has left Varykino under the power and influence of an older man who exploited her when she was a naïve teenager. Significantly, however, Zhivago does not reflect on Lara's situation in this way, but instead comes to understand the new universality and accessibility of his poetry as being 'как утешение, лично посланное ему с дороги едущей, как далекий ее привет, как ее явление во сне или как прикосновение ее руки к его лбу. И он любил на стихах этот облагораживающий отпечаток' (p. 365), ('like a message sent to him by Lara from her travels, like a distant greeting from her, like in a dream or the touch of her hand on his forehead, and he rejoiced at this ennobling of his verse' [pp. 405-6]). This shows how far Lara is characterised as a helper for Zhivago on what is essentially *his* journey as a masculine hero. Despite Lara's and Katya's vulnerability having been carried off by Komarovsky (on 'travels' to quote Zhivago's comforting expression), Lara is still imagined by Zhivago as inspiring his poetry and bringing him physical comfort by touching his forehead.

It is implied by Gillespie that Lara has some degree of power as all three of her lovers change under her 'spell'.⁶¹⁷ However, although her relations with both Pasha and Zhivago produce a change and development in the male characters – Pasha Antipov decides to leave home and become a revolutionary and Zhivago is able to write more powerful, evocative poetry (how Komarovsky changes is more unclear) – Lara herself does not share in this transformation. That Lara remains static and does not appear to develop as a character throughout the novel is important

⁶¹⁷ Gillespie, p. 120.

evidence of the primacy of the masculine quest as a driving force throughout the narrative of *Doctor Zhivago*. Pasternak describes how: ‘Для них же, – и в этом была их исключительность, – мгновения, когда, подобно веянию вечности, в их обреченное человеческое существование залетало веяние страсти, были минутами откровения и узнавания все нового и нового о себе и жизни’ (pp. 317-8), (‘To [Zhivago and Lara] – and this made them unusual – the moments when passion visited their doomed human existence like a breath of timelessness were moments of revelation, of ever greater understanding of life and of themselves’ [p. 355]). However, it seems to me that the text shows only the revelation and greater understanding experienced by Zhivago. Although, arguably, Lara experiences joy and love in her relationship with Zhivago, it is Zhivago’s quest for self-understanding, and his artistic mission, that drives the narrative forward. If Pasternak conceived of Zhivago and Lara growing in knowledge and understanding together and equally, as the quotation above implies, Lara’s development happens outside of the text’s frame of reference – judged by the author to be unworthy of narrative description.

In stark contrast to Zhivago, who gains a kind of immortality through his poetry, Lara’s fate is unknown:

Однажды Лариса Федоровна ушла из дому и больше не возвращалась. Видимо, ее арестовали в те дни на улице и она умерла или пропала неизвестно где, забытая под каким-нибудь безымянным номером из впоследствии запропастившихся списков, в одном из неисчислимых общих или женских концлагерей севера (p. 406).

(One day Lara went out and did not come back. She must have been arrested in the street, as so often happened in those days, and she died or vanished somewhere, forgotten as a nameless number on a list which was later mislaid, in one of the innumerable mixed or women’s concentration camps in the north [p. 449]).

This further demonstrates the role of the feminine in narrative. De Lauretis argues that as patriarchy has influenced the retelling of the Oedipus story, the role of the princess has been played down while the role of the masculine hero has gradually become more prominent.⁶¹⁸ Using Propp's typology, she explains that the princess' role has become that of a donor for the hero, and feminine areas, such as the forest, have become imagined as the site of his education.⁶¹⁹ In de Lauretis' words: 'the animal who nurtures the child hero is female (e.g., the she-wolf in the legend of the foundation of Rome), representing the carnal mother; and the nature of the initiation rite itself, in preparing the adolescent for adult sexuality, is closely linked with the woman-mother, she who rules over the animals.'⁶²⁰ Lara successfully performs this nurturing role for Zhivago, enabling him to grow into his identity as a poet and achieve a form of immortality through his poetry. When Zhivago dies, and no longer needs Lara to nurture and fulfil a mother-like function, Lara's story also ends. Her journey is defined by the fulfilment of the male hero's desire.⁶²¹

To conclude, we have seen how, despite the lyric nature of *Doctor Zhivago*, and the 'femininity' of the themes of nature and spirituality which permeate the text, the narrative is driven by the development of a central, masculine hero. This hero is closely associated with the author of the novel, and seems to be his mouthpiece and have his sympathy. As Cornwell points out, some passages in *Doctor Zhivago* seem to originate from a 'God-like' narrator, or are perhaps the digressions of an 'all-wise' author.⁶²² The feelings and opinions expressed in these passages seem to align with Zhivago's (and Pasternak's) stated viewpoints. Cornwell's observation would, therefore, seem to support the argument that Pasternak's text is driven by masculine desire, represented by his central male character. One of the difficulties of the 'God-like' narrator voice which we can attribute to Pasternak/Zhivago is that the lyrical and poetic nature of the text makes the narrative voice appear to reflect 'universal truths'. On further examination, these 'truths', while not challenged in the text itself, can be seen as patriarchal, and centred around a traditionally

⁶¹⁸ de Lauretis (1984), p. 115.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid., p. 133.

⁶²² Cornwell, p. 114.

‘masculine’ view of the world. The developing masculine hero’s search for authentic self-expression forms his quest and he is supported to achieve this quest by two main female characters, Tonya and Lara, who do not question or criticise his behaviour, or blame him when he abandons them. They privilege his development and his needs above their own and so support him to attain his goals, but are ejected from the narrative once the hero’s needs have been met. At the end of *Doctor Zhivago*, Yury Zhivago stands narratologically and existentially alone through the poetry he leaves behind.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I have reflected in depth on the representation of relationships between literary men and women in Russian texts. As Elizabeth Grosz argues, the representation of the ‘real’ world offered to us in art helps to ‘slow down’ the world for us, making it ‘temporarily comprehensible’, enabling us to understand it.⁶²³ However, she also points out that for feminists this representation comes to have a ‘more negative role than a constructive one’ because of the many ways in which women are excluded from representations.⁶²⁴

I have focused on de Lauretis’ narrotological approach to consider one important way in which representations of heterosexual relationships marginalise the feminine by promoting the image of female characters as static spaces used by male characters as part of their journeys, or quests, towards unified, whole masculine identities. This approach has enabled me to highlight the importance of intellectual, spiritual and creative freedom for male characters. This sense of freedom, which female characters less commonly possess, is an elusive quality which is much harder to quantify or analyse than economic or political status. De Lauretis’ approach has, however, made it possible for me to interpret characters and relationships in this way by asking whose desire drives the narrative and which characters are transformed and reborn.

The importance of understanding for male characters has emerged as a persistent theme as I have analysed the works of five significant Russian writers. The need to understand their environments and to interpret the world around them has united characters as diverse as Dostoevsky’s Raskolnikov and Myshkin, Tolstoy’s Pierre, Levin and Nekhlyudov, Babel’s Lyutov, Bugakov’s Master and Pasternak’s Zhivago. Understanding the world, and their own identity within it, can be said to define the masculine quest in a way that the pursuit of wealth or status does not. Zhivago, for example, is destitute, and yet he shares a sense of new life and transformation with the wealthy and secure Nekhlyudov. Likewise, at the end of *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov is beginning

⁶²³ Grosz in an interview with Kontturi and Tiainen, p. 248.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

a new life in exile and yet he is inwardly transformed, just as Pierre is reborn in the serene domestic setting which concludes *War and Peace*.

The most significant change I have found in the way masculine characters are portrayed in the texts is the shift in the twentieth century towards a focus on artistic and creative freedom of expression. This study is not large enough to draw conclusions about why this may be, although I would tentatively suggest that this might reflect the oppression experienced by artists and writers during the Soviet era. Perhaps the restrictions on physical movement across borders and the limitations on everyday life produced a sense that individuals could experience freedom only within their own thoughts and imaginary worlds. This sense is certainly present in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* with its use of magical realism and supernatural characters who challenge official Soviet doctrine. The Master, like Lyutov and Zhivago, acts through the narrative and the text he creates. This marks a departure from the development of the nineteenth-century heroes I have analysed, even those gentle male characters such as Myshkin and Levin who are characterised by spirituality and insight. Even these two characters conform to an extent to the image of masculine heroes acting on the world through their interaction with other characters, through their ability to effect change. Lyutov's role within my thesis seems symbolically significant as his 'quests' appear to involve both artistically conveying the impression the world makes on him and also learning to act – to kill and to ride a horse like the Cossacks. After Lyutov, the focus of twentieth-century heroes in this dissertation is on creative freedom.

I find this conclusion particularly interesting when it is considered from a feminist perspective. As I argued in my Introduction, within patriarchy qualities are viewed in a dualistic way as opposite pairs in which each quality is associated with either masculinity or femininity. In the epic/lyric, reason/emotion, action/passivity and objectivity/subjectivity dichotomies, epic-reason-action-objectivity is coded as masculine while lyric-emotion-passivity-subjectivity is viewed as feminine. In this schema, there are strong elements of the feminine in the quests undertaken by the Master and by Zhivago in comparison to Raskolnikov's murder of the pawnbroker to test his rational ideas

in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The conclusion of my research - that the portrayal of masculine quests has changed in the twentieth-century Russian narratives - suggests that writers have used feminine qualities and values to drive the development of their male heroes.

Despite these elements of femininity, however, masculine characters throughout this study have consistently remained masculine *in relation* to their feminine counterparts. In this area, de Lauretis' theoretical framework has been particularly useful in highlighting how male heroes stand existentially alone at the end of narratives, having emerged as developed, coherent, unified heroes, while their female donors symbolically disappear from the narrative. Natasha Rostova becomes fixed in her domestic role as a new mother; Nastasya lies dead between Myshkin and Rogozhin; and Lara disappears into a Soviet camp. With the notable exception of Margarita, it appears that however feminine heroes become, the women who support them are even more 'feminine', if feminine means static, fixed in a role and acting as a boundary for the male hero to cross. Even Margarita, who is a strong, confident female character who acts decisively, is a helper for the male hero. Her actions support the Master, whose creativity and link with the supernatural is the focus and the driving force of Bulgakov's novel.

As I explained in my Introduction, my original intention was to study the religious, or 'spiritual' (to use a term with more general connotations) aspects of the helpmate function female characters perform in narrative. I planned to examine the image of women as purer than men, maybe more connected with the source or essence of life, however that was imagined. Male characters, it seemed to me, could be described as entering a clean, pure space in their encounter with a woman who responses to the world were intuitive and natural – a space which helped them to experience God, or life essence, or some sense of spiritual wholeness. This approach was influenced by feminist theology which highlights the masculinity of the Judeo-Christian God and of Jesus Christ. I wanted to explore how women were characterised in an idealistic way, to meet the needs of male characters by aiding their spiritual 'resurrection', but also by reinforcing their conception of God as masculine. In this way, I imagined them acting to reinforce patriarchy, and I planned to reflect on

how this constrained view of female religiosity affected portrayals of their own intellectual and spiritual freedom. I still believe that this study would shed interesting new light on the relationships between characters in the texts I have considered.

Given that this was the starting point for this thesis, I have been surprised by the recurrence of themes of sexual abuse and early sexualisation of female characters. While the characterisation of both male and female characters cannot be separated from their experiences as imagined embodied, physical beings, the memory of previous experiences seems to be more of a burden for female characters such as Sonya, Nastasya, Maslova, Anna and Lara who experienced varying degrees of sexual abuse and exploitation. I have been surprised by the deep significance of female bodies, and bodily experiences in this dissertation which focussed on intellectual and spiritual journeys. I have found that male quests often involve the violent expulsion of the female body, either through brutal murder in the case of Raskolnikov's killing of the pawnbroker, Nastasya's murder, or Pozdnyshv's jealous murder of his wife in *The Kreutzer Sonata*; the madness and suicide of Anna Karenina; or the removal of Lara from the narrative when she disappears into a camp where her fate is shrouded in mystery.

In short, this study has used a narratological approach to consider texts from a new angle, by viewing the development of male characters in terms of the 'quests' they complete, and the feminine spaces they enter, before emerging as whole, masculine heroes. While male characters seem to engage with female spaces and characters in slightly different ways, this study has highlighted the persistence of elements of female characterisation. For example, as I discussed above, some women are shown with fascinating, but probably unrealistic, extremes of personality traits and experiences. Many have, on the one hand, suffered serious sexual exploitation and abuse at a young age, but grow into seemingly pure, forgiving, mild, deeply spiritual women. These women, such as Sonya, Lara and Maslova are able to help male characters along their journey of intellectual development. Others, such as Anna and Nastasya, suffer character 'splits' in another

way. They act in rebellious, possibly ‘masculine’ ways, but are ultimately unable to achieve the status of unified heroes at the end of their ‘quest’.

The narratological framework I have used could be fruitfully applied to any text including poems, village prose and more recent forms of media such as films. But I would like to develop this research by considering novels and short stories by female authors, as originally planned, to assess whether similar patterns emerge. I think that this would be an intriguing development because of the theoretical link between the way sex is physically experienced and artistic expression. Robert E. Scholes argues that the ‘archetype of all fiction is the sexual act’ and this points to the parallel between the progression of narrative and the male sex act.⁶²⁵ My research has also suggested that the masculine quest is extremely pervasive as a theme which drives narrative. *Anna Karenina*, for instance, is a novel focusing on the events in a strong, determined woman’s life, and her death, as I have shown, can be explained in terms of de Lauretis’ ideas, as the result of her failed masculine quest. In *The Master and Margarita*, Margarita is the more active participant in the drama and the events of the novel, and yet it is the Master and his novel which form its centre, and *his* fate that determines Margarita’s.

Given how deeply the theme of masculine development runs through narratives – from the folktales analysed by Propp to the work of Pasternak and Bulgakov in the middle of the twentieth century – I would anticipate that women writers, even those writing from a modernist perspective, would also be influenced by this patriarchal heritage. I hope that this research lays the foundations for a further study which considers works which find narrative techniques to break free from this tradition.

⁶²⁵ Cited in de Lauretis (1984) p. 108.

Bibliography

Primary Texts

Babel, I. *Konarmiya* (Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994).

Babel, I. and McDuff, D. (trans.) *Collected Stories* (Penguin, London, 1994).

Bulgakov, M. *Sobranie sochineniy, t. 5, Master i Margarita* (Azbuka-klassika, St Petersburg, 2002).

Bulgakov, M. and Glenny, M. (trans.), *The Master and Margarita* (Vintage, London, 2004).

Bulgakov, M. and Glenny, M. (trans.), *The White Guard* (Collins, London, 1973).

Dostoevsky, F. *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy v 30 tomakh* (Nauka, Leningrad, 1972-1990).

- vol. 2 *Netochka Nezvanova* (1972).
- vol. 4 *Zapisky iz Myortvogo doma* (1972).
- vol. 6 *Prestuplenie e nakazanie* (1973).
- vol. 8 *Idiot* (1973).

Dostoevsky, F.

- and McDuff, D. (trans.) *Crime and Punishment* (Penguin, London, 1991).
- and Kentish, J. (trans.) *Netochka Nezvanova* (Penguin, London, 1985).
- and McDuff, D. (trans.) *The House of the Dead* (Penguin, London, 2003).
- and Brailovsky, A. and Garnett, C. (trans.) *The Idiot* (Random House, New York, 2003).

Pasternak, B. *Doktor Zhivago* (Troika Publishing House, Moscow, 1994).

- and Hayward, M. and Harari, M. (trans.) *Doctor Zhivago* (Vintage, London, 2002).

Pasternak, B. and Struve, G. and Filippova, B. (eds.) *Stikhi i poëmy, 1912-1932* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1961).

Pasternak, B. and Schimanski, S. (trans.) *Prose and Poems* (Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1959).

Solzhenitsyn, A., Whitney, T. and Willets, H. (trans.) *Gulag Archipelago* (Harvill Press, London, 2003)

Tolstoy, L. *Sevastopol' v dekabre mesyatse, Sevastopol' v mae* (Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994).

Tolstoy, L. *Sobranie sochinenii v 22 tomakh* (Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1978-1985). Available online: <http://rvb.ru/tolstoy/toc.htm>.

Tolstoy, L. and Pevear, R. and Volokhonsky, L. (trans.) *Anna Karenina* (Penguin, London, 2001).

- and Briggs, A. (trans.) *Resurrection* (Penguin, London, 2009).
- and McDuff, D. and Foote, P. (trans.), *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories* (Penguin, London, 2008).
- *The Sebastopol Stories* (Penguin, London, 1986).
- and Christian, R. (trans. and ed.) *Tolstoy's Diaries* (Flamingo, London, 1994).
- and Edmunds, R. (trans.) *War and Peace* (Penguin, London, 1982).

Woolf, V. *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998).

- *The Waves* (Vintage, London, 2004).

Zamyatin, Y and Barratt, A. (trans. and ed.) *My* (Bristol Classical Press, London, 1994).

Zamyatin, Y. *We* (Penguin, London, 1993).

Secondary Literature

Adlam, C. *Women in Russian Literature after Glasnost: Female Alternatives* (Legenda, London, 2005).

Alexandrov, V. *Limits to Interpretation: The Meanings of Anna Karenina* (The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 2004).

Amert, S. 'The Dialectics of Closure in Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*' in *Russian Review*, vol. 61, iss. 4, 2002, (pp. 599-617).

Amusin, M. "'Your Novel Has Some More Surprises in Store for You" (The Specificity of the Fantastic in *The Master and Margarita*)' in *Russian Studies in Literature*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2005-2006, (pp. 80-91).

Andrew, J., Polukhina, V., and Reid, R. (eds.) *Literary Tradition and Practice in Russian Culture: Papers from an International Conference on the Occasion of the Seventieth Birthday of Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman* (Rodolpi, Amsterdam, 1993).

Andrew, J. *Narrative, Space and Gender in Russian Fiction 1846-1903* (Rodolpi, Amsterdam and New York, 2007).

- 'Resurrection and Rebirth in Babel: "Moi pervyi gus"' in *Slavica Tergestina*, vol. 4, 1996, (pp. 213-232).
- *Narrative and Desire in Russian Literature 1822-49* (Macmillan, London, 1993).
- 'Spoil the Purest of Ladies:- Male and Female in Isaac Babel's *Konarmiya*' in *Essays in Poetics*, vol. 4, iss. 2, 1989, (pp. 1-27).
- (ed.) *The Structural Analysis of Russian Narrative Fiction* (Essays in Poetics Publications, Keele, 1984).
- *Women in Russian literature, 1780-1863* (Macmillan, London, 1983).

- *Russian Writers and Society in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Macmillan, London, 1982).
- Armstrong, J. *The Unsaid Anna Karenina* (Macmillan Press, Basingstoke, 1988).
- Armstrong, K. *A History of God* (Vintage, London, 1999).
- *The Battle for God* (Harper Collins, London, 2004).
- Barker, A. and Gheith, J. (eds.) *A History of Women's Writing in Russia* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002).
- Barnes, C. *Boris Pasternak: A Literary Biography, Vol 1, 1890-1928* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989).
- *Boris Pasternak: A Literary Biography, Vol 2, 1928-1960* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998).
- Barratt, A. *Between Two Worlds: A Critical Introduction to The Master and Margarita* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987).
- Barthes, R. *Image, Music, Text* (Fontana Press, London, 1993).
- Battersby, C. *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (The Women's Press, London, 1989).
- Bayley, J. *Leo Tolstoy* (Northcote House Publishers, Plymouth, 1997).
- *Tolstoy and the Novel* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988).
- de Beauvoir, S. *The Second Sex* (Vintage, London, 1997).
- Benson, R. *Women in Tolstoy* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Chicago and London, 1973).
- Berlin, I. *Russian Thinkers* (Penguin, London, 1978).
- *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays* (Vintage, London, 2013).
- van den Berken, W. *Holy Russia and Christian Europe* (SCM Press, London, 1999).

- Berman, A. 'The Sibling Bond: A Model for Romance and Motherhood in *War and Peace*' in *Tolstoy Studies Journal*, vol. 18, 2006, (pp. 1-15).
- Billington, S. and Green, M. (eds.) *The Concept of the Goddess* (Routledge, London and New York, 1996).
- Blake, E. 'Sonya, Silent No More: A Response to the Woman Question in Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment' in *Slavonic and Eastern European Review*, vol. 50, iss. 2, 2006, (pp. 252-71).
- Blank, K. 'The Rabbit and the Duck: Antinomic Unity in Dostoevsky, the Russian Religious Tradition and Mikhail Bakhtin' in *Studies of East European Thought* vol. 59, 2007, (pp. 21-37).
- Bloom, H. (ed.) *Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace* (Chelsea House, New York and Philadelphia, 1988).
- de Boer, E. *Mary Magdalene: Beyond the Myth* (Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, 1997).
- Boyce Gibson, A. *The Religion of Dostoevsky* (SCM Press, London, 1973).
- Bowlby, R. (ed.) *Virginia Woolf* (Longman, London and New York, 1992).
- Bradstock, A., Gill, S., Hogan, A., and Morgan, S. (eds.) *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture* (Macmillan, London, 2000).
- Braidotti, R. *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991).
- Brewer, M. 'A Loosening of Tongues: From Narrative Economy to Women Writing' in *Comparative Literature* vol. 99, no. 5, 1984, (pp. 1141-61).
- Brodsky, J. *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (Penguin, London, 1987).
- Brown, S. 'The Jew Among the Cossacks: Isaac Babel and the Red Cavalry in the Soviet-Polish war of 1920' in *Slavonica*, vol. 3, 1996-7, (pp. 29-43).

Budaragin, M. 'History and Love (Magdalene II in the Context of Doctor Zhivago)' in *Russian Studies in Literature*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2005-6, (pp. 68-79).

Burkin, D. 'Prince Myshkin: The True Lover and Impossible Bridegroom' in *Slavic and European Journal* vol. 27, 1983, (pp. 158-75).

Butler, J. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, London, 1990).

- *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (Routledge, London, 1993).
- *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (Routledge, London and New York, 1997).

Bynum, C. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (University of California Press, Oakland, 1997).

Calvino, I. *Why Read the Classics?* (Random House, London, 1999).

Campbell, J. *Arguing with the Phallus: Feminist, Queer and Postcolonial Theory: A Psychoanalytic Contribution* (Zed Books, London and New York, 2000).

Carden, P. *The Art of Isaac Babel* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1972).

Carrette, J. (ed.) *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999).

Charyn, J. *Savage Shorthand: The Life and Death of Isaac Babel* (Random House, New York, 2005).

Christian, R., *Tolstoy's 'War and Peace': A Study* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962).

Clark, K. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1981).

Clowes, E. (ed.) *Doctor Zhivago: A Critical Companion* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1995).

Coates, R. *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998).

Connolly, J. 'Dostoevskij's Guide to Spiritual Epiphany in *The Brothers Karamazov*' in *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 59, iss. 1/2, 2007, (pp. 39-54).

Conquest, R. *The Courage of Genius: The Pasternak Affair: A Documentary Report on its Literary and Political Significance* (Collins and Harvill Press, London, 1961).

Contino, P. 'Zosima, Mikhail, and Prosaic Confessional Dialogue in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*' in *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 27, iss. 1, 1995, (pp. 63-87).

Cornell, D. *Beyond Accommodation: Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction, and the Law* (Routledge, New York and London, 1991)

Cornwell, N. *Pasternak's Novel: Perspectives on Doctor Zhivago* (Essays in Poetics Publications, Keele, 1986).

Curtis, J. *Bulgakov's Last Decade: The Writer as Hero* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987).

Daly, M. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (The Women's Press, London, 1973).

- *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (The Women's Press, London, 1979).

Danow, D. 'Epiphany in *Doctor Zhivago*' in *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 76, no. 4, 1981, (pp. 889-903).

- *The Dialogic Sign: Essays on the Major Novels of Dostoevsky* (Peter Lang, New York, 1991).

- 'The Paradox of *Red Cavalry*' in *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, vol. 36, no. 1-2, 1994, (pp. 43-54).

Davison, R. *Camus: The Challenge of Dostoevsky* (University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1997).

Diamond, I. and Quinby, L. (eds.) *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* (Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1988).

Dinnerstein, D. *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1977)

D'Onofrio, A., 'Is Feminism [sic] Realism Possible? A Theory of Labial Eros and Mimesis' in *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1999, (pp. 159-80).

Duffield, H. and Bilsky, M. (eds.) *Tolstoy and the Critics: Literature and Aesthetics* (Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1965).

Eaton, M. 'Kantian and Conceptual Beauty' in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 57, no. 1, 1999, (pp. 11-5).

Ellis, D. *Death and the Author: How D. H. Lawrence Died and was Remembered* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008).

Ericson, E. *The Apocalyptic Vision of Mikhail Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita* (The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter, 1991).

Erllich, V. (ed.) *Pasternak: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1978).

Fanger, D. 'Rehabilitated Experimentalist' in *The Nation*, 22 January 1968, p. 118.

Falen, J. *Isaac Babel: Russian Master of the Short Story* (University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1974).

Faulks, S. *Faulks on Fiction* (BBC Books, London, 2011).

Felch, S. and Contino, P. (eds.) *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 2001).

Fleishman, L. *Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, 1990).

Foster, H. (ed.) *Postmodern Culture* (Pluto Press, London, 1985).

Foucault, M. *Madness and Civilisation* (Tavistock Publications, London, 1967).

- *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge* (Penguin, London, 1998).
- *The History of Sexuality Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure* (Penguin, London, 1992).
- *The History of Sexuality Volume 3: The Care of the Self* (Penguin, London, 1990).

Frank, J. *Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal 1850-1859* (Robson Books, London, 1983).

Frank Parsons, S. (ed.) *Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002).

Frye, N. *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1982).

Garrard, J. (ed.) *The Russian Novel from Pushkin to Pasternak* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1983).

Gifford, H. *Pasternak: A Critical Study* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and London, 1977).

Gillespie, D. *The Twentieth-Century Russian Novel: An Introduction* (Berg Publishers Limited, Oxford, 1996).

Grenier, S. *Representing the Marginal Woman in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature* (Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut and London, 2001).

Griffiths, A. (ed.) *Philosophy and Literature* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984).

Hallett, C. *Isaac Babel* (Bradda Books Ltd. Letchworth, 1972).

Heldt, B. *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1987).

Hingley, R. *Pasternak: A Biography* (Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1985).

- Hodgson, K. 'Telling Tales: Genre and Narrative in Post-Soviet Poetry' in *Slavonica*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2013, (pp. 36-56).
- Hoisington, S. 'Fairy-Tale Elements in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*' in *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1981, (pp. 44-55).
- *A Plot of her Own* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1995).
- Holquist, M. *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1977).
- hooks, b. *Art on my Mind: Visual Politics* (The New Press, New York, 1995).
- Howlett, J. and Mengham R. (eds) *The Violent Muse: Violence and the Artistic Imagination in Europe 1910-1939* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994).
- Hudspith, S. 'Narrative and Miscarriages of Justice in Tolstoy's *Resurrection*' in *Tolstoy Studies Journal*, vol. 14, 2002, (pp. 15-23).
- Ianovskaia, L. 'Pontius Pilate and Yeshua Ha-Nozri: In the Mirror of Bulgakov' in *Russian Studies in Literature* vol. 47, no. 2, 2011, (pp. 7-60).
- Irigaray, L. *Je, tu, nous: Towards a Culture of Difference* (Routledge, London and New York, 1993).
- Ivanits, L. 'The Other Lazarus in *Crime and Punishment*' in *Russian Review*, vol. 61, iss. 3, 2002, (pp. 341-57).
- Ives, K. *Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva: The Jouissance of French Feminism* (Crescent Moon Publishing, Kent, 2007).
- Ivinskaya, O. *A Captive of Time: My Years with Pasternak* (Collins and Harvill Press, London, 1978).
- Jaggar, A. *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Rowman and Allanheld, New Jersey, 1983).

- (ed.) *Living with Contradictions: Controversies in Feminist Social Ethics* (Westview Press, Colorado, 1994).
- Jantzen, G. *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995).
- Jones, M. and Terry, G. (eds.) *New Essays on Dostoevsky* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983).
- Jones, M. *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience* (Anthem Press, London, 2005).
- (ed.) *New Essays on Tolstoy* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978).
 - *Dostoyevsky: The Novel of Discord* (Elek Books, London, 1976).
- Jung, C. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Fontana Press, London, 1995).
- Kagal, A. and Perova, N. *Present Imperfect* (Westview Press, Boulder, 1996).
- Kelly, C. *A History of Russian Women's Writing 1820-1992* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994).
- Knapp, L. (ed.) *Dostoevsky's The Idiot: A Critical Companion* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1998).
- Knapp, L. and Mandelker, A. (eds.) *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina* (The Modern Language Association of America, New York, 2003).
- Kontturi, K. and Tianen, M. 'Feminism, Art, Deleuze, and Darwin: An Interview with Elizabeth Grosz' in *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 15, no. 4, 2007, (pp. 246-56).
- Kornblatt, J. *The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature: A Study in Cultural Mythology* (University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 1992).
- Kreeft, P. *Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1994).
- Kristeva, J. *Hannah Arendt* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2001).

Kroeker, P. and Ward, B. *Remembering the End: Dostoevsky as Prophet to Modernity* (SCM Press, London, 2002).

Kuzmic, T. 'The Mind, the Body, and the Love Triangle in *Anna Karenina*' in *Tolstoy Studies Journal*, vol. 19, 2007, (pp. 1-14).

de Lauretis, T. 'Desire in Narrative' in *Alice Doesn't* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984) pp. 103-57.

- *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1987).
- 'Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness' in *Feminist Studies*, vol. 16, iss. 1, 1990, (pp. 115-50).

Leatherbarrow, W. *A Devil's Vaudeville: The Demonic in Dostoevsky's Major Fiction* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 2005).

Levi, P. *Boris Pasternak* (Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, 1990).

Livingstone, A. *Boris Pasternak: Doctor Zhivago* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989).

Lodge, D. *The Art of Fiction* (Penguin, London, 1992).

Lossky, V. *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1978).

Lotman, J. 'The Origins of the Plot in the Plight of Typology' in *Poetics Today*, vol. 1, iss. 2, 1979, (pp. 161-84).

Luck, C. *Figures of War and Fields of Honour: Isaak Babel's Red Cavalry* (Keele University Press, Keele, 1995).

Lukács, G. *The Theory of the Novel* (Merlin Press, London, 1971).

Luplow, C. *Isaac Babel's Red Cavalry* (Ardis, Michigan, 1982).

Lyons, B. 'American Patchwork' in *Essays in Criticism* vol. 42, no. 4, 1992, (pp. 338-44).

Mackiewicz, S. *Dostoevsky* (Orbis, London, 1947).

Maitland, S. *Gossip from the Forest: The Tangled Roots of our Forests and Fairytales* (Granta Books, London, 2013).

Mandelker, A. *Framing Anna Karenina: Tolstoy, the Woman Question and the Victorian Novel* (Ohio State University Press, 1993).

Mandelstam, N. *Hope Abandoned* (Penguin, London, 1972).

- *Hope Against Hope* (Penguin, London, 1975).

Marks, E. and de Courtivron, I. (eds.) *New French Feminisms* (Harvester Press, Hemel Hempstead, 1981).

Marsh, R. *Gender and Russian Literature: New Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996).

Maybaum, I. *Creation and Guilt: A Theological Assessment of Freud's Father-Son Conflict* (Valentine, Mitchell and Co, London, 1969).

McDuff, D. 'Introduction' in Babel, I. *Collected Stories*, translated by McDuff, D. (Penguin, London, 1994).

Mendelson, D. *Metaphor in Babel's Short Stories* (Ardis, Michigan, 1982).

Meyer, P. 'Crime and Punishment and Jules Janin's *La Confession*' in *Russian Review*, vol. 58, iss. 2, 1999, (pp. 234-44).

- 'Anna Karenina: Tolstoy's Polemic with *Madame Bovary*' in *Russian Review* vol. 54, iss. 2, 1995, (pp. 243-59).

Miller, K. *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1985).

Milne, L. *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990).

- (ed.) *Bulgakov: The Novelist-Playwright* (Harwood Academic Publishers, Amsterdam, 1995).
- Mirsky, D. *A History of Russian Literature: From its Beginnings to 1900* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1999).
- Mochulsky, K. *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1971).
- Modleski, T. *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a 'Post-feminist Age'* (Routledge, New York, 1991).
- Moi, T. (ed.) *The Kristeva Reader* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986).
- *Sexual/Textual Politics* (Routledge, London and New York, 1988).
 - *What is a Woman?* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999).
- Morgan, S. (ed.) *The Feminist History Reader* (Routledge: London and New York, 2006).
- Morson, G. 'How to Read *Crime and Punishment*' in *Commentary*, vol. 93, iss. 6, 1992, (pp. 49-54).
- Moss, A. 'Tolstoy's Politics of Love: "That Passionate and Tender Friendship that Exists Only Among Women"' in *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 53, no. 4, 2009, (pp. 566-86).
- Moulin, D. 'Leo Tolstoy the Spiritual Educator' in *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2008, (pp. 345-53).
- Mulvey, L. *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1989).
- Musanga, T. and Mutekwa, A. 'Destabilizing and Subverting Patriarchal and Eurocentric Notions of Time: An Analysis of Chenjerai Hove's *Bones and Ancestors*' in *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 42, iss. 8, 2011, (pp. 1299-319).
- Natov, N. *Mikhail Bulgakov* (Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1985).
- Neu, J. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Freud* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991).

Nichols, R. and Stavros, T. (eds.) *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1978).

Nickell, W. *The Death of Tolstoy: Russia on the Eve, Astapovo Station, 1910* (Cornell University Press, New York, 2010)

Orwin, Tussing D. *Tolstoy's Art and Thought 1847-1880* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993).

- *Consequences of Consciousness: Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy* (Stanford, California, 2007).

- (ed.) *Anniversary Essays on Tolstoy* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010).

Ouspensky, L. and Lossky, V. *The Meaning of Icons* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1982).

Panchias, G. *Dostoevsky's Spiritual Art: The Burden of Vision* (Transaction Publishers, New Jersey, 2005).

Paris, B. *Dostoevsky's Greatest Characters: A New Approach to Notes from the Underground, Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2008).

Pasternak, L. *The Memoirs of Leonid Pasternak* (Quartet Books, London, Melbourne and New York, 1982).

Pattison, G. and Oenning Thompson, D. (eds.) *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001).

Peace, R. *Dostoevsky* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1971).

Pelikan Strauss, N. *Dostoevsky and the Woman Question: Re-readings at the End of the Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 1994).

Pittman, R. *The Writer's Divided Self in Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita* (Macmillan, Basingstoke and London, 1991).

- Plain, G. and Sellers, S. (eds.) *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007).
- Polukhina, V. *Joseph Brodsky: A Poet for our Time* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989).
- Propp, V. *Theory and History of Folklore* (University of Minnesota Press, Mineapolis, 1984).
- Radford Ruether, R. *Sexism and God-Talk* (SCM Press, London, 1983).
- Raku, M. 'The Wagnerian Contexts of *Doctor Zhivago*' in *Russian Studies in Literature*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2012, (pp. 44-81).
- Rando, F. 'The Essential Representation of Women' in *Art Journal*, vol. 50, iss. 2, 1991, (pp. 48-52).
- Rebel, G. 'Who is to Blame for it all?: The Characters' World, the Structure, and the Genre of *The Idiot*' in *Russian Studies in Literature*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2007-8, (pp. 49-89).
- Rhodes, C. *Black Cats and Evil Eyes: A Book of Old-Fashioned Superstitions* (Michael O'Mara Books Limited, London, 2012).
- Rougle, C. (ed.) *Red Cavalry: A Critical Companion* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1996).
- Rudova, L. *Understanding Boris Pasternak* (University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1997).
- Russo, M. *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (Routledge, New York and London, 1994).
- Rutten, E. *Unattainable Bride Russia: Gendering Nation, State, and Intelligentsia in Russian Intellectual Culture* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 2012).
- Rylkova, G. 'Doubling versus Totality in *Doktor Živago* of B. Pasternak' in *Russian Literature* vol. 43, iss. 4, 1998, (pp. 495-518).

Rzhevsky, N. *Russian Literature and Ideology: Herzen, Dostoevsky, Leontiev, Tolstoy, Fadeyev* (University of Illinois Press, Champaign, 1983).

Sahni, K. *A Mind in Ferment: Mikhail Bulgakov's Prose* (Arnold-Heineman Publishers, New Delhi, 1984).

Sartre, J. *Nausea* (Penguin, London, 2000).

- *Being and Nothingness* (Routledge, London and New York, 2003).

Sawicki, J. *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body* (Routledge, London, 1991).

Scanlan, J. *Dostoevsky The Thinker* (Cornell University Press, New York, 2002).

Schultze, S. *The Structure of Anna Karenina* (Ardis, Michigan, 1982).

Scott, K. 'Remembering Mary Magdalene' in *The Furrow*, vol. 59, no. 10, 2008, (pp. 577-9).

Seeley, F. *Dostoevsky's Women* in *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 39, 1961, (pp. 291-312).

- *From the Heyday of the Superfluous Man to Chekhov: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature* (Astra Press, Nottingham, 1994).

Sellers, S. *Writing Differences: Readings from the Seminar of Hélène Cixous* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1988).

- *Hélène Cixous: Authorship, Autobiography and Love* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1996).

Sellers, S. and Plain, G. (eds.) *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007).

Sendelback, A. 'The Realisation of Solov'ev's Philosophical treatise *The Meaning of Love* in Pasternak's Zhivago Poem *Winter Night*' in *Papers on Language and Literature*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2008, (pp. 115-44).

- Shcheglov, Y. 'Some Themes and Archetypes in Babel's *Red Cavalry*' in *Slavic Review*, vol. 53, no. 3, 1994, (pp. 653-70).
- Shiach, M. *Hélène Cixous: A Politics of Writing* (Routledge, London and New York 1991).
- Shklovsky, V. *Energy of Delusion: A Book on Plot* (University of Illinois, Springfield 2007).
- Showalter, E. *A Literature of Their Own* (Virago Press, London, 1982).
- *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980* (Virago Press, London, 1987).
- Sicher, E. *Style and Structure in the Prose of Isaak Babel* (Slavica Publishers, Ohio, 1985).
- Stallybrass, P. and White, A. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Cornell University Press, New York, 1986).
- Stevens, A. *Jung* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994).
- Sutcliffe, B. *The Prose of Life: Russian Women Writers from Khrushchev to Putin* (The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2009).
- Tambling, J. *Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2012).
- Tanner, T. *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1979).
- Tark, K. 'The Trappist Monk and Pasternak's Tree' in *Sewanee Review*, vol. 121, no. 3, 2013, (pp. 449-59).
- Tolstoy, S. and Porter, C. (trans.) *The Diaries of Sofia Tolstoy* (Alma Books, London, 1978)
- Tolstoy, T. *Tolstoy Remembered* (Michael Joseph Ltd, London, 1977).
- Tong, R. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Westview Press, Colorado, 1998).

Trickett, P. and Putnam, F. 'Impact of Child Sexual Abuse on Females: Toward a Developmental, Psychobiological Integration' in *Psychological Science*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1993, (pp. 81-7).

Trilling, L. 'Introduction' in Babel, I. *Collected Stories* (Penguin, London, 1961).

Turner, C. *A Karenina Companion* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Ontario, 1993).

Warhol, R. and Price Herndl, D. (eds.) *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2010)

Warner, M. *Once upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014)

- *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds; Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford University Press, 2004)
- *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1976).

Wasiolek, E. *Tolstoy's Major Fiction* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978).

Weeda, E. 'Rulers, Russia and the Eighteenth-Century Epic' in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 83, no. 2, 2005, (pp. 175-207).

Weir, J. *The Author as Hero: Self and Tradition in Bulgakov, Pasternak, and Nabokov* (Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 2002)

Whitford, M. 'Irigaray's Body Symbolic' in *Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1991, (pp. 97-110).

- *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (Routledge, London and New York 1991).

Wilcox, M., McWaters, K., Thompson, A. and Williams, L. (eds.) *The Body and the Text: Hélène Cixous, Reading and Teaching* (Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1990).

Williams, R. *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* (Baylor University Press, London, 2008).

Wittig, M. *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1992).

Yarmolinsky, A. *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* (Arco, London, 1957).

Young, S. *Dostoevsky's The Idiot and the Ethical Foundations of Narrative: Reading, Narrating, Scripting* (Anthem Press, London, 2004).

Zipes, J. *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2012).