

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM IN PUSHKIN'S

EVGENII ONEGIN

by

MICHAEL MADESKER, B.A.

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"Пою приятеля молодого
И множество его причуд.
Благослави мой долгий труд,
О ты эпическая муза!
И, верный посох мне вручив,
Не дай блуждать мне вкось и вкрив."

A.S. Pushkin

"It was one of Pushkin's great merits
that he disestablished the vogue of
monsters of vice and heroes of virtue,
depicting instead just ordinary people."

V. G. Belinsky

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AUTHOR: Michael Madesker, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor D. J. Jones

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: An analysis of Pushkin's novel Evgenii Onegin with the aim of showing that although superficially influenced by the romantic school, Pushkin may be considered the author of the first great example of realism in the field of the Russian novel.

Contains a preface and five chapters. Chapter I discusses the terms realism and romanticism; Chapter II outlines the content of the novel as published by Pushkin; Chapter III discusses the chapters sketched by Pushkin but never published; in Chapter IV an attempt is made to separate the realistic from the romantic elements in the novel; Chapter V provides a summary of the most important findings.

PREFACE

Evgenii Onegin occupies the central place among Pushkin's works. It is his best known and longest, and the one that has had the greatest influence on Russian literature as a whole. With Evgenii Onegin the poet gave a new dimension to Russian letters, at the same time using it as a vehicle for social and literary criticism.

It is proposed to show in this thesis that while Pushkin decked his "novel in verse" in the trappings of the romantic movement, its content is a rare example of vivid realism.

Romanticism is one of the hardest of literary terms to define, largely because it was a movement of revolt; what it was in revolt against was often easy enough to see, but what it favoured was not always too clear. As with so many revolutions, the forms to which it ultimately led, in this case realism, were not yet apparent in the original formless upheaval. Realism itself, being an end-product, is much more easily definable.

Chapter I, therefore, is concerned with defining terms. Chapter II examines the novel itself in detail. Chapter III investigates the "missing chapters". Chapter IV separates the romantic from the realistic elements. This will be followed by a concluding chapter summarizing the more important findings.

All quotations from Pushkin are taken from Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Pushkina (Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1948-54, 10 volumes). References to Evgenii Onegin, consisting merely of Chapter,

Stanza and Line Number (e.g. I, i, 1-2), are appended directly after the quotations. Other references to the Polnoe Sobranie are indicated fully by Volume, Page Number, etc. (e.g. Vol. V, p. 202, vi, 14), also appended after quotation.

References to works other than Pushkin's are indicated in the usual fashion by arabic numerals and corresponding footnotes.

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CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF ROMANTICISM AND REALISM IN EUROPEAN LITERATURE

Bertrand Russell calls romanticism a revolt against the ethical and aesthetic standards of its times. But he is quick to caution that "the romantics were not without morals; on the contrary, their moral judgements were sharp and vehement."¹ He notes that their preference for all that is grand, remote and terrifying is characteristic, and well exemplified by their preference for Gothic architecture.

Although the romantic movement originated with Rousseau, it was, at first, as Russell points out, mainly German. The English and French romantics were influenced by Kant, who taught at the end of the eighteenth century in Goettingen, the Mecca of romantic poets. An extreme and easily recognizable case, the Byronic romantic, is "violent and anti-social, an anarchic rebel or a conquering tyrant."² He is characterized by unfortunate love, destructive passions, hate, resentment, jealousy, remorse, despair, hurt pride and contempt for cowards. "The romantic movement, in its essence, aimed at liberating human personality from the fetters of social convention and social morality."³

Romanticism comes of age with the French Revolution and remains undisputed master of the field in Western Europe at least, for about half a century. Among the great authors to which the movement gave birth, but not necessarily their final stature, one is bound to include Hugo,

1 Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 677.

2 Ibid. p. 681.

3 Ibid. p. 683.

Byron, Balzac, Scott, Wordsworth, Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Goethe, Schiller, and Mickiewicz, as well as many composers and painters. The ideas, principles and philosophies created in that period naturally influenced the balance of the nineteenth century.

Realism, which replaced romanticism, owed much to it: "romanticism does not die out in 1850, but branches out under different names, like a delta."⁴ Jacques Barzun is undoubtedly right in adding that what the romantics wanted was liberty for the individual within a context of social order, as well as freedom of thought and religion without superstition or bias. Having failed, they became disappointed; their disappointment was expressed in realism.⁵

Alexander Herzen points out that the triumph of romanticism did not mean that classicism had died. It had only been forced into different ways of expressing itself.⁶ The principal poet of this epoch was Byron, while Scott and Chateaubriand were delving into Gothicism for inspiration. At the same time, Voltaire and the Encyclopedists had become the direct heirs of Roman and Greek thought. The two trends, then, existed side by side. When a new trend appeared, around 1830, the romantics saw it as being realistic, while the classicists saw in it idealism. Neither of the two older movements made any attempt to combat the new one. The classicists believed that it would fall apart from being too idealistic, the romanticists thought it would perish because

4 Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic and Modern (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1961), p. 99.

5 Ibid. p. 103.

6 A. Herzen, "Diletanty-Romantiki", in Fatherland Notes, 1842.

the public was not yet ready for it. The new movement, however, displaced both classicism and romanticism, by exposing them for what they were:

"Just as classicism belongs to the ancient world, so romanticism belongs to the Middle Ages. Neither can claim to govern the present, because the present in no way resembles the ancient world or the Middle Ages."⁷

Schiller, we may agree with Herzen, was a pure romantic, whereas Goethe, drawn more to humanism, was saddened in his old age to see that his really important works were ignored, while others were misunderstood. "Goethe had been essentially a realist, like Napoleon and the whole of our century; but romanticism had no faculty for the understanding of realism."⁸ Herzen goes on to point out a fact concerning Scott that could well apply to Pushkin, that "one of the principal disseminators of romanticism was no romanticist at all. His is the vital and practical outlook of his country. To recreate the life of an epoch does not yet mean to accept its one-sidedness."⁹

Barzun asserts that romanticism was already dead in the early 1840's. The masses, according to him, had ceased to sympathize with the movement some fifteen years earlier. He thus places the effective decline of romanticism as early as the middle of the 1820's (when Pushkin was writing Eygenii Onegin). It seems indeed, to use Barzun's metaphor, that the romantic stream was quicker in Russia than elsewhere to branch out, like a delta, into other channels.

7 A. Herzen, Selected Philosophical Works (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), p. 37.

8 Ibid. p. 47.

9 Ibid. p. 48.

In a letter to his friend, Christian Gotfried Koerner, Schiller says: "Certainly no greater words were ever spoken by mortal man than these of Kant which represent at once the essence of his entire philosophy: Determine yourself from within."¹⁰ Pushkin, presenting Lenskii to the reader, emphasizes that the latter was a disciple of Kant (VI, ii). He portrays the young poet as one who dreams of liberty, with a fiery spirit and an impassioned manner in his conversations. But there is little doubt that Pushkin did not himself subscribe fully to the idealistic romanticism of Kant or Schiller. Unlike the cosmopolitan Schiller, Pushkin was a nationalist and a patriot, a fact illustrated by his remorse over the tragedy of the Decembrist uprising.

On the other hand, in his essay "On the Sublime", Schiller says: "Whoever inflicts force upon us denies us nothing less than our humanity. Whoever submits to it out of cowardice casts away his humanity."¹¹ In this respect Pushkin's life and works show agreement with Schiller.

Schiller, comparing realistic and romantic poets, calls the realistic writers naïve, because they were allegedly able to see and describe Nature only as it appeared to them and therefore their field of creativity was limited.¹² The romantic poet, in Schiller's estimation, is sentimental but also more creative.¹³

¹⁰ Friedrich Schiller, An Anthology of Our Time (published and compiled by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York: 1960), p. 23.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 24.

¹² "Ueber Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung" in Schillers Philosophische Schriften und Gedichte (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1922).

¹³ Ibid. p. 344.

For him a realist is "naive", since he lacks the intuition of sentimentality.¹⁴

By contrast, Pushkin abhorred sentimentalism, a fact which is implicit in his Tales of Belkin. He soon outlived his early flirtation with romanticism, i.e., Byron, and was essentially a realist. Hence, we observe the tremendous gulf between Pushkin the realist and Lenskii the disciple of Schiller and Kant.

Pushkin was well acquainted with the works of Victor Hugo. In a letter to Mme. E. M. Khitrovo (May 19-24, 1830) he says: "Hugo et Sainte-Beuve sont sans contredit les seuls poètes français de l'époque, surtout Sainte-Beuve" (Vol. V, p. 289). But in a further letter, this one written to M. F. Pogodin (first part of September, 1832), Pushkin criticizes Hugo: "One thing that provokes me: I would like to expose for all time the whole ugly baseness of contemporary French literature. I would like to say just once, out loud, that Lamartine is duller than Young, but does not have his depth, that Béranger is not a poet, that V. Hugo has no life, i.e., no truth; that the novels of A. Vigny are worse than the novels of Zagoskin."

One may surmise the Pushkin, who published nothing that did not come up to his own high standards of craftsmanship, had soon discovered the uneven quality of Hugo's output; yet in fact much of his own theory was in tune with Hugo's: "Truth in art cannot possibly be, as several writers have claimed, absolute reality. Art cannot produce the thing itself."¹⁵

14 Ibid. p. 399.

15 C. W. Eliot, Prefaces and Prologues (The Harvard Classics) (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909) Vol. 39, p. 385.

It is quite consistent with artistic truth, according to Hugo, to add fictitious elements to events that have actually taken place in order to make them more vivid and better understood. The aim of art is to revive history, with all the local colour and dramatic effects of its times. In addition Hugo advises young poets to attune the drama of life to the drama of consciousness, to place man in his own historical environment. Pushkin is unlikely to have disagreed.

If only for the reason that Pushkin alludes so frequently to Byron in Evgenii Onegin, we are bound to compare the two poets at some length.

It is significant, as V. Zhirmunsky¹⁶ says, that "in contrast to the classical poems, the romantic poems of Byron have the style associated with novels." The action is concentrated around one hero, it describes his inner conflicts and affairs of the heart. The poem's composition is characterized by a lyrical introduction followed by a sudden beginning of action which takes the reader directly into the heart of the story. The action is provided by separate dramatic situations, which determine the pace of the story. In the remainder of the poem we have short detached passages, which do not necessarily deal with the situation, but provide food for thought. There is an abundance of dramatic monologue, as well as dialogue, which deals with the hero's feelings. The poet's own involvement with the story is emphasized by lyrical repetitions, questions and digressions. It is as if the poet were trying to identify himself with the hero's inner

16 V. Zhirmunsky, Bairon i Pushkin (Leningrad: Academia, 1924) own translation. p. 21.

feelings. "Byron more than anything has strengthened in the romantic poem what may be called the centripetal force, the centralization of the whole story-telling around the hero, his inner experiences, which dominate the action and, through emotional identification, become a lyrical expression of the poet's own feelings."¹⁷

Lyrical digressions in the works of Byron are not self-contained, that is to say they are not set apart from the main trend of thought. "They develop inconspicuously from the emotional manner of the narration, adorned by the subjective presence of the author, and in this manner present those questions and exclamations which have received an independent meaning in the composition and have occupied a more or less separate place in the story."¹⁸

The themes of Byron's poems were in no way original. The romantic tale, unusual characters, and melodramatic situations, the poetic elements associated with Byron, can also be found in Chateaubriand, Walter Scott, Thomas More and in many other outstanding writers of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. "But Byron, as the 'ruler of men's minds' of his generation was able in his works to unite all the elements of the new art and to present them to the reader in this form, which from this time on governed their imaginations more strongly and acquired a kind of canonical importance for the whole epoch."¹⁹

17 Ibid. p. 23.

18 Ibid. p. 95.

19 Ibid. p. 98.

Byronic heroes are disappointed men. The poet gives detailed descriptions of their emotional state, but not the reasons for their disillusionment. The reasons, therefore, remain unclear. This problem is magnified by the fact that they are not always similar nor seemingly logical.

An echo of Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, as Zhirmunsky points out, can be found in Pushkin's Kavkazskii Plennik, where the prisoner declares that he is no longer used to happiness and his tender emotions have turned to stone.²⁰ This motive is also found in one of the stanzas that did not go into the final edition, a confession by the prisoner that he is satiated with the erotic delights of passionate youth (Vol. IV, p. 496). Zhirmunsky cites for comparison various passages in Canto One of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: the hero's spending "his days in riot most uncouth" (stanza ii, line 3); reference to bacchanals in stanza vi and to carnal pleasures in stanza ii, and especially stanza iv, line 7: "He felt the fullness of satiety."

Zhirmunsky sees this approach copied by Pushkin in Evgenii Onegin. But as Barzun²¹ asserts (more correctly, one feels): "The quick reception of influences, as shown in Pushkin's Byronism, is a sign, not of imitation but of pre-established sympathy between minds independently tending towards the same goals." Indeed, Byron and Pushkin differ radically in the final treatment of their heroes. Byron's e.g. the Corsair and Lara, repent for their sins; Pushkin's Onegin, on the other hand, although he felt remorse, never repented.

20 A. S. Pushkin, Kavkazskii Plennik, Part II, lines 66-67.

21 J. Barzun, op. cit., p. 98.

In 1825, Pushkin began writing an essay entitled "Classical and Romantic Poetry", which, however, he never finished. In it, he attacks Russian critics who, he says, base their opinions erroneously on the writings of French critics and assume that a work characterized by French sentimentalism or German idealism is romantic. Despite such characteristics, he argues, some works belong rather to classicism. For, according to Pushkin, only "those genres which were not known to the ancients and those in which previous forms have been changed or replaced by others"²² can be considered romantic.

After the destruction of the ancient arts, he declares, poetry underwent a renaissance. "Under the skies of Southern France verses resounded in a Romance tongue."²³ These verses of the troubadours had had a profound influence on the development of modern literature. In the new forms of literary expression (ballads, sonnets, etc.) "petty witticisms have replaced feeling",²⁴ while the signs of this degeneration were to be found in the works of "the greatest geniuses of the present times." Among the pure romantics who had made a valid and lasting contribution to literature Pushkin counts La Fontaine and Voltaire.

We can see from the above that as early as 1825, that is only two years after he began writing Evgenii Onegin, Pushkin was outspokenly opposed to the romantic movement. Small wonder then, that having

22 Own translation, vol. VII, p..33..

23 Own translation, vol. VII, p. 34.

24 Own translation, vol. VII, p. 34.

established a reputation with such romantic works as Ruslan and Ludmila, Bakhchiserayskii Fontan and Kavkazskii Plennik, his later work, reflecting a reaction to romanticism, was not properly appreciated.

For there can be no doubt that realism came into being as a reaction to the excesses of romanticism. Among these were over-expressiveness (which Pushkin criticized in Karamzin), unsuccessful attempts at new forms, overemphasis on dramatic contrast and intensity, and carelessness with facts. As Barzun states: "Irritated by all this, the realists applied as their new criterion of the 'really real' the denominator of common experience. Flaubert supplies the classic example of Realism so defined and made into a method. Madame Bovary is the bible of Realism just as Faust is the bible of romanticism."²⁵

Prosper Merimee, a realist of note, is of particular interest in connection with Pushkin. He began his literary career as a romantic and was, in his youth, strongly influenced by his friend Hugo. To this period of his life belongs a collection of supposedly Illyrian (Serbian) ballads, La Guzla, which were translated by Pushkin into Russian, on the mistaken assumption that they were of Slavic origin (they are better known in Russian under the title Songs of the Western Slavs).

Merimee, who knew Russian, translated into French some of the works of Gogol and Turgenev. He is also credited with introducing Pushkin's prose to the French public. He considered all three as foremost exponents of realism.

25 J. Barzun, op. cit., p. 104.

The works of Gogol, even his most mature, are not without romantic traits - fantasy and a love for the supernatural - but they are characterized chiefly by remarkable power of observation and a keen sense of humour. Fantasy and realism are blended, as for example in the Greatcoat, where he describes the plight of a clerk whose greatest desire was the possession of a new greatcoat, whose ultimate misfortune was its theft, and whose revenge was accomplished by his ghost. In Dead Souls and the Government Inspector he explores dishonesty in all its guises, exposing reality through the grotesque. In the words of Mirsky: "The caricatures he drew were weirdly and terribly like the reality about him."²⁶ Gogol himself, in a lecture on Pushkin, singles out pity for all unfortunates as one of the great qualities of Russian literature. Moreover, it had been at Pushkin's urging that Gogol turned his talents to writing stories based on Russian history and popular Russian scenes. In this fact we have a clue to Pushkin's own intentions.

Turgenev, to quote Marc Slonim, was "a promoter of realism at home, and an unofficial ambassador of Russian culture in Europe."²⁷ He studied under Pletnev, a friend of Pushkin's, and published his early verses in Pushkin's journal "Sovremennik." His first prose work, A Hunter's Notes, was a realistic account of the life of serfs, peasants and squires. Written in a "matter of fact" style, it is a realistic picture of Russia's country life in the eighteen forties. Mirsky calls Turgenev "a highly intelligent and creative pupil of

²⁶ D. S. Mirsky, A History of Russian Literature (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), p. 158.

²⁷ M. Slonim, An Outline of Russian Literature (New York: Mentor Book, 1959), p. 64.

Pushkin's." ²⁸ "Like Pushkin in Evgenii Onegin, Turgenev does not analyze and dissect his heroes; he does not uncover their souls; he only conveys their atmosphere, partly by showing how they are reflected in others, partly by an exceedingly delicate and finely woven aura of suggestive accompaniment - a method that at once betrays its origin in a poetic novel."²⁹ In all his works Turgenev displayed a mastery of the realistic portrait devoid of caricature. Furthermore, it was Turgenev who coined the term "superfluous man", so applicable to Pushkin's hero Evgenii Onegin.

In 1830, Pushkin wrote a short note on the novels of Walter Scott.³⁰ In it he says: "The principal attraction of Walter Scott's novels is that in them we become acquainted with the past, not in the manner of the excitable (enflure) French tragedies - nor with the stiffness of sentimental novels - and not with the dignity of history, but in a contemporary manner."³¹ Pushkin was also impressed by Scott's independence in his refusal to flatter royalty.

Pushkin's note emphasizes two basic things: (1) that he did not object to a modern interpretation of historical facts, as long as they were not distorted, and (2) that the poet held in contempt sentimental romantic writers. Pushkin thus declared himself a realist.

28 D. S. Mirsky, op. cit., p. 201.

29 D. S. Mirsky, op. cit., p. 201.

30 "Sketches, notes, conspects, plans", vol. VII.

31 Own translation, vol. Vii, p. 529.

Romanticism then, is a literary movement characterized chiefly by idealistic cults, such as the worship of nature, and a subjective presentation of facts. It appeals primarily to the emotions and the imagination, and is often highly coloured by autobiographical material. A morbid interest in the supernatural is also an element of Romanticism.

Realism, on the other hand, appears as a movement opposed to idealism and stands for an objective recounting of facts, with nature cast in a neutral role and the supernatural all but ignored. Its hallmark is the objective and unemotional treatment of reality.

CHAPTER II

EVGENII ONEGIN: A DETAILED ANALYSIS

As early as 1822, a year before beginning Evgenii Onegin, Pushkin wrote: "Precision and brevity - these are the prime merits of prose. It demands thoughts and more thoughts, without them the most brilliant expressions are of no use. Verses are another matter."³²

The idea of writing a novel in verse Pushkin without doubt took from Byron. There are several references in Evgenii Onegin to Byron himself and to the hero of the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold. There is also the letter written on November 4, 1823, to P. A. Vyazemsky: "As concerns my pursuits, I am now writing not just a novel, but a novel in verse - a devil of a difference. Not unlike Don Juan."³³

Pushkin started writing Evgenii Onegin on May 9, 1823, a year after formulating his thoughts regarding prose writing. It is possible that he did not feel himself practiced enough to use the exacting rules he set for prose, or he may have had other reasons. It is certainly arguable that in literary history good verse precedes good prose. Verse is essentially an exercise in its own various devices - "brilliant expressions." Precision and brevity are the least of its concerns. However, even in the verses of Evgenii Onegin, as we shall see, Pushkin worked according to self-imposed rules, shunning "poetic licence" and achieving remarkable precision and brevity despite what has aptly been

32 Own translation, vol. VII, pp. 15-16.

33 Own translation, vol. X, pp. 69-70.

called the encyclopaedic scope of his work.

The plot of Evgenii Onegin is very simple. It is a story of unrequited love, set in early nineteenth century Russia. What holds the readers attention then is not the plot, but its development. Verse, from the point of view of content, is less formal than prose, and allows the writer a much freer hand with digressions. In fact some of the most beautiful descriptions and lyrical passages in Evgenii Onegin, and much of the wider gamut of Pushkin's own views and feelings, are found in the novel's digressions. All in all, digressions and descriptive passages occupy in Evgenii Onegin more than two thirds of the lines, leaving only one third to the plot itself. Prose, even by less rigorous standards than those of Pushkin, could never allow such frequent departures from the basic story. The poet, it seems, saw the advantages presented to him by writing his novel in verse and seized them with both hands.

The similarities between Don Juan and Evgenii Onegin are few. Both novels are fictitious tales of contemporary life in stanzaed verse. Don Juan, however, has only eight lines to a stanza, written in iambic pentameters; while Evgenii Onegin is written in iambic tetrameters with fourteen lines to a stanza. In both novels the authors treated each stanza as a separate unit. Enjambement between stanzas is a very rare exception; in fact, Pushkin used it only ten times, each for a specific effect, which would have been lost had it occurred too frequently. But Evgenii Onegin differs in many more matters than it is similar to Don Juan.

That Pushkin did not set out to imitate Byron is suggested straight away by the fact that he called the main divisions of his work

chapters ("glavy"), while the English poet used the term canto, both in Don Juan and the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold. Both poets delayed their plots and indulged in long digressions. But while Pushkin's digressions are never far from the scenes of his plot and always in some way germane to his argument, Byron often strayed far afield, as with his description of warfare in Canto vii. For another thing, despite much sarcasm in it, Evgenii Onegin is not truly satirical. It gives in fact an accurate picture of contemporary Russian life (or rather that of Pushkin's own class), whereas Don Juan does not portray Byron's own environment. The ultimate impression produced on the reader by Evgenii Onegin is an overall one, which depends a lot, because it is a novel, on the final outcome; in Don Juan different impressions may be produced by different parts, and remain quite separate from one another.

Because of its fourteen line stanzas, each with seven rhymes but only four couplets, one is tempted to say that Evgenii Onegin is almost a novel written in sonnets. On closer examination it becomes evident, however, that the "Onegin stanza" is a unique creation. For one thing it is not written in pentameters, for another the symmetry of the first quatrain is different from that of the second. As if to confirm these differences, Pushkin wrote in 1830 his "Sonnet":

Суровый Дант не презирал сонета;
 В нем жар любви Петрарка изливал;
 Игру его любил творец Макбета;
 Им скорбну мысль Камознс облекал.
 И в наши дни пленяет он поэта;
 Вордсворт его орудием избрал,
 Когда вдали от суетного света
 Природы он рисует идеал.
 Под сенью гор Тавриды отдаленной
 Певец Литвы в размер его стесненный
 Свои мечты мгновенью заключал.
 Уже еще его не знали девы,
 Как для него уж Дельвиг забывал
 Гексаметра священные напевы.

(vol. III, p. 167.)

A modern Polish critic has written: "The sonnet is a kind of a lyrical poem, which was not known to the ancients. It took its beginnings in the Middle Ages, and probably for this reason, contemporary esthetes consider this type of poem as part of romantic poetry, although the actual symbols of romanticism are not a necessary part of it.....
..In various countries, especially in England and Germany, except for the name and similarity in shape, they had nothing in common with each other, and in all of them the subject and purpose were chosen freely. Some of them paint a live and strong feeling, others contain a description of matters or actions which could have been rendered in some other type of poetry, others finally - and of these sonnets probably the French have the most - are only a toy for witticism or an empty way of showing off."³⁴

One of the best known forms is the Petrarchan sonnet. Although it is not the original form, it was brought to its fullest development by Petrarch in the fourteenth century. It is divided into two parts: an octave, rhyming abbaabba, and a sestet, rhyming cdecde. There are some Petrarchan sonnets with variations in the sestet, but there are never more than five rhymes in the poem.

The Miltonian sonnet differs from the Petrarchan only in its total lack of variety in the rhyme of the sestets.

The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into three quatrains and a concluding couplet. Its rhyme scheme is abab-cdcd-efef-gg or abba-cddc-effe-gg.

³⁴ W. Billip, Mickiewicz w Oczach Współczesnych (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1962), own translation, p. 140.

The Mickiewicz sonnets have three basic variations of rhyme scheme in their sestets: efe-fef, efg-efg or eee-fff.

The Onegin stanza is writtem in iambic tetrameters and consists of fourteen lines with a fixed rhyme scheme, according to the following formula: AbAbCCddEffEgg, where the capital letters denote a masculine rhyme. All "kontsovkas" (final couplets) are feminine.

B. V. Tomashevskii³⁵ says that if one were to open Evgenii Onegin at random and read only a first quatrain, one would encounter a complete syntactic as well as logical entity, serving as an introduction to the balance of the stanza. Where Pushkin did not follow this pattern it was only for some special effect, or because of a continuity of thought from a previous stanza (see page 15), or for the expression of a lengthy thought within the same paragraph. In support of these observations, Tomashevskii points out that about seventy per cent of first quatrains are self-contained, while the second and third quatrains are in the majority of cases interdependent. Whenever the last two lines follow a full stop they serve as a form of epilogue for the whole stanza.

The middle quatrains are characterized by their "instability", with frequent changes in pace and ideas often emphasized by enjambements and sudden halts in the syntax:

Скажите: Вашей душой
Какое чувство овладеет.

(VI, xxxiv, 8-9)

35 B. V. Tomashevskii, Literaturnoe Nasledstvo (Moscow: 1934) vols. XVI-XVIII, p. 386.

In giving a stanza separate sense identity, Pushkin employed many syntactic manoeuvres, such as:

- (1) anaphoric construction (repetition of an identical word or group of words in successive verses):

Там скука, там обман иль бред;
В том совести, в том смысла нет.

(I, xliv, 7-8)

- (2) syntactic parallels in sentence construction:

Чем меньше женщину мы любим,
Тем больше нравимся мы ей,
И тем ее вернее губим
Средь обольстительных сетей.
Разврат бывало, хладнокровный
Наукой славился любовной,
Сам о себе везде трубя
И наслаждаясь не любя.

(IV, vii, 1-8)

- (3) pronominal connections between sentences:

Архивны юноши толпою
На Таню чопорно глядят
И про нее между собою
Неблагодарно говорят.
Один какой-то шут печальный,
Её находит идеальной
И, прислонившись у дверей,
Элегию готовит ей.

(VII, xlix, 1-8)

- (4) changes in the natural order of words:

А я - быть может, я гробницы
Сойду в таинственную сень.

(VI, xxii, 3-4)

In general, by using verse Pushkin was able to add substance and subtlety to an otherwise bare and simple story.

Evgenii Onegin was written over a period of ten years. The existence of fragments of two further chapters, not included in the original publication, testify to Pushkin's intention of continuing the novel. In many ways Evgenii Onegin is a diary of the author's own development and emotions, the confession of a man's awakening to the realities of life. As we shall see later in this work, the romanticism of the novel is most pronounced in the parts written prior to 1825, the year of the Decembrist rising, in which Pushkin was all but implicated. It is almost as if the poet's anticipation of trouble ahead converted him to realism. This change is symbolised in the novel by the death at this point of Lenskii, the incarnation of romanticism.

The exact dates when Pushkin wrote separate chapters of Evgenii Onegin are easily verified through checking the dates appended to them in most of the editions of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and ascribed to the poet himself. The dates can be further substantiated in the volume Rasskazy o Prizhiznennikh Izdaniyakh Pushkina, by N. Smirnov-Sokolskii, where the publication date of a poem or part thereof is followed by the date when an item was actually written, as witnessed by Pushkin's own diary or by his letters accompanying the poem to the censor or publisher.

Pushkin began writing Evgenii Onegin in Kishenev, May 9, 1823. He finished the first chapter on October 22, 1823, in Odessa.

Still in Odessa, he finished the second chapter, between October 22 and December 8, 1823. He began writing the third chapter in February, 1824 and finished it on October 2, 1824, at Mikhailovskoe.

Pushkin had been banished from Odessa to Mikhailovskoe on July 8, 1824, and remained there till the end of August, 1826. During 1827, the poet paid a lengthy visit to Mikhailovskoe.

Towards the end of 1824, in Mikhailovskoe, Pushkin began working simultaneously on chapters four, five and six. The fourth and fifth chapters were finished by the end of January, 1826, the sixth on August 10, 1826.

He began writing the seventh chapter at Mikhailovskoe in August, 1827 and continued working on it during his travels to Moscow and St. Petersburg, finishing it at Malinniki on November 4, 1828.

Pushkin began writing Onegin's Travels, apparently with the intention of making it the eighth chapter of the novel, in Moscow, during September 1829. He continued it in Pavlovskoe and completed it at Boldino in October, 1830.

The eighth chapter, as we now know it, was apparently at first planned as chapter nine, for Pushkin began writing it at the same time as Onegin's Travels and finished it at Boldino, September 25, 1830. Simultaneously with the eighth chapter, Pushkin wrote chapter ten, dealing with the Decembrists. Since this chapter expressed thoughts of a revolutionary nature Pushkin burned it on October 19, 1830. Only very few fragments have survived.

Onegin's letter to Tatyana, which was included in chapter eight, was written at Tsarskoe Selo, on October 5, 1831.

Each chapter was first published separately, either in Moscow or in St. Petersburg. The first complete edition appeared in St. Petersburg in 1833. The second edition, also printed at St. Peters-

burg, appeared on the day of Pushkin's death, January 29, 1837.

All works of Pushkin, published during his lifetime, including Evgenii Onegin, were edited by his friend, P. A. Pletnev.

In the First Chapter of Evgenii Onegin, Pushkin acquaints us straight away with the hero of the novel. This first encounter is via a mental soliloquy of Onegin's on the tedium and hypocrisy of tending a sick uncle (from whom he will inherit). Before introducing Onegin formally, the poet has told us, briefly but sufficiently, about the hero's father and the manner in which the young man was brought up. Liberal use of macaronic verses gives this description a satirical effect.

The bulk of the chapter is taken up with the details of Onegin's life prior to our meeting him. Pushkin gives us especially telling accounts of the life of this idle young nobleman, and enhances the picture with digressive passages reinforcing the impressions created. One of the methods employed by the poet to impart reality to the picture is onomatopoeia, as for example in this restaurant scene:

Вошел - и пробка в потолок,
Вина кометы брызнул ток.

(I, xvi, 7-8)

Pushkin takes us, together with Onegin, to the theater and the ballet. These excursions give the poet an opportunity for wistful reminiscences concerning actresses and ballerinas. By introducing variations of pace and through repetition of key words, Pushkin imparts reality and unity to the description of the ballet:

Стоит Истомина; она,
 Одной ногой касаясь пола,
 Другою медленно кружит,
 И вдруг прижок, и вдруг летит,
 Летит как пух от уст Эола,
 То стан совет, то разовьет,
 И быстрой ножкой ножку бьет.

(I, xx, 8-14)

Onegin returns home after the theater to change into evening attire. This gives the poet an opportunity to describe the fastidiousness of contemporary dressing habits, while during his description of the ball that follows, he indulges in the purely personal fascination held for him by female feet.

Pushkin takes great pains to emphasize that he is not to be confused with the hero, who by now, tired of the ball, is returning home.

The subsequent stanzas (xxxvi-xxxviii) are devoted to a description of Onegin's boredom with life and uselessness to others. Pushkin refers in passing to Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, by comparing the heroes of the two works:

Как Child-Harold, угрюмый, томный
 В гостиных появился он.

(I, xxxviii, 9-10)

Once again the poet points out that he and Onegin are not to be considered as one person:

. ничего
 Не вышло из пера его,
 И не попал он в цех задорный
 Людей, о коих не сужу,
 Затем, что к ним принадлежу.

(I, xliii, 9-14)

Next (stanzas xlv-xlvi) Pushkin installs himself as an intermediary between the reader and the hero, with whom, we are told, he had shared a desire to travel abroad. Onegin had been unable to embark on such a journey due to the responsibilities he had to assume on the death of his father and uncle. Pushkin himself was prevented from travelling abroad by the conditions of his exile.

The chapter ends in further digressions idealizing country life, where, forgetting the affairs of his heart, Pushkin can once again settle to writing:

Прошла любовь, явилась муза.

(I, lix, 1)

and then

И скоро, скоро бури след
В душе моей совсем утихнет:
Тогда-то я начну писать
Поэму песень в двадцать пять.

(I, lix, 11-14)

In Chapter II Pushkin introduces the reader to the rest of the main characters, including the heroine, Tatyana Larina. One of the Onegin's neighbours was a young poet, Vladimir Lenskii, who was likewise considered strange by the gentry. Lenskii has just returned, after a long absence, from abroad. This young man is a romantic, raised in the idealistic schools of Kantism. His introduction to the reader affords Pushkin the opportunity for a digression containing such gibes at German idealism as:

Вольнолюбивые мечты.

(II, vi, 11)

and

Он верил, что друзья готовы
За честь его принять оковы.

(II, vii, 5-6)

Onegin, according to Pushkin, was the only man who could truly appreciate Lenskii's poetic nature. The only reason for the other neighbours to become friendly was that Lenskii was a highly eligible bachelor. However, the "half-Russian" young poet did not consider marriage as yet.

Although of entirely different interests and temperament, Onegin and Lenskii become friends:

От делать нечего друзья.

(II, xii, 14)

Lenskii was the better educated of the two, but because of his timidity was bullied and tolerated rather than liked by Onegin.

Onegin extracts from his new friend his only secret, his love for a country girl, Olga. This love for a childhood sweetheart is greatly exaggerated by long absence. Olga is described as a pretty girl, but not unusual:

. но любой роман
Возьмите и найдете, верно,
Её портрет.

(II, xxiii, 8-10)

A much more interesting person, Pushkin suggests, is her older sister:

Позвольте мне, читатель мой,
Заняться старшей сестрой.

(II, xxiii, 13-14)

Tatyana's arrival on the scene serves Pushkin as an excuse for another notable digression, on the life and habits of the squires. The poet begins by drawing our attention to their lack of sophistication in such a seemingly minor point as the choice of names. Tatyana, although a name later, thanks to Pushkin, to achieve great popularity, was at the time associated with socially inferior people:

. Мы все должны
Признаться: вкусу очень мало
У нас и в наших именах.

(II, xxiv, 8-10)

also

Нам просвещение не пристало,
И нам досталось от него
Жеманство - больше ничего.

(II, xxiv, 12-14)

Tatyana, according to the poet, was not as vivacious or pretty as her younger sister. In a passage seemingly suggested by traditional hagiography. Pushkin describes her shyness and her aversion to childhood games. She was only interested in novels, particularly the sentimental creations of Richardson and Rousseau. We may recall from the Kievan and Muscovite hagiographies that the saints were regularly portrayed as having been remarkable children, who were not interested in childish pursuits and devoted their time instead to the reading of holy books. Similarly Tatyana, Pushkin seems to suggest, was a devotee of the sacred writ, as it were, of romanticism - the works of Richardson and Rousseau - and had never wasted her time on normal childish diversions. Tatyana's father had not concerned himself with his daughter's literary interests:

Он в книгах не видал вреда;
Он, не читая никогда,
Их почитал пустой игрушкой.

(II, xxix, 7-9)

The mother fostered her daughter's literary tastes, being herself a devotee of the two authors. The books brought to Larina bittersweet memories of unrequited love and distracted her from the marriage of convenience to which she was resigned:

Привычка свыше нам дана:
Замена счастию она.

(II, xxxi, 13-14)

Pushkin, always critical of the rural gentry, takes this opportunity to describe the Larins' domestic affairs. We are left in no doubt that for the sake of peace and quiet, and perhaps because of his own incompetence, General Larin left matters of household administration in the hands of his wife. Larin had died prior to the arrival of the two young men in the district. In telling us of Larin's death, he makes appropriate use of a Biblical expression, thus placing Tatyana's father among the God-fearing landed gentry:

И новый он принял венец.

(II, xxxvi, 4)

Lenskii, on his return home from Goettingen, pays a visit to the local cemetery to pay homage to his own parents and to Larin, while in the concluding stanzas Pushkin recalls his own childhood and reaffirms his zest for life (xxxix, 9).

The Third Chapter opens with a conversation between Lenskii and Onegin. In the exchange, Onegin, once again, expresses his contempt for rural life and its people. Yet in the same breath he suggests a visit to the Larins. In his innocence, Lenskii invites Onegin to go with him. The two friends are soon heading for the Larin estate, where they are

greeted in the customary friendly manner.

In an obvious attempt at offending Lenskii, Onegin makes a highly derogatory remark concerning Olga:

В чертах у Ольги жизни нет.

(III, v, 8)

Lenskii does not answer this provocation.

In the opinion of the neighbours, marriage between Lenskii and Olga is certain. It is for this reason that all curiosity is directed towards the newcomer Onegin. Gossip has it that he and Tatyana are secretly engaged and only lack of modern wedding bands has delayed the marriage. Tatyana, outwardly angry at such talk, is in fact more than happy at the thought that the match might occur:

Пора пришла, она влюбилась.
Так в землю падшее зерно
Весны огнем оживлено.

(III, vii, 6-8)

In her vivid imagination, Tatyana sees Onegin as the answer to her dreams, and herself as the heroine of a romantic novel.

Pushkin, digressing again, now reviews the tastes of the Russian reading public. He feels that he himself may soon turn to prose:

Я перестану быть поэтом,
В меня вселится новый бес.

(III, xiii, 3-4)

In distinct contradiction to an earlier mood (Chapter I), Pushkin now sees Byron in a somewhat less flattering light:

Британской музы небылицы
Тревожат сон отроковицы.

(III, xii, 5-6)

and

Лорд Байрон прихотью удачной
Облек в унылый романтизм
И безнадежный эгоизм.

(III, xii, 12-14)

Pushkin feels sorry for Tatyana. He feels that she has fallen in love with a man not worthy of her. Onegin is an unscrupulous man who may take advantage of Tatyana's naiveté. In the meantime, the house guests depart and the girl is growing restive. To the nursemaid's protestations that she appears ill, Tatyana can only answer that she is in love.

Pushkin now takes time to compare the genuine feelings of Tatyana with those of the society ladies he has known:

Кокетка судит хладнокровно,
Татьяна любит не шутя.

(III, xxv, 1-2)

and her inexperience with the perfidy of others:

Измучим сердце, а потом
Ревнивым оживим огнем.

(III, xxv, 10-11)

Pushkin points out that like most well-bred girls, Tatyana could not write as well in Russian as in French. The letter she writes now to Onegin is in French, and it is the poet, as narrator of his friend's exploits, who gives us the Russian translation. Further, abandoning the sarcasm of earlier remarks on the subject, Pushkin offers some rather more serious thoughts on the qualities of the Russian language:

Я верен буду старине.

(III, xxviii, 14)

and:

Мне галлицизмы будут милы.

(III, xxix, 6)

Tatyana, in her letter, confesses her love to Onegin. She knows what kind of a man he is and therefore begs him not to betray her or take advantage of her. He may fulfil her innermost desires just as easily as ruin her life!

Кончаю! страшно перечестъ...
 Стыдом и страхом замираю...
 Но мне порукой ваша честь,
 И смело ей себя вверяю...

(Vol, V, p. 72)

Tatyana sends the letter to Onegin by hand and impatiently awaits an answer.

This pause in the action gives Pushkin an opportunity to show yet another facet of country life, the gathering of berries. While at work the serf-girls have to sing, as a check (one wonders how effective!) on their eating the fruit.

Onegin, finally appears; the poet, however, feigning weariness, excuses himself until the next chapter and purposely leaves the reader in suspense.

The Fourth Chapter is in the main concerned with Onegin's rejection of Tatyana, which, at the end of the novel, he is so bitterly to regret.

The chapter opens with Onegin's views on the art of love. This is an echo of the poet's remarks in the third chapter, dealing with the differences between the feelings of Tatyana and those of certain society

ladies (III-iii). It is also a justification of Onegin, whose behaviour towards Tatyana at this juncture, however 'lacking' in feeling, is nevertheless perfectly honourable:

Чем меньше женщину мы любим,
Тем легче нравимся мы ей,
И тем ее вернее губим
Средь обольстительных сетей.

(IV, vii, 1-4)

and:

Быть может, чувствий пыл старинный
Им на минуту овладел;
Но обмануть он не хотел
Доверчивость души невинной.

(IV, xi, 9-12)

Onegin meets Tatyana at the gates of the estate. While the two are walking, Onegin confesses to Tatyana that if he loves her, it is only "as a brother." He would be unable to settle to domestic life even with her, but will honour her confidence. He warns Tatyana not to betray her feelings so recklessly in future, since someone may take advantage of her inexperience. Pushkin adds a cynical comment to Onegin's "noble" act:

Врагов имеет в мире всяк,
Но от друзей спаси нас, боже!

(IV, xviii, 11-12)

The poet's sarcastic remarks on love, friendship and family ties run for five stanzas and provide a perfect counterpoint to his genuinely sympathetic treatment of Tatyana's grief at rejection. In fact the poet is not merely sympathizing with the girl; he has deep affection for her:

Простите мне: я так люблю
Татьяну милую мою.

(IV, xxiv, 13-14)

In contrast to the abrupt end of the romance between the principal heroes, Pushkin describes Lenskii's so far blissful relationship with Olga. Lenskii's inscriptions in Olga's album are used by Pushkin for a further digression on the quality of literary works. The digression is in the form of an imaginary discussion between critics and poets on the merits of certain literary genres and tastes. In a sarcastic aside, Pushkin tells us that he reads verses of questionable merit only to his nurse-maid. He finds another outlet for bad verses in scaring ducks:

Бродя над озером моим,
Пугаю стадо диких уток:
Вняв пенью сладкозвучных строф,
Они слетают с берегов.

(IV, xxxv, 11-14)

Onegin continues living on his estate, but in contrast to his previous carefree life, he leads the existence of a hermit. He becomes interested in the surrounding beauty to which he was blind before. Pushkin supplements Onegin's observations with a description of the Russian countryside in the autumn, and the joys of country life during the winter. For those who did not enjoy the cold outdoors there was always the solace of books. Onegin turns to reading, in which, again, Pushkin finds him similar to Childe Harold.³⁶ A visit from Lenskii is an occasion for a magnificent dinner and a discourse on the merits of different wines. It is at this point (IV, xlvii, 12) that the poet uses a direct translation of the French "entre chien et loup" (Russian "пора мех волка и собаки") to describe the twilight, thus again entering the literary controversy of his time.

36 IV, in xlv the name "Childe Harold" is transliterated into Russian, whereas in a previous reference (I, xxxviii), Pushkin uses the original English.

Lenskii, in the course of the dinner, refers somewhat vulgarly to Olga's more obvious beauties with an expression that is in distinct contrast to Pushkin's own pastoral simile in an earlier chapter:

Pushkin earlier:

Невинной прелести полна,
В глазах родителей, она
Цвела как ландыш потаенный,
Незнаемый в траве глухой
Ни мотыльками, ни пчелой.

(ii, XXI, 10-14)

Lenskii now:

У Ольги плечи, что за грудь!
Что за душа!

(IV, xlviii, 7-8)

Suddenly Lenskii remembers that Saturday is Tatyana's nameday and that both he and Onegin are invited to a party in her honour. Lenskii is so carried away that he persuades Onegin into accepting before the latter has hardly time to think.

Pushkin contrasts the moods of the two friends in the last stanza of the chapter:

that of Lenskii

Он был любим... по крайней мере,
Так думал он и был счастлив.

(IV, li, 1-2)

and that of Onegin

Но жалок тот, кто все предвидит
Чья не кружится голова.

(IV, li, 9-10)

In the Fifth Chapter, Pushkin continues his description of the Russian winter. The poet finds the panorama beautiful, and adds, sarcastically, for those who appreciate only artificial beauties:

**Все это низкая природа;
Изящного не много тут.**

(V, iii, 3-4)

Tatyana loved Russian winters; she was, as Pushkin says:

**.(русская душою
Сама не зная почему)**

(V, iv, 1-2)

Such sarcasms (for here he implies that to feel Russian was somehow odd) persist throughout the chapter. A further example occurs in his enumeration of the various folk beliefs to which Tatyana subscribes:

**Гадает старость сквозь очки
У гробовой своей доски,
Все потеряв невозвратно.**

(V, vii, 10-12)

On the eve of Epiphany, Tatyana, in accordance with an old Russian custom, decides to divine the name of her prospective husband. The ritual calls for a mirror to be trained on a road lit by a full moon; the name of the first person thus seen coming down the road will be the name of the future husband. Tatyana learns that the name of her husband will be Agafon. The whole eerie procedure scares Tatyana and without finishing all the divining she runs home to bed. Even in the safety of her own house Tatyana has no peace. After falling asleep she has a very disturbing dream. This dream proves somewhat prophetic. Thus we note a straight jump from the contempt in which superstition

was held by the poet to an apparent belief by him that dreams do sometimes foretell the future. This may possibly tie in with Pushkin's own superstitious nature, or we may have to concede that Tatyana was in possession of all the facts necessary for feeling what the future held in store.

In her dream, Tatyana wanders through snow drifts until she comes to a small stream. In her attempt to cross the water she gets a helping hand from a bear (dreaming of a bear meant marriage was near). The sight of the animal causes Tatyana to panic. She tries to run away from the unwelcome helper, but to no avail. Finally, frightened and exhausted, Tatyana faints. The bear picks her up and carries her to a hut, deep in the forest. On regaining consciousness Tatyana finds herself in the doorway of the hut. To her relief, the bear has gone. She looks into the room, where a feast is in progress. The guests are quite terrifying. Most of them have the appearance of weird animals. Among those present is Onegin:

Кто мил и страшен ей.

(V, xvii, 11)

The oxymoron Pushkin uses here is especially significant, for it will be recalled that Tatyana had been quite willing to surrender herself to Onegin, despite the fear and trembling that he unwittingly caused her at every meeting.

Onegin appears to be the leader of the gathering, for everybody takes orders from him. When Tatyana enters the room all those present try to seize her. But Onegin claims her as his and leads her away to a bench (recalling to us the garden bench from which she had heard his

painful rejection of her love).

Olga and Lenskii now enter, interrupting Onegin's amorous advances. Onegin is highly angered and kills Lenskii with a long knife. (This is perhaps the one prophetic detail in the dream that goes beyond the likely bounds of Tatyana's premonitions, parallelling the witches' prophecies in Macbeth). At this point Tatyana wakes up.

Tatyana, immediately on waking, begins consulting books dealing with the meaning of dreams. She is obviously frightened by the omens of impending disaster but finds nothing in the books to either confirm or dispel her fears. Olga's appearance in the room goes unnoticed.

But Tatyana has little time for reflection. This is her nameday and the Larins expect many guests for a celebration. As they arrive their names strangely remind us of the guests at the feast in Tatyana's dream (although of course she knew these people, and their appearance in her dream need not be interpreted as out of the ordinary):

in the dream:

Другой с петушей головой.

(V, xvi, 10)

at home:

Уездный франтик Петушков.

(V, xxvi, 8)

A little late, Lenskii and Onegin arrive and are seated across from Tatyana. Tatyana becomes embarrassed to the point of tears. Onegin and the assembled guests notice this, but remain occupied with the festivities. Pushkin digresses from the description of the party with his own comments on merrymaking.

Dancing starts, and Onegin decides to pay back Lenskii for the latter's deception, for when inviting Onegin to the party Lenskii had assured him that it would be only a family gathering and not a tedious village affair. In the meantime, the appearance of the two men among the many guests has again started whispers which anger Onegin. Larina herself greets their arrival as that of guests of honour:

Кричит хозяйка. Наконец!

(V, xxix, 11)

In order to vex Lenskii, without thinking of serious consequences, Onegin invites Olga to dance. He flirts and keeps her occupied throughout the evening. In vain Lenskii tries to have at least the last dance of the evening with Olga, but even that she has already promised to Onegin.

Lenskii becomes angry with Olga:

**Уж хитрость ведает она,
Уж изменять наученá!**

(V, xlv, 7-8)

Finally, quite unable to appreciate the unkind joke Onegin intended, and understandably offended by his friend's behaviour, Lenskii decides to challenge him to a duel:

**Две пули - больше ничего -
Вдруг разрешат судьбу его.**

(V, xlv, 13-14)

At the beginning of the Sixth Chapter, Onegin, satisfied with his revenge for Lenskii's deception, leaves for home alone. Tatyana, upset by Onegin's actions at the ball, nevertheless holds firm to her unreasoning love for him.

Near Lenskii's estate lives a reformed scapegrace named Zaretskii.

It is he whom Lenskii selects as his second. Zaretskii delivers the challenge to Onegin. Onegin, without a word, accepts the challenge and Zaretskii leaves. Onegin realizes his guilt, but finds no way out; besides, he does not want to appear a coward:

Уж поздно, время улетело...
К тому ж, - он мыслит, - в это дело
Вмешался старый дуэлист.

(VI, xi, 5-7)

Lenskii, after some deliberation, goes to see Olga. She meets him in her usual happy, innocent manner. In fact, she expresses surprise that he had left the party so early the night before. It is only now that Lenskii understands that Olga has played only a passive part in the flirtation and feels confirmed in his conviction that her honour needs defending:

Не потерплю, чтоб развратитель
Огнем и вздохов и похвал
Младое сердце искушал.

(VI, xv, 6-8)

Neither Tatyana nor Olga know anything about the forthcoming duel, and are therefore not in a position to stop the tragic encounter.

On his return home, Lenskii writes a poem for Olga. The poem is centered round the premonitions that naturally occupy his mind:

А я - быть может, я гробницы
Сойду в таинственную сень.

(VI, xxii, 3-4)

Many people, according to Pushkin, would find Lenskii's poem very romantic; he, however, cannot see this:

Так он писал темно и вяло
 (Что романтизмом мы зовем,
 Хоть романтизма тут нimalo
 Не вижу я; да что нам в том?)

(VI, xxiii, 1-4)

Onegin arrives late for the duel (having overslept!). He is accompanied by Monsieur Guillot, his valet, as his second. This choice of second, a man of no social standing, is calculated to humiliate Lenskii even more. Lenskii, being nervous even before Onegin's arrival, does not notice the slight. Zaretskii feels the offence, but does not comment.

Further in his sketch of Zaretskii's character, Pushkin points out the meticulous way in which he arranges the duel.

Pushkin digresses briefly on the folly of duelling, which, he finds, is usually dictated by false pride and fear of public opinion:

Но дико светская вражда
 Боится ложного стыда.

(VI, xxviii, 13-14)

In short, but highly emotional verses, Pushkin describes the duel itself and Lenskii's death:

Вот пистолеты уж блеснули,
 Гремит о шомпол молоток.
 В граненый ствол уходят пули,
 И щелкнул в первый раз курок.

(VI, xxix, 1-4)

Онегин выстрелил... Пробили
 Часы урочные: поэт
 Роняет молча пистолет.

(VI, xxx, 12-14)

На грудь кладет тихонько руку
 И падает. Туманный взор
 Изображает смерть, не муку.

(VI, xxi, 1-3)

Onegin, who did not intend killing Lenskii, is overcome by a feeling of horror.

Pushkin digresses on the pointlessness of this slaughter, which robs the world of a potential poet. Oddly enough, this episode not only fulfills the most alarming and unexplainable part of Tatyana's dream, but corresponds in a surprising number of details to the circumstances of Pushkin's own death, also in a duel.

Lenskii is buried on the bank of a stream, with only a simple gravestone marking the place. For the Russian Orthodox Church considered duelling a sin equal to suicide, and refused Christian burial to its victims.³⁷ Moreover, under paragraph 352, volume 15, of the "Svod Zakonov 1832", based on the Decree of 1787 of Catherine II, there were severe civil penalties for duelling.³⁸ In most cases, however, offenders escaped prosecution by making their peace with the church and suffering short displeasure at court. Social ostracism of those refusing to duel was often the worst penalty involved.

Pushkin promises that the novel will not end here, and that he will still tell the reader about the fate of Olga and the main heroes of the story.³⁹

37 D. S. Mirsky, Pushkin (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1963) p. 222.

38 Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia, 2nd edition (Moscow, 1952) vol. XV, p. 321.

39 Reference to Pushkin's publishing of Evgenii Onegin in instalments.

The end of the chapter is devoted to a digression dealing with the narrator himself. The poet bids farewell to his youth, and at the same time looks forward to new fields of endeavour:

Пускаюсь ныне в новый путь
От жизни прошлой отдохнуть.

(VI, xlv, 13-14)⁴⁰

He hopes that the inspiration he has had till now will still remain with him:

Не дай остыть душе поэта.

(VI, xlvi, 9)

The Seventh Chapter begins with a description of the Russian spring. Pushkin admits to nostalgic feelings aroused by the sight of awakening Nature:

И в трепет сердце нам приводит
Мечтой о дальной стороне,
О чудной ночи, о луне...

(VII, iii, 12-14)

He reminds the reader that the last chapter ended⁴¹ with immediate results of Onegin's deed:

Где грустный он оставил след.

(VII, v, 14)

Pushkin then takes the reader to the grave of Lenskii, in a forest by a stream, forgotten by all his friends and foes. Even his beloved Olga has not mourned him very long. She was soon consoled by marriage to a cavalry officer.

40 Reference to Pushkin's prose writing, possibly Tales of Ivan Belkin, which he wrote during 1929. This chapter was finished in August, 1828.

41 There was an interval of one year between the time Pushkin finished Chapter Six and began Chapter Seven. There were two years between the publication times of the two chapters. Note 39 is also relevant here.

Olga's departure from the Larin estate has left Tatyana without a friend or confidante. Her thoughts once again turn to Onegin. Tatyana cannot hate him, despite his attitude towards her, or even because of the murder of her brother-in-law to be. The poet asks apologetically:

Еще грустят... На что грустить? (VII, xiv, 14)

In answer to this question he makes the reader aware of the world proceeding along its normal path:

Жук жужжал.
Уж расходились хороводы. (VII, xv, 2-3)

. пылал
Огонь рыбачий. (VII, xv, 4-5)

The picture of the fisherman has a symbolic quality in Pushkin's works. It appears at times of great turbulence and signifies the continuity of life. In The Bronze Horseman the fisherman is treated in a manner similar to the appearance of a rainbow, a sign that even the worst storms must end.

Tatyana decides to go for a walk. While walking she comes, or is subconsciously guided, to the Onegin estate, and after a few minutes' hesitation decides to go in. An elderly servant lets her in, explains which were the master's favourite rooms and points out the furniture he used. Tatyana is pleased with the visit. Pushkin depicts her as a pilgrim visiting a shrine. But a feeling of some lurking danger overcomes her and she decides that it is time to leave:

И пилигримке молодой
Пора, давно пора домой.

(VII, xx, 7-8)

Within a day Tatyana returns to the house, and when left alone bursts into tears. She has resolved to learn all she can about her first love by reading the books Onegin read. He has destroyed most of his books, but those that remain are enough for Tatyana to gauge his character. Among them are the works of Byron, and his desk is decorated with a portrait of this romantic poet par excellence, and a bust of Napoleon. Pushkin leads us to see in Onegin what was termed later in Russian literary history a "superfluous man":

С его безнравственной душой,
Себялюбивый и сухой,
Мечтанью преданной безмерно,
С его озлобленным умом,
Кипящим в действии пустом.

(VII, xxii, 10-14)

Tatyana, who still loves Onegin, is frankly disappointed with the man she discovers him to be. In a masterful way, the poet sums up her feelings in one short rhetorical question that she asks herself:

Уж не пародия ли он?

(VII, xxiv, 14)

In the meantime, Larian, disturbed by her behaviour, decides that Tatyana must go to Moscow. Tatyana spends the summer and fall wandering through the countryside. She tries to absorb all the peaceful beauty of the changing seasons. Finally, loaded with household utensils and amid the good wishes of the servants, the Larian caravan starts out on the wintry road. Tatyana wonders if she will ever see the country again.

The trip to Moscow provides Pushkin with an opportunity to describe the lamentable state of Russian roads. It seems that the ruts are made less noticeable by snow, hence the reason for making the trip during the winter.

The journey takes a week. The sight of the capital brings to the poet memories of Russian history and the place it occupies in the hearts of the people. These reflections are followed by a very vivid description of the waking city and its streets:

Мелькают мимо будки, бабы,
Мальчишки, лавки, фонари,
Дворцы, сады, монастыри.

(VII, xxxviii, 6-8)

The Larins arrive at the house of an aunt. No sooner do they settle, than Tatyana, dressed according to the city fashions, is taken the rounds to be introduced to Moscow society. The descriptions of one of the gala dinners and the guests remind one again of the party in Tatyana's dream.

Tatyana still continues thinking of Onegin. In the meantime, an old general becomes interested in her and her aunts arrange the match.

The chapter ends with Pushkin paying what he playfully suggests is a forgotten debt to the spirit of classicism with the conventional appeal for inspiration to the Epic Muse. His final comment on this point shows us, if such proof be needed, that conformity to classical canons in the writing of his novel could not in fact be further from his mind:

Пою приятеля младого
 И множество его причуд.
 Благослави мой долгий труд,
 О ты, эпическая муза!
 И, верный посох мне вручив,
 Не дай блуждать мне вкось и вкрив.
 Довольно. С плеч долой обуза!
 Я классицизму отдал честь:
 Хоть поздно, а вступление есть.

(VII, 1v, 5-14)

Pushkin begins the Eighth Chapter with an autobiographical sketch, recalling the different stages and moods of his literary career. In the beginning he was mainly interested in describing childish pranks, the history of Russia and romantic dreams:

Воспела детские веселья,
 И славу нашей старины,
 И сердца трепетные сны.

(VIII, i, 12-14)

During his youth he had used his poetic inspiration to describe merrymaking with his friends, but not for long:

Но я отстал от их союза.

(VIII, iv, 1)

At the time of his southern exile the poet had been inspired by the roar of the sea:

Глубокий, вечный хор валов,
 Хвалебный гимн отцу миров.

(VIII, iv, 13-14)

His Moldavian sojourn had brought yet another change in the mood of his poetry, a mood geared to the sounds of the steppes, which caused him to forget his former style:

И позабыла речь богов.

(VIII, v, 7)

It was in this mood that he had had his first vision of

Tatyana:

И вот она в саду моем
Явилась барышней уездной,
С печальной думою в очах,
С французской книжкою в руках.

(VIII, v, 11-14)

Then having created his heroine, Pushkin had introduced her to the world:

И ныне музу я впервые
На светский раут привожу.

(VIII, vi, 1-2)

At a ball, to which the poet now takes the reader, we find Onegin among the guests. Onegin has just returned from his lengthy travels about Russia, and Pushkin feigns surprise at seeing him:

Но это кто в толпе избранной
Стоит безмолвный и туманный?

(VIII, vii, 5-6)

He notes some changes in his friend:

Знаком он вам? - И да и нет.

(VIII, viii, 14)

Onegin's appearance at the ball leads to a digression on the contrast between idle men and those with a purpose in life. Pushkin is visibly siding with the latter:

Блажен, кто смолоду был молод,
Блажен, кто вовремя созрел.

(VIII, x, 1-2)

The poet contrasts Onegin, a man without purpose or a goal, with the man useful to society:

Убив на поединке друга,
Дожив без цели, без трудов

До двадцати шести годов,
Томясь в бездействии досуга
Без службы, без жены, без дел,
Ничем заняться не умел.

(VIII, xii, 9-14)

The killing of a friend has produced in Onegin a sincere feeling of remorse. He has tried to run away from his guilt by travelling. But even here he has not succeeded; the ghost of the dead man has haunted his soul and so he has returned home.

The arrival of the hostess turns all heads towards her. It is hard to recognize in this high society lady the erstwhile provincial girl Tatyana. Her appearance and dress are restrained and modest:

Она казалась верный снимок
Du comme il faut... (Шишков, прости:
Не знаю, как перевести).

(VIII, xiv, 12-14)

Thus Pushkin not only characterizes the appearance of a person but also enters, once again, the polemic regarding literary styles.

Onegin does not at first recognize Tatyana. She seems familiar to him and he turns to an old friend, a prince and general, asking if he happens to know the lady. It turns out that his friend is Tatyana's husband. When he formally introduces the two, Tatyana, notwithstanding her true feelings, does not reveal her former acquaintance with Onegin. Onegin feels uneasy, and both, he and the poet, wonder if she is the same person:

Та, от которой он хранит
Письмо, где сердце говорит.

(VIII, xx, 7-8)

The morning after the ball, Onegin receives an invitation from the general to an evening with the family. Arriving at the general's home he spends a few very uncomfortable minutes alone with Tatyana. The entry of the general, with his friendly manner, finally puts Onegin at ease. The husband and the remainder of the guests are described in some detail. There is no doubt left that Pushkin himself did not favour this group, which was close to the Tsarist court.

Onegin is now in love with Tatyana, but she does not pay any attention to him. This attitude of course makes her even more desirable:

**Запретный плод вам подавай:
А без того вам рай не рай.**

(VIII, xxvii, 13-14)

In desperation, Onegin watches her house and frequents the places where she is likely to be. However, outside of social pleasantries, Tatyana ignores him. Onegin does not abandon his hopes and writes her a letter. In it he offers an explanation of his former attitude towards her, begs forgiveness and a chance to see her again. His letter remains unanswered. Onegin, once again, turns to voracious reading. Nothing, however, reaches his mind; he can see only Tatyana's image before him. Time passes, seasons change and Onegin still awaits some communication from Tatyana. In desperation he goes to her house, uninvited, and falls at her feet, but she at first remains quite aloof. Finally she bids him to rise and listen to her reply to the sermon he had delivered in the garden of their estate so long ago. She thanks

Onegin for his gentlemanly behaviour at that time. Now, however, she suggests, he may have ulterior motives:

Не потому ль, что мой позор
Теперь бы всеми был замечен
И мог бы в обществе принести
Вам соблазительную честь?

(VIII, xlv, 11-14)

There was a time, she says, when his love for her could have brought bliss, but now, despite her continued love for him, nothing can join them:

Но я другому отдана;
Я буду век ему верна.

(VIII, xl, vii, 13-14)

Tatyana leaves Onegin alone. At this moment the general returns home and the two friends remain face to face. This is a tense moment for Onegin, but Pushkin chooses this time, with apologies, to end the story. He feels, he says, that only in this manner can he remain on friendly terms with the heroes of the story, and with the reader.

CHAPTER III

THE "MISSING" CHAPTERS

In Pushkin's original plan for the novel, the eighth chapter was to be devoted to Onegin's travels within Russia. The present eighth and last would have been the ninth. This is attested to by the poet himself in his introduction to the Excerpts from "Onegin's Travels" (Vol. V, p. 199). Pushkin tells us that many parts of Onegin's Travels, had it become Chapter VIII, would have been by necessity changed, replaced by dots or simply marked by numbers (Vol. V, p. 199). He obviously refers to his habit of indicating missing stanzas by giving their numbers, but not their text, e.g. Chapter IV, stanzas one to six, or by writing a single stanza under a multiple number as in Chapter IV, stanzas xxxvi and xxxvii. This fact alone provides a problem for separate investigation.

Pushkin finally omitted the intended Chapter VIII and renumbered the original Chapter IX to make it the eighth and final chapter of the novel. (Vol. V, p. 199). He thus sacrificed the material for a whole chapter and also cut the original final stanza of the novel:

Пора: перо покоя просит;
Я девять песенъ написал;
На берег радостный выносит
Мою ладью девятый вал --
Хвала вам, девяти камням, и проч.

(Vol. V, p. 199)

The fact that in an earlier edition there existed

this reference to nine cantos, omitted in the final draft, confirms, according to Bondi,⁴² that Pushkin switched the last two chapters for some important reason.

The obvious question is "why?" We do know that he was under constant police surveillance, and dreaded the possible results of an indiscretion. But what was that indiscretion? We may recall that when informing Vyazemsky of his intention to write Evgenii Onegin, he did not dare to hope that it would ever see the light of day: "publishing is out of question."⁴³ Further in the same letter he writes: "Our censorship is so capricious, that it is impossible for one to measure off the realm of its intentions - it is best not to think of it - and if one has to accept it, then let us accept it, there is no point in just getting one's nails dirty."⁴⁴ This letter was written on November 4, 1823, long before the chapter in question.

The Excerpts From Onegin's Travels do not seem to contain any politically controversial matter. According to I. Dyakonov,⁴⁵ the only extant document to suggest that there was anything in Onegin's Travels to which the censor might take exception is contained in a letter, written by one Katenin, referring to descriptions in it of military detention camps. Bearing in mind the political storm that broke in

42 S. Bondi, Preface to A. S. Pushkin - Evgenii Onegin (Moscow: Detgiz, 1963).

43 Own translation, vol. X, p. 70.

44 Own translation, Ibid.

45 I. Dyakonov, O Vosmoy, Devyatoy i Desyatoy Glavakh "Evgenia Onegina" in Russkaya Literatura #3 (Leningrad, 1963).

1825, and Pushkin's own feelings about the Decembrist movement, it is entirely likely that the omitted chapter would indeed have been of a political nature. For Onegin's travels, according to the chronology of the novel, must have extended from about spring, 1825 to the middle of 1826, thus including the period of the abortive uprising, and its immediate aftermath, including the executions and imprisonments.

According to what survives of the text, Onegin, after leaving Moscow, went to Nizhni Novgorod. This city was an important commercial center, and Pushkin describes very vividly the goings-on in the market place. The poet leaves no doubt that it would interest the average sight-seer. Onegin, however, remains unimpressed, a fact which is characterized by a single word: "Тоска" - ennui.

The next leg of his trip takes Onegin to Astrakhan and then to the Caucasus. Pushkin, who had visited this part of the country himself, describes the mountainous surroundings. Onegin views the poor and sick people around him, and expresses his compassion, but again with impatience and boredom:

Зачем не чувствую в плече
Хоть ревматизма? - ах, создатель!
Я молод, жизнь во мне крепка;
Чего мне ждать? Тоска, тоска!..⁴⁶

Onegin travels on to the Crimea. Here Pushkin recalls some of the historical legends and also the visit of Mickiewicz to these shores

⁴⁶ Vol. V, p. 202, the fourth stanza, lines 11-14; this count is followed in all succeeding quotations.

(during his political disgrace - MM). The poet recalls the first moments of his own sojourn in the Crimea, but interrupts the soliloquy:

Но, муза! прошлое забудь!

(Vol. V, p. 202, vi, 14)

He explains that such sentimental feelings no longer exist for him, and he must not recall them. His youth has passed and with it youthful desires; the only desire that is left to him is peace and quiet:

**Мой идеал теперь - хозяйка,
Мои желания - покой,
Да щей горшок, да сам большой.**

(Vol. V, p. 203,
viii, 12-14)

Then, apparently, having re-read these lines, he discovers, with disgust, how, in true life, his tastes have changed:

Тьфу! прозаические бредни.

(Vol. V, p. 203, ix, 3)

Three years after Onegin begins his travels he suddenly remembers Pushkin. At this time Pushkin is living in exile at Odessa. Odessa was a cosmopolitan city. A digression follows on the different people inhabiting the city, as well as a description of the surrounding country. Odessa is also a dirty city, it is either covered in mud or enveloped in dust. There are, however, compensations: duty-free wine, southern sun and the sea. Odessa offers many pleasant diversions and some varied entertainment. Food is available from many foreign countries to satisfy the cravings of a young appetite. Odessa also has an opera house which stages the most modern European works. The

audience at the opera contains the young wife of a merchant, who, dozing, is apparently oblivious to the attentions being paid to his spouse by the surrounding admirers. When the performance ends the city is already asleep, and all is quiet, except for the sea:

Все молчит;
Лишь море Черное шумит...
*
Итак, я жил тогда в Одессе...

(Vol. V, p. 208, xix,
13-14, and xx, 1)

The chapter remains incomplete.

The first complete edition of Evgenii Onegin was published on March 23, 1833, in St. Petersburg, by Aleksandr Smirdin. It consisted of eight chapters.⁴⁷ But that Pushkin intended to continue the novel can be seen from a note in his diary: "On October nineteenth burned tenth canto" (Vol. V, p. 592). The only other reference, somewhat inconclusive, to a development of the plot beyond the point at which the novel was made to end is found in the memoirs of one M. V. Yuzefovich, a Ukrainian statesman, with whom Pushkin was friends in Odessa: "Onegin should have been killed in the Caucasus or have joined the Decembrist society."⁴⁸ Fortunately, some of Pushkin's rough drafts of material evidently intended for Chapter X have been preserved.

Because of their political nature he wrote them in a very intricate code which had not been completely broken to date. We do, however, have a copy of the last six lines of the fifteenth stanza made

⁴⁷ N. Smirnov-Sokolskii, Rasskazy o Prizhiznennykh Izdaniyakh Pushkina (Moscow: Vsesoyuznaya Knizhnaya Palata, 1962) p. 309.

⁴⁸ N. K. Brodskii, Pushkin v Vospominaniyakh Sovremennikov, (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1950) own translation, p. 396.

by A. I. Turgenev (Vol. V, p. 592) from Pushkin's manuscript before the poet burned it. Present day researchers find it extremely difficult to reconstruct the chapter.

Of the seventeen stanzas of the tenth chapter that have been put together, only stanzas sixteen and the already mentioned fifteenth are known in their entirety. Stanza seventeen is heavily dotted, indicating missing words, and of the rest we have only the first quatrains of stanzas 1 to 4, 10 to 12 and 14. This suggests that Pushkin wrote his first quatrains separately before returning to add the rest of the stanza, which would explain the fact, already observed, that the first quatrains, throughout the novel, constitute in most cases a homogeneous unit independent from the balance of the stanza. Stanzas 5 and 13 are known only in their first three lines and stanzas 6 to 9 have the first quatrain and line 2 of the second quatrain (Vol. V, p. 209).

In the first stanza Pushkin refers to the reign of Alexander I, whom he despised; stanza two, referring to Napoleon, and the third, directly mentioning the year 1812 and General Barclay, follow naturally from the first. Further, Pushkin affirms that through his victories Alexander became the most influential among the rulers of Europe:

Мы очутились в Париже,
А русский царь главой царей.

(X, iv, 3-4)

while England became the ruler of the seas:

Моря достались Альбиону.

(X, vi, 6)

The seventh stanza refers to the rule of Nicholas I and the deportation of families to Siberia:

Авось по манью Николая
Семействам возвратить Сибирь.

(X, vii, 3-4)

The context of these historical allusions is not completely clear because of the many missing words. In stanza twelve, however, the poet clearly refers to the Decembrist movement:

Россия присмирела снова,
И пуше царь пошел кутить,
Но искра пламени иного
Уж издавна, может быть.

(X, xii, 1-4)

This is continued in stanza thirteen, where Pushkin tells us that the clandestine meetings took place over a glass of wine. He even identifies the conspirators by name and hints at regicidal intentions:

Читал свои Ноэли Пушкин,
Меланхолический Якушин,
Казалось, молча обнажал
Цареубийственный кинжал.

(X, xv, 5-8)

Stanza fifteen contains a particularly interesting note:

Предвидел в сей толпе дворян
Освободителей крестьян.

(X, xv, 13-14)

Thus Pushkin clearly states that he was aware not only of the existence of a conspiracy, but also of its aims.

Stanza sixteen further refers to the uprising and the fate of some of the leaders, such as Pestel and Muravyev.

The last surviving stanza of the tenth chapter, the seventeenth, suggests that the Decembrist movement began with conversations at first not meant all that seriously:

Забавы взрослых шалунов,
 Казалось
 Узлы к узлам
 И постепенно сетью тайной
 Россия
 Наш царь дремал

The two "missing" chapters of Evgenii Onegin are very actively investigated at the present time, as evidenced by ample literature, but except for speculation, nothing new has been uncovered. The forum for these investigations is "Russkaya Literatura", and to a lesser extent certain other literary journals. The leading scholar in this field today appears to be I. Dyakonov of the Soviet Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkinskii Dom).

CHAPTER IV

ROMANTIC AND REALISTIC ELEMENTS IN EVGENII ONEGIN

In a letter to his brother⁴⁹ Pushkin complains that the critic N. Rayevskii had disliked his work because "he expected romanticism, but instead found cynicism and satire."

What was that romanticism that Rayevskii had expected to find, any why was he disappointed? On the one hand, romanticism is exemplified by freedom of expression as opposed to the strictness of classical forms. This freedom Rayevskii must surely have detected. On the other hand, it was an expression of a particular trend in literature, as typified for example by Byron - a trend which Pushkin followed only to a limited extent, choosing for himself the straight and narrow way, which bore no signpost then, but which led to realism.

Pushkin began writing Evgenii Onegin in 1823, while still under the influence of Byronic romanticism. However, as early as June 1824, that is before he had begun writing the third chapter, Pushkin apparently was trying to disassociate himself from this influence. In a letter to Vyazemskii⁵⁰ he wrote: "You are longing for Byron. Byron's genius paled with his youth. After the fourth canto of Childe Harold, we no longer hear Byron."

49 Letter #67, vol X, p. 81.

50 Letter #78, vol X, p. 92.

Thus Rayevskii at least did Pushkin a service, clumsy as it was, in recognizing the satirical and cynical elements in Evgenii Onegin, even though he apparently failed to appreciate their superiority over romantic hyperboles.

In the original Chapter Eight⁵¹ (which, it may be recalled, was not included in the final publication of Evgenii Onegin), Pushkin discusses at length his own erstwhile preoccupation with romantic grandeur, during his Crimean period, and still cannot quite convince himself that he has become a realist, interested in "prosaic nonsense". But he is nonetheless resolved to treat his romanticism as an unfortunate episode not to be dwelled on:

Иные мне нужны картины.

(IX, vii, 1)

It is clear, too, that Pushkin took exception to Rayevskii's remarks partly because the latter mistook the poet's realism for mere satire and cynicism, and partly because he did not take sufficient notice of the carefully contrived "romantic" digressions - romantic it is true, merely because they are rambling digressions, not because they have any particular romantic content. In fact, the many digressions allow the author to comment on the thoughts and mores of his contemporaries with typically romantic nonchalance as a subtle substitute for romantic content - a device which in itself illustrates the poet's lack of true concern for literary fashion. As for cynicism, it certainly cannot replace realism, but healthy as opposed to morbid cynicism does have a place in many realistic attitudes.

51 p. 50 of this work

Realism was not as yet known as a movement in Pushkin's times. It is, therefore, interesting to note that in this respect Pushkin was a pioneer, not only in Russian literature, but also a precursor of realism in European literature. Pushkin's realism is, however, intermingled with romanticism; after all, he was raised in the romantic school. Indeed, in Evgenii Onegin romantic content as well as form may be discerned.

The romantic element of Evgenii Onegin is most pronounced in the first two chapters. It is characterized by the presence of romantic metaphors and unfinished thoughts as well as by the descriptions of the heroes. The third chapter does not have as many digressions, and they are closer to the subject, but it is not until the fifth chapter that Pushkin exposes fully his intention of creating a realistic novel:

В начале моего романа
(Смотрите первую тетрадь)
Хотелось в роде мне Альбана
Бал петербургский описать.

(V, xl, 1-4)

С изменой юности моей
Пора мне сделаться умней,
В делах и в слоге поправляться
И эту пятую тетрадь
От отступлений очищать.

(V, xl, 10-14)

It is only for some reason known to the poet alone, after making a deliberate statement of a resolution to depart from the romantic tradition, that he nevertheless ends his novel on a muted but unmistakably romantic note of heart-break.

In the first chapter, Pushkin, true to the romantic tradition, lapses unashamedly into sentimental reminiscences of the no longer living great men of literature:

Волшебный край! Там в стары годы,
Сатиры смелый властелин,
Блистал Фонвизин, друг свободы,
И переимчивый Княжнин,
Там Озеров

(I, xviii, 1-5)

The poet is impressed by the modern theatre but longs for the past. On the one hand he extols the mastery of a modern ballerina:

Стоит Истомина; она,
Одной ногой касаясь пола,
Другую медленно кружит,
И вдруг прыжок, и вдруг летит,
Летит, как пух из уст Эола.

(I, xx, 8-12)

On the other hand he longingly thinks of yesteryear:

Безмолвно буду я зевать
И о былом воспоминать.

(I, xix, 13-14)

Further memories haunt the poet at a ball, where he follows Onegin, this time memories of women's feet - his peculiar obsession. He admits to a feeling of melancholy:

Две ножки... Грустный, охладелый,
Я все их помню, и во сне
Они тревожат сердце мне.

(I, xxx, 12-14)

The succeeding stanzas emphasize the poet's melancholy feeling with their purely romantic character. In fact, seen by itself, one of the stanzas might easily be mistaken for a separate romantic poem (cf. "Я помню чудное мгновенье") rather than an intrinsic part

part of a novel:

Я помню море пред грозю:
 Как я завидовал волнам,
 Бегущим бурной чередою
 С любовью лечь к ее ногам!
 Как я желал тогда с волнами
 Коснуться милых ног устами!
 Нет, никогда средь пылких дней
 Кипящей младости моей
 Я не желал с таким мученьем
 Лобзать уста молодых Армид,
 Иль розы пламенных ланит,
 Иль перси, полные томленьем;
 Нет, никогда порыв страстей
 Так не терзал души моей!

(I, xxxiii, 1-14)

We should note, however, that Pushkin goes to great lengths to make certain that he is not identified with his hero. In one stanza he describes how both of them were engulfed in thoughts inspired by the atmosphere of their surroundings:

Дыханьем ночи благосклонной
 Безмолвно упивались мы.

(I, xlvii, 9-10)

But for Pushkin this romantic day-dream is interrupted by the vision of a moving vessel, which, like the fisherman he has pointed out more than once elsewhere, suggests the undramatic continuity of life - a continuity that reduces recurring human dramas to mere details in a realistic conception of life as a whole:

Лишь лодка, веслами махая,
 Плыла по дремлющей реке.

(I, xlviii, 9-10)

In explaining Onegin's reasons for not joining Pushkin in a contemplated trip to Italy, the poet describes his own dreams and

longings, including a vaguely expressed desire to roam:

Когда ж начну я вольный бег?

(I, 1, 7)

This passage is again an expression of a melancholy state of mind in Pushkin, which we may ascribe to romantic influences, or perhaps more properly to a deeply felt malaise. We must also bear in mind that foreign travel for Pushkin was a political impossibility, a fact that gives him reason enough for complaint. Be this as it may, Pushkin does create a romantic mood and feels he needs to apologize for it:

Замечу кстати: все поэты -
Любви мечтательной друзья.

(I, lviii, 1-2)

Introducing Lenskii, in the second chapter, Pushkin emphasizes the young poet's romanticism. The verses referring to Lenskii are appropriately sentimental - a gentle parody of Lenskii's own style:

Он пел любовь, любви послушный,
И песнь его была ясна,
Как мысли девы простодушной,
Как сон младенца, как луна
В пустынях неба безмятежных,
Богиня тайн и вздохов нежных.

(II, x, 1-6)

Onegin treats his new friend condescendingly, although, under Lenskii's influence, he too, is given to sentimental thoughts:

Но чаще занимали страсти
Умы пустынников моих.
Ушед от их мятежной власти,
Онегин говорил об них
С невольным вздохом сожаленья:
Блажен, кто ведал их волненья
И наконец от них отстал;
Блаженный тот, кто их не знал,
Кто охлаждал любовь - разлукой,
Вражду - злословием.

(II, xvii, 1-10)

Pushkin heightens the sentimentality by resorting to anaphonic verse:

Ни охлаждающая даль,
 Ни долгие лета разлуки,
 Ни музам данные часы,
 Ни чужемные красы,
 Ни шум веселый, ни науки
 Души не изменили в нем,
 Согретой девственным огнем.

(II, xx, 8-14)

The second chapter is marked by the entry of the heroine of the novel, Tatyana, the elder sister of Lenskii's beloved Olga. She is sentimental and given to daydreaming, just like Lenskii:

Задумчивость, ее подруга
 От самых колыбельных дней.

(II, xxxi, 1-2)

Here, too, Pushkin uses anaphonic verse for the same effect as above:

Она любила на балконе
 Предупреждать зари восход,
 Когда на бледном небосклоне
 Звезд исчезает хоровод,
 И тихо край земли светлеет,
 И, вестник утра, ветер веет,
 И всходит постепенно день.

(II, xxviii, 1-7)

In the third chapter, where Tatyana first meets Onegin and falls in love with him, the sense of longing is heightened by romantic metaphors:

Пора пришла, она влюбилась,
 Так в землю падшее зерно
 Весны огнем оживлено,
 Давно ее воображение,
 Сгорая негой и тоской,
 Алкало пищи роковой;
 Давно сердечное томленье
 Теснило ей младую грудь;
 Душа ждала... когонибудь,

*

И дождалась

(III, vii, 6-14 -
 III, viii, 1)

It is quite normal that from the moment she meets Onegin, Tatyana walks with her head in the clouds. Given to sentimentalism from childhood, her romantic nature finds a perfect outlet in this imaginary love affair. Here again Pushkin makes use of anaphoric verse:

Британской музы небылицы
 Тревожат сон отроковицы,
 И стал теперь ее кумир
 Или задумчивый Вампир,
 Или Мельмот, бродяга мрачный,
 Иль вечный жид, или корсар,
 Или таинственный Сбогар.

(III, xii, 5-11)

A notable digression in the third chapter is Pushkin's description of life in the country. It occupies only one stanza and serves as an introduction to Pushkin's own sentimental attitude towards Tatyana:

Татьяна, милая Татьяна!
 С тобой теперь я слезы лью;
 Ты в руки модного тирана
 Уж отдала судьбу свою.
 Погибнешь, милая; но, прежде
 Ты в ослепительной надежде
 Блаженство темное зовешь,
 Ты негу жизни узнаешь.

(III, xv, 1-8)

As remarked earlier, Pushkin uses a standard romantic device in matching the language and descriptions of people to their character. For example, in describing Tatyana, Pushkin habitually provides a deliberately romantic setting:

Настанет ночь; луна обходит
 Дозором дальний свод небес.
 И соловей во мгле деревьев
 Напевы звучные заводит.

(III, xvi, 9-12)

He even introduces a supernatural element in this scene:

И сердцем далеко носилась
 Татьяна, смотря на луну...
 Вдруг мысль в уме ее родилась.

(III, xxi, 1-3)

In a lengthy digression on the women he had met, Pushkin tries to justify Tatyana's gullibility. Here again the poet expresses more than a purely objective interest in the heroine of his novel. He points out Tatyana's naiveté and romantic nature:

За что ж виновнее Татьяна?
 За то ль, что в милой простоте
 Она не ведает обмана
 И верит избранной мечте?
 За то ль, что любит без искусства,
 Послушная влеченью чувства,

Что так доверчива она,
 Что от небес одарена
 Воображением мятежным,
 Умом и волею живой,
 И своенравной головой,
 И сердцем пламенным и нежным?
 Ужели не простите ей
 Вы легкомыслия страстей?

(III, xxiv, 1-14)

The third chapter contains one of the climactic points of the story: Tatyana's letter to Onegin. The letter, according to Pushkin, was written in French and translated by him for the reader into Russian. The poet "proves" that the letter was written by Tatyana by departing from the Onegin stanza. The letter is written in a highly romantic style and exhibits Tatyana's complete inexperience of worldly affairs. There is in the letter a pathetic longing for a kind word from Onegin and a sentimental reproach to him for having disturbed the peace of their rural household:

Зачем вы посетили нас?
 В глуши забытого селенья
 Я никогда не знала б вас,
 Не знала б горького мученья.

(Vol. V, p. 70)

Her emotions overpower her to the point where she suddenly abandons the polite form of expression, the plural Russian "you", in favour of the more personal singular "you":

То воля неба: я твоя.

(Vol. V, p. 70)

The letter abounds in sentimental expressions and declarations of love. There are strong allusions to dreams and unfulfilled desires:

Не ты ли, милое виденье,
В прозрачной темноте мелькнул,
Приникнул тихо к изголовью?
Не ты ль, с отрадой и любовью,
Слова надежды мне шепнул?

(Vol. V, p. 70)

Having exposed herself, Tatyana ends the letter by beseeching Onegin not to betray her, thus once again exhibiting her naiveté.

In one of the scenes dealing with Tatyana's letter, Pushkin once again surrenders to romanticism and exposes his deep affection for the heroine:

К плечу головушкой склонилась.
Сорочка легкая опустилась
С ее прелестного плеча...

(III, xxxii, 5-7)

Моей Татьяне все равно.

(III, xxxii, 14)

To emphasize Tatyana's nursemaid's country background, Pushkin resorts to the romantic device of characterization through speech:

О пташка ранняя моя!
Вечор уж как боялась я!

(III, xxxiii, 10-11)

Pushkin ends the third chapter on a note of mystery. Onegin, after a long delay, has arrived at the Larin estate and meets Tatyana in the garden. The poet, however, chooses to make a pause here. It must be remembered that originally Evgenii Onegin was published in parts, chapter by chapter, and this ending would keep the reader in suspense. This appeal to imagination is another device of the romantic school, already discussed in Chapter I.

The third chapter, besides Tatyana's letter, contains another departure from the Onegin stanza. This one deals with the song the country girls were singing on the orders of the squire to prevent them from eating berries while collecting them. The song has a sentimental note; it deals with the girls' wish to attract a young man, and, characteristically, is written in a country dialect:

Затяните песенку,
Песенку заветную,
Заманите молодца
К хороводу нашему.

(Vol. V, p. 76)

In describing Tatyana's reaction to the song, Pushkin uses pastoral metaphors, likely the most beautiful in the whole novel:

Но в персях то же трепетанье,
И не проходит жар ланит,
Но ярче, ярче лишь горит...
Так бедный мотылек и блещет
И бьется радужным крылом,
Плененный школьным шалуном;
Так зайчик в озими трепещет,
Увидя вдруг издалека
В кусты припавшего стрелка.

(III, xl, 6-14)

The fourth chapter begins with a digression dealing with the hero's attitude towards love. Pushkin seems to justify Onegin's unwillingness to become settled:

Он в первой юности своей
Был жертвой бурных заблуждений
И необузданных страстей.

(IV, ix, 2-4)

В красавиц он уж не влюблялся,
 А волочился как-нибудь;
 Откажут - мигом утешался,
 Изменят - рад был отдохнуть.
 Он их искал без упоенья,
 А оставлял без сожаленья,
 Чуть помня их любовь и злость. (IV, x, 1-7)

Thus, Onegin's restlessness and his character as a superfluous man are strongly emphasized.

In his verbal reply to Tatyana, Onegin exhibits a measure of tenderness so far unsuspected:

Мне ваша искренность мила,
 Она в волненье привела
 Давно умолкнувшие чувства.
 (IV, xii, 7-9)

But when Onegin tries to console her, it is a rather clumsy attempt, and his choice of metaphor, perhaps intended to sound romantic, is tasteless in the extreme:

Сменит не раз молодая дева
 Мечтами легкие мечты;
 Так деревцо свои листы
 Меняет с каждою весною.
 (IV, xvi, 6-9)

In describing Tatyana's mortification upon rejection, Pushkin himself uses a truly moving metaphor:

Здоровье, жизни цвет и сладость,
 Улыбка, девственный покой,
 Пропало все, что звук пустой,
 И меркнет милой Тани младость;
 Так одевает бури тень
 Едва рождающийся день.

(IV, xxiii, 9-14)

Describing the romance of Olga and Lenskii, which proceeds undisturbed, Pushkin gives us another description of the young poet's romantic nature. It will be recalled that Lenskii was educated in the sentimentalist schools of Goettingen:

Поедет ли домой - и дома
Он занят Ольгою своею,
Летучие листки альбома
Прилежно украшает ей:
То в них рисует сельски виды,
Надгробный камень, храм Киприды,
Или на лире голубка
Пером и красками слегка;
То на листках воспоминанья
Пониже подписи других
Он оставляет нежный стих,
Безмолвный памятник мечтанья,
Мгновенной думы долгий след,
Все тот же после многих лет.

(IV, xxvii, 1-14)

Nostalgia seems to be the predominant tone of the fourth chapter of Evgenii Onegin. In describing his hero's daily activities, after the meeting with Tatyana, Pushkin digresses to draw a picture of the oncoming winter. A strongly nostalgic note occurs in a reference to Pushkin's southern sojourn:

Но наше северное лето,
Карикатура южных зим,
Мелькнет и нет.

(IV, xl, 1-3)

Among Onegin's winter activities was entertaining at dinner. In connection with this Pushkin introduces two notable digressions, one dealing with the merits of different wines, the other, sentimental in flavour, deals with the setting of the room:

Огонь потух; едва золою
 Подернут уголь золотой;
 Едва заметную струю
 Виется пар, и теплотой
 Камин чуть дышит.

(IV, xlvii, 1-5)

In keeping with the general tenor of the chapter comes an appropriately romantic ending:

Стократ блажен, кто предан вере,
 Кто, хладный ум угомонив,
 Покоится в сердечной неге,
 Как пьяный путник на ночлеге,
 Или, нежней, как мотылек,
 В весенний впившийся цветок.

(IV, li, 3-8)

In the fifth chapter, Pushkin discusses Tatyana's preoccupation with superstitions, in perfect accord with the romantic tradition:

Татьяна верила преданьям
 Простонародной старины,
 И снам, и карточным гаданьям,
 И предсказаниям луны.

(V, v, 1-4)

The description of Tatyana's preparations for divining the name of her husband is full of sentimental tenderness almost worthy of Karamzin's Poor Liza:

Татьяна поясок шелковый
 Сняла, разделась и в постель
 Легла. Над нею вьется Лель,
 А под подушкой пуховой
 Девичье зеркало лежит.
 Утихло все. Татьяна спит.

(V, x, 9-14)

Tatyana's dream, which perhaps tells us more about her than even her letter to Onegin is filled with many superstitious omens.

Moreover, it proved prophetic in many details for Tatyana, as we have already seen, and despite all attempts at logical explanation, this foretelling of a tragic future must undoubtedly be numbered among the romantic traits in Evgenii Onegin.

Among the omens in the dream is the stream between the estates, suggesting separation; the bear, in folklore, means a bridegroom. There is a half-disturbing, half-comforting note in the scene describing Tatyana's first encounter with the bear:

И лапу с острыми когтями
Ей протянул; она скрепясь
Дрожащей ручкой оперлась
И боязливыми шагами
Перебралась через ручей;
Пошла - и что ж? Медведь за ней!

(V, xii, 9-14)

Could the bear represent the fat general she eventually marries?

Another ominous detail in the dream is that Tatyana sees in the feast a funeral wake:

За дверью крик и звон стакана,
Как на больших похоронах.

(V, xvi, 3-4)

The dagger, symbol of tragedy in classical elegies, also features in her dream:

Спор громче, громче; вдруг Евгений
Хватает длинный нож, и вмиг
Повержен Ленский.

(V, xxxi, 1-3)

Likewise weird guests at the feast in the dream could be construed as the masks of classical ill-omen, for the names of the

guests at Tatyana's nameday party strangely resemble the appearances of the caricatures in the dream. These coincidences between the dream and reality, although psychologically possible, still seem more akin to romantic superstition than realistic detail. Especially if, to the dagger and masks we can add the military band at the nameday festivities as representing the trumpet of the classical omens.

Indeed, Pushkin has already included a reference to these omens in a digression concerning literary traditions, where he conjures up the spirit of an imaginary "strict critic" who might have required that he cast his story in the rigid form of a classical tragedy:

Ты прав и, верно, нам укажешь
Трубу, личину и кинжал.

(IV, xxxii, 9-10)

There is also a description of dances in one of the digressions in this chapter in which a typically romantic simile is employed:

Однообразный и безумный,
Как вихорь жизни молодой,
Кружится вальса вихорь шумный.

(V, xli, 1-3)

In the fifth chapter Pushkin avows that digressions are indeed a practice of the romantic school and promises to refrain from them, although, as we will see later, he did not quite succeed in keeping his word:

Пора мне сделаться умней,
В делах и в слоге поправятся
И эту пятую тетрадь
От отступлений очищать.

(V, xl, 11-14)

For the romantic tradition is well represented in the fifth chapter, too. We have here elements of superstition, sentimental verses and violent action, leading to a duel.

The superstitions find their fulfilment in the sixth chapter where, despite his earlier pledge, Pushkin digresses almost from the very beginning, describing in detail the background of the man Lenskii has chosen to deliver his challenge to Onegin:

. Зарецкий мой,
Под сень черемух и акаций
От бурь укрывшись наконец,
Живёт, как истинный мудрец,
Капусту сажит, как Гораций,
Разводит уток и гусей
И учит азбуке детей.

(Vi, vii, 8-14)

The last meeting between Lenskii and Olga is of necessity very solemn. The mood is created by the gentle, hesitant style that characterizes Lenskii himself and his feelings for Olga:

Он смотрит в сладком умиленье;
Он видит: он еще любим;
Уж он, раскаяньем томим,
Готов просить у ней прощенье,
Трепещет, не находит слов,
Он счастлив, он почти здоров...

(VI, xiv, 9-14)

Lenskii's romanticism is, according to Pushkin, much to blame for the forthcoming duel and tragedy. He emphasizes this in appropriate verses:

Не потерплю, чтоб развратитель
 Огнем и вздохов и похвал
 Младое сердце искушал;
 Чтоб червь презренный, ядовитый
 Точил лилеи стебелек,
 Чтобы двухутренный цветок
 Увял еще полураскрытый.

(VI, xv, 6-12)

The night before the duel Lenskii writes a letter to Olga. This letter is significantly written in the Onegin stanza and not, like Tatyana's or later Onegin's letters, in a different style. It is moreover distinctly sentimental:

Куда, куда вы удалились,
 Весны моей златые дни?

(VI, xxi, 3-4)

Pushkin acknowledges the sentimentality of Lenskii's verses, but fails to equate it with romanticism; he sees in it a natural expression of feelings and can thus subscribe personally to it. Hence the use of regular Onegin stanzas:

Так он писал темно и вяло
 (Что романтизмом мы зовем,
 Хоть романтизма тут нimalo
 Не вижу я; да что нам в том?)

(VI, xxii, 1-4)

The last words suggest that Pushkin may have had second thoughts on the contradiction, but he lets it pass. Such gallantries - a general reluctance to censure people in trouble - are characteristic of Pushkin in Evgenii Onegin, and render his underlying realism less harsh.

When Lenskii, without a chance to fire his own gun, is killed

by his former friend, the dying scene is described by Pushkin with unabashed sentimentality through a brilliantly apt simile:

Дохнула буря, цвет прекрасный
Увял на утренней заре,
Потух огонь на алтаре.

(VI, xxxi, 12-14)

Теперь, как в доме опустелом,
Все в нем и тихо и темно;
Замолкло навсегда оно.
Закрты ставни, окна мелом
Забелены. Хозяйки нет.
А где, бог весть. Пропал и след.

(VI, xxxii, 9-14)

By some strange twist of fate the description of the duel and Lenskii's death fulfil not only Tatyana's strange dream, but as we have already noted, in most surprising details fit the circumstances of Pushkin's own death.

The tone of Pushkin's comment on the pointlessness of the untimely death of the young poet is matched by his description of Lenskii's burial place. Again Pushkin is not ashamed to reveal sentiment:

Есть место: влево от селенья,
Где жил питомец вдохновенья,
Две сосны корнями срослись;
Под ними струйки извились
Ручья соседственной долины.

(VI, xl, 5-9)

With his description of the grave Pushkin refers to a herdsman visiting the site, and again introduces his stock symbol of continuing life, the fisherman:

Там у ручья в тени густой
Поставлен памятник простой.

Под ним (как начинает капать
Весенний дождь на злак полей)
Пастух, плетя свой пестрый лапотъ,
Поет про волжских рыбарей.

(VI, xl, 13-14 -
VI, xli, 1-4)

In an oblique reference to his publication of Evgenii Onegin by instalments, Pushkin promises not to end the novel here. He also asserts to the reader that he likes Onegin, thus maintaining the attitude that Lenskii was much to blame for his own misfortune:

Со временем отчет я вам
Подробно обо всем отдам,
Но не теперь. Хоть я сердечно
Люблю героя моего.

(VI, xlii, 13-14 -
VI, xliii, 1-2)

In the sixth chapter Pushkin bids farewell to his romanticism, as though it had died with Lenskii, and for the same reason - that it was unsuited for dealing with the realities of life. But first he acknowledges its contribution to his creativity. The words of thanks are written appropriately in a sentimental manner:

Дай оглянись. Простите ж, сени,
Где дни мои текли в глуши,
Исполнены страстей и лени
И снов задумчивой души.
А ты младое вдохновенье,
Волнуй мое воображенье.

(VI, xlvi, 1-6)

In perfect romantic tradition, Pushkin begins the seventh chapter with a sentimental discourse on spring:

Как грустно мне твое явленье,
Весна, весна! пора любви!
Какое томное волненье
В моей душе, в моей крови!

(VII, ii, 1-4)

The poet takes this opportunity to remind the (instalment) reader about the death of Lenskii, and does this through the use of a metaphor:

Или, не радуясь возврату
Погибших осенью листов,
Мы помним горькую утрату,
Внимая новый шум лесов.

(VII, iii, 1-4)

That the poet refers here to Lenskii can be judged by the fact that he uses the word "bitter", which could hardly refer to the loss of anything else but a human life. The verses bear an unmistakable romantic stamp and are of the type Pushkin would use to characterize the young poet. The only mention of Onegin is made in connection with Lenskii's death. When Pushkin finally does name the young poet by name, he hastens to point out that life goes on in its normal manner despite his death. He does this by again introducing the herdsman:

Один под ним седой и хилый
Пастух по-прежнему поет
И обувь бедную плетет.

(VII, viii, 12-14)

Так! равнодушное забвенье
За гробом ожидает нас.

(VII, xi, 9-10)

Поэта память пронеслась
Как дым по небу голубому.

(VII, xiv, 11-12)

Re-introducing Tatyana into the story, Pushkin reminds us of her nature and feelings with habitual mastery of characterization:

Как тень она без цели бродит,
То смотрит в опустелый сад...
Нигде, ни в чем ей нет отрад,
И облегченья не находит.

(VII, xiii, 9-12)

She becomes even more introspective at the sight of Onegin's house, which she sights on one of her walks. When let into the house she is overcome by even stronger sentiments.

Onegin, as far as we can judge, was a man almost devoid of sentiment. It is therefore, at first, unexpected to see in his home the stock idols of a romantic: Byron's portrait and Napoleon's statuette. The books that Tatyana finds in his room make her wonder, along with the reader, as to what kind of a man Onegin really is. Pushkin answers the question he has posed through Tatyana's intuitive thoughts:

Ничтожный призрак, иль еще
Москвич в Гарольдовом плаще,
Чужих причуд истолкованье,
Слов модных полный лексикон?..
Уж не пародия ли он?

(VII, xxiv, 10-14)

The changing season once again provides Pushkin with the opportunity for reflection on the beauty of nature and at the same time he recalls, in its details, Tatyana's plight:

Настала осень золотая,
Природа трепетна, бледна,
Как жертва пышно убрана...

(VII, xxix, 9-11)

The sight of Moscow invites Pushkin to a nostalgic digression:

Москва... как много в этом звуке
Для сердца русского слилось!
Как много в нем отозвалось!

(VII, xxxvi, 12-14)

While describing the ladies present at a reception attended by Tatyana, Pushkin pays tribute to an unnamed beauty. This again is in keeping with the romantic tradition:

Но та, которую не смю
Тревожить лирою моею,
Как величавая луна
Средь жен и дев блеснит одна.

(VII, liii, 5-8)

Tatyana, bored by the artificial atmosphere of Moscow, longs for her country home. Her sentimental nature calls her back to where she experienced her first love:

К своим цветам, к своим романам
И в сумрак липовых аллей,
Туда, где он явился ей.

(VII, liii, 12-14)

In a form of an apology, Pushkin explains the difficulty of departing from sentimentalism and the romantic school associated with it. It is the romantic inspiration that has helped Pushkin to create Tatyana. He admits that he does not really know when his exotic Byronic mood ended and the more familiar image of his heroine appeared:

И вот она в саду моем
Явилась барышней уездной,
С печальной думою в очах.

(VIII, v, 11-13)

The appearance of Onegin, back from a long trip, inspires Pushkin to a monologue on the results of misspent life. A note of solemnity is introduced by the use, yet again, of anaphonic verse:

Но грустно думать, что напрасно
 Была нам молодость дана,
 Что изменяли ей всечасно,
 Что обманула нас она;
 Что наши лучшие желанья
 Что наши свежие мечтанья
 Истлели быстрой чередой,
 Как листья осенью гнилой.

(VIII, xi, 1-8)

The simile in the last two lines once again reminds us of Pushkin's roots in the romantic school.

In describing Tatyana, Pushkin no longer resorts to a sentimental picture except for a very short aside and the use of a metaphor:

Нина мраморной краскою
 Затмить соседку не могла,
 Хоть ослепительна была.

(VIII, xvi, 12-14)

A meeting between Onegin and Tatyana, at the ball, provides Pushkin with a natural opportunity to digress on man's dissatisfaction with his lot:

Запретный плод вам подавай:
 А без того вам рай не рай.

(VIII, xxii, 13-14)

After the above remark, Pushkin ridicules Onegin's new found affection for Tatyana. Through the use of metaphors the poet gives the digression a mockingly sentimental tone:

Но в возраст поздний и бесплодный,
 На повороте наших лет,
 Печален страсти мертвый след:
 Так бури осени холодной
 В болото обращают луг
 И обнажают лес вокруг.

(VIII, xxix, 9-14)

Onegin's letter to Tatyana is the third departure from the Onegin stanza. There are some sentimental passages in the letter worthy of Tatyana's feelings at the time she wrote her letter. One such passage describes Onegin's desire to be near his beloved:

Повсюду следовать за вами,
 Улыбку уст, движенье глаз
 Ловить влюбленными глазами.

(Vol. V, p. 180)

Another passage asserts to Tatyana that her presence is needed to keep him alive:

Но, чтоб продлилась жизнь моя
 Я утром должен быть уверен,
 Что с вами днем увижусь я.

(Vol. V, p. 180)

Waiting in vain for an answer, Onegin finally summons his courage to call on Tatyana. When, after a long pause, Tatyana reads him a lesson, it is a somewhat vindictive answer to the treatment he had accorded her on receipt of her letter. There is also a moment of candid reflection, when we again meet the Tatyana of old. Pushkin, in sentimental verses, reproduces Tatyana's words:

. . . Сейчас отдать я рада
 Всю эту ветошь маскарада,
 Весь этот блеск, и шум, и чад
 За полку книг, за дикий сад,
 За наше бедное жилище,
 За те места, где в первый раз,
 Онегин, видела я вас.

(VIII, xlvi, 5-11)

The novel ends in uncertainty and may even be considered as not having an ending at all:

Она ушла. Стоит Евгений,
Как будто громом поражен.
В какую бурю ощущений
Теперь он сердцем погружен!
Но шпор незапный звон раздался,
И муж Татьяны показался,
И здесь героя моего
В минуту, злую для него,
Читатель, мы теперь оставим,
Надолго... навсегда.

(VIII, xlviii, 1-10)

It is true that Pushkin made an attempt to finish the novel at a later date, although for reasons not entirely clear, but probably political, he did not proceed with his plan. From the manuscripts that survive we can deduce the political nature of the proposed ending, but not the actual manner in which the poet proposed to reintroduce his hero. All the same, the form in which Evgenii Onegin is known now, consisting of eight chapters, must be considered in a sense complete. Pushkin was much too conscientious an author to publish a novel that could not be considered finished, and we can hardly doubt that the "unfinished" quality of the novel's ending, as we have it, was consciously intended by him. We certainly have more evidence for this point of view than the musicologists who refuse to call Schubert's Eighth Symphony "Unfinished" on the argument that it does not have the usual number of movements.

The succeeding chapters, if they had appeared, would in all probability have revived the Onegin theme and perhaps even made a

Decembrist of him. But it was always possible that on one level at least Pushkin had nothing more to say, for it should be noted that the surviving manuscripts of the succeeding chapters do not mention Tatyana, for whom the poet admitted so particular an affection. Thus for Tatyana, his romantic heroine - romantic in herself and seen by Pushkin through romantic eyes - the novel is given a heartbreaking "romantic" ending.

Of course one may object that the novel is named after Onegin, but to this it is surely justifiable to counter that Evgenii Onegin was the title for a novel that did not get written, while the Tatyana theme, outgrowing perhaps the poet's intentions, became a novel by itself.

The romanticism of Evgenii Onegin, which we have just examined, is one of the most obvious and appealing features of the novel, although, as we shall see, it is largely superficial and intended perhaps primarily to appeal to the less discriminating among the reading public, and to a certain extent to the censor. Romantic in flavour, we have noted, are its lyrical digressions, its sentimentalism and its overtones of fatalism and superstition. The realism of the novel, much deeper seated, and less obvious to the unprobing eye, takes the form of subtle reflections on Pushkin's own times and stems from the portrayal of what were later to become types in Russian realist literature - the "superfluous man", in the person of the vacillating hero, Evgenii Onegin, and the strong-willed heroine, typified here by Tatyana.

As we have seen, Evgenii Onegin was at first conceived as a satire (page 50). We may also recall that he named it a "novel in verse" (in a letter to Vyazemsky) "of the Don Juan type." The narration exhibits considerable irony in the poet's attitude towards the hero and his way of life. The irony is deep, one might say heartfelt- something altogether different from the satirical witticisms of Byron. Indeed, if Onegin is, as Tatyana suggests, a parody of Byron, Pushkin himself, inasmuch as he implies censure of Onegin, was bound to assume a more sober style than Byron's.

The inescapable "moral" of Evgenii Onegin is the absolute necessity to lead a creative rather than an idle life. In this, more than in anything else, lies the basic difference between the lyrical presence of the narrator (the "I" of the novel) and the hero, and the difference between Onegin and Tatyana.

Pushkin shows that there is, on the surface, much similarity between him and his hero. They have both known and enjoyed life to the full, and both are now tired of it:

Страстей игру мы знали оба:
Томила жизнь обоих нас;
В обоих сердца жар угас.

(I, xlv, 9-11)

But Pushkin, although embittered, does not remain impassive, while Onegin is plunged in gloom and devoid of any apparent desire to do anything but brood:

Я был озлоблен, он угрюм.

(I, xlv, 8)

Onegin was incapable of being carried away by even an outstanding theatre performance, for, as we have seen, he found the theatre never more than merely amusing. Not so Pushkin; for him, the theatre is a vivid experience long to be remembered. It is a "magic land", a shrine of Russian culture:

Узрю ли русской Терпсихоры
Душой исполненный полет?

(I, xix, 6-7)

Onegin finds work as boring as pleasure. He tried to write, but (and here the contrast with Pushkin is obvious) gave it up:

Хотел писать - но труд упорный
Ему был тошен.

(I, xliii, 9-10)

Pushkin had read widely and never in fact stopped educating himself. Not so Onegin. He tried to absorb "strange minds", devouring books, but in a manner that bored him from the beginning. He found in the books deception and mere idle talk. For him they lacked either conscientiousness or common sense, while modern books were too repetitious of old stories. In the end, as with everything else, Onegin gave up:

Как женщин, он оставил книги. (I, xliv, 12)

Onegin, as we have seen in the beginning of the book, had an education equal to that of other young men of his station in society. He had also been well endowed financially and was thus free from all obligation to work. He is absolutely egoistic, without a care for anyone. Paradoxically, this "anyone" includes himself. Here lies the root of his sufferings. Pushkin emphasizes this by drawing Onegin as

a passive individual, a man with a cold heart, engrossed in his own thoughts:

Мне нравились его черты,
Мечтам невольная преданность,
Неподражательная странность
И резкий охлажденный ум.

(I, xlv, 4-7)

The love, however, that Onegin finally experienced for Tatyana was apparently genuine. It was an experience which caused him pain, having possessed him too late to bear fruit. (Tatyana's admission that she still loved him, but could not yield to him, would in all probability cause Onegin to wander aimlessly, both in his mind and deeds. This is, however, a mere conjecture drawn from the fragments of Pushkin's intended final chapters.)

In often quoted words from the eighth chapter, Pushkin tries to arouse in us a feeling of pity for Onegin. This is the sequel to an earlier stanza where the poet feels that every occasion in the life of a man has its own purpose, and blessed are those who take advantage of it:

Любви все возрасты покорны

(VIII, xxix, 1)

(Но) печален страсти мертвый след.

(VIII, xxix, 11)

Onegin's evasion of the realities of the world are strongly emphasized by Pushkin in *The Travels* of Evgenii Onegin. We will recall that in the very first of the surviving stanzas Pushkin describes the market place of Nizhnii Novgorod with its teeming life. Onegin, standing in the midst of it, sees nothing. Aware of his

helpless situation, but incapable of emotion, he prays:

Зачем не чувствую в плече
Хоть ревматизма? - Ах, создатель!
Я молод, жизнь во мне крепка;
Чего мне ждать? тоска, тоска!..

(Travels, v, 11-14)

Pushkin, as the narrator and ever present observer, is in this respect quite different from Onegin. The difference is that he accepts reality and becomes emotionally involved in all that surrounds him. He could not otherwise describe the scene in such vivid colours. He takes in everything, is able to place himself in the midst of it, and in his capacity as an author finds release and fulfilment. Onegin, on the other hand, looks but does not see, he is unable to apply himself to the realities of life, and concentrates instead on his own feelings of weakness and egoism and his purposelessness in life. Thus Pushkin once again emphasizes his role as an objective spectator and separates his own personality from that of Onegin, employing the romantics' own device of digression to subtly underline his own realism.

Tatyana is the prototype of the heroines of Russian novels who stand morally higher than their male counterparts. In a way it would, in fact, have been perhaps more appropriate to call the novel as it now stands: "Tatyana Larina".. Of course, had the novel been completed according to Pushkin's plan, and perhaps become much longer - who knows? - then Tatyana's part in the story might have seemed less dominant. In any case, in the novel as we now have it, it can be argued that she steals a lot of the limelight.

The society of the eighteen twenties in Russia barred women from active life, even if they had the ability and will to take part in it. Bearing in mind the contrasting aimlessness of Onegin, we may now examine the manner in which Pushkin characterizes the shy, but determined, country girl:

. От небес одарена
 Воображением мятежным,
 Умом и волею живой,
 И своею головою,
 И сердцем пламенным и нежным.

(III, xxiv, 8-12)

After her meeting with Onegin and despite her unrequited love, Tatyana is not given to dark thoughts, as Onegin is when later rejected by her. On the contrary, she begins thinking even deeper. She does not read distractedly, like Onegin, to while away the time, but rather to further her knowledge, to open new horizons:

. Чтенью предалася
 Татьяна жадною душой;
 И ей открылся мир иной.

(VII, xxi, 12-14)

Raised in foreign traditions, Tatyana had found it easier to write to Onegin in French, but nevertheless, she is a Russian at heart. Here Pushkin defends not only the heroine of his novel but all the young people of his generation, including himself, and it is indeed Russia that Pushkin has at heart throughout Evgenii Onegin. In a well-known passage, early in the novel Pushkin clearly reveals this devotion to his motherland, albeit with a tinge of sarcasm:

Татьяна (русская душою,
Сама не зная почему)
С ее холодную красою
Любила русскую зиму.

(V, lv, 1-4)

The brief appearance of Lenskii in the novel is necessary if only to give a realistic picture of the variety of types among the Russian nobility and landed gentry. The young poet, according to Pushkin's account, is a dreamer, a sentimentalist, educated abroad in the romantic tradition. Pushkin describes Lenskii in a rather detached manner without ever showing much sympathy for him:

Он сердцем милый был новежда,
Его лелеяла надежда,
И мира новый блеск и шум
Еще пленяли юный ум.

(II, vii, 5-8)

He points out Lenskii's continued attachment to foreign countries, with few references to link him to the land of his birth, and he calls him (only) "half-Russian":

Он пел те дальные страны.

(II, x, 10)

Pushkin does not hesitate to accuse Lenskii of the folly of challenging Onegin to a duel. He does it by pointing out that Onegin had no choice but to accept the challenge:

Он обвинял себя во многом.

(VI, x, 3)

..... Но теперь
Уж поздно; время улетело...

(VI, xi, 4-5)

Whatever sympathetic words Pushkin found were for Onegin and not Lenskii. According to Pushkin it was Onegin who was the real victim

of the duel:

**Скажите: вашею душой
Какое чувство овладеет.**

(VI, xxxiv, 8-9)

Thus Lenskii, having fulfilled his purpose in the novel, is removed from the scene. Whenever Pushkin recalls his name it is only to emphasize Onegin's feelings, to show that his hero had a conscience.

It is interesting to note that Pushkin devoted very little space to Olga. In fact he devoted more verses to Larina, the mother of the two girls, and even to Zaretskii, Lenskii's second. The reason for this may be that Olga, too, is invented only to contrast Tatyana, and to explain better Lenskii's preoccupation with things towards which Pushkin himself was contemptuous. This notwithstanding the fact that the poet in real life married an equally worthless woman. Onegin, the bored fop, has a better appreciation of human worth, and expresses surprise that Lenskii could be interested in Olga:

В чертах у Ольги жизни нет.

(III, v, 8)

There is perhaps a lesson in the contrast between Pushkin's realistic evaluation of Olga (expressed here through Onegin) and his apparent blindness to the negative qualities of his own wife. For although he liked Tatyana very much, even loved her:

**Я так люблю
Татьяну милую мою!**

(IV, xxiv, 13-14)

She was not a living person, but only a figment of his imagination. Thus he could think and choose with a much clearer mind

than when the choice between a real Tatyana and a real Olga (his wife) actually presented itself. An echo of this attitude is to be found in his lines concerning composition:

Прошла любовь, явилась муза,
И прояснился темный ум.

(I, lix, 1-2)

Thus we see that just as the world at large is populated with an infinite variety of different people, so even the miniature cosmos of Evgenii Onegin has a convincingly wide range of characters. They were created by Pushkin in the image of the real world in which he himself lived. Moreover the relative importance of the different characters to the plot of the story can be, in a way, judged by the amount of space he devoted to them. And so it is a particular problem to the analyst of Evgenii Onegin that Tatyana occupies more verses than Onegin, a problem to which we have already alluded and which will be further discussed in our consideration of the novels' form which now follows.

The novel, as we have said before, is a complete entity with a beginning, a middle and an end. It can indeed be subdivided into three distinct parts:

PART ONE

Chapter I: Devoted to Onegin.

Chapter II: Introduces all the leading characters. About two thirds of its contents are devoted to Lenskii, with the balance devoted to Tatyana. Olga and Larina are described in connection with this or the other person, not separately.

Chapter III: Devoted completely to Tatyana. The first part ends here, leaving the reader in suspense as to the outcome of Tatyana's encounter with Onegin.

PART TWO

Chapter IV: Although devoted to all four heroes, it is dominated by Tatyana and, to a lesser degree, Onegin.

Chapter V: Belongs completely to Tatyana.

Chapter VI: Occupied to a small extent by Lenskii, but dominated by the poet's attempt to arouse sympathy for Onegin. The second part ends with this chapter, also on a note of some mystery. Onegin departs on his travels, his fate and that of the two sisters not yet decided.

PART THREE

Chapter VII: Although mention of Onegin is made, the chapter belongs fully to Tatyana.

Chapter VIII: Belongs to Onegin, although Tatyana's presence is strongly felt and indispensable. This chapter ends in suspense and mystery as to Onegin's future.

The surviving fragments of two other chapters fail to give a positive answer to the mystery, although there is little doubt that they would belong to Onegin.

A certain equilibrium between the presences of Onegin and Tatyana in the novel could thus be established. Of much greater dramatic importance, however, is the contrast of characters.

At first we have two opposites meeting: Onegin and Lenskii. The poet himself emphasizes the differences, and explains that only for lack of any other companionship did the two become friends:

Они сошлись. Волна и камень,
Стихи и проза, лед и пламень
Не столь различны меж собой (II, xiii, 5-6)

От делать нечего друзья. (II, xiii, 14)

There is no less difference between Olga and Tatyana:

Ни красотой сестры своей,
Ни свежестью ее румяной
Не привлекла б она очей. (II, xxv, 2-4)

The meeting of the opposites continues with the romantic Lenskii falling in love with Olga. At the same time Lenskii's female double, the sentimental Tatyana, is enamoured of the flighty Onegin. Although Olga's fickle-mindedness is suspected, the proof comes only when she marries soon after Lenskii's death. In this manner Pushkin removes the two "props", Olga and Lenskii, and proves his point that romanticism is doomed. Now we are left with the two main dramatis personae: Onegin and Tatyana. Marriage between the two was nothing more than a romantic dream which no realist could see as coming true. Onegin was a playboy, not ready to settle, now or ever; Tatyana was "born" for domestic life. An indeed, although she remains in love with him, Tatyana marries and remains faithful to another man - a man not of her choice, but of the kind such girls in such times were fated to marry.

The "shadow" in the novel, the narrator, Pushkin himself,

admits his own affection for Tatyana, but also professes his friendship for Onegin. And it is with Onegin that he remains at the end of the novel:

Она ушла. Стоит Евгений,
Как будто громом поражен.

(VIII, xlviii, 1-2)

The moment of truth has arrived for Onegin, and Pushkin leaves him to his fate:

И здесь героя моего
В минуту, злую для него,
Читатель, мы теперь оставим,
Надолго... навсегда.

(VIII, xlviii, 7-10)

Thus, till the very end, Pushkin draws his heroes and the actions of all those involved in the story with a realistic pen, although there is perhaps something romantic in the way the poet, discreetly leaving Onegin at such a painful moment, proves the worth of his own friendship. We may recall his words spoken at an earlier time:

Брагов имеет в мире всяк,
Но от друзей спаси нас, боже!

(IV, xviii, 11-12)

Having populated his microcosm with true-to-life people, Pushkin added many other touches of realism to Evgenii Onegin, by employing various poetic devices. One of the most interesting is the occasional deliberate departure from the regular Onegin stanza. The "Song of the Maidens" at the end of the third chapter illustrates in some measure this point. There is ample evidence that the song was composed by Pushkin and is not therefore a folk song in the true sense of the term. Although, as we have already seen, digressions are one

of the characteristics of romanticism, one cannot dispute that in this case the digression adds realism. With Pushkin, raised in the romantic school, it was natural to employ some of the devices of that school for the realism which he unwittingly pioneered. The "Song of the Maidens" is indeed so much in character that it is not even of the literary quality one would ordinarily expect from Pushkin.

The celebrated letter, too, which Tatyana writes to Onegin is not written in the Onegin stanza. The romantic label can be much more successfully attached to "Tatyana's Letter" than to any other part of the novel. This is of course how it should be, for Tatyana was passing through a genuinely romantic phase, which Pushkin has faithfully rendered.

Having ascribed this letter's authorship to someone other than himself, Pushkin not only departs from the form of the balance of the novel but adds to the effect of realism by making it a separate entity, without a stanza number. It is perhaps partly for this reason that "Tatyana's Letter" is one of the most reprinted parts of the novel.

The very first line of the letter sounds a note of verisimilitude:

Я к вам пишу - чего же боле? (Vol. V, p. 70)

Precisely what such a girl would write!

As her feelings and emotions begin to possess her mind we enter the second part of the letter. For all its high-flown romanticism we still feel that it is a credible document. Tatyana is in love and she is willing to give herself fully to Onegin.

The third part is a highly emotional prayer of hope that Onegin will accept her sacrifice, with a naive but typical footnote expressing confidence that this cynical womanizer will honour her by remaining discreet:

Но мне порукой ваша честь. (Vol. V., p. 70)

Onegin's letter is an echo of Tatyana's writing. It is also written in a different meter from that of the balance of the novel, and is also a separate entity. The realism of Onegin's letter is again in its appropriateness to his character:

**Я думал: вольность и покой
Замена счастью. Боже мой!
Как я ошибся, как наказан!**
(Vol. V, p. 180)

It is at this point - in considering Onegin's letter, that several interesting questions occur, whose answers can only be speculative. We will recall that Zaretskii, Lenskii's second in the duel, is given more verses in the novel than Olga, who provides the female counterpart to Onegin. We should also recall that the poet spends much time and effort in pointing out that Zaretskii, formerly a worthless individual, is now employed at peaceful endeavours, such as gardening and being the village handyman. Is it possible that Pushkin was preparing Zaretskii as a parallel to Onegin? This question cannot of course be answered with any certainty. However, we may examine some facts that could shed light on the plausibility of a positive answer. The most important clue to be examined is provided by Onegin's letter.

Onegin's letter seems at first a masterpiece of the seducer's

art, with just enough echoes from Tatyana's letter to stir up the maximum of sympathy. As such it is what we might expect from Onegin, and forms a part of Pushkin's realistic portrayal of the hero. Pushkin, however, does not anywhere suggest that Tatyana was at all right in her suspicions that the letter was merely the opening move in a design to create a grand scandal, after which she was to be abandoned. Certainly, Tatyana's reaction, justified as it may seem, is not without spite (*сегодня очередь моя* VIII, xlii, 14), and spite discolours truth.

Taking stock of the known facts, we will recall that when Onegin was introduced to the reader, Pushkin remarked that his friend was no longer interested in amorous adventures (*в красавиц он уж не влюблялся* IV, x, 1). Thus, although having the opportunity, he did not take advantage of Tatyana's original confession of love. We know that Lenskii's death was a great shock to him, and prompted Onegin to embark on his travels. The ghost of the dead friend, however, followed him on the journey. Onegin was outwardly changed on his return, to the point that Pushkin had difficulty in recognizing him and even wondered what manner of man he was now. As if taking stock of himself, the poet remarks that Onegin is now 26, but has not as yet achieved anything tangible in his life (*Блажен, кто смолоду был молод* VIII, x, 1). Moreover, some change in Onegin's character was due, especially if he was to end up as a self-sacrificing Decembrist.

With all the facts now assembled, we still must ask another question: could his letter have marked a turning point in the development of his character, tragically unrecognized by Tatyana, or was the rebuff from her perhaps to jolt him into an agonizing self-

appraisal that would lead to a change for the better? It is just possible that the disarming note in Onegin's letter is sincerely contrived, but that he was cursed by habit always to sound like a seducer, even if he had in fact fallen more truly in love with Tatyana than Pushkin chooses at this point to reveal.

We thus have a clue to an earlier question, whether Pushkin planned to present a reformed Onegin at some stage of the novel, perhaps in the part he never had a chance to present to the reader. For if he did plan this, it was possible that he would have made Onegin return for a visit to his village and meet his new parallel, Zaretskii, thus maintaining the continuity of the novel and affirming that reform was possible even for a man whose only serious occupation in life hitherto had been the pursuit of pleasure.

A parallel can be drawn from Pushkin's own life. His affair with Madame Vorontsova was an "honourable" one. Pushkin was truly in love with the countess at the time, and he provided her with the companionship and pleasures which she could hardly expect from a fat, war-scarred general. There is, therefore, reason to believe that Onegin would have been made to re-enact the admittedly adulterous relationship of Pushkin, but without any desire for scandal. For it is doubtful that Onegin, shaken by the senseless death of a friend, would have searched for another amorous adventure that could have resulted in his own death or the death of another friend, the general. On the other hand, of course, there is always the possibility that Pushkin, with uncanny premonition, intended to cast Onegin in the role of a Baron

d'Anthès, his own killer in a duel for the "honour" of the poet's wife.

A strong effect of realism is produced throughout the novel by the use of onomatopoeia. This of course is not a normal device for a realist writing novels in prose. But for a verse novel, a rarity in itself, to employ as many imitative word devices as does Pushkin in Evgenii Onegin cannot but add to its total effect as a work of realism:

The sound of beetles on a warm evening:

Был вечер. Небо меркло. Воды
Струились тихо. Жук жужжал.

(VII, xv, 1-2)

the opening of a champagne bottle:

Вошел - и пробка в потолок,
Вина кометы брызнул ток.

(I, xvi, 7-8)

Not only individual sounds are conjured up by Pushkin's verse, but also whole scenes, as at the ballet:

Одной ногой касаясь пола,
Другую медленно кружит,
И вдруг прыжок, и вдруг летит,
Летит, как пух от уст Эола,
То стан совет, то разовьет,
И быстрой ножкой, ножку бьет.

(I, xx, 9-14)

Pushkin gives us truly realistic descriptions of nature, devoid of any bias. Nature in Evgenii Onegin is cast in a neutral role. Descriptions of the different seasons are devoid of metaphors:

Уж небо осенью дышало,
 Уж реже солнышко блистало,
 Короче становился день,
 Лесов таинственная сень
 С печальным шумом обнажалась,
 Ложился на поля туман,
 Гусей крикливых караван
 Тянулся к югу: приближалась
 Довольно скучная пора;
 Стоял ноябрь уж у двора.

(IV, xl, 5-14)

The description of the various types and sights one would notice coming to the outskirts of Moscow in the eighteen twenties is again free of metaphors, and relies for its effect entirely on the visual impression conveyed:

Мелькают мимо будки, бабы,
 Мальчишки, лавки, фонари,
 Дворцы, сады, монастыри,
 Бухарцы, башни, казаки,
 Аптеки, магазины моды,
 Балконы, львы на воротах
 И стаи галок на крестах.

(VII, xxxviii, 6-14)

The description of a ball is almost cursory in its lack of development, but the picture it gives is real:

Шум, хохот, беготня, поклоны,
 Галоп, мазурка, вальс...

(VII, liii, 1-2)

On a rare occasion where realism yields to a romantic mood, the picture is blurred and comparatively meaningless. All it tells us is of affection for an unknown beauty, allowing Pushkin to maintain a discreet silence over the details:

Как величавая луна
 Средь жен и дев блестит одна,
 С какою гордостью небесной
 Земли касается она!
 Как негой грудь ее полна!
 Как томен взор ее чудесный!..

(VII, lii, 7-12)

Contrast his straightforward description of Olga, which tells what we need to know about her:

Глаза как небо голубые,
 Улыбка, локоны льняные,
 Движенья, голос, легкий стан.

(II, xxiii, 5-8)

In order to render Evgenii Onegin truer to life, Pushkin attempted to account for all events in a chronologically logical manner. In a note to the poem he states: "In our novel, time is accounted for according to the calendar" (Vol. V, p. 194, note #17). Indeed, by watching hard for clues, one can determine the year of an event and in some cases the month and even the exact day. However, Pushkin appears to have made a curious slip. St. Tatyana's Day is celebrated, according to the Julian calendar, on January 12. In 1824, the year Pushkin wrote Chapter III, that day was a Saturday. Apparently, without checking further, he placed Tatyana's nameday party on Saturday, January 12, 1821, when in fact the day was a Wednesday!"* The most prominent Pushkinologists have seemingly ignored this fact.

Many dates in the chronology of events of Evgenii Onegin

* This date has been checked by the Toronto Public Library and the New York Public Library.

presented here have been re-constructed on the basis of the works of such authorities as S. Bondi, B. Meylakh and B. V. Tomashevskii, who have had access to Pushkin's diaries and manuscripts.

Onegin's departure from St. Petersburg, with which the novel begins, to be with his dying uncle in the country, may be placed in the spring of 1820. This is evident from the fact that Onegin left the capital soon after Pushkin's initial banishment:

Онегин был готов со мною
Увидеть чуждые страны;
Но скоро были мы судьбою
На долгий срок разведены.

(I, li, 1-4)

Pushkin left St. Petersburg on May 6, 1820, and Evgenii's uncle died before his nephew could reach him:

Но, прилетев в деревню дяди,
Его нашел уж на столе,
Как дань готовую земле.

(I, lii, 12-14)

In the ninth stanza of the fourth chapter Pushkin tells us that Onegin wasted eight years in St. Petersburg:

Вот как убил он восемь лет,
Утрата жизни лучший цвет.

(IV, ix, 13-14)

Thus he had moved there about 1812, following the defeat of Napoleon, when many Russian families dismissed their French tutors, as apparently did the Onegin's:

Monsieur прогнали со двора,
Вот мой Онегин на свободе.

(I, iv, 4-5)

According to an earlier edition of the novel, Onegin came to

St. Petersburg at the age of sixteen,⁵³ which places his birth in about 1796. Thus, by coincidence or by design, Onegin's age when he left the capital (more or less 24) at the outset of the novel could have been exactly Pushkin's when he began writing Evgenii Onegin on May 9, 1823 (born May 25, 1799).

In the first chapter of his first edition Pushkin indicates that Onegin was eighteen years old when they met in the capital:

Все украшало кабинет
Философа в осьмнадцать лет.

(I, xxiii, 13-14)

The meeting between the two therefore occurred in 1814, three years after the poet and two years after his hero arrived in St. Petersburg.

Onegin settles in the country at the beginning of the summer of 1820. The same summer he meets Lenskii, who has just returned from Germany, graduating from the University of Goettingen at eighteen:

Без малого в осьмнадцать лет.

(II, x, 14)

Not long after meeting his neighbour, Lenskii introduces Onegin to the Larins. In response to Tatyana's letter, Evgenii meets her in the garden, which indicates continued warm weather. At the end of the fourth chapter Pushkin talks of the Russian fall:

Уж небо осенью дышало.

(IV, xl, 5)

⁵³ According to S. Bondi (op. cit.) in an early manuscript, Pushkin had the words "шестнадцати не больше лет" in place of "острижен по последней моде" the final draft of V, iv, 6.

and the winter of 1820:

И вот уже трещат морозы. (IV, xlii, 1)

Tatyana's fortune-telling and her dream can thus be placed between December 31, 1820 and January 6, 1821, for this particular kind of fortune-telling among Russian girls traditionally takes place during the week beginning on New Year's Eve, and indeed Pushkin states at this point:

Настали святки. (V, vii, 5)

Tatyana's nameday was celebrated January 12, the day of her patron saint. It was the day after the nameday party that Lenskii paid his next and last visit to Olga, for she asked him:

Зачем ввечор так рано скрылись? (VI, xiv, 1)

The same evening he writes his last verses, where he refers to the duel which is to take place the following day:

Что день грядущий мне готовит? (VI, xxi, 5)

The duel and Lenskii's death, therefore, took place on January 14, 1821, a Monday.

That the action so far takes place within one year can be further shown by the fact (II, x, 14) that Onegin and Lenskii met when the latter was almost eighteen years old, the same age at which the young poet dies:

. пускай поэт
Дурачится: в осьмнадцать лет
Оно простительно

(VI, x, 7-9)

Onegin left shortly after the duel for St. Petersburg and then

for a trip around the country. On his return to St. Petersburg
Onegin was twenty-six years old:

Дожив без цели, без трудов
До двадцати шести годов.

(VIII, xii, 10-11)

Olga married a cavalry officer in the summer of 1821:

Не долго плакала она.

(VII, viii, 2)

Tatyana began wandering through the countryside after Olga's
departure and visited Onegin's house (summer and autumn, 1821):

Но лето быстрое летит,
Настала осень золотая.

(VII, xix, 8-9)

and before departure for Moscow (winter 1821-1822):

Идет волшебница зима.

(VII, xxix, 14)

Tatyana's move to Moscow took place in the winter of 1821-1822:

Зато зимы порой холодной
Езда приятна и легка.

(VII, xxxv, 1-2)

In 1822 Tatyana marries the general:

Но здесь с победою поздравим
Татьяну милую мою.

(VII, lii, 13-14)

Onegin cannot have begun his travels later than 1821, for
"three years later" he visited Pushkin in Odessa:

Спустя три года, вслед за мною,
Скитаясь в той же стороне,
Онегин вспомнил обо мне.

*

Я жил тогда в Одессе пыльной.

(Vol. V, pp. 203-204)

Pushkin lived in Odessa between July, 1823 and July, 1824 and returned to Mikhailovskoe in August of 1824. Onegin probably returned to St. Petersburg at the same time, for it was Pushkin's first ball after his return:

И ныне музу я впервые
На светский раут привожу.

(VIII, vi, 1-2)

and Onegin went to the ball immediately on his arrival in St. Petersburg:

Как Чацкий. С корабля на бал.

(VIII, xiii, 14)

where the friends met:

Ужели он?.. Так, точно он.

(VIII, vii, 13)

Onegin met Tatyana on his return to the capital, at the same ball, which was held in her house:

"Ты ей знаком?" - "Я им сосед".

(VIII, xviii, 4)

He wrote his letter to her and awaited an answer throughout the winter of 1824-1825:

Дни мчались; в воздухе нагретом
Уж разрешалась зима.

(VIII, xxxix, 1-2)

In the very beginning of the spring of 1825, Onegin pays his last visit to Tatyana:

На синих, иссеченных льдах
Играет солнце; грязно тает
На улицах разрытый снег.

(VIII, xxxix, 10-12)

Judging from the above quotation, the snow was melting, which

indicates that it was early spring. With this visit, which can be placed in March, 1825, the novel ends.

Thus Pushkin based his novel partly on a sequence of events in his own life, thereby giving us a richly documented account of the times in which he lived.

In a note to the publisher accompanying the first chapter of Evgenii Onegin, Pushkin wrote: "The first chapter is something complete in itself. It contains a description of the society life of a young man from St. Petersburg at the end of 1819 and is reminiscent of Beppo, a facetious work of the gloomy Byron " (Vol. V, p. 509). This statement, more than anything else that has been said by Pushkin or his critics, illustrates the poet's intentions. Although considered by many sarcastic and unkind, the first chapter in fact sets the pace of realism for the whole novel. That it is historically correct we know from our history of this period. We also know that Pushkin expected to be criticized and ridiculed, perhaps even have the work banned by the censor, as he told his friend Vyazemskii (Vol.X, p. 70).

But his hopes and expectations for the novel are implicit in the last two lines of this same first chapter:

И заслужи мне славы дань:
Кривые толки, шум и брань!

(I, lx, 13-14)

CHAPTER V

ONEGIN AND TATYANA: PROTOTYPES OF RUSSIAN REALISM

It is an inescapable fact that Pushkin was raised in the romantic school of the nineteenth century. Small wonder, then, that as we move now to a summary of our findings we are bound to state that his pioneer experiment in realism, Evgenii Onegin, bears many romantic traits. First of these is his choice of medium: verse. But it is not the nebulous, long-winded verse of so many romantic outpourings. A disciplined writer, as can be judged from his composing nearly 400 stanzas over a period of ten years in unfaltering style, Pushkin wrote his novel, even though it was in verse, very much in accord with the strict rules he advocated for prose. These rules, which he defined as early as 1822, were precision, tidiness and brevity. Indeed, there is hardly a single word in the novel that can be subtracted or substituted without lessening its effect, a fact which makes the novel extremely difficult to translate into another language, even without rhyme.

The romantic influence is also reflected in the liberal use of digressions and the poet's personal involvement with the subject. There are also coincidental parallels between Pushkin and the true romantics such as Byron. But the Byronic picture of the hero is transferred from an ideal romantic setting into a contemporary social milieu, and the traditional story of disappointed love is treated in a new, realistic manner.

In the poetic form of Evgenii Onegin, there is a great deal of eighteenth century classicism, while in other respects it is a psychological novel, pointing the way to Dostoyevsky. It is psychological because it is more concerned with the inner than with the exterior qualities of the characters.

In his preface to the first printing of Evgenii Onegin Pushkin referred to the poem as satirical, yet on several subsequent occasions he denied that it was meant to be satirical! Indeed, Evgenii Onegin is a direct rather than oblique or mainly satirical reflection of the people and society of Pushkin's own times. The novel is concerned primarily with the relationship between its two main heroes: Evgenii and Tatyana. A third prominent character in the novel, and its unifying agent, is the author himself. Although never directly involved in the action, he is always present to comment, explain and judge. He is present in the novel not just in the sense of an author always showing through his work, but as a person taking part in the events rather than as an observer and historian. Without the author's acknowledged participation in the events of the novel, none of his outspoken expressions of sarcasm or regret, or his many interpolated thoughts, would have the same force. Without a narrator actually present on the scene the thread of the story would soon have been lost amid the many digressions and descriptive passages.

To assert that he should not be confused with the hero of the story, Pushkin not only says so quite explicitly, but also uses such devices as presenting the "Song of the Maidens" and the letters

written by Tatyana and Evgenii in forms differing from that of his Onegin stanza, thus, as it were, denying his authorship of these three pieces, and placing himself as the historian of the action, only marginally involved.

In the plot, then, as opposed to the novel as a whole, the poet does not occupy a central place. That place is reserved for two people only, Tatyana and Evgenii. The supporting actors in the plot are there largely to emphasize some characteristic of one of the heroes. For this reason a supporting actor will be introduced somewhat arbitrarily and eventually discarded when he is no longer needed. Lenskii is no exception; even if his death had not been part of the plot, he would surely have faded, like Olga, from the scene. In making Olga shallow like Onegin, and Lenskii passionate like Tatyana, Pushkin created parallels to the main heroes, and in describing the loveless marriage of the old nurse and of Larina, the poet prepares us for Tatyana's eventual fate.

In general, by using verse, Pushkin was able to add substance and subtlety to an otherwise bare and simple story. Tolstoy accomplished a similar feat in Anna Karenina without resorting to verse, but while Tolstoy and many others since Pushkin have admired his prose for its "nakedness", they did not feel bound by Pushkin's formula for its use, nor were they hampered (and for this they owe much to Pushkin's pioneer work) by the lack of a truly Russian prose tradition.

Thus, on the basis of our findings, we are bound to arrive at the following conclusions:

Pushkin was inspired by Byron to write a novel in verse "not unlike Don Juan". From the start however, there were signs that this apparent promise of a new exercise in the traditions of romanticism was not to be fulfilled. Not only did Pushkin prefer the prosaic term "chapter" to the Byronic "canto", but his references, implicit and implied, to the romantic movement and what he clearly recognized as its excesses range, as we have seen, from the off-hand and irreverent to the severely critical.

Not that he did not himself use many of the devices of romanticism, such as digression (but for his own subtle purposes), or even surrender on occasion to what we might uncharitably describe as blatant sentimentality, especially in his attitude to Tatyana.

But even when his infection with the then prevalent romantic fever is evident, as in many passages up to Lenskii's death, we nevertheless discover, on closer inspection, that such passages are symptomatic of genuine feeling (as for example in the poetry of Wordsworth and Keats) and generally quite devoid of the affectation and general airiness that mars so many romantic works. It is from this sincerity, found at first even in his romantic output, that Pushkin's realism springs - sincerity elevated by artistry.

We have noted that Pushkin, being a political exile condemned never to be allowed foreign travel, could sincerely complain of a frustrated wanderlust. Unhappy in love, he could become genuinely enamoured of his fictitious heroine, Tatyana.

More important perhaps - and if Pushkin had completed the "missing" chapters, we could judge this better - he could sincerely regret the wasted life of Evgenii, for did he not himself feel that he had somehow cheated in not dying with the Decembrists?

The whole question of Pushkin's association with the Decembrists is immensely interesting, and, as we have stated, still much debated. Suffice it to remind ourselves again that Lenskii dies, and the dalliance with romantic attitudes peters out, at the same time as the Decembrist movement is crushed. From then on, as though the characters in the novel are real people, affected by gloomy portends of Nicholas' reign, the romantic trivialities of their youth become mere memories amidst the stark realities of life.

The fact that the central tragedy is one of love does not in any way detract from realism, even though the love story, often superficially considered, was a stock-in-trade of romanticism. Indeed Tatyana and Evgenii, thwarted in love, assume a symbolic stature - Tatyana the embodiment of all that is most attractive in the Russian character and Evgenii the personification of those who idled away their time instead of committing themselves to the cultivation of things that mattered. Pushkin may have been preparing him for a brave end on the political scene, or he may not, but even in the eight chapters that Pushkin was able to publish we see him clearly as the prototype of the superfluous man.

That so many more superfluous men, be they called Rudin, Oblomov or Nekhludov, were to be created by the writers that followed

Pushkin, and so many more Tatyanas - real women, lovable despite their faults - is surely extra evidence, if it were needed, that Pushkin cleared away the débris of the romantic ruins and laid the foundations, in their stead, of the realistic Russian novel.

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