WOMEN AS READERS IN ALEXANDER PUSHKIN'S EUGENE ONEGIN, IVAN TURGENEV'S RUDIN AND KAROLINA PAVLOVA'S A DOUBLE LIFE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the image and function of the female protagonist as a reader in Alexander Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin, Ivan Turgenev’s Rudin and Karolina Pavlova’s A Double Life. In these novels the motif of reading serves as an indication of and guide to the protagonist’s self-knowledge and development or bildung. In The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development, Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland establish the idea of a specifically female type of Bildungsroman. Their expanded definition of the genre takes into account the following classical features: belief in a coherent self, faith in the possibility of development, insistence on a time span in which development occurs, and emphasis on social context. Using these parameters this study identifies each text as a Bildungsroman for the female protagonists and explores the role of reading as a tool for and impetus to their development.

Chapter One traces the path of Pushkin’s heroine Tatiana as she progresses from a naive to a sophisticated reader whose critical reception of literature enables her to reinvent and refigure her personality. The high authority of Pushkin’s novel in verse in the Russian literary tradition has made Tatiana a model which has influenced, either directly or indirectly, many later works. Chapter Two explores the female protagonist of Rudin, (written in prose) Natalia, as an inscribed reader of, among other texts, Eugene Onegin. Turgenev’s reconfiguration of the Tatiana model reflects both the differences in referential
aspect and literary mode of the two texts. Chapter Three focuses on Pavlova’s *A Double Life*, written partly in prose and partly in verse. It has respectful but nonetheless polemical relations to the Tatiana model. Cecilia, the protagonist, does not present as overt a portrait of an inscribed reader as do the other two heroines, for she can only interact with literature in her dreams. Moreover, unlike Tatiana and Natalia she is not only a reader but a poet herself.

Each heroine’s *bildung* involves an awakening to the societal limitations imposed on her during the time of personal maturation and quest for a coherent self. Their significant emotional and intellectual development before the time of marriage is largely aided by acts of reading and internalization of literary models.
To My Family
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INTRODUCTION

At last she shut the book sharply, lay back, and drew a deep breath, expressive of the wonder which always marks the transition from the imaginary world to the real world.

"What I want to know," she said aloud, "is this: What is the truth? What's the truth of it all?" She was speaking partly as herself, and partly as the heroine of the play she had just read. The landscape outside, because she had seen nothing but print for the space of two hours, now appeared amazingly solid and clear, but although there were men on the hill washing the trunks of olive trees with a white liquid, for the moment she herself was the most vivid thing in it - an heroic statue in the middle of the foreground, dominating the view. Ibsen's plays always left her in that condition. She acted them for days at a time, greatly to Helen's amusement... But Helen was aware that it was not all acting, and that some sort of change was taking place in the human being.  

In this portrayal of an inscribed reader from her novel The Voyage Out (1915), Virginia Woolf addresses many of the themes this paper seeks to explore in the context of Russian literature. The female protagonist is all consumed by her reading. Her interaction with the text does not end when she closes the book, and the act of reading alters her vision, both literally and symbolically. Days after having read the play she continues to adopt the role of the heroine. Through this scene Woolf demonstrates the use of the motif of reading as a characterization device and the potential it offers for a character's intellectual and emotional growth.
In *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland approach the genre of the *Bildungsroman* or novel of development specifically in terms of gender. They suggest that the *bildung* of female protagonists often constitutes a “voyage in,” that is self-knowledge as an impetus to development. Many of the opportunities for development available to male protagonists are inaccessible to women. These protagonists often turn to literature in search of an understanding of their surroundings and self. In her study of the motif of reading in English literature, Rachel Brownstein finds that, “Girls, enjoined from thinking about becoming generals and emperors, tend to live more in novels than boys do, and to live longer in them. And to suspect that one can be significant only in the fantasy of fiction, to look for significance in a concentrated essence of character, in an image of oneself, rather than in action or achievement, is, historically, only feminine.” ² For the heroines of Alexander Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, Ivan Turgenev’s *Rudin* and Karolina Pavlova’s *A Double Life* this association of life and literature is not merely the result of the inscribed reflection of societal limitations. Rather, as this paper seeks to reveal, it offers them the opportunity for growth and enables the reader to perceive the story of each female protagonist as a *Bildungsroman*.

While focusing on the role played by gender along the path of development, Abel, Hirsch and Langland’s definition, “shares common ground with the presuppositions and generic features of the traditional *Bildungsroman*: belief in a coherent self (although not necessarily an autonomous one); faith in the possibility of development (although change may be frustrated, may occur at different stages and rates, and may be concealed in the
narrative); insistence on a time span in which development occurs (although the time span may exist only in memory); and emphasis on social context (even as an adversary).” 3

Using these guidelines I seek to establish each text as a Bildungsroman for its female protagonist. If these features of the Bildungsroman shape the heroines’ development, it is through the motif of reading that each protagonist finds her way.

Much as the classical Bildungsroman can be expanded to include gender considerations, so too may the motif of reading. While this exploration of self through the motif of reading is common to all three Russian protagonists, Cecilia’s reading does not correspond as overtly with the traditional portrait of an inscribed reader as the other heroines. Karolina Pavlova’s protagonist can only interact with literature on a subconscious level. She is not an inscribed reader in the same sense as Tatiana and Natalia who are often found with book in hand. Still, her journey is a literary one both in the way it is expressed and the path it takes. Her interaction with literature belongs to a world outside of reality, and she experiences a “transition state” similar to the one described by Virginia Woolf. As I shall examine later, even without the physical presence of a book, Cecilia engages literature in her subconscious quest for development.

“Tatiana Larina opens her book and becomes the primordial Russian reading heroine.” 4 The influence of Tatiana’s image on Russian literature and literary heroines may be described as the introductory chapter in an extensive, and perhaps infinite, book of inscribed readers. It represents the literary referent toward which Pavlova and Turgenev oriented their respective female characters. The authors expected their implied readers to decode the intertextual references, be they implicit or explicit, to Pushkin’s Tatiana. Thus
the other heroines’ novels of development both depend and build on Tatiana’s text. Analyses of the texts will uncover parallels and reveal Natalia and Cecilia as heirs to the image of Tatiana as an inscribed reader. Comparison of these works to each other and the female Bildungsroman may raise questions about the development of the female inscribed reader and the status of Russian literature within the concept of the female Bildungsroman.

Before an analysis of Tatiana as a reader, it is important to establish that this analysis will focus on Tatiana as a fictional character or creation, rather than as an aesthetic feature or incarnation of Pushkin’s muse. Although beyond the scope of this study, the combination of genres involved in A Double Life demands that the character of Cecilia receive similar qualification. It can be argued that Cecilia’s presence in the poetic sections represents more of an aesthetic feature than a realistic character. The final poem indicates a fusion between Cecilia’s poetic voice and that of the author. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will focus on the protagonists in their roles as prose characters.
CHAPTER 1

TATIANA LARINA: CRITICAL RECEPTION OF LITERATURE AND THE POWER TO REINVENT A FEMININE SELF

“Life and literature” which according to William Mills Todd, “intersect at every turn,” in Eugene Onegin, “are not merely analogous to each other.”6 The motif of reading combines these two worlds in the image of Tatiana and serves to both trace and shape her development. The real author, i.e. Pushkin, creates a fictional character through the medium of literature. He introduces his female protagonist to the real reader through the voice of a narrator as well as through his selection of and attitude towards her readings. In fact, Tatiana’s use of literature acts as a primary means for her psychological and social development. Thus the motif of reading becomes a characterization device within a work of literature. The author not only engages literature to create the fictional biography of Tatiana, but explicitly describes his heroine’s use of reading to shape her life. Literature is present in of all the major moments of Tatiana’s life. Life and literature not only intersect at every turn, they can be read as inseparable in the character of Tatiana.

Contemplating the Tatiana cult, which she recognizes as a manifestation of the bond between life and literature, Caryl Emerson identifies Tatiana’s most resilient and irresistible attributes as being naïve, stubborn and largely silent. 7 All these qualities of
Tatiana as well as her social, intellectual and emotional milieu are conveyed through the motif of reading, which testifies to its importance as a characterization device. Since the narrator guards the heroine’s thoughts and even actions, much of her characterization depends on the motif of reading. Thus, in terms of the Bildungsroman, the motif of reading is employed to shape the “coherent self” of the female protagonist.

In a sense, Tatiana is presented to the real reader not by who she is but who she is not. Unlike her sister Olga, she is given no physical portraiture except the mention of her sad, doelike expression. The narrator creates Tatiana’s image as a solitary individual by isolating her from her family and placing her alone by the window. This image is followed by a list of negations: Tatiana does not embroider, play with dolls, gossip or play with other children. The question prompted by this list, “What does she do?”, is soon answered:

She early had been fond of novels;
for her they replaced all

Ей рано нравились романы
Они ей заменили все (2:29). 8

Reading explains or even justifies her solitary, pensive nature. All of the social qualities she lacks, in comparison to her sister, are replaced by the image of Tatiana reading by the window.

What Tatiana reads is as significant to the building of her character as the voracity with which she reads it. Because her favorite novels, Richardson’s Clarissa, Rousseau’s Julie and Mme De Stael’s Delphine belong to a earlier generation, “Pushkin uses Tatiana’s reading habits as a means of locating her in the pattern of changing attitudes of successive
periods. Pushkin implies that, while it was to be expected that the mother’s contemporaries should adore Richardson, Tatiana lagged behind the taste appropriate to her generation; her reading fits in with her rustic, isolated, old-fashioned upbringing, and contrasts with that of Onegin." Tatiana’s choice of books seems to represent more of a lack of choice. At this point the only valorization she has seen of literature or literary images is that of her mother’s generation. It seems that Tatiana had inherited both her early unsophisticated approach to literature and her selection of texts from Mme Larina. While the naïveté of her approach to reading is primarily emphasized by its influence on her, the selection of books supports her old fashioned image and serves to further define her character.

The characterization of Tatiana through the motif of reading develops when she is seen in the context of her family. Pushkin presents Tatiana’s family in relation to their attitudes toward reading and choices of books. This manner of characterization is not surprising for all of the characters in Eugene Onegin are, to some degree, defined by references to literature. By describing the reading habits of the Larins, Pushkin both reinforces the significance of the motif of reading as a characterization device and emphasizes the image of Tatiana as a solitary and somewhat alienated member of the family. As a sign of her maturation and growing self-reliance Tatiana’s literary tastes and influences begin to evolve. The fact that at first Tatiana’s favorite books are eighteenth century foreign epistolary novels is significant both for her characterization and her family relations. Tatiana’s mother is described as enamored of, but not an actual reader of Richardson’s Clarissa. During Mme Larina’s youth the work was such a part of Russian
culture that she endowed her beau with all the traits of Richardson's protagonist Grandison without ever having read the book. References to the role of literature in the mother's life serve several purposes. The characterization of Mme Larina by her attitude toward "reading" further underscores the importance of literature for Tatiana's character. Also, the mother's behavior serves as the first example of the influence of literature on the life of a Russian noblewoman and thus foreshadows future events and tendencies in Tatiana's own life.

Mme Larina, in spite of falling in love with a sentimentalist literary image and being married against her will, eventually adapts to the practical demands of her life. Time and habit were the only means of building a coherent self available to her. Tatiana seems to embark on a similar path, but she has a tool her mother lacked, namely her love for reading. Through her reading she acquires the sophistication and sense of a coherent self that enable her to fit into a lifestyle very different from that of her mother. Regardless of the difference between mother and daughter's attitudes toward literature, Mme Larina's characterization acts as a precursor to that of Tatiana. Her mother's depiction is the first hint as to Tatiana's early reception of literature. Mme Larina uncritically absorbed contemporary literary culture. Although Tatiana actually reads the texts, she seems to be developing similarly unsophisticated reading habits. Paradoxically, it is this very difference in their initially shared response to literature that offers Tatiana the opportunity to become a more sophisticated reader and accomplished individual.
It is hardly surprising that Tatiana’s father is also characterized by his attitude toward reading. One of the few references to Dmitri Larin before his death presents him as a nonreader who fails to recognize the power of literature:

Her father was a kindly fellow
who lagged in the precedent age
but saw no harm in books;
he, never reading,
deeded them an empty toy,
nor did he care
what secret tome his daughter had
doing till mourn under her pillow.

Отец ее был добрый малый
В прошедшем веке запоздальный
Но в книгах не видал вреда;
Он, не читая никогда,
Их почитал пустой игрушкой,
И не заботился о том
Какой у дочки тайный том
Дремал до утра под подушкой (2:29)

By mentioning his status as a nonreader between the extensive comments on the role of literature in the lives of Tatiana and her mother, the author emphasizes the importance of reading in the text as a whole and alludes to yet another aspect of the heroine’s personality, namely, her use of reading as a primary source of knowledge. The successful acquisition of knowledge, despite an absence of parental guidance, hints at the innate quality of Tatiana’s natural intelligence and potential for further development.

Tatiana’s sister Olga is presented as her opposite in nearly every way. Her interest in reading and literature corresponds more to her mother’s tastes than her sister’s. The narrator makes it clear that had Lenski’s poetry been comprised of serious minded old fashioned odes she would have refused to read them. The more contemporary elegies,
against which the narrator protests, were probably more acceptable to Olga, although she clearly was not an avid reader. Her attitude toward reading resembles her mother’s superficial acquaintance with contemporary literary culture. The act of reading subtly serves as a value judgment of the character’s ability to experience romantic love. Olga is less than attentive to Lenski’s poetry, and it does not take long to call her love into question when she quickly forgets him after he is killed in a duel. In contrast, Tatiana not only reads Eugene’s books and notes in order to understand him, but although they remain apart, she continues to love him. The relationship between Olga, Lenski and poetry is presented as a reverse image of Tatiana’s better understanding of Onegin achieved through reading and supports the role of literature as a potential route to knowledge, emotional maturity and even wisdom.

By providing contrast to Tatiana, Olga contributes greatly to the understanding of her sister’s character. In terms of the poetics of the novel, Olga is described as a static character, which favorably frames Tatiana’s capacity for development. Both her actions and the narrator’s comment, “but any novel / take, and you’ll surely find / her portrait” indicate that Olga is a stock character from whom little development can be expected (2:23). Tatiana’s interest in literature, especially when viewed against the background of her family, indicates the important role that reading will play in her quest for a coherent self.

Tatiana’s initial characterization as a reader is solidified as her actions, feelings and words are repeatedly shown to be linked to literary models. The creative powers of literature do not, however, belong to the author alone. Tatiana’s development through the
motif of reading reveals the act of creation both by the author and on the part of the heroine. While Pushkin crafts one of his most beloved and influential characters, the heroine recreates herself as a wife and salon hostess. At first, Tatiana's unsophisticated reading habits may lead to the equation of literature with reality, but she is not merely an empty vessel for literature's lessons. On the contrary, Tatiana uses her readings as a means for survival as well as a source of consolation and joy. Through literature she creates changing images of Onegin and alters her version of self. Thus, literature and reading are inscribed not just as texts, but also as part of the social context in which the female protagonist develops her sense of coherent self.

In *Eugene Onegin*, "life and the novel are somehow equivalent because Pushkin's characters make them so, bridging the space between the literary and social areas of culture with conventional definitions of literature: literature as representation of reality, as self-expression, as moral guide, and as entertainment or consolation." Tatiana embodies all of these uses of literature, and they play an integral part in the shaping of her character. The following analysis of Tatiana's changing attitude toward reading reveals many parallels between the motif of reading and character development.

At first Tatiana naively perceives literature as representative of life. That this solitary young woman should suddenly deem herself ready to fall in love with the cold and cynical Onegin can be at least partially attributed to her susceptibility to literary models. Consideration of the role played by literature in Tatiana's enamorment should not negate other contributing factors. William Mills Todd rightly points out that combined with Tatiana's romantic readings, social pressures and her coming of age ("the time had come -
she fell in love”) fueled her yearnings and imagination (3:7). Nevertheless, literature exerts a powerful influence over her perception of self and others. It is to her books that Tatiana turns for guidance after first seeing Onegin. A multitude of factors may have prompted Tatiana to fall in love and bestow that love on Onegin, but literature crafts her image of him. With even greater enthusiasm than before, Tatiana, “turns to her favorite authors for inspiration. All the heroes merge into Onegin, all the heroines into her imagined self.”

While Tatiana may love artlessly, the narrator depicts her love as preconditioned and ironically credits literature for its development:

*Imagining herself the heroine of her beloved authors - in it (book) she seeks and finds her secret glow, her daydreams the fruits of the heart’s fullness

Воображаясь героиней своего возлюбленных творцов
Она в ней (книге) ищет и находит свой тайный жар, свои мечты,
Плоды сердечной полноты (3:10).

Through a combination of literary texts and her imagination Tatiana creates an image of herself similar to that of her favorite literary heroines. She then invents both a love and a lover appropriate for that image. Her image of self is so closely merged with her literary heroines that that she adopts not only their actions but their emotions as well:

* she sighs and having made her own another’s ecstasy, another’s melancholy. she whispers in a trance, by heart, a letter to the amiable hero.
Having firmly established the literary models for her real-life role, Tatiana continues to seek direction in her books. Her letter to Onegin is the next step in the course of action prescribed by her epistolary novels, particularly Rousseau’s *Julie.*¹⁴ The fact that she whispers this letter “by heart” in a trance-like state supports the idea that her love is inspired by a literary model (3:10). It is not of Eugene that she thinks, but of her favorite fictional heroes with Onegin’s face. The narrator discreetly reminds the real reader of the discrepancy between Onegin and Tatiana’s fictional image of him in the query:

The letter’s ready, folded.
Tatiana! Whom, then, is it for?

Письмо готово, сложено
Татьяна, для кого ж оно? (3:21).

If the model for Tatiana’s epistolary expression of love comes from her novels, the content of the letter also reflects its origins. This letter, although “translated” by the narrator and framed by his comments, represents one of the few opportunities for the real reader to hear Tatiana’s voice. The vision of romantic love inscribed in it infers that it was really composed before Tatiana’s confession to her nurse, that is while she was roaming the woods with a book in hand. George Gibian indicates that her ideas about love are consistent with those of eighteenth century sentimentalist literature: the lover is a protector sent by God; their love is the will of Heaven and was born even before they saw each other; the female protagonist places herself and her reputation at the mercy of the
hero and his honor. The fusion of Tatiana’s identity with that of her literary heroines can be seen by a comparison of her letter to an excerpt from Julie’s first letter to St. Preux: “Modesty and virtue were dear to me; I hoped to cherish them in a life of simplicity and industry. But to what purpose were my efforts which Heaven rejected? Since the first day that I had the misfortune to see you, I have felt the poison which destroys my sense and reason; I have felt it from the first instant. Your virtues are the last refuge of my innocence; my honor dares to confide itself in yours.” Although with somewhat different words (but also in French, according to the narrator) Tatiana expresses similar sentiments: without ‘him’ she could have led a simple life; heaven has predestined their love; it was love at first sight, and she relies on her ‘hero’s’ honor for her own survival.

There exists, however, an important difference in the circumstances in which these similar letters were written and read by the male objects of feminine desire. St. Preux had already confessed his love to Julie, while Tatiana initiates contact with Onegin on a romantic level. The impact of this difference can be seen in terms of the social norms and values of the time which dictated that a young woman was forbidden from disclosing such feelings first and especially in writing. At this point in Tatiana’s development literary models take precedence over the reality of her own circumstances. She offers Onegin the choice of two roles - a guardian angel or perfidious tempter (3:31). Knowing little about Onegin, she seeks to understand him by measuring his response against the standards set by her literary heroes. The literary models do not enable Tatiana to predict his reaction with any certainty, and she awaits his reply with trepidation.
It is a sign of her potential for development that after the pain of a negative reply from Onegin Tatiana does not return to reading her beloved epistolary novels. She by no means abandons reading, nor has its influence over her abated. However, Tatiana can no longer find consolation and guidance in the novels the plots of which develop in a different direction than her own life. Now the power of literary discourse over Tatiana’s psyche manifests itself mainly in her unconscious dreams. Images from her famous dream have been attributed to many sources, including Richardson’s Clarissa, Zhukovsky’s Svetlana and the Russian folklore tradition. Regardless of the actual intertextual references or combination of cultural codes which shape her dream, the act of dreaming itself is strongly tied to Tatiana’s former repertoire of reading. According to Todd, the dream, “as a repository for fears, forbidden desires, punishment fantasies, and premonitions - was an integral part[...]of the epistolary novel.” While this conclusion alone may not prove the connection between Tatiana’s unconscious dreaming and conscious literature based daydreaming, the consistent modeling of her actions and thoughts according to familiar literary models supports it rather strongly.

Upon awaking from her dream, Tatiana turns not to a novel, but to Martin Zadeck’s guide for interpreting dreams. This episode is indicative of a larger pattern; in spite of the fact that her dependence on literary models has led to disappointment and unrequited love, it is through reading that Tatiana seeks a solution. Evidently Tatiana still views reading as a source of knowledge. Although Zadeck’s book does not provide the answer she seeks, it marks the beginning of a process in which reading is reassigned from its role as
entertainment, fuel for the imagination and consolation, to a tool for personal
development.

The next stage of Tatiana’s evolution as a reader parallels her maturation as a
person. She becomes better able to understand and control both the books and social
context of her life, rather than being governed by her own imagination and overpowered
by literary fiction. Consequently, she gains a clearer understanding of self as well as of
Onegin. Tatiana’s developmental voyage begins when, distraught at having lost Onegin,
Lenski and Olga, she embarks on a solitary walk in the woods. Her journey leads her to
Onegin’s home where she requests permission for the housekeeper to:

Visit the deserted castle
So as to read books there alone.

Пустынный замок навещать,
Чтоб книжки здесь одной читать (7:20).

At this point it remains unclear whether Tatiana intends to use literature as a tool for self
knowledge or as a habitual mechanism for assuaging her grief. Onegin’s books fulfill both
needs:

Then to the books she turned.
At first she was not in the mood for them,
but their choice appeared
to her bizarre. To reading fell
Tatiana with an avid soul;
and a different world revealed itself to her.

Потом за книги принялась
Сперва ей было не до них,
Но показался выбор их
Ей странен. Чтенью предалась
Татьяна жадною душой;
И ей открылся мир иной (7:21).
As she reads Onegin's books and his notes in the margins, aptly described by Stanley Mitchell as his "mental furniture," Tatiana recognizes her own use of literature, as a representation of reality and self as well as a guide and impetus to action, in Onegin.19 Her ability to question, "Might he not be, in fact, a parody?" reveals Tatiana's increasingly sophisticated reading skills (7:24).20 After this experience, the real reader sees a different, much more mature Tatiana who does not impose fantasy on reality, but instead employs her reading in order to acquire a realistic perception of herself and her actions and an understanding of Onegin as separate from the imaginary biographies of her literary heroes. Her habit of turning to literature for comfort leads her to Onegin's books, but by reading his motley collection of books and personal notes, Tatiana changes her attitude to literature. Now she is able to elicit its guidance through interpretations that are much more controlled and insightful.

Having learned that both she and Onegin have been imposing their reading of literature on their reading of life, Tatiana begins to build a new life for herself. Either because her literary heroines faced a different social context and personal fate (as I shall discuss later) or because she has become wary of impetuous imitation of their actions, Tatiana molds herself into a perfect aristocratic lady and salon hostess. Tatiana engages in, "the highest form of creativity open to a woman at this time."21 In addition, the salon served as a primary arena for literature and artists. Tatiana's leadership position within the salon scene as well as the skill with which she executes it is indicative of her developing relationship with literature.
The fact that Tatiana reshapes herself in a manner not derived from a literary model does not mean that she creates a coherent self by severing her relationship with literature. In fact, she turns to a preformed text for a moral imperative when faced with the lovesick Onegin, who is still playing a literary role. In response to a Onegin’s pleas she responds:

I love you (why dissimulate?)
but to another I’ve been given away:
to him I shall be faithful all my life.

Я вас люблю (к чему лукавить?)
Но я другому отдана,
Я буду век ему верна (8:48).

Several literary models for these lines have been suggested, all of which indicate Tatiana’s continued relationship with literature. It should be noted that her sentiments are still very much in keeping with the values found in Rousseau. Judith McDowell offers the following interpretation of the value system inherent in Rousseau’s Julie, “If she is carried away by true love, a woman may fall from innocence before she is married without leaving a stain upon her character, but after marriage such a lapse would be criminal.”

According to McDowell, a woman is expected to focus her energies on the marriage and maintain the delusion that she no longer feels her former passion. Tatiana’s connection to literature is not severed but rather transformed. Now she recognizes the social conventions of the world in which she moves and is determined not to transgress them. Other critics trace her speech to a Russian folksong available to her in various literary collections or even from the oral repertoire of her nurse. Tatiana admits that given a choice she would trade all her social success for, among other things, a shelf of books to be read as an innocent youth in her idyllic country home (8:46). As a more mature reader,
Tatiana regards literature as, "more than a consoling, entertaining object; it becomes the expression of her soul and values." Her bildung involves an appreciation of the knowledge available to her through literature, a transition to a more critical reception of literature and an incorporation of her Russian cultural history into her life in the grande monde.

Tatiana's personal development and search for a coherent self is parallel to and a direct result of her literary evolution. Her journey seems particularly significant when compared to the fate of her literary heroines who are able to preserve their integrity only through an early death. In contrast, Tatiana does not die but succeeds in creating a new life for herself. Although the solution that her development affords may not be ideal, that is a loveless marriage, it should be viewed in its historical and social context. Marriage and social success were among the limited achievements available to young women of the end of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries. Reading, coupled with Tatiana's natural emotional and intellectual potential, empowers her to attain the greatest possible success within the constraints of her society. Unsophisticated reading proves to be fruitless, but once Tatiana is able to take control of her reading, the inherent danger becomes a valuable lesson. What could have been poison becomes a cure.

How then is Tatiana able to progress from uncritical literary reception to using her reading as a vehicle for understanding herself and her world? Pushkin ironically refers to Tatiana's French and English sentimentalist novels as "dangerous," but they do not represent her only literary influence. A major factor in her development is her Russian nurse, a peasant woman with considerable knowledge of folk culture. The first reference
to literature captivating Tatiana’s heart and mind is not the, “fictions of Richardson and Rousseau”; her nurse’s (grisly) “tales in winter, in the dark of nights, captivated more her heart.” (2:29, 2:28). 26 Faced with disillusionment when she discovers that life does not mirror literature, “she can replenish her spirit...with the folklore of her nurse.” 27 The references to her nurse’s stories represent Tatiana’s tie to Russia. Just as this bond protects her from sharing the fate of the restless, wandering Onegin, so the oral tradition personified in her nurse, “outweighs all those ‘dangerous books’.” 28 Fortified by her heritage and land, Tatiana preserves her integrity in a different manner than her foreign literary models.

The time span in which Tatiana’s development occurs warrants comment as well. Her journey towards a coherent self begins as a young woman of marriageable age. Her introduction to Onegin acts as an impetus to action. Through her use of reading, interaction with the hero, and reliance on her innate potential for development Tatiana reinvents her life and self. The real reader’s knowledge of Tatiana’s bildung process ends after she comes to understand Onegin through his books and notes. Immersed in the world of high society, Tatiana reverts to daydreams of her country life and sentimentalist novels (7:53). The final stage of her transformation of self into the perfect salon hostess remains hidden from the reader. I would suggest that her acceptance of the general represents another stage in her developmental process which continues after her marriage and involves her introduction to and success in the very highest stratum of society. Her development of a coherent self necessarily ends with this success because she has reached the highest form of self creation available to a woman of her time and social status.
Regardless, Tatiana's character development seems to end on an optimistic note; she has successfully retained her noble nature and love for literature and incorporated them into her reinvented self.
CHAPTER 2

NATALIA: THE TATIANA MODEL RECONFIGURED

Pushkin once described literature as, “embroidering new patterns on an old canvas.” In the case of the representation of the female protagonist as reader, the next pattern I will discuss is the one embodied in Natalia, the heroine of Turgenev’s novel Rudin (1856). According to Hugh McLean, in Rudin, “the ambiance of culture, and specifically literature, its formative influence on the characters, is still very much present, through perhaps used less effectively than in Eugene Onegin.” I would posit that as regards the female protagonist’s search for a coherent self, the motif of reading is no less important than in Pushkin’s novel, but it is assigned a less obvious role in the text. Instead of describing in detail what Natalia reads (or is read) Turgenev characterizes her as a reader in part by evoking intertextual references to Eugene Onegin and especially Tatiana Larina.

The conception of Natalia as the spiritual and aesthetic heir to Tatiana becomes particularly powerful when viewed within the context of the motif of reading. Moreover, regardless of the differences in literary mode, i.e. prose rather than poetry, and chronology, the development of Natalia’s character also follows the generic model of the
Bildungsroman. The female protagonists of Pushkin and Turgenev are linked not only by their similarities but also by their differences. Like Tatiana, Natalia is characterized by her selection of readings, her initial uncritical reception of literature, and her ability to redirect her path and create a coherent self with the assistance of literature. She gains wisdom from her sorrows and creates a life for herself through a marriage in which she plays a dominant role. Like her predecessor, Natalia is exposed to various types of literature but it is the selection of her readings that marks and, in a sense, predetermines the divergence between the two characters.

Both heroines are baryshniki (young, unmarried noblewomen) residing on country estates, but Natalia belongs to the 1840s generation while Tatiana is a woman of the 1820s. The chronological gap is further emphasized by the fact that, “not fairy-tales and mid-eighteenth century novels but history and contemporary literature are forming her (Natalia’s) mind.” Both female protagonists can be guided and led astray by literature, but Natalia relies on a different knowledge base than Tatiana. While Tatiana seeks a guardian angel, Natalia envisions her love as inseparable from the support she can provide to the man with whom she will pursue a common noble cause. Each heroine begins her journey from a different starting point but equipped with similar tools, challenged by comparable obstacles and progressing toward emotional and intellectual development.

As in the case of Tatiana, Natalia’s character is defined both through the motif of reading and her social context. “She is of a serious cast of mind, with a youthful eagerness for self-dedication first hinted at in her statement that she has been reading a history of the crusades.” Natalia’s serious nature amidst the frivolity surrounding her, is shaped by the
narrator’s observation of her williaeness to read and study (75). One of the other characters, Lezhnev, comments that, "Natalia’s no child; believe me, she thinks more deeply and more often than you and I’" (92).

Natalia’s nature is most clearly depicted by the narrator’s observation of her behavior: "She spoke little, listened and watched attentively, almost fixedly, exactly as if she wanted to absorb everything she saw and heard. She would frequently sit quite motionless, her hands in her lap, and become absorbed in thought; the inner workings of her thoughts would then be expressed in her face" (75). While in this passage Natalia deviates from her role as a literal inscribed reader, her behavior is reminiscent of the act of inscribed reading depicted in the excerpt from Virginia Woolf’s The Voyage Out, discussed in the Introduction. She is absorbed in her “reading,” internalizes her observations and cannot help but express them, albeit silently. This description of Natalia presents the key points of her character - her love for reading, her inclination towards serious thought and analysis, and her ability to experience genuine feelings. The link between Natalia’s behavior and the motif of reading is strengthened by the juxtaposition of this description with one of her earnest study habits (75). Natalia’s portrayal as an inscribed reader is not as overt as Tatiana’s. The connection between her literal reading of texts and reading of the world around her is perhaps less clearly stated. However, the motif of reading links the various perceptions of Natalia and plays a major role in creating a coherent character.

Familial relationships also play a notable role in characterizing Natalia as a reader. Her mother, Daria Mikhailovna controls Natalia’s selection of reading material, but it is the difference in their preferences and general attitudes to reading that serves to valorize
Natalia as a reader and a person. Natalia’s own choice of readings and determination to follow it reflects her potential for emotional and intellectual development. Daria Mikhailovna censors Natalia’s reading, keeping the French novels she deems improper for her daughter for her own use; “Despite her mother’s efforts, Natalya also read books whose very existence Mlle Boncourt did not suspect: she knew all Pushkin by heart”(76).36

Comparison between mother and daughter as concerns the motif of reading allows the real reader to draw conclusions about each character’s literary competence and personality. The contrast between Natalia’s interest in history books and her mother’s choice of French novels implies that Natalia is nowhere near as naïve a reader as her mother thinks. In fact, Natalia proves to be a more sophisticated reader than either her mother or Tatiana at the same age. Daria Mikhailovna’s control of her daughter’s reading also establishes a pattern which allows the better educated Rudin to assume the role of a person who has the right to direct Natalia’s reading practices. The gulf between mother and daughter as regards reading underscores their inherent character differences. While Daria Mikhailovna proudly recounts her former social encounters with second-rate literary celebrities, Natalia uses literature as a means of developing her mind and soul. The differences in their attitudes toward literature support the perception of Natalia as isolated and misunderstood within her family circle. The narrator describes the lack of understanding between mother and daughter, and the motif of reading plays an important role in defining this relationship.
Natalia’s secret reading represents one of many direct intertextual references to Pushkin. In combination with other elements of the work this direct intertextuality allows for the parallel between Natalia and Tatiana to become a major vehicle for substantiating Natalia’s rapid development and success in creating a coherent self. It also establishes Natalia’s identity as a competent reader. Despite the external influences on her reading first from her mother and then Rudin, at the decisive moment of her life Natalia returns, albeit secretly, to Pushkin. Her love for Pushkin, and especially for Eugene Onegin, noted at both the beginning and end of the work indicates that perhaps she is not as overwhelmed by the power of literature as she may have seemed. Her unbreakable bond with Pushkin enables Natalia to control her own readings as well as her reactions, and finally, to set the course of her future life.

Although the first image of Natalia is one of her embroidering rather than reading, it is quickly established not only that she is a reader, but that her range extends beyond Tatiana’s epistolary novels. Nevertheless, she seems ready to follow a similar path with Rudin as that of a young Tatiana with Onegin. At first Natalia too draws parallels between her readings and real life. She shapes the image of her hero not from epistolary novels, but: “is reading a history of the crusades and apparently makes the mistake of transposing their ethical imperatives and character modeis to her own time, thereby creating a disastrous moral yardstick for measuring poor Rudin.” A key difference between the heroines’ paths lies in the fact that Natalia is misled by Rudin’s reading as much as by her own. His control over the choices of literature and appropriation of their interpretations present Natalia with his version of self and prevent her from discerning his
true nature. She cannot see that he is a parody of his readings and falls in love with him. Unlike in *Eugene Onegin*, the selection of reading that shapes Natalia’s impression of Rudin is not her own but imposed on her by the protagonist:

He used secretly to give her books, divulged to her his plans and read her the first pages of projected articles and literary works. He was her mentor, her guide. Rudin was steeped in German poetry, in the world of German Romanticism and German philosophy and drew her with him into those lands of fairytale promise. Mysterious and beautiful, they were spread out before her attentive gaze; from the pages of the book which Rudin held in his hands wonderful pictures and new, mint-bright ideas literally poured in resonant torrents into her soul, and in her heart, shaken by the noble joy of great feelings, a sacred spark of exultation was gently kindled and caught alight (87).38

This passage demonstrates that Natalia is led to romantic infatuation by literature. The path taken by the heroine’s burgeoning love soon becomes clear both to Natalia and Rudin. In his parting letter Rudin advises her to, “always follow the inclinations of (her) heart, never submit to (her) own or another’s mind” (144).39 This statement echoes the narrator’s observation that Natalia’s love for Rudin was born in her head rather than in her heart and that her mind did not create this infatuation of its own volition.

Although the stage for the heroine’s love is set by her own reading as well as the works of German literature to which Rudin introduces her, Natalia’s feelings blossom from her reading of Rudin’s words. Even without a book in hand, Rudin’s speech represents a form of literature. The narrator observes that, “carried away in the flow of his own feelings, he reached heights of eloquence and poetry…” (63).40 Natalia’s ardor for study and serious reading indicates that she regards reading as a source of knowledge and information. Therefore it is natural that she believes that Rudin’s discourse, which so
resembles literature, offers insight into his true personality. The source of her love only intensifies her disappointment when she realizes that Rudin’s actions are not in harmony with the literary images he has created. Natalia misreads Rudin’s words and cannot see the degree to which they misrepresent him.

In despair, Natalia again follows in Tatiana’s footsteps. The precedent set by Tatiana becomes the true text as opposed to Rudin’s false texts and serves as the foundation of Natalia’s education and self-transformation through reading. After receiving Rudin’s letter she randomly opens Eugene Onegin seeking guidance. Although the passage she finds is not directly connected to Tatiana, it signifies the valuable lessons that Pushkin’s novel can offer to a young woman still building her coherent self. By returning to reading that was of her own choice and not of Rudin’s design she could understand the degree to which her actions had paralleled the text of Eugene Onegin and discovers a course of action. She chooses the path of Tatiana, that is, to build a life for and by herself on the foundation of the sad lessons she has learned. Rather than remaining stagnant like Onegin, or for that matter, Rudin, Natalia continues her development and eventually finds an acceptable compromise between her dreams and the social reality of her times by marrying Volyntsev.

In Rudin, unlike in Eugene Onegin, the real reader’s contact with the female protagonist ends before her marriage. Natalia’s final appearance is dominated by sadness, but the narrator predicts that her sorrow will prove to be temporary. The time span allotted to Natalia’s bildung resembles that of Tatiana. The introduction of a possible suitor, at least to her thinking, inspires the heroine to action and love. Her growth is
mediated through the act of reading, but the final state of development is hidden from the
real reader. The power she reportedly holds within her marriage mirrors Tatiana’s success
in high society; Natalia has reached the peak of her development available to her, and her
growth through the motif of reading has been completed.

Natalia’s coherent self develops as a result of the interaction between correct and
false readings of a variety of texts. Her education is best assessed by Lezhnev who, before
her fateful meeting with Rudin, warns, “You know, don’t you, that it is precisely little girls
like that who drown themselves, take poison and so on?” (103).41 While Lezhnev is more
convinced of Natalia’s strength and willingness to act decisively than any of the other
characters, his comment recognizes her potential as a sentimentalist heroine. After
Rudin’s departure and Natalia’s marriage to Volynstev, the earlier remark that, “Volynstev
felt no strong attraction for literature and was simply terrified of poetry,” seems rather
significant (115).42 While Natalia certainly has not disassociated herself from literature,
her choice of Volynstev as a husband hints that she has become much less susceptible to
and suspicious of possible misreading. Her development is underscored by the fact that
she chose Volynstev over her mother’s candidate. It seems that the painful lessons of her
encounter with Rudin have redirected and shaped her innate strength of character.

Part of this strength emanates from the same source that enabled Tatiana to learn
and grow, namely, from reading and developing her literary competence. Intertextual
references to Eugene Onegin imply that Natalia embodies the same positive and
empowering “Russianness” as Tatiana. Similarities in the works, including use of the
motif of reading, connect the two heroines. Textual elements also support this
association. The pond which Natalia selects for her rendezvous with Rudin is the subject of peasant legend. The story that a girl was crushed by a falling tree near the pond can be seen as relating to Rudin’s many tree metaphors as well as offering a warning to Natalia. Her choice of this spot for its isolation indicates that she was aware of the legend. While this connection to the peasantry may not be as powerful as the image of Tatiana turning to her nanny in tears over Onegin, it strengthens the bond between the heroines.

An interesting juxtaposition towards the end of the novel also encourages the reader to make a connection between Natalia and Russia. After announcing Natalia’s marriage, Lezhnev proclaims his pity for Rudin because, “(his) unhappiness is that he doesn’t know Russia” (158). Immediately after this statement the conversation returns to Natalia and the potential for finding happiness in her marriage. I would suggest that the diagnosis of Rudin’s sorrow as his lack of connection with Russia and the fact that it is framed by references to Natalia’s “contentedness” implies that her ties with her homeland are strong and stable. A similar pattern of the female protagonist finding strength in her national heritage has already been established in Eugene Onegin. It seems to carry over to Rudin without the need for extensive textual and/or intertextual references. Tatiana’s “dangerous” reading is tempered by her nurse as a representative of Russian national heritage. Natalia, in turn, is saved by the example of Tatiana.
CHAPTER 3

CECILIA: POETRY AS A METAPHOR OF SELF

The connection between life, literature and the inscribed female reader becomes more abstract in the novelistic visions of Karolina Pavlova. In her novel, A Double Life, (1848) this link is personified by the female protagonist Cecilia. Like other heroines of female Bildungsromane, Cecilia’s quest for a coherent self is at least partially defined by the motif of reading. She acquires knowledge from and is changed by her interaction with literature. Cecilia’s voyage is directed perhaps even more inward than that of the other female protagonists addressed here because of the type of reading in which she engages. Rather than seeking guidance from a book kept under her pillow like Tatiana, Cecilia’s literary lessons take place at the subconscious level and are presented as part of her dreams.

The fact that the motif of reading applies to Cecilia exclusively in her dreams reflects the constrictive social context in which she lives. Diana Greene defines the prose sections of this multi generic work as a ‘svetskaia povest’. As a prosaic society tale, A Double Life describes, explains and criticizes Cecilia’s world. Her waking life is filled with frivolity and falsehood. Well trained in the ways of society, “she was so used to
wearing her mind in a corset that she felt it no more than the silk undergarment that she took off only at night” (26). During the day Cecilia seems happily occupied with people and social obligations; only in the solitude of night can she engage in literary creativity and benefit from its lessons.

Unlike Tatiana whose characterization as a reader is known to other characters as well as the real reader, Cecilia’s life through literature remains a secret, both to others and to a large extent even to her. The other characters see nothing exceptional in Cecilia, nor would they be pleased to learn of her artistic nature. Thus it is important to note that while Cecilia is characterized through the motif of reading, this side of her personality is revealed only to the real reader. While Tatiana and Natalia stand out as exceptional within their circles of relatives and friends, Cecilia fits comfortably into her social context.

Compared to Pushkin and Turgenev, Pavlova depicts Russian society as a far more oppressive environment for her female protagonist. She does not criticize Cecilia for failing to rise above her surroundings, but rather portrays her social environment as so constrictive that Cecilia can hope only for survival. Within her world, the very fact that Cecilia subconsciously engages literature is enough to characterize her as a serious reader. Although the narrator does not explain how Cecilia acquired the knowledge of versification demonstrated in her poetic dreams, it is safe to assume that some exposure to literature and the verbal arts was inevitable in Russian high society. The fact that poetry is presented to Cecilia, “mostly by hearsay as something wild and incompatible with a respectable life,” guarantees that an exploration of the motif of reading is limited to her dream world (26).
The prose narrative of Cecilia's everyday life stands in stark contrast to her subconscious world which is rendered in verse. Towards the end of each chapter, with the exception of the final one, Cecilia lays down to sleep. The language of the prose sections becomes more ethereal and laden with nature imagery as Cecilia begins to dream. Her entrance into a subconscious dream world is marked by a generic shift from prose to poetry. Only in this state can Cecilia "read" and experience poetry. Her waking world is one of such, "spiritual deprivation, a world which has so completely repressed her inborn poetic genius that she no longer has access to it, except while asleep."47

The poetic subconscious world and transitional states make it possible to read A Double Life as a Bildungsroman. Her interaction with poetry presents Cecilia as more of a coherent character than those around her. The fact that the perception of this quality is not generally available to Cecilia herself reveals the author's incorporation of the intended reader into the construction and deconstruction of the norms and values of the novelistic discourse. Pavlova condemns high society and presents her female protagonist as a strong argument in support of her judgment. Cecilia's expression of self through a poetic voice implies that she possesses the potential for development, at least at the subconscious level. Again, the hidden nature of her poetic voice indict[s] the rules of propriety which imprison this potential in a dream world and prevent her from realizing it. Cecilia's "double life" represents an aspect of the female Bildungsroman that is not explored in either Eugene Onegin or Rudin. According to Abel, Hirsch and Langland, "The tensions that shape female development may lead to a disjunction between a surface plot, which affirms social conventions, and a submerged plot, which encodes rebellion;[...]between a plot that charts
development and a plot that unravels it.\textsuperscript{48} I believe that while \textit{A Double Life} exhibits precisely this configuration of a surface and submerged plot, their paths are not always inverse and linear. It is the coexistence and overlap between the two worlds/plots that determine Cecilia’s fate and development.

Cecilia’s first words in the prose part of the novel are a query which becomes “the question in her soul” as she falls asleep and enters her poetic dream world for the first time (8). The question stems from an overheard conversation about a man who had recently died. When a silent male figure enters her poetic world the text implies and Cecilia later reports that this was the same man.\textsuperscript{49} In the dream state the female protagonist:

\begin{center}
Remembers what never was  
Recognizes what she has never met (9).
\end{center}

\begin{center}
В ней помнит мысль о небывалом,  
Невстреченног о узнает (236).
\end{center}

The familiarity with a figure foreign to both her dream and waking world infers that the mysterious male figure is Cecilia’s own unconscious poetic creation. When Cecilia next enters her poetic dream world, she addresses the stranger. He confirms that he is her creation, “I whom you called for, yours” \textsuperscript{50} and defines himself as:

\begin{center}
I am your sadness in the tumult of a ball  
I am the secret of your dream  
That you could not reach with reason (17-18).
\end{center}

\begin{center}
Я грусть твоя сре́дь шума бала,  
Я таинство твоей мечты,  
Чего умом не постигла (242).
\end{center}
The poetic stranger introduces the idea that Cecilia may not be completely content in the world of high society. The dream world represents if not a form of rebellion against her upbringing, at least a strong criticism of it. The goal of this dream world, or the “submerged plot,” is Cecilia’s artistic education and spiritual development:

What the genius learns in waking
You will learn in sleep, my child...
I will lift the shackles from your soul,
So that the holy song may sound...
Again in you, the silent temple (19-20).

Что наву узнает гений,
Узнаешь ты, дитя, во сне
Цепь сниму с твоей души
Чтоб взнеслось святое пенье
Вновь в тебе безмолвный храм (244).

Cecilia’s next encounter with literature occurs in her waking world and makes a powerful impression on her. After listening to a young poet read his translation Cecilia is confused and fascinated:

But now she was thinking involuntarily about that strange ability of the soul. Unconsciously there awakened in her a new and obscure sympathy for that harmony of verse, for those melodious thoughts, those improper delights, and this unexpected sympathy almost frightened her. Her reason told her that after all this was empty and unnecessary nonsense...But no, through her drowsiness, poetry sounded in her again; she heard poetry and, half asleep, she smiled at the absurdity of this (27) 51

The significance of poetry permeating her consciousness is further enhanced when later the reader learns that several lines of her own poetry survive after she has awoken.

Cecilia’s inscribed reading provides more than comfort or entertainment; it represents the involuntary reaction of a starving soul. When poetry enters her prose world, it signifies a
major development within the submerged plot but only a slight unraveling of the surface plot, the goals of which are evolution in social stature and marriage. 

In general, the surface plot proceeds smoothly with the assistance of Cecilia's mother, Vera Vladimirovna. She carefully schooled Cecilia in the rules of high society and, "quite justly feared any development of imagination and inspiration, those eternal enemies of propriety" (26).52 The mental and emotional corset that Cecilia rebels against in her dream world may be imposed according to the rules of society, but throughout the surface plot its strings are pulled and tightened by her mother. While it seems that Vera Vladimirovna and Cecilia would agree on the value of literature, her mother's views stand in stark contrast to Cecilia's fascination with poetry in the transition states and the reading/creation of it in her dreams. The narrator ironically refers to Vera Vladimirovna's love and respect for poetry, which amounts to offering it as entertainment to similarly minded guests (26). She perceives only the utilitarian purpose of reading and literature. The sole "reading" she confesses to is that of a mother into her daughter's soul (14).

Unlike in Eugene Onegin, where the heroine forms the image of her love interest through the motif of reading, Cecilia's love stems solely from societal experiences. She becomes most attached to Dimitri after learning from Olga that he has turned to gambling out of frustrated love for her. Madame Valitsky exploits Cecilia's perception of woman as the moral savior of man in order to peak her interest. The entire betrothal is arranged by societal maneuverings to such a degree that Vera Vladimirovna agrees to the engagement although she is unsure of the groom's identity. On the surface Cecilia seems to be content
with the match and too inexperienced to be able to explore her feelings. In her subconcious, poetic world, however, she grapples with ideas of love and marriage.

As Cecilia falls asleep she is troubled by the feeling that there is something false in her life, but she does not know what or where. A daytime conversation about a woman who loved her husband more than he loved her becomes a lesson and a warning in Cecilia’s dreams. In Chapter 5, as she hears/reads two separate voices discussing the experience of this woman, the parallels to Cecilia’s life are made quite clear. While recognizing the harsh nature of reality, the second voice demandingly inquires:

And did she enter into this world
To live an empty life and die a useless death...
What has she brought to life?
Where is her life’s work? (52).

Она в сей мир вступила для того ли,
Чтоб праздно жить и бесполезно пасть?

The first voice defends the woman’s life because of her suffering and longing for love:

One is not guilty because he has believed,
One is not guilty because he has loved (53).

Не виноват он в том, что верил,
Не виноват он, что любил! (268).

Here the poetic world touches upon two aspects of Cecilia’s life. The unloved woman’s lonely death after much suffering offers a premonition of Cecilia’s future. The two unidentified voices reflect Cecilia’s position in the waking world; there too she only learns valuable information as an outside observer. The subtext of this poetic section is Cecilia’s potential as a poet. The second voice demands, “Didn’t she lose heart at the power of an
inner summons?” (52). The implied conclusion of this chapter seems to be that Cecilia, like the unknown woman, has achieved and maintained spiritual integrity and a sense of coherent self by not abandoning hope in the face of suffering. Nevertheless, the possibility of wasting her poetic gift and potential for development has been raised and will continue to haunt the protagonist’s dreams.

The benevolent poetic voice returns to Cecilia’s dreams after an evening spent with Dimitri at a ball. It warns her of the pain that lies ahead and that her role as a wife will require unconditional patience and submission, in other words the forfeit of her integrity. This same advice is offered by her mother in the surface plot, but in poetic form it conveys a sense of doom and pity. Through her poetic creation Cecilia reads and laments her prospects which seem more a disintegration of self than a promise of positive development. The poetic voice’s declaration that:

It is in me your soul believes,
Me that you love, not him (65)

В меня ты веруешь душою,
Меня ты любишь, не его (276)

reflects the dual nature of the submerged plot. This statement challenges her love for Dimitri and infers that her soul longs for a true love that her mind cannot fathom. Reading the poetic voice as the spirit of poetry invokes an alternate interpretation. It is the potential for creativity and poetry that Cecilia truly loves but cannot possess in her waking life.

Once Cecilia’s betrothal becomes official, “dream and waking have an inverse emotional correlation: the better Cecily’s real life seems to become as her marriage
approaches, the greater the anguish expressed in her poetic dreams.\(^{54}\) In Chapter 7, she lays down to sleep “weary with happiness,” but in her dreams she angrily confronts her poetic instructor, demanding that he leave her alone (80). She acknowledges the fate predicted in her previous dreams:

\[
\text{Let me instruct my soul,} \\
\text{For its daily, trivial fare (81)}
\]

Пускай к вседневной, пошлой доле \\
Своя я душу приучу (287)

and wishes she could remain deceived. From the response of the poetic voice Greene infers that, “rather than to become a poet, her (Cecilia’s) task is to develop the spiritual strength necessary to endure the viciousness and banality that surround her.”\(^{55}\) While in her waking life, “unhappiness was a meaningless word for her” and “she reigned over fate,” in her return to the dream world Cecilia recognizes the impotence of love and the power of societal pressure (90).\(^{56}\) She submits entirely to her poetic self and as a result reads/hears that:

\[
\text{Your soul has touched the deity,} \\
\text{Secrets have found tongue,} \\
\text{Infinity has been thrown open,} \\
\text{And your glance has reached into unearthly things (93).}
\]

Но божества душа коснулась, \\
Но тайны в ней нашли язык, \\
Но бесконечность распахнулась, \\
И взгляд в нездешнее проник (296). \\

Her double life is united in the sense that this chapter represents the apex of happiness possible in both plots. At the same time, it becomes clear that the two cannot coexist, and the foreboding of a dramatic, perhaps tragic, outcome emerges.
The night before Cecilia’s wedding her poetic world breaks through the barrier of the surface plot. The narrator compares Cecilia to “a marble effigy on a tomb” (102). On the verge of remembering her past poetic encounters, Cecilia whispers, “who has died?” (102). The answer comes from the voice which has guided her poetic journey. He parts with her forever saying:

Go back to the realm of earth,
Go to your earthly triumph-
I give you over to the world (103).

Иди назад к земному краю,
Иди к земному ты венцу,-
Тебя я миру уступаю (302).

He again predicts that suffering will be her fate, but reminds her of the lesson she has learned in their shared poetic world:

All that is today unconscious
Foreign to everyone, will flower in you,
So, go as agreed
Strong in faith only,
Not hoping for support,
Defenseless and alone (104).

Все что ныне без сознаньа,
Чуждо всем в тебе цветет
Так иди ж по приговору,
Только верою сильна,
Не надеясь на опору,
Беззащитна и одна (303).

The strength of spirit found in her poetic journey will feed Cecilia in her future, which will be full of pain and devoid of poetry.

Poetry has not entirely abandoned Cecilia yet. As she prepares for her wedding several lines of her poetry are still in her mind - “So go as agreed, / Defenseless and
alone...” (108). The narrator muses that the heavy wedding crown symbolizes future burdens. The connection between death and marriage that has been developed throughout the work manifests itself at the wedding in a spectator’s comment that, “She’s (Cecilia) as pale as a corpse” (109). The wedding marks a descent in the development of the surface plot. Ideally, for a young woman of Russian high society marriage should not be equated with death but with triumph. Through the lessons of poetry, however, Cecilia seems to have come to equate marriage with the death and unhappiness. She has lost more than her carefree youth, for marriage signifies the end of Cecilia as a reader and a poet.

In *A Double Life*, the time span allowed for the protagonist’s development is quite limited. Like Tatiana, Cecilia’s *bildung* begins when she is of marriageable age and exposed to potential suitors. Her poetic, spiritual development, which is strongly emphasized in the novel, concludes with marriage. From Cecilia’s perspective the two plots in her life have ended at the same place. While her mother, who is aware only of the surface plot, watches its end with tears of joy, Cecilia sees mainly the threatening storm clouds. According to the poetic voice, her spiritual development has ceased. Her encounter with poetry has endowed her with spiritual integrity sufficient to counterbalance the sorrows of earthly life, but not to overcome them. The two plots, although headed in different directions, have been equally derailed by a marriage which seems to be the end of the protagonist’s personal development and growth.

After both the prosaic and poetic lines of Cecilia’s story have been brought to a close, the narrator adds her own poetic voice. The novel concludes with a final poem in which Pavlova reveals the narrator’s gender and confirms the real reader’s suspicions that
she is a poet. Diana Greene interprets the narrator’s “ironic digressions on poetry” in the prose sections as evidence of her status as a poet. In these digressions the authorial and narratorial voices seem to merge. The narrator’s comment that, “Literature is extremely respected, and ladies especially have been getting so involved in it for some time that only by hardly noticeable signs is it possible to guess that in fact they play no living role in it” reflects Pavlova’s own frustration at being accepted as a literary salon hostess but not a poet (21). A Double Life explores the difficulties of being a female poet, while recognizing the sufferings of all artists. Barbara Heldt summarizes the drawing room scene in which a young poet reads as, “When a poet suffers and is ridiculed, society is condemned.” The final poetry section, however, focuses on the place of a female poet in the literary world and society. The narrator considers abandoning her craft while simultaneously fearing that it will abandon her. She concludes that the consciousness afforded her by poetry is her only source of strength, and despite the hard times ahead it and she will persevere.

The final section ties in with Cecilia’s life in several ways. The narrator’s conclusion that the consciousness of poetry in her soul has enabled her to survive echoes the poetic voice’s wish for Cecilia. The narrator, however, understands the source of her spiritual integrity and practices her craft. The pain she faces in doing so relates to both Cecilia’s fate and the author’s autobiography. Pavlova died penniless and unrecognized for her work; the narrator’s poem predicts such a fate:

Then let the future threaten loss,
Let me pay a woeful price
For the bright gifts of my youth (111).
Cecilia’s fate as expressed by both the prose and poetry sections bodes no brighter. Together their experiences paint a bleak picture for the future of Russian society women. Even if Cecilia had been able to choose between her two lives, the narrator suggests that she would have been no happier. Cecilia, the narrator and Pavlova are sustained by the poetry in their souls; their surface lives either as wife or poet cause them pain.

Despite the limitations placed on her mind Cecilia’s soul is filled with poetry. The text does not explain how she can be so typical on the surface and exceptional in her soul. I would like to offer two possible extratextual explanations.

*A Double Life* contains many intertextual references to *Eugene Onegin* which infer that Pavlova’s ideal reader was expected to be familiar with the work. Cecilia’s superficial best friend Olga evokes the image of Olga Larina, thereby endowing Cecilia with a certain sense of depth in comparison. The many intertextual references allow for the interpretation of Cecilia as a contemporary Tatiana. Like Tatiana, Cecilia finds warnings and precursors to her future in her dreams. Her letter writing cannot help but invoke comparison. The narrator’s observation that, “she received approximately two dozen bouquets and three dozen notes from friends—all saying precisely the same thing, to which it was necessary to respond with precisely the same variations. Society women have attained the wondrous art of contriving thirty variations on a phrase which means nothing even the first time” reminds the real reader of Tatiana’s heartfelt letter to Onegin (55). Structural parallels also support comparison. Although the mixing of genres may not have
been unusual for the period, the combination of poetry, prose and the related themes evokes the image of *Eugene Onegin*, even without more direct references.⁶² Like *Eugene Onegin*, *A Double Life* addresses the author/narrator’s perceptions of her craft. Both Pushkin’s and Pavlova’s narrators question whether they should continue writing. It does not seem coincidental that the narrator’s poem, and the entire work, ends with the structure, familiar from *Eugene Onegin*, “Blessed is he…” (111). These various references encourage the real reader to draw parallels between the two works and their heroines. These parallels highlight the differences as well. A primary point of departure between the female protagonists is Tatiana’s tie to the Russian land and people despite her surroundings while Cecilia is limited to and a full participant in her social environment. Returning to the question of how Cecilia comes to possess a poetic soul despite her surroundings, I would posit that perhaps the intertextual links with *Eugene Onegin* offer a possible answer. Tatiana’s “Russianness” is expressed overtly by the narrator and more covertly by her actions and dreams. Pavlova depicts Cecilia’s world as so oppressive that she does not even see its limits and therefore cannot question them. Her only sense of Russia outside of her circle is as “other.” Still, she unconsciously carries poetry in her soul. Perhaps the model created in *Eugene Onegin* of Tatiana as imbued with the interlocking qualities of poetry (she is the narrator’s muse after all) and the *narod* can also apply to Cecilia. This result of the intertextual links can only be perceived as subconsciously as Cecilia experiences poetry.

One cannot overlook the fact that unlike Tatiana, Cecilia was created by a female author whose experiences with and views on the literary world were drastically different.
from Pushkin’s. Through the poetic voice in Cecilia’s dreams Pavlova makes it clear that marriage marks the end of her relationship with literature. The narratorial voice, both in the prose and poetry sections, represents the author’s protest against the upbringing of young women in high society and the roles subsequently afforded them. Creating intertextual links between Tatiana and Cecilia but only allowing Cecilia to be “exceptional” in her dreams may constitute a part of that protest. A Double Life represents potential lost to the rules of high society, a potential which according to the author, is at constant risk for her as well. By endowing a superficially typical society woman with a poetic soul, the author can infer that there are many such women whose minds suffocate in the corset of society while their souls have the potential to soar into the world of literature.
CONCLUSION

The bond between the novel of development and the motif of reading is illuminated by Proust’s observation that, “The writer’s work is merely a kind of optical instrument which he offers to the reader to enable him to discern what, without this book, he would perhaps never have perceived.”64 This paper addresses his idea on two different levels. As regards the female protagonists, Tatiana, Natalia and Cecilia, the motif of reading is presented as a mirror offering a greater understanding of self and a pair of glasses (reading glasses?) which allows the characters a clearer picture of their worlds. At the same time the motif of reading plays an important role in the construction of the heroine’s story as a Bildungsroman. Through acts of inscribed reading, the real reader is also offered an optical instrument, perhaps a magnifying glass, which enhances the ability to read the female protagonist’s plot in Eugene Onegin, Rudin and A Double Life as novels of development.

In his article “Evgenii Onegin: An Encyclopedia of Russian Life,” literary critic Vissarian Belinsky observes:

In high society, just as everywhere else, there are two kinds of people. There are those who are attracted to form and see in adherence
to it life’s purpose[...] And there are those who acquire from society a knowledge of people and life, sound judgment, and the ability to utilize completely all that nature has given them.65

I would posit that his analysis corresponds with the themes addressed in this paper, namely, the use of the motif of reading in the presentation of a female protagonist’s bildung. The characteristics of Bildungsroman share with Belinsky’s analysis an emphasis on social context and the potential for development. The interaction with society of the second character type resembles the process of creating a coherent self.

If one substitutes the word ‘reading’ for ‘society’ in the last line of the quote, the statement will continue to reflect Belinsky’s idea while at the same time supporting the connections between literature and bildung offered in this paper. Belinsky identifies Tatiana as belonging to the second character type, and I would suggest that all three female protagonists belong to the aforementioned category.

I justify the substitution by the fact that in the works that I have discussed, ‘society’ and ‘reading’ are closely intertwined. The earliest social setting in which Tatiana appears is comprised of her nurse and her books. As she moves through a series of gradually widening social circles, her primary tool for interpreting their norms and values is literature. Her early choice of texts reflects a social context informed largely by her family, particularly her mother. Natalia’s readings are also determined by her social context. Her preference for history books as well as interest in the German philosophy and poetry read to her by Rudin demonstrates the differences between her referential aspect and that of Tatiana. Natalia’s primary social contact is provided by her family. The link between society and the motif of reading is inscribed in her mother’s attempts to
control her daughter’s reading and Natalia’s resistance. Finally, Cecilia’s acts of reading are depicted as belonging to the part of her character not fettered by society. This fission between Cecilia’s social and poetic worlds, itself represents the social context of her reading. The norms and values of high society as presented by Pavlova, force Cecilia’s acts of reading into the subconscious realm of her psyche. Thus, the inscribed reading of all three female characters is modeled after a real reader’s inevitable reference to his/her social and cultural environment.

The act of reading enables the protagonists to develop a more sophisticated awareness of both their surroundings and self. Interaction with literature affords Tatiana and Natalia a more accurate perception of Onegin and Rudin, as well as an understanding of the role played by literature in the creation of their early images of the heroes. The motif of reading is used to reshape the heroines’ visions of ideal life. Tatiana replaces her dream of a guardian angel with her own creative power, while Natalia, rather than playing the supporting role she sought, takes the lead in her marriage. The motif of reading is portrayed as offering Cecilia a more realistic, albeit subconscious, understanding of her world, an echo of which remains when she is awake.

The motif of reading acts as a device by which each heroine’s potential is revealed and developed. Each of them is depicted as capable of intellectual and emotional growth. For Tatiana, personal development involves a shift from sentimentalist literature to more sophisticated texts. Natalia’s development depends on her refutation of the interpretations of other characters and conditioned in part by her rereading of Eugene Onegin. In Cecilia’s case the potential for development is revealed primarily to the real reader and
only briefly to the heroine herself. However, within the subconscious realm her intellectual and spiritual capabilities are developed to their fullest. The characters' engagement in reading corresponds to one of the main features of Bildungsroman, that is, it demonstrates their potential for development and, to some extent, cultivates that potential.

One aspect of Bildungsroman which is not addressed by the revised quote is the existence of a limited time span during which the development takes place. Abel, Hirsch and Langland note that often the female novel of development or awakening begins after marriage when the heroine is established in her social setting, for example Kate Chopin's The Awakening and Flaubert's Madame Bovary, and can end in a descent into madness or death.66 Thus, the time frame of the heroine's development in Eugene Onegin, Rudin and A Double Life fits into the classical archetype of Bildungsroman while deviating from some of the variant models found in other national literatures.

The development of each Russian heroine begins while she is unmarried but of marriageable age. Her role in the text concludes either shortly after or at the time of her marriage. In the cases of Tatiana and Natalia, the time span available for development fits the classical conception of Bildungsroman in which, “The hero should be brought to a point where he can accept a responsible role in a friendly social community.”67 The “social community” most open to the Russian female protagonists is the family: the most responsible female role within the institution is that of the wife. A large part of the heroines' success and power within marriage stems from the lessons learned throughout the text and their personal potential for development. Cecilia's personal development also
concludes at the time of marriage, the apex of achievement available to her within the surface plot. Her real bildung, however, takes place in the submerged plot. Through her interaction with poetry, Cecilia has realized her potential and developed the skills necessary for survival within society. Once these goals have been reached the development of her character ceases.

While this time span for the development of the protagonists is not unique to Russian literature, it seems to be a prevalent pattern in the novels of the nineteenth century. Perhaps one reason for the wide usage of this time span is the powerful image of Tatiana. In order to reconfigure the ‘Tatiana model’ Turgenev had to adopt some of its qualities. Pavlova’s exploration of the same time span seems to represent a polemic with Pushkin. Tatiana’s creative efforts are closely tied to her entrance into high society and marriage. In contrast, for Pavlova’s heroine society acts as a constrictive corset, and marriage marks the end of Cecilia’s creative potential.

A discussion of the time span involved in the bildung of Tatiana, Natalia and Cecilia raises more questions about the motif of reading and its use in Russian literature. Usage of this time span for female development continues beyond the works examined in this paper, especially for some of Tolstoy’s heroines, namely Kitty Shcherbatskaia, Natasha Rostova and to a lesser extent Maria Bolkonskaia. The motif of reading exists within other time spans and outside of the Bildungsroman, most notably in Anna Karenina. I believe an examination of the motif of reading within the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would reveal multiple functions of inscribed acts of reading. I wonder to what degree they would be polemic with the primordial Russian reader, Tatiana.
Extensive analysis of the motif of reading tends to focus on French, English and German national literatures. A thorough discussion of the Russian tradition may allow for comparison and a rereading of the importance of the inscribed reader’s national heritage. The additional questions which stem from this exploration of the motif of reading complete the analogy of the book as an optical instrument. The real reader can use inscribed acts of reading as a kaleidoscope through which the multi dimensional nature of the motif of reading is revealed and an intricate pattern created. By merging this pattern with other elements of the work the picture comes into focus, and the result is a better understanding of both the parts and the whole.


7 Emerson 6.


10 “но любой роман / возьмите и найдете / верно ее портрет” (2:23).

11 Todd 234.

12 Todd 113. “Пора пришла, она влюбилась” (3:7).


14 Todd 209.

15 Gibian 99.

17 Todd 215-6

18 Todd 215.

19 Mitchell 15.

20 “Уж не пародия ли он?” (7:24).

21 Todd 129.


23 Todd 229.

24 Todd 228.

25 Mitchell 17.

26 “обманы и Ричардсона и Руссо” (2:29) “страшные рассказы зимою в темноте ночей пленяли больше сердце ей” (2:28) The word обманы is translated by Nabokov as “fictions” but can also mean ‘deceits’. Dimitri Chizhevski notes that Pushkin uses the word not in the moral sense but as an artistic or poetic illusion (xxi-xxii).

27 Mitchell 7.

28 Mitchell 16.

29 Mitchell 14.


31 Seeley 178.

32 Freeborn 108.

“Наталья не ребенок, она, поверьте, чаще и глубже размышляет, чем мы с вами” (294).

“Она говорила мало, слушала и глядела внимательно, почти пристально,- точно она себе во всем хотела дать отчет. Она часто оставалась неподвижной, опускала руки и задумывалась; на лице ее выражалась тогда внутренняя работа мыслей” (279).

“Наталья читала и такие книги, существования которых m lle Boncourt не подозревала: она знала наизусть всего Пушкина” (280).

McLean 262.

Он тайком давал ей книги, перебирал их свои планы, читал ей первые страницы предполагаемых статей и сочинений[….] он был ее наставником в вождел. Рудин был весь погружен в германсую поэзию, в германской романтический и философский мир и увлекал ее за собой в те заповедные страны. Неведомые, прекрасные, раскрывались они перед ее внимательным взором, со страниц книги, которую Рудин держал в руках, дивные образы, новые, светлые мысли так и лислись звеньями строем ей в душу, и в сердце ее, потрясенном благородной радостью великих ощущений, тихо всходила и разгоралась святая искра восторга (290).

“следуйте всегда внушениям вашего сердца не подчиняйтесь ни своему ни чужому уму” (337).

“Увлеченный потоком собственных ощущений, он возвысился до красноречия, до поэзии” (269).

“Знаете ли, что именно такие девочки топятся, принимают яду и так далее?” (303).

“Вольницев к литературе влечения не чувствовал, а стихов просто боялся” (313).

“Несчастье Рудина состоит в том, что он России не знает” (349).


All quotations in English are from: Karolina Pavlova, A Double Life, Trans. Barbara Helt, (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978). Henceforth they can be referenced by page number. The Russian text of all prose quotations will be included as endnotes. All

“Она так привыкла к своему умственному корсету, что не чувствовала его на себе более своего шелкового который снимала только на ночь” (249).

46 “более понаслышке, как что-то дикое и несовместное с порядочным образом жизни” (249).

47 Greene 573.

48 Abel 12.

49 Greene quotes A.I. Beletskii’s suggestion that Pushkin acts as the prototype for the spirit of poetry in Cecilia’s dreams (574). Regardless of the muse’s identity, he is unquestionably male. This fact is particularly interesting in reference to Pavlova’s influence on Tsvetaeva who often credited her inspiration to a male muse.

50 “Я признанный, я твой” (242).

51 “А теперь она невольно думала об этой странной способности души, в ней безсознательно просыпалось сочувствие новое и непонятное к этой гармонии стиха, к этим созвучным думам, к этим неприличным восторгам, и такое нежданное сочувствие почти пугало ее: она опять приводила себе на ум, что это все-таки пустые и ненужные бредни. Но нет-нет, сквозь дремоту, опять звучала в ней рифма, опять слышался стих и ей, полусонной, вздумалось вдруг, что может быть, и она умела бы так говорить, песню и уже засыпая, она улыбнулась этой нелепой мысли” (249). Note that the Russian text suggests Cecilia’s potential to create poetry.

52 “Она весьма справедливо опасалась всякого развития воображения и вдохновения, этих вечных врагов приличий” (248).

53 “Не уняла ль мочь внутреннего зова” (267).


55 Greene 573.

56 “Несчастье было для нее бессмысленный звук; она царила над судьбой” (293).
57 “бледна как мертвая” (305).

58 Greene 576.

59 “литературу чрезвычайно уважают, и в особенности дамы с некоторых пор так о ней заботятся, что только по едва заметным признакам возможно угадать, что они не в самом деле принимают в ней живое участие” (244).

Heldt xix.

61 “Она получила дюжины две букетов и дюжины три дружеских записок,— все одного и того же содержания, на которые должно было отвечать одно и то же разным образом. Светские женщины дошли до этого изумительного искусства варьировать раз тридцать фразу, которая и с первого раза ничего не значит” (268).

62 See Greene’s article for a discussion of the gender politics of genre.

63 If one accepts Beletskii’s opinion that the poetic voice is that of Pushkin the implications are numerous. Is this Pavlova’s protest against the stifling male-run literary establishment? If so, how can one reconcile this protest with the many intertextual references and the scene of the young poet in the drawing room?


67 Abel 6.
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