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IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS:
LITERARY REFRACTIONS OF RUSSIAN YULETIDE RITUALS (SVIATKI)

DISTRIBUTION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1999

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the significance of the sviatki folk ritual in three major works of Russian literature, namely, Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin, Tolstoy’s War and Peace, and Akhmatova’s Poem Without a Hero. The works are analyzed in the context of the folk ritual of sviatki and a series of literary renditions of the motif. A large part of the analysis is intertextual. Each of the three works emphasizes the sviatki rituals of mummering and fortune telling and maintains a dialogue with the sviatki motif of literary predecessors. Because the folk celebration occupies only a portion of the larger works, part of my investigation consists of an analysis of the functions of the ritual celebration within the context of the works as a whole.

In particular, the rituals provide the means to transcend time barriers. Both Pushkin and Tolstoy describe a sviatki ritual in which the narrative description approximates a traditional folk celebration of sviatki. The young heroines try to see into their future at a transitional stage in their lives when they are moving from adolescence into adulthood. Akhmatova creates a "reverse"-sviatki in which her more than fifty-year-old author-persona looks into the past to expose a transitional stage in the life of her country.

The methods and significance of intertextualizing varies in each of the works. Pushkin creates a balladic dream for his heroine which resembles both the frightening dream of Zhukovskii’s Svetlana and the mock funeral of the sviatki folk celebration. Tolstoy, by means of intertextual allusions to Zhukovskii’s ballad and Pushkin’s novel in verse, shows his characters to play roles which both parallel and contrast with the roles of
the characters in the earlier works. Through the comparison he thus parallels and contrasts the transition of two of his female characters, Natasha and Sonia, into their adult lives. Akhmatova contrasts the sviatki performance of her persona ironically and primarily with the dream in *Eugene Onegin*. She also evokes an image of the folk plays embedded in Dostoevsky’s *House of the Dead* in order to emphasize the magnitude of the terrors of the twentieth century.
In memory of
my parents, Harry and Alice Warner
and my aunt and uncle, John and JoAnne Fleming Warner
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I express sincere appreciation to my advisers, Dr. Irene Masing-Delic and Dr. Lyubomira Parpulova-Gribble, for their guidance, insight, and support of my research. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Patrick Mullen for his ideas pertaining to folklore and literature. Thanks go to Dr. Anelya Rugaleva for her help in matters concerning the Russian language and syntax. Gratitude is also extended to Olga Velichkina for her expertise in Russian folk singing and especially the folk ritual of sviatki. And finally, many thanks to all the members of the OSU Russian Folk Choir Rusalka with whom I have sung and danced for the past six years. They have helped me acquire a sense of the performance of the koliadki and fortune telling of sviatki.
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INTRODUCTION

Russian writers seem to have discovered the literary potential of the sviatki ritual as early as the end of the seventeenth century and were attracted, in particular, to the motifs of fortune telling and mummery. The practice of embedding the rituals in literary works rose dramatically during the first half of the nineteenth century. It continued into the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth but underwent a significant metamorphosis in the way that the motifs were presented. At the end of the nineteenth century the sviatki motif surfaced almost exclusively in the sviatochnyi rasskaz, the sviatki short story, but prior to this development and again in the twentieth century it appeared in all literary genres - in drama, poetry, and prose, the novel and the short story.

Russian Yuletide rituals (sviatki) have been inscribed in many important works of Russian literature in which they provide the setting as well as a mode for interpretation of the development of the literary characters. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the sviatki motif is frequently interwoven with intertextual references to other literary works which have used that motif. Therefore, there are direct and indirect connections between the folk ritual and its refractions in Russian poetry and prose. A single work of literature may even contain reflections of multiple literary renditions, thus creating a "hall of mirrors," to borrow Anna Akhmatova's splendid image, which blurs the distinction between the actual ritual and its literary representation. Additionally, the image of the folk ritual blurs during the later part of the nineteenth century as Western traditions merge with Russian ones.

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If one tries to visualize the course that my investigation will take, one might see the whole of my work as a wheel. The *sviatki* ritual is the hub and it is surrounded by numerous spokes which connect to points on the rim. The rim is the literary tradition in its entirety, and the various points represent the individual literary renditions of *sviatki*. As the wheel moves forward, the rim expands in order to accommodate the new literary works. Additionally, the rim is not solid. The points on the rim and the hub are connected to each other as if each were one half of an hour glass, filled with fine grains of sand. As the wheel moves, a few grains will on occasion flow into the next chamber, i.e., into the next literary rendition of *sviatki*. Or at times the grains may even flow back into the hub, interacting with the folk tradition. At the same time grains of sand may be blown into the hub from outside, again altering the nature of the folk tradition. This is the intertextual nature of the many renditions and the constantly evolving status of the folk tradition itself. In my analysis I will use the hub of the wheel as the core of information with which to analyze the works. Furthermore I will investigate the individual works, not only as they interact with the hub, but as they interact with other points on the rim. An analysis of the interaction of the parts on the rim expands the basis from which conclusions may then be drawn.

The purpose of this particular study is to investigate in depth three particular points on the *sviatki* wheel, i.e., to investigate the development and significance of the *sviatki* motif in three major works of Russian literature, namely Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, and Akhmatova’s *Poem Without a Hero*. Each of the three works emphasizes the *sviatki* rituals of mumery and fortune telling, in particular the telling of fortunes with mirrors and candles. The works are all highly intertextual and maintain a dialogue with the *sviatki* motif of literary predecessors. This may be in the form of explicit and implicit references, as in the case of *Eugene Onegin* and *Poem Without a Hero*, or parallel events and characters, as in the case of *War and Peace* where
events and characters of the sviatki episode are analogous to those of Eugene Onegin. Finally, in each of the works the folk celebration occupies only a portion of a larger work, and I will analyze the functions of the ritual celebration within the context of the works as a whole. In particular, the rituals provide the means to transcend a time barrier. In the novels of Pushkin and Tolstoy the sviatki episodes fulfill the ritualistic function of looking to the future and the literary function of signaling a significant phase in the psychological development of certain female characters. In the case of Poem Without a Hero, the sviatki ritual performs the reverse ritualistic function of looking to the past and the literary function of disclosing the truth of that earlier time period.

To analyze the functions of folklore in literature, it is imperative both to identify the folklore material and to interpret it. In his article “The Study of Folklore in Literature and Culture: Identification and Interpretation,” Alan Dundes points out that this has often not been the case (351). Traditionally the folklorist, he maintains, has only identified the folklore material found in a literary work, without any attempt to interpret why it is there and how it enriches the text. The literary scholar, on the other hand, makes naive interpretations based on “inadequate or inaccurate identification” (Dundes 351). This inadequate and ineffective approach is evident in the frequent misconceptions of one of the three works in question. When referring to the sviatki episode of Eugene Onegin, critics sometimes speak of the heroine’s fortune telling with mirrors and candles, when, in fact, no such divination occurs or is even mentioned. Misidentification of this kind easily leads to misinterpretation. Thus, accurate identification of folklore material as well as interpretation of it are essential for making a valid and comprehensive analysis. One must first understand how the material used is similar to its usage in previous renditions, both ethnographic and literary, and, most importantly, one must identify how the presentation of a certain motif differs. By establishing the differences one can then
hypothesize the literary function of the material in the given text and the intertextual
dialogue presented.

Little research has been conducted which successfully combines identification and
interpretation of sviatki folk rituals in Russian literature. To my knowledge, no
investigations exist which approach the subject from an intertextual perspective. Elena
Dushechkina's recent study, Russian Sviatki Story: The Making of a Genre (Russkii
sviatochnyi rasskaz: stanovlenie zhanra, 1995) comprises an excellent and
comprehensive identification of the ritual in Russian literature, and she traces its evolution
up to the beginning of the twentieth century. She makes, however, very few attempts to
interpret the literary importance of sviatki in the individual works. Other scholars have
investigated the function of the sviatki ritual in one of the three major works of my study -
Eugene Onegin, War and Peace, and Poem Without a Hero -, but because they did not
accurately or thoroughly identify the elements of the ritual in the texts, their interpretations
are incomplete or inaccurate. Due to the fact that this research is specific to each of the
three works, it will be discussed in greater detail in the individual chapters.

A comprehensive background of the folklore and literary traditions will provide
the basis for the in-depth analysis that I will conduct in this study. Close readings of the
works will be analyzed in the context of the folk ritual of sviatki and a series of literary
renditions of the motif. A large part of the analysis will be intertextual. The popularity of
the ritual among Russian writers has fostered a motif which frequently depends upon
intertextuality for an adequate interpretation of its significance. An analysis of any work
with traditional sviatki folk motifs mandates dialogue with predecessors in the literary
tradition because over time the phenomenon of sviatki in literature has acquired meaning
which is bound to the historical literary tradition.

In my study I will explore an important motif in an extensive and varied corpus of
literary works which - in regard to sviatki - has only recently attracted the interest of a few
researchers. Although there have been some studies referring to individual works, there
has never been a systematic and thorough investigation of the literary function of sviatki
in these works. In existing scholarship the function of the folk ritual has usually been
referred to in very general terms and has ignored the role of intertextuality. A substantial
component of this dissertation will comprise a comprehensive identification of the sviatki
ritual in the three works in question and an interpretation of its functions based heavily on
an in-depth intertextual analysis.

Notes

1 Because the Americanized spelling of the names "Tolstoy" and "Dostoevsky" is
so standard, I have opted to use it instead of the Library of Congress transliteration
"Tolstoi" and "Dostoevskii."
CHAPTER 1

THE FOLK TRADITION OF SVIATKI

Any investigation concerning the use of the sviatki folk ritual by Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Akhmatova must be based in part on an understanding of the folk performance itself. Thus, in this chapter I will provide a descriptive analysis of the folk tradition of sviatki as it was celebrated in the nineteenth century in order to sufficiently familiarize the reader so that he/she can follow the proposed analysis. It will be based on published ethnographic and folklore materials and scholarship, from both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. I do not intend to give a comprehensive and in-depth description of all the components of the sviatki ritual. Instead I intend to focus on those details which are essential to the understanding of my analysis of the three works in question. For example, I will investigate the practice of fortune telling and mummary in great detail because they are essential components of the sviatki celebration in all three works under discussion, but I will only mention the practice of "reading the weather" - part of the ritual - since it is peripheral to my work. For each of the ritual practices I will focus on the following issues: what its major components were, who was involved in the ritual, when and where it was performed, and what significance the ritual had for the performers. In order to properly interpret the author's rendition of the ritual, one must understand the expectations of the people of the time, i.e., what they expect from other ritual participants and from the ritual itself.
1.1 History of the Sviatki Folk Ritual

*Sviatki*, a folk ritual which dates back to pre-Christian times, was still widely celebrated in nineteenth-century Russia. A rite marking the winter solstice, the return to the light, and the beginning of the new year, for the peasant this was one of the most significant agricultural rituals. It was one of many observances of the folk calendar based on the phases of the sun as it orbits around the earth and the effect of the phases upon farming. These folk rituals can be grouped into two cycles, i.e. those which call forth the harvest (winter and spring rituals) and those which accompany the work leading to and including the harvest (summer and autumn rituals) (Chicherov, *Zim.* 19). *Sviatki*, the ritual celebrating the winter solstice, belongs to the first group. Its symbolism permeated many aspects of daily life. It ascribed meaning to the weather, food, and ritual activities (e.g., *koliadki* singing and mummmery) and was centered around the desired harvest for the coming year. Since fertility was its dominant theme, the ritual involved various kinds of divination which focused on foretelling the future of the harvest and livestock. With time, the fertility of the human also became a dominant theme, and many of the ritual activities focused on foretelling the marital future of the young maiden.

With the advent of Christianity the original pagan celebration became associated with Christmas, December 25, and *Kreshchenie* (the Epiphany), January 6 (Propp, *Rus.* 14). It was not until much later that the agrarian/peasant new year was linked to the official new year of the church and state calendar. Until 1348 the new year was recognized by the church calendar as the beginning of September, while the state calendar placed it at the beginning of March. In 1348 the Russian church declared the beginning of September as the official beginning of the year for both calendars. In 1700 Emperor Peter the Great declared January 1 the official new year, and *sviatki* became linked not only with the agrarian new year, but with the new year of the church and state calendar as well. All of these events fit conveniently into the *sviatki* festivities. The birth of Jesus was
associated with the fertility of the earth and woman. Likewise, Christ was the sun, and his birth meant a return of the light. *Kreshchenie* was the ritual purification necessary after the birth of the Christ Child and the beginning of the new year.

Although not observed in the same manner and with the same intensity everywhere in Russia, one can say that by the nineteenth century, the *sviatki* ritual had become perhaps the most important non-religious folk ritual of the year and was celebrated over a twelve-day period of time from December 25 to January 6 with three focal points: Christmas, the New Year, and the eve of *Kreshchenie*. In his 1903 account, S. V. Maksimov declared that some of the *sviatki* activities (e.g., the pouring of wax, fortune telling with a rooster, and the throwing of a shoe) were so widespread and well-known that it was not even necessary to describe them (322). According to T. A. Bernshtam, *sviatki* was one of the "great holidays" (*bol'shie prazdniki*) and comparable to the church holidays of Easter and Trinity (214). Although for many people it had lost most of its ties to the cycle of the death and regeneration of the vegetation, it was still predominantly a folk ritual. With very few exceptions, religious practices were not incorporated into the celebration.

1.2 Core Elements of *Sviatki*

There are certain core elements which are characteristic of the performance and the symbolism of *sviatki* in most areas of nineteenth-century Russia. A definitive feature of folklore, however, is variation, and as such, the regional celebrations of *sviatki* are not fully uniform but display a variety of local forms. There are differences not only between large geographic areas, but also between neighboring villages. Furthermore, all of the descriptions of *sviatki* written by nineteenth-century ethnographers are incomplete (Propp, *Rus.* 6-12). For example, there is no complete description by a competent ethnographer of the ritual of the mummers (110). The many partial pictures from the
nineteenth century have been pieced together to give one general picture of the core elements with some of the regional variations. More recent studies in the twentieth century have helped fill in the gaps of missing information of, for example, the performance of the mummers. This investigation will concern itself primarily with the core elements although regional variations may also be mentioned on occasion.

One of the main core elements is the division of the nearly two-week long sviatki celebration into two parts: the holy evenings from December 25 to January 1 (sviatye vechera), and the frightful evenings from January 1 to January 6 (strashnye vechera) (Chicherov, Zim. 73). Ivleva notes the correspondence between this division and the costumes and behavior of the mummers. During the first part of sviatki, mummer personages tend to be "quiet" and "clean." Their behavior evokes amusement and an interest in "this world." In contrast, during the second part of sviatki the personages are "unclean" and "frightful." Their activities are of a magical nature and indicate an interest in the world of unclean spirits (76-77). Although not stated in ethnographic accounts, perhaps the proximity of the "holy evenings" to the religious celebration of Christmas had a sobering effect on the activities of the ritual participants and thus influenced the choice of costumes. In contrast, the New Year may have had a converse effect on the same people, due to the widespread belief that dangerous spirits roamed the earth after the New Year. The boundary between the holy and the frightful evenings is marked by the so-called "magic of the first day," i.e., New Year's Eve and Day, when contact with the other world was believed to be at its peak and have an especially strong bearing on what happens during the rest of the year (Propp, Rus. 26).

Sviatki was celebrated primarily in the villages, but when people moved to the city, they took their customs and beliefs with them. Once in the environs of the city, the practices generally diminished in frequency and intensity and at times took on other forms, i.e., people told stories about their past experiences or other related sviatki events.
For a brief period of time, however, the capital city experienced sviatki festivities which were every bit as remarkable as the village counterpart. Tsar Peter the Great, himself, indicated a great interest in the winter celebrations. He and his courtiers mocked the old Russian customs and at the same time parodied the clergy of the church by dressing up as priests, monks, nuns, and even the pope (Hughes 256). In keeping with the traditional folk ritual, there was frequent cross-dressing with erotic undertones and many of the actions of the participants were extremely crude.

1.3 Traditional Get-togethers (Posidelki)

The majority of the sviatki practices center around the young people and serve as a prelude to the marriage season as they respond to the desire to find a mate. Bernshtam considers the entire sequence of the four seasons as one big game for the youth (230-248). Its first stage, i.e., the getting acquainted stage, takes place in the spring. At that time the girls show themselves to the young men in the khorovody or line dances which might wind their way all through the village. The next stage unfolds during the summer as the boys and girls meet in the fields. While taking breaks from work, they play games and tease each other. After the harvest, the game continues indoors at get-togethers commonly called posidelki, besedy or vecherki. The posidelki take place in somebody's house or in a rented room or hut which is often designated as the "family" hut. During work days the girls gather and continue their work such as spinning and weaving. On Sundays and holidays the boys join them for dancing and games. During this time boys and girls begin to pair up. In the winter, the posidelki during sviatki offer the girls their last chance to find a husband for the coming marriage season which immediately follows sviatki. Therefore, they go to all extremes, both in how they present themselves to the
boys, i.e., the clothing they wear, and in the means they use to find out what will happen to them, i.e., participation in the most fearful types of divination.

At the posidelki during sviatki the girls place lit candles in the windows as an invitation to passers-by (Tereshchenko 224, Snegirev 33). At these gatherings, the young people participate in a multitude of different combinations of the core ritual activities. Males and females, mostly young, but often members of the older generation as well, gather at the Yuletide posidelki for an evening of dancing, singing and games. Some of the games and songs are performed only during sviatki, others can be performed at various other times of the year, but take on a special significance during the winter holiday season (Propp, Rus. 105-135). According to V. I. Chicherov, the most striking difference between the posidelki of the autumn and those of the Yuletide season is the presence of mummers (discussed at greater length below) at the latter (Chicherov, Zim. 174).

1.4 Common Themes and Motifs

Two of the key themes of sviatki are death and laughter, and, correspondingly, the frightful and the funny co-exist in many sviatki activities. The co-existence of death and laughter is linked as well with the creation of life, and the three interrelated features are found in many cultures around the world. The common premise is the perception of laughter as belonging only to living humans (Propp, "Ritual" 128-136). Therefore a living person entering the kingdom of the dead may give himself away by laughing. Conversely, laughter frequently accompanies the birth of new life and has the power to actually create it. The notion of laughter as a life-giving force explains its link to the reproductive power of the earth, (i.e., bountiful harvest) and its central role in agricultural rites. Laughter is inextricably connected to death as a necessary stage in the cycle of death and regeneration of the vegetation.
Although Vladimir Propp does not speak of the importance of the journey in relationship to the rituals of *sviatki*, he does identify it as a motif which is common in folklore, in particular in the fairy tales of all cultures (Morphology 25-65). The motif of the journey in fairy tales is often part of a rite of passage, particularly for male heroes, and results in marriage. The hero/heroine leaves home and undertakes a journey for one of two main reasons: 1) he/she is searching for another person or item, or 2) he/she is captured and forced to undertake the journey. After accomplishing a prescribed task or winning a series of challenges, the hero/heroine returns home and generally marries.

The journey also appears as a common motif in the *sviatki* rituals. Young people leave home and "journey" to *posidelki*, wandering through their town or traveling to another town. The mummers journey to the house of their master or to the *posidelki*. Spirits of the "other world" journey to visit their relatives in "this world." The *koliadki* singers travel from house to house as they sing about the long journey they have just undertaken. The symbolic imagery of the fortune-telling songs sometimes predicts a journey (e.g., a sleigh or a cart). In essence, *sviatki* is the climax of the year's "journey" or "game" as described above. At the beginning of the journey/game, the young people leave home to be with their friends and seek a mate for themselves. During the course of the year they must, without parental assistance, meet the challenge of attracting a member of the opposite sex. After the culmination of the journey at *sviatki*, the young people emerge, having gone through their rite of passage, and enter into their new lives as wedded members of society.

1.5 Mummers

The fusion of death and laughter are evident in the performance of the mummers (*riazhenye*) as they go from house to house where they dance, sing songs, play games as well as tricks, and are given treats. Although nineteenth-century accounts of the practice
are somewhat sketchy, Ivleva maintains that the ritual dressing is extremely important in establishing the emotional atmosphere of the holiday celebrations as well as forming a collective mood (27). Mummery is rarely an individual act. It is most frequently carried out in groups of five to ten, on rare occasions even twenty people (Ivleva 82). In order to distance themselves from their ordinary roles within the community, i.e., in "this world," the participants dress so that they will not be recognized. Significantly, someone commonly dons the costume of Death. Other costumes include those of animals (bears, goats, bulls, horses, cranes and chickens), other nationalities and professions (Turks, Tatars, gypsies, doctors and soldiers), and the opposite sex (Tereshchenko 186-87, Snegirev 31-32). The costumes are often quite complex, and along with appropriate clothing for the new persona, an appropriate face is also chosen. A mask may be worn or the face may be colored with burnt cork or flour, the traditional color of death. Animal costumes are characterized by strange proportions, exaggerations of features, and an emphasis on the ugly (Ivleva 50). In keeping with the theme of "the frightful and the funny," the costumes are intended to scare the observer but may also bring about laughter. Different selections of costumes seem to characterize the different segments of sviatki (Ivleva 81). Less frightening costumes appear during the "holy evenings," whereas the scarier ones are more common during the "frightful evenings". Dressing in other clothing is often accompanied by a significant change in behavior (Propp, Rus. 110-120). By assuming new outer clothing, a participant also assumes the personality of the costume. Cross-dressing, in particular, carries erotic undertones. Behavioral changes are often extreme and may even be crude. An unwritten societal permission for that change is also part of the ritual performance.
1.5.1 Mock Funerals

Mock funerals, called *igra v pokhorony* or *igra v pokoinika*, are also enacted by the mummers (Maksimov 300-01, Propp, *Rus*. 68-70). The part of the dead is either played by one of the mummers or an actual corpse is dug up from a grave (Propp, *Rus*. 68-69). One of the goals of such games is to bring about interaction between the performers, i.e., the mummers, who in this instance are almost always males, with the females from the audience (Lur’e 178-180). Frequently the actor is an unwilling volunteer and is chosen by lots to play the part. He is often dressed in white material, at times resembling a shroud, and his face is either covered with a scarf, a mask or white flour. Turnips or rutabagas are placed on his teeth to make him look more frightful. He is then tied onto a bench or placed into a coffin. Accompanied by mummers dressed as a priest, deacon (which shows the influence of Christianity on the ritual), and mourners, he is carried into the room where the *posidelki* is being held. Those attending the *posidelki* may first respond with fright and even run, but the fright is followed by blasphemies, swearing and coarse laughter. Before carrying the corpse away, the young girls are called forward to bid it farewell by kissing it on its open lips. At the very end, the corpse returns to life. At times it may even attack the girls as they attempt to kiss it. Maksimov reports that in one region, those in attendance at the *posidelki* carry whips with which they lash intruders, both male and female, from other villages (302). Although Maksimov does not state the reason behind the whipping, in all probability the participants wish to maintain a certain level of secrecy in light of the indecorous scenes which are taking place.

Although most earlier accounts of the mock funeral give only the above information, later studies show the enactment frequently to be highly erotic and feared by the young girls. M. L. Lur’e attributes the earlier, incomplete reports to the fact that the
authors "were ashamed of this side of the new-year festivities" (178). Maksimov gives us a slight clue as to the extent to which the mummers will take their tricks. After the corpse is removed from the posidelki for burial, other male mummers, dressed in women's clothing, offer the girls objects from their baskets - shan'gi, pieces of frozen horse excrement (301). Ivleva also reports that at times the corpse would try to jab the girls with a pin hidden in its mask (85). Either of the above tricks would in and of themselves be enough to scare many girls, but they do not account fully for the extreme reaction that Maksimov claims many of the females experience: "just the sight of the corpse makes a depressing impression on the girls: many of them cry and the youngest ones even become sick after the game" (301). Almost as if insignificant, Maksimov adds in a footnote that during the game the boys intentionally introduce a "scabrous element, brought in by way of the disorder of the corpse's dress" (301). Although Maksimov does not elaborate, more recent investigations give us a possible interpretation of both the extreme reaction of the girls and the "scabrous element" introduced by the boys. In Lur'e's studies we see incidences of girls who not only had to kiss the revolting corpse, but were forced to hold onto the "living" corpse's exposed penis (181). At times they were even made to kiss it. Any attempt by the girls to run away was stopped by the mummers and the girls were promptly carried back to the corpse. At times mummers were assigned to stand guard at the doors to prevent unwilling participants from fleeing. One of the objectives of such games was for the girls to show their "sexual maturity and readiness for adult life" (Lur'e 183).

I. K. Kopanevich recounts an interesting and unusual variation of the mock funeral in the Pskov region. Although the performance is usually rendered by males, here girls also perform it without male assistance or participation. The performance itself follows a similar procedure as when performed by men but the erotic features are lacking. One of the girls plays the part of the deceased and lies on a bench. The other girls wail,
light candles and recite the funeral service. They carry the girl out for burial and then "the laughter and noise arise" (Gusev 52). The "indecency" that was a part of the mock funeral is not, in fact, a part of the literary texts that I will be analyzing. My analysis of Pushkin's Eugene Onegin, however, gives cause to believe that Pushkin does allude to the above ritual of the mock funeral and thus also to the erotic undertones.

1.5.2 Games and Skits

Another very popular form of entertainment during the posidelki is the enactment of short sketches or games similar to the mock funerals as well as the performance of longer plays or folk comedies. During the games one or two of the boys usually dresses as an animal such as a horse, goose or bull (Maksimov 296-298) (igra v loshad', v gusia, v byka). They then parade through the posidelki performing certain tricks which are part of a set routine. In another game a boy dresses as a landowner and arranges marriages for the girls present (igra v barina) (Maksimov 299). Just as with the mock funerals, later studies have shown these games to involve a high frequency of physical contact between the males and females at the posidelki. Often the girls are captured, pecked, "fed to the animals as food" or hit until they scream (Lur'e 202-222). The play is filled with laughter, however, and the contact seems to bring more enjoyment than real pain. An interesting game called the "game of pancakes" (igra v bliny) is described both by Maksimov (298) and in a later collection of personal accounts made by the Department of Russian Literature from the Russian State Pedagogical University (Lur'e 204-05). The accounts are peasant reminiscences of the years 1930-50. In the game boys enter the posidelki with a bucket of snow and a small shovel. According to Maksimov, the boys then grab a girl, take a spadeful of snow and hit them on the "back" (spina). The personal accounts of the later study, however, indicate that the term "back" may have been used somewhat
ambiguously. These peasants recount that the boys took the spadeful of snow and hit the girls on the "buttocks" (zadnitsa, zhopa). Again, these particular ritual games do not appear in any of the three texts that I will be discussing in my study, but they reinforce the highly erotic and indecent nature of many of the sviatki games.

1.6 Feeding and Warming the Dead

Yet another instance of the theme of death is the special attention that is paid to the deceased. This can be attributed to the popular folk belief that being dead and buried did not mean the end to one's existence on earth. In fact, at certain times of the year, including the Yuletide season, the dead came forth to roam the earth. Only by eating the food or drinking the water of the dead could one fully enter the "other world." Until then the deceased maintained many properties of the living and experienced both hunger and cold. Thus, although relatives expressed a profound fear of the dead, they took care to make them more comfortable by providing them food and warmth and to ease their transition from one world to the other. In times of trouble or need they also turned to them for help as the dead were believed to have special powers (Eremina 55-56).

During sviatki certain rites exist which acknowledge the presence of the dead in attempts to both feed and warm them. The eve of each of the three major celebrations frequently involves a funeral repast. The deceased are invited to join the family and food is set aside for them. Just as at a Russian wake, the traditional dish is kut'ia, prepared from whole grain and symbolic of new life. Both the Christmas Eve repast and the repast on the eve of the Kreshchenie are "fasting" kut'ia (postnaia kut'ia) including little other than the grain dish. The repast of New Year's Eve is called a "rich" kut'ia (bogataia kut'ia), which consists of kut'ia (i.e. the grain dish) and sausage, ham, butter, beer, wine and vodka (Propp, Rus. 16).
At other times fires are built and the deceased are invited to come warm themselves (gret' pokoinikov or gret' roditelei) (Zelenin 164-178). Although little ethnographic data exists regarding this practice, reports indicate that fires were most likely built in the early morning at which time the deceased were called. Zelenin suggests that the fires were initially built in order to offer a sacrifice to the house-spirit, the domovoi. The domovoi was believed to have very close connections to the souls of the dead, and with the Christianization of some of the folk rituals, the ritual activities gradually focused more on the souls of the dead rather than the house-spirit. Both the domovoi and the deceased, however, were believed to be able to aid in bringing about a successful harvest and maintaining healthy cattle.

1.7 Fortune Telling

Closely associated with the notice paid to the deceased are the attempts to foretell one's future. The practice of fortune telling (gadaniia) was very common in the late 18th century and early 19th century, both in the peasant community as well as among the upper class. Wigzell offers one possible explanation for its popularity. The Russian folk, she asserts, believed that it had little control over its future and that "predictions, fortune-telling and prognostication...were means of smoothing a path for self and family through life, an attempt to deal with man's helplessness in the face of nature and fate" (76).

Wigzell traces what I would term the "visible" evolution of fortune telling in nineteenth-century Russia. Initially fortune-telling enjoyed the patronage of both males and females, she states. Although men were more interested in predictions affecting agricultural practices, women expressed a greater concern for predictions about future life prospects, i.e., birth, marriage, and death (76-77). As the 19th century progressed, less and less credence was given to superstitions and folk practices as more and more emphasis was placed on rational thought. The upper class began to view divination as an
activity of the uneducated, and men gradually withdrew almost entirely from the realm of those seeking to foretell the future. According to Wigzell, this change first affected urban dwellers but took much longer to reach the country gentry. Affected last and least were the peasants. In spite of the encroaching societal disapproval, however, a large number of women, both peasant and urban, maintained their interest in the art of divination (82-83). In particular the fortune telling of the Yuletide season maintained its popularity among the young girls. Although many men and women no longer viewed the rituals as a means to foretell the future, they were still a very popular form of entertainment among the peasants and the country gentry. Although Wigzell contends that the practice diminished toward the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, folklorist David Hufford presents evidence that such beliefs and practices have always existed in all cultures, independent of societal class (16-19). Thus, what Wigzell presents as an outward decline in the belief in the supernatural and practices of fortune telling was, instead, only a decline in the perceptibility of such practices. Certainly the picture of Russia today with its plethora of dream books, books about Russian folk beliefs, etc., is proof that belief in the supernatural still has not died.

Surmising from ethnographic accounts, in the nineteenth-century both males and females join in the fortune telling of sviatki although women by far play the more active role. Young girls seek to find out their future through the practices of divination, commonly with the help of older women whose experience qualifies them to help the girls interpret the results. At a gathering of young daughters of the gentry, this is most often the nurse of one of the girls or another of the house serfs. Often the boys fulfill only a side role during divination - that of scaring the girls.
1.7.1 Less Fearful Forms of Fortune Telling

The fortune-telling of *sviatki* may take one of several forms. Least frightful among these are the types of divination which are based on lots and involve the interpretation of diverse signs. One common type involves roosters and may be performed in various ways. In one of the forms, oats are placed at the feet of several people standing in a circle. The person whom the rooster approaches first will be the first person to marry (Tereshchenko 235-36). In another form, one of the participants places various items such as a ring, bread, coal, chalk or dish of water onto the ground. The item the rooster goes to first foretells the future for that person. The ring, for example, indicates marriage, and the dish of water shows that the husband will be a drunkard. Chalk predicts death in the near future, while the bread foretells poverty (Tereshchenko 236, Snegirev 42).

As another example of this category of divination, the young girls tell their fortunes by pouring melted wax or tin into cold water or snow (Tereshchenko 269, Snegirev 44). The wax or tin hardens and the solidified forms are held up to the light so that shadows are reflected on the wall. The girls, often with the help of an older, more experienced woman, then analyze the resulting shadows in a way symbolic of the girl's future. The shape of a church foretells marriage whereas the shape of a long box is seen as a coffin which predicts death.

Several forms of fortune telling involving the interpretation of signs take place in the out-of-doors and most may be performed by both young men and girls. In one of these the young person, after going outside, stops the first passer-by of the opposite sex and asks his or her name (Tereshchenko 236, Snegirev 42). That is to be the name of the 'intended,' i.e., of the future husband or wife. Other similar forms involve going to an intersection to listen for a passer-by (Tereshchenko 231, Snegirev 48-49). Whichever
direction the person comes from is the direction from which the future spouse will come. In still other forms, the young person goes to an intersection and listen for the sound of a barking dog or possibly a sleigh (Maksimov 325, Tereshchenko 234, Snegirev 44). Again, the direction from which the sound comes indicates the direction from which the future spouse will come. Also the type of noise may foretell the nature of the future spouse. For example, if the dog’s bark is rough and course, the future spouse will be old. If the bark is shrill, the spouse will be sickly, and if the bark is strong the spouse will be young.

At other times girls may listen at the neighbors' windows or at a church (Maksimov 326, Tereshchenko 231, 233, Snegirev 42). The type of conversation or church singing that the girls overhear foretells what their married life will be like. If they hear the neighbors laughing and having a good time, their life will be happy. If the husband is yelling at his wife, then their future husband will do the same. Similarly, if the girls hear joyous singing at the church, their life is destined to be happy. If the girls overhear a funeral service, they will soon die.

In yet another form of this type of fortune telling, shoes are thrown onto the street through the gates of the home (Tereshchenko 238, Snegirev 44). The direction the shoe points when it lands indicates where the ‘intended’ will be from. If the shoe points back at the girl’s own gates, she will remain single that year. In another variant of this form of fortune telling, the girl’s future husband will be the next male to come from that direction.

1.7.1.1 Fortune-telling Songs (podbliudnye pesni)

Special fortune-telling songs called podbliudnye pesni (under-the-dish songs) are often sung to the young girls (Tereshchenko 238, Snegirev 44). Again the performance can be carried out in a variety of ways, but most commonly rings or earrings are collected
from the unmarried girls and put into a bowl which is frequently filled with water. Variations of the ritual are found where pieces of bread are added to the bowl or a piece of bread, some salt and small pieces of coal. The bowl is then covered with a scarf. As each song is sung, an appointed woman pulls a piece of jewelry out of the bowl. That particular song foretells the future of the young girl to whom the jewelry belongs. The words of the song are often allegoric and frequently feature various animals. Although the songs may vary slightly from region to region, they maintain similar motifs and are generally perceived in a similar manner, e.g. getting into a sleigh indicates that the bride will live far from her family; if the blacksmith is forging a crown, the young girl will get married soon. Occasionally, however, one may find like songs which are understood differently in different regions. Again, the more experienced singers or observers will be called upon to help interpret the songs.

The cat and the bear make frequent allegorical appearances in the _podbliudnye pesni_. Songs about a cat generally foretell marriage to one's beloved in the near future:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tom cat calls the female cat</th>
<th>Kot koshurku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To sleep on the stove:</td>
<td>Zvał spat' u pechurku:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;To sleep on the stove&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;U pechurku spat&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Is warm and good."^10        | Tiaplo khorosho" (Shein 323).

As Iurii Lotman and other scholars have shown, the bear in Russian folk belief symbolizes marriage in general and, sometimes, the bridegroom in particular (270-71). The symbolic image of the bear that surfaces in the _podbliudnye pesni_ is one of him swimming in a river. Lotman quotes a song from Snegirev's collection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The bear, the puffing one, Glory!</th>
<th>Medved' pykhtun, Slava!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swims in the river, Glory!</td>
<td>Po reke plyvet; Slava!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Into whose yard he puffs, Glory!</td>
<td>Komu pykhnet vo dvor, Slava!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He will get a son-in-law in his household, Glory!</td>
<td>Tomu ziat' v terem, Slava! (270).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the bear bespeaks of marriage, not in all instances is the marriage forthcoming. Whereas the above song hints of a wedding in the near future, the bear can also bode
negatively for one's married life. The following text recently recorded and presently housed in the archives of the Moscow Conservatory of Music shows the bear crossing the river, but alas, he changes his mind. A young girl's beloved may also change his mind about marriage:

And the bear swam across the river, holy evening!
He swam across the river, then changed his mind, holy evening!
He changed his mind, then came to his senses, holy evening!

I pereplyl medved' cherez recheshku, sviat vechor!
Pereplyl reku a adumalsia, sviat vechor!
Adumalsia, da a chakhalsia, sviat vechor!11

In addition to the podbliudnye pesni, the bear appears at other times during sviatki. Mummers frequently dress as a bear, and the bear may make an appearance in the flesh as well. Not infrequently guests appear with a live bear on a line, and the bear dances or entertains the guests with his tricks.

Generally the mention of silver or gold in podbliudnye pesni portends a positive future, one surrounded by wealth. Thus the following podbliudnaia pesnia is most frequently interpreted to predict marriage to a wealthy man:

At Spasa in Chigasy beyond the Yauza, U Spasa v Chigasakh za Iauzoiu,
Live rich countrymen, Zhivut muzhiki bogatye,
They rake gold with shovels, Grebut zoloto lopatami,
Pure silver with baskets, Chisto serebro lukoshkami.

(Tereshchenko 159)

This song illustrates well, however, how interpretation may vary according to region. Pushkin includes similar lines in Chapter Five of Eugene Onegin, but in his explanatory notes, he indicates that the song foretells death.

Closely connected with the songs about gold and silver are those about the blacksmith. He is often called upon to forge a golden crown for the young maiden:

The blacksmiths forge Kuiut kuzniatsy
Golden crowns. Zolotye viantsy. (Shein 324)
In Russian folklore, the golden crown is a symbol of marriage. Thus, the lucky girl for whom this song is sung will soon be married to her beloved.

Just as in the mock funerals and mummery, the erotic component of the *sviatki* rituals is evident in the *podbliudnye pesni*. Some of the songs make direct or indirect reference to body parts and are considered indecent although they may be either positive or negative in their predictions for the future. The following song from Viatka (*Viatskii krai*), for example, is considered negative and foretells failure in one's future life:

The lazy lazy-one
Sits on the stove,
With her ass she melts snow,
Cooks cabbage soup for her husband.  

Leniva lenivitsa
Na peche sidit,
Zhopoi sneg taiala,
Muzhu shchi varila (Satyrenko 231).

The following song from the same region predicts marriage and children:

The husband is lying on the bench,
He lets it down below the bench.  

Lezhit muzhik na lavke,
Svesil ego pod lavku (Satyrenko 232).

### 1.7.1.2 Games With Scarves (*platki*)

In addition to shoes thrown through gates and pieces of jewelry drawn during the *podbliudnye pesni*, girls' other items of clothing such as shoes and kerchiefs or scarves (*platki*) figure prominently in *sviatki* divination and games. As stated earlier, in some forms of fortune telling, shoes are thrown onto the street through the gates of the home. The direction the shoe points when it lands indicates where the 'intended' will be from. If the shoe points back at the girl's own gates, she will remain single that year. In another variant of this form of fortune telling, the girl's future husband will be the next male to come from that direction. In addition to the use of the kerchief is used to cover the bowl during *podbliudnye pesni*, but it is also used during several songs and games of the *posidelki*. For example, while singing one of the marriage songs (also sung at other times of the year), the girls wander around the room while the boys remain in one place.
(Tereshchenko 204-06). At a certain point in the song, the girls throw their scarves at the person they like. During other songs the boys throw kerchiefs at the girls. In all cases, the items of clothing, including the scarves, the shoes and the rings and earrings of the *podbliudnye pesni* have the same function of being indicators, i.e. they point out some aspect of the girl's future or her 'intended,' or more specifically they indicate who the 'intended' is to be.

### 1.7.2 Frightful Forms of Divination

The examples of divination above are considered to belong to the less frightful forms. Although powers of the other world are thought to help bring a response to the young girl's attempts to determine who her future husband will be, no direct communication is sought with these spirits. In the more frightful forms of divination, girls seek direct contact with the magical powers of the other world. The spirits are often thought to be demonic, and thus, when directly contacting them, the young girl prepares herself for a potentially very frightening experience. She calls on the spirits to reveal to her the identity of her 'intended.' The spirit may disclose this information either by assuming the shape of the 'intended,' by speaking to her, or through other sounds. This type of divination most frequently takes place in the bathhouse or the barn, the locations considered the most fearful for telling one's future. Evil spirits were believed to inhabit these buildings because of the absence of icons and other religious objects.

Many of these forms of divination involve the use of a mirror. The mirror was believed to be a powerful tool for reflecting the other world. Mikhail Chulkov's *Dictionary of Russian Superstitions* of 1782 relates one folk legend which claims that the mirror was created by the devil himself (164-65). A young monk was trying to win the hand of the tsar's daughter in marriage. Before agreeing, she first gave him the task of
finding an object in which she could see herself. The monk presented the task to the devil and promised his service to him if he could make such an object. The devil completed the task and now inhabits the mirror. It was believed that he could be seen in mirrors during the middle of the night.

One of the most common forms of mirror-fortune-telling prescribes that at midnight the girl prepare one or two mirrors, either on the same table or on two separate ones, in the bathhouse or the barn. She then invites her 'intended' to show himself in the mirror(s). The invitation takes the form of a short incantation: "Show yourself to me in the mirror, my loved one; show yourself!" ("Pokazhis' mne v zerkale, moi miloi; pokazhis'!") (Tereshchenko 226). As she stares into the mirror(s), the reflection of her 'intended' gradually takes shape. The described fortune telling with mirrors may take place as a ritual in and of itself or it may be combined with other prescribed actions. In addition to the mirrors or as a separate form of fortune telling, the girl may also set the table for two and invite her 'intended' to join her for dinner. Again the invitation takes the form of an incantation: "Suzhenyi, riazhenyi! come eat dinner with me" ("Suzhenyi, riazhenyi! Pridi ko mne uzhinat'."), and again the girl may see the shape of her beloved or may hear his voice (Tereshchenko 226, Snegirev 50-51). Frequently, as the girl sits listening and waiting, a young man may scare her by making noises and playing other tricks. If the girl becomes unbearably frightened, she must yell the antidote, "Keep away from me!" ("Chur menia!" or "Chur sego mesta!") and the apparition will disappear (Tereshchenko 227). She may also take a rooster with her for the sake of safety (Tereshchenko 228, Snegirev 49). If she becomes too frightened, she can prod the rooster and make it crow, thus causing the specter to leave. In addition to the forms of mirror-fortune-telling described above, a less frightful form exists which does not take place in the bathhouse or barn. Standing outside, often at an intersection, the young girl
holds a mirror up to catch the reflection of the moon. As she stares at it, the reflection of her 'intended' will take shape.

Not involving mirrors but equally as fearful, is another form of fortune telling which usually take place in the barn or mill. The young girl enters the building and listens for noises (Tereshchenko 240). The type of noise she hears determines what her 'intended' will be like. Shifting grain is usually positive, whereas knocking is negative. Again the young men try to frighten the girls by making noises.

In yet another frightening form of divination, the young girls attempt to contact the spirits of the other world directly through dreams. Dreams were an everyday occurrence "but those which happened during sviatki were thought to be important and have an influence on the person's future" (Tereshchenko 276). Although dreams usually occur in one's home, the girls encourage unclean spirits to visit them by removing any religious symbols they may have on their person and their belt which was a symbolic form of protection from evil forces (Lotman 266-67). The girl places a special object under her pillow before sleep and invites her 'intended' to be present in her dream that night. Lying down to sleep, she utters an appropriate incantation. For example, after placing a comb under her pillow the girl says, "Suzhenyi, riazhenyi! comb my hair" ("Suzhenyi, riazhenyi! Pricheshi mne golovu.") (Tereshchenko 247, Snegirev, 52). The objects used vary considerably, but most typical are a key, ring or comb. The young maiden may also place a small bridge made of twigs under her pillow (Tereshchenko 268, Snegirev 52). The 'intended' is then invited to help the girl across the bridge (52). This is accompanied by the words, "Whoever my suzhenyi is, whoever my riazhenyi is, that person will take me across the bridge!" ("Kto moi suzhenoi, kto moi riazhenoi, tot perevedet menia cherez most!"). Upon waking in the morning, the girl again must seek the help of another person, usually somebody older and more experienced, to help her decipher the meaning of the dream.

27
1.8 Singing of Koliadki

Another typical activity during the sviatki season is the singing of koliadki, known in central Russia as ovsen’ or tausen’, and in north Russia as vinograd’e. It also implies contact with the "other world" in an effort to favorably influence the future, but is largely devoid of the element of death/fear, characteristic of the mummers’ performance and divination. Koliadki are performed on one or more of the eves of the three major holidays (Propp, Rus. 40-41, Vinogradova 23-24). In some places the performances may continue for a couple days following the holiday. The performance usually involves small groups of people that go from house to house and sing under their host's windows. At times they may be invited to enter the house and sing. The procession is often led by a person carrying a bag, the mekhonosha, who collects the treats given to the singers by the hosts.

Most of the songs have similar structures and contain common motifs. Both Propp (Rus. 40-44) and Liudmila Vinogradova (23-24) identify three main stages in koliadki singing. During the first stage the singers approach the house and ask for permission to sing. This may take the form of a short song, a simple spoken request, or a combination of the two. The request is highly formulaic and includes a description of the long journey and the difficulty in finding the host's house, regardless of the fact that they may have come from near by. When permission is granted, the singers proceed to the second stage, namely, a eulogy of the house and its occupants. This stage always involves a song which is either as a continuation of the koliadka from the first stage or a new one. During the third stage the singers invite donations of food or small change. They give thanks and wish the host well, providing he has granted the singers' request. Otherwise the singers may threaten to avenge themselves on the host in some way. The well-wishing may be rendered as a song or it may be spoken.
The diversity of *koliadki* is most strongly demonstrated during the second stage where the content of the songs is largely determined by the addressee. Although the *koliadki* of the Western Slavs, Southern Slavs, and most of the Eastern Slavs (Ukrainians and Belorussians) may be addressed to either a single young man, young girl, or the host and/or hostess of the home (Vinogradova 38-39), most Russian *koliadki* are addressed collectively to the host, hostess and other members of the household (28). Numerous motifs are common to such Russian *koliadki*, but for the purposes of this investigation only one motif will be considered in detail. These *koliadki* appear during the eulogy of the home, the second stage of *koliadki* singing. The common narrative motif refers to the home in terms similar to comparable descriptions found in Russian fairy tales and epic songs (Propp, *Rus.* 41-43). The host's house is depicted as being surrounded by a silver or iron fence. It is located on seven pillars, and on each pillar there is a pearl. There are also three towers in which shine the sun, the moon and the stars. Each celestial body signifies occupants of the home, i.e., the sun is the hostess, the moon is the host, and the stars are the children.

As a component of *sviatki*, the *koliadki* help call forth a bountiful harvest and prosperous year. According to Chicherov, the performance is in fact a magical rite (*Zim.* 26). The words of the song have the power to fulfill future desires and assist in bringing wealth to the host and his family. Vinogradova adds that "in all of these promises and threats is revealed a realization by the *koliadki* singers of their special meaning and traces of belief that their visit may in some way have an effect on the family during the course of the year" (134). Therefore, the households generally welcome the singers and present them with treats and money.

In anticipation of the *koliadki* singers and their request for food, families often prepare special treats in advance, e.g., *bliny* (a thin pancake resembling the French crepe) or baked treats in the form of various animals and birds (Chicherov 76, 82). Propp
contents that such animal figures were intended to influence the future productivity of the host's animals because they are not only given to *koliadki* singers but frequently also given to the domestic animals (*Rus.* 29).

### 1.9 Folk Comedies

The staging of exceptionally long folk comedies was also very popular during *sviatki* (Maksimov 296), although performances were not limited to the winter festivities. They were directed and enacted by the local male youth and involved a considerable amount of organization. Many of the texts did not appear in print until the later part of the nineteenth century were passed on in the same manner as other oral folk genres. The audience was usually familiar with the contents of the play and interacted extensively with the actors during the performance (Warner, *Rus. Folk* xi-xiv). The plays seldom contain a plot but are instead a series of scenes centered around one central character or motif and exist in many regional variations. The content is very satirical, parodical, mocking or abusive, and the humor is often crude. Two popular and widespread examples are *Tsar' Maksimilian* and *The Ship* (*Lodka*).

The main conflict of the first half of *Tsar' Maksimilian* revolves around the pagan tsar Maksimilian and his Christian son Adol'f who refuses to worship pagan gods and is therefore executed (Warner, *Rus. Folk* 155-176). As part of the pagan-Christian opposition, the play frequently contains a parody of the marriage of the father and/or the funeral of the son. Comic interludes are provided by two main characters. The gravedigger, who must measure the son's body for a coffin, shows disrespect for the tsar by mimicking and disobeying him. The doctor, in turn, treats the gravedigger's aches and pains with strange remedies and advice. The second half of the play is a series of duels between the tsar and his enemies who want to capture the capital city.
The unifying link in the play The Ship is the dramatization of the song “Down the Mother Volga” (“Vniz po matushke po Volge”) which was first published in Chulkov's song book of 1773 (Warner, Rus. Folk 127-153). The comedy is composed of a series of scenes about robber bands and could be easily expanded, depending on the inclinations of the individual performance groups. At times the action of the scenes focuses on board the ship where the men only pretend to follow the orders of their captain. At other times the brigands land in order to rob landowners or merchants.

1.10 Weather Omens

One of the few practices that was related exclusively to the agricultural work of the peasant, i.e., it did not develop further significance in regard to the fertility of the woman, was the reading of the weather during sviatki. The accounts of Maksimov and Tereshchenko offer differing information about such omens, however. The differences very likely reflect regional variations. According to Maksimov, it is a positive omen if the New Year's sky is starry, i.e., there will be a bountiful harvest of berries and mushrooms in the coming year (329). According to Tereshchenko, it is the starry sky of Christmas or of Kreshchenie that foretells a big harvest. He also adds that if both the stars and moon are shining brightly on the fields, this was interpreted as a sign that they are congratulating each other on the future good harvest. In turn, a cloudy sky was interpreted as a negative omen, i.e., the moon and stars are thinking about the hard year that is to come.

1.11 Conclusion

No matter how greatly sviatki rituals may have differed from region to region, ethnographers seem to concur about the overall atmosphere during sviatki. According to Tereshchenko, “sviatki supply strictly a time of merriment” (132). Even the frightful
nature of the mock funerals does not seem to dampen the overall sense of festivity for all those involved. At the same time the sviatki rituals allow young girls a chance "to probe into their future" (181). Present at all times is not only the desire to have fun and not only to find out about one's future but also to have a direct influence upon it through the powers of the other world which are most active at this time of the year. The young Russian girls, in particular, take advantage of this special time of the year: "Sviatki are of particular interest for the young [peasant] girls: into their monotonous work life bursts a whole wave of new impressions, and the rigorous, village humdrum life is exchanged for large-scale freedom and an entire series of games and amusements" (Maksimov 19). This desire to find out about and to control one's fate at a transitional stage in one's life is a primary usage that literature makes of the sviatki rituals.

Notes

1 Epiphany in the sense of the Western holiday is defined by Webster as "a church festival in commemoration of the coming of the Magi as the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles" but in the Eastern Church it is the "commemoration or the baptism of Christ" (419). I will use the Russian term Kreshchenie, which refers to the holiday as "baptism," because it is more appropriate for this investigation.

2 These dates are according to the Julian calendar which would have been in use in Russia during the 19th century. Many sviatki customs are being revived and are currently celebrated between January 7-19 according to the Gregorian calendar which was adopted in 1918.

3 Although Christmas and Kreshchenie are here called "religious" holidays, and the intervening days are considered a "folk" celebration, there was nevertheless a dynamic interaction between the two. The terms are used here to differentiate between activities which focused on the Orthodox Church and the teachings of Christ, and activities which were centered around the agricultural calendar and the cycles of the regeneration of vegetation and livestock.

4 The primary practice influenced by Christianity was the singing of koliadki which occurred mainly in the West and South Slavic regions. Groups of children still went from house to house singing songs, but they carried with them sticks with stars attached to the ends. Instead of praising the host of the house, they praised Christ.

5 According to one folk legend, God so greatly rejoiced at the birth of his Son that he opened the doors to the nether world and released all of the demons (Maksimov, 21). Therefore, on New Year's Eve numerous evil spirits leave their home in the underworld and wander the earth during the frightful evenings, thinking up various types of entertainment to tempt the youth.
Scabrous: "dealing with suggestive, indecent or scandalous themes" (Webster 1046).

Reported by V. E. Gusev in his article "Ot obriadu k narodnomu teatru (evoliutsia sviatochnykh igr v pokoinika)." One of Pushkin's estates, Mikhailovskoe, where he was exiled and worked on Eugene Onegin, is located in the Pskov region.

Belief that life does not end with one's death on earth indicates the way that folk and religious belief overlap.

There are numerous types of fortune telling, but only those most pertinent to this study will be discussed.

Translations of all songs are mine.

I did not see the text in the archives myself, but the information was given to me by Olga Velichkina, a former Ph.D. student in Russian ethnomusicology at The Ohio State University. She was part of a 1985 expedition of the Moscow Conservatory which recorded the song during field work in West Russia.

Dal' gives two definitions of the word *riazhenyi*: 1) a mummer, i.e., a person dressed in unusual clothing; and 2) a synonym to the Russian *suzhenyi* or *zhenikh*, meaning "the intended one" or "beloved one" (125).

According to Max Vasmer the etymology of the term *koliadki* is the Latin *calendae*, from the verb *calare*, in Russian *vyklímt'*, to call out. In ancient Rome the main priest called out the first day of each new moon. The first ten days of each new moon became known as *calendae*, hence also the term *calendar* (Propp 36).

In Ukraine songs sung at the New Year are known as *shchedrovki*.

These are similar to the plays enacted by the convicts in Dostoevsky's *Notes From the House of the Dead*. 
CHAPTER 2

SVIATKI IN THE RUSSIAN LITERARY TRADITION

A presentation of the Russian literary tradition of incorporating the sviatki folk motif is equally as important as a description of the folk tradition. Use of the sviatki folk motif, in particular by authors of the nineteenth century, was extremely widespread and a full appreciation of its significance in any one work is partially dependent upon an understanding of the evolution of the motif. Like a snowball growing in size as it rolls down a hill, the sviatki literary motif has grown with successive generations. It is made up of a cluster of sub-motifs which has increased in number over time, while the original motifs have evolved and been modified. The motifs of the earlier works differ from many of the motifs of the later works, both in the ways that they are rendered by the author as well as how they are interpreted by the reader.

An understanding of the evolution of the sviatki motif in literature affects my study of the three works that I have selected for detailed analysis in two different but interrelated ways. It is a key to the interpretation of both the author’s use of intertextuality as well as the reader’s expectations upon encountering the motif. The intertextuality is not limited to the sviatki segments of the three works under investigation. As mentioned in the introduction, it is like a wheel, and the many points on the rim are the individual works which incorporate sviatki motifs. They all interact with the hub which is the sviatki folk ritual as well as with each other. Thus, for example, when comparing similar references to Zhukovskii’s “Svetlana” made by Anna Akhmatova and Alexander Pushkin,
one must take into account the development of the *sviatki* motif during the hundred years of literature which separate their works. It might be that other works of the literary tradition as well as new ethnographic studies or an evolution of the folk celebration itself alter or add to an interpretation of the intertextuality of the later work. For example, the twentieth-century studies of the mock funeral and other mummer games and skits show them to have been very common and highly erotic, but these ritual activities were, in fact, ignored or described very superficially by nineteenth-century ethnographers. These more recent studies directly affect my interpretation of Tatiana’s dream in Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, and thus also affect an interpretation of the intertextual allusions to the dream in Akhmatova’s *Poem Without a Hero*.

Closely associated with the intertextuality of the works, the expectations of the nineteenth-century/early-twentieth-century reader also play a role in forming an accurate analysis of the three works in question. The folk ritual itself was so widespread that the reader of the time undoubtedly knew of it and had certain expectations because of this knowledge. Those expectations, however, are complicated by the reader’s knowledge of the literary tradition and the changes brought about during the evolution of the *sviatki* motif. The motif as rendered in *Eugene Onegin* and “Svetlana” is only partially responsible for forming these expectations. By the time these two works appeared, the *sviatki* motif had already established a certain tradition through its appearance in journals of the eighteenth century as well as tales such as “Tale of Frol Skobeev.” At this time the image of *sviatki* in literature carried with it primarily a sense of eroticism, the supernatural, and, therefore, tremendous anxiety and fear for the young heroine of each text. These sub-motifs evolved through the nineteenth century, mainly within the genre of the *sviatochnyi rasskaz*, the *sviatki* short story, and continually altered the reader’s expectations.
I began my study of the sviatki motif in Russian literature several years ago before any comparable studies were available. Since then, in 1995, Dushechkina’s study of the evolution of the sviatki short story in Russian Sviatki Short Story: The Making of a Genre (Russkii sviatochnyi rasskaz: Stanovlenie zhanra) was published. As the title of her study indicates, Dushechkina is mainly concerned with a specific genre of Russian literature, the so-called “sviatochnyi rasskaz” or “sviatki short story.” Genre studies is not my concern. I do not deal with the genre of the sviatki short story (to be discussed in greater detail below), but with texts which incorporate sviatki motifs. Here our research interests overlap. Most of Dushechkina’s conclusions concerning types of motifs and the general evolution of the sviatki motif in literature are in agreement with mine. Her work has provided me, however, with many facts, e.g., dates, names of journals and minor authors, which would have taken years of research in Russia to accumulate. I will refer extensively to her work for such facts, and I appreciate the time and energy it has taken for her to compile them. Although the main focus of our individual studies is quite different, they do at the same time overlap to a certain degree. Dushechkina analyzes the historical evolution of the genre of the sviatki short story whereas I am investigating the literary functions of the sviatki motif within select longer works. I do, however, refer at times to general tendencies within the trend of incorporating sviatki motifs in literature as well as the historical evolution of the trend. The sviatki short story did not really evolve as a separate genre until the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus, some of our work with Russian literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries necessarily overlaps, but the focus of our investigations in later literature is very dissimilar. I believe that my own findings will complement those of Dushechkina and provide an even broader base for future scholars to work from.
2.1 Sub-motifs of Sviatki in Literature

Before I identify the sub-motifs of sviatki in literature, I must first clarify what I mean by certain terms which will reappear in my study: sviatki short story/poem; Christmas story/poem; and New Year’s story/poem. I will use the term "sviatki short story/poem" inclusively to indicate all stories/poems which in some way pertain to the sviatki season, either through selection of traditional folk motifs or as indicated by the sub-title “Sviatki-,” “Christmas-,” or “New Year’s Short Story.” The terms "Christmas short story/poem" and "New Year’s short story/poem" refer to stories or poems which develop motifs peculiar to that holiday, e.g., the Christmas tree or church service, or the transition from the old year to the new year. Although both types of stories and poems are also considered sviatki short stories and poems, the stories and poems of Christmas and New Year’s did not become part of the literary tradition until the second half of the nineteenth century and I will at times refer to them separately. When I wish to indicate either Western or traditional Russian sviatki motifs in any or all genres of Russian literature, I will refer to “sviatki motifs in Russian literature.” However, when I wish to specify the presence of motifs of the folk tradition of sviatki, e.g., fortune telling and mummery, I will refer to “traditional sviatki folk motifs in Russian literature.” Although this chapter will examine “sviatki motifs in literature,” i.e., both Russian and Western motifs in all genres, the subsequent investigation of Eugene Onegin, War and Peace, and Poem Without a Hero will be limited to an analysis of the “traditional folk motifs of sviatki in literature.”

In the eighteenth century the sviatki motifs found in literature were primarily from the Russian folk tradition. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, sviatki motifs, primarily within the sviatki short story, had incorporated a number of Western motifs. Some works maintained predominantly the traditional motifs of the Russian folk ritual, e.g., fortune telling, whereas others followed more closely the Western tradition of
Charles Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen, reflecting on such social problems as poverty exacerbated at Christmas time, the season to be thankful and generous. Most writers, however, integrated motifs from both the Russian and the Western traditions. Although the division of motifs was most evident in the *sviatki* short story, it also occurred in poetry and later in the novel. The motifs eventually congealed within the *sviatki* short story which evolved into its own genre, thanks to the calendrical journals. Similar motifs were embedded in the plotlines of novels, and other longer works, but all genres underwent the same evolutionary process of adapting to the influence of Western motifs. Although I will not be concerned with the genre of the *sviatki* short story itself, the focus of my subsequent study is not restricted to certain genres. Instead, it is limited to the way in which the traditional Russian motifs are embedded in the three chosen works. An account of the literary tradition of inscribing *sviatki* motifs in literature would not be complete, however, without an account of the evolution of the *sviatki* short story.

Comprising the overarching *sviatki* motif is a cluster of sub-motifs which recurs throughout the tradition of incorporating *sviatki* in literature and is reflected in all literary genres. The motifs that I have compiled include: a) the unclean spirit; b) a supernatural occurrence, to which Dushechkina adds the Christmas miracle which was a seemingly supernatural occurrence brought about with the intervention of God (205); c) storms or other possibly hostile forces of nature; d) the appearance of a dead person or visit by the deceased; e) a dream; f) fortune telling; g) mummers; h) matrimony; i) story-telling and j) the journey. Seldom do any of the motifs occur in isolation. Instead, any single work may develop a combination of two or more of the motifs. Each of the motifs will now be examined in greater detail.

a) **The unclean spirit** frequently appears as the result of a character’s attempts at divination. These are very prominent in the *bylichki* and *byval’shchiny* (short stories which tell, in this case, of individual *sviatki* experiences) of the eighteenth and early
nineteenth centuries. In most of these stories, encounters with unclean spirits were depicted as true encounters with spirit from the other world. During the nineteenth century the motif developed in two different ways. At times the unclean spirit is shown to be a true spirit of the other world whose presence is demonstrated through actions which have no rational explanation. More likely than not, however, the actions of the “unclean spirit” receive a realistic clarification at the end of the story.

b) A supernatural occurrence or the impression of one, might result from one of several different authorial techniques. A story such as Gogol’s “Night Before Christmas” is, in fact, supernatural. There is no rational explanation given for the hero Vakula’s flight with the devil. In most other stories, however, the supernatural occurrences receive a rational explanation and frequently turn out to be the result of a coincidence or simply a strange, but explicable, set of circumstances. Those circumstances may consist of the insanity of the hero or heroine or the temporary impairment of the hero or heroine’s senses. Anton Chekhov’s stories are representative of this type of “supernatural occurrence.” In his story "Crooked Mirror: Sviatki Short Story" ("Krivoe zerkalo: sviatochnyi rasskaz," 1883), for example, the heroine is entranced by the image that she sees of herself in a particular mirror. Because the mirror is crooked, most people see a distorted and ugly reflection of themselves. The heroine, by coincidence however, is ugly and therefore always sees the reflection of a beautiful woman.

After 1844 when Charles Dickens’ first Christmas book, The Christmas Carol, was published in Russia under the name Sviatki Apparitions (Sviatochnye videniia), the nature of the supernatural motif expanded to include the Christmas miracle. While the supernatural occurrence as discussed above still existed in many stories, in others the idea of the supernatural combined with divine powers of good to bring about changes in people’s lives (Dushechkina 204-205). Christmas became a magical time which helped
lead people out of difficult situations or brought them to a reunion or reconciliation with loved ones by awakening their conscience.

c) **Storms or other possibly hostile forces of nature** frequently play a role similar to that of the unclean spirit. They act as if they are representatives of the other world whose task it is to endanger the life of the hero or heroine. They may cause the hero or heroine to lose his/her way and lead him/her to a dangerous place. These elements of nature may even cause the loss of life or a temporary loss of consciousness.

d) The supernatural occurrence may take a particular form, namely, as the **appearance of a dead person or visit by the deceased** (Dushechkina 202). Often a dead person is thought to have come back to life in order to take revenge on somebody for an insult done to him/her while alive, or the deceased appears to a relative or friend in a dream with a specific request. Again, the author often offers a logical explanation for the appearance.

e) **Dreams** also provide an opportunity for the inclusion of a supernatural occurrence without altering the realistic nature of a story. They may result from the state of drunkenness, from a divination ritual, or other circumstances. Dushechkina identifies six different types of dreams within this category (202-203): dreams that occur immediately before dying; dreams of remembrance; visions foretelling one’s own death or the death of a near one; dreams of the posthumous adventures of the hero; visions of the future of Russia; dreams of warning about the inappropriate moral behavior of a person; and anti-utopian dreams. The most famous sviatki dreams in literature are undoubtedly the dreams of the two female protagonists of the early nineteenth century, Zhukovskii’s Svetlana and Pushkin’s Tatiana.3 The dreams of both heroines come about as a result of fortune telling.

f) The most common sviatki ritual found in literature is the ritual of **fortune telling**. Generally the heroine (rather than the hero) or one or more of the secondary,
female characters engages in divination practices, and although she may perform several forms of fortune telling (e.g., wax pouring, fortune telling with roosters, singing of *podbliudnye pesni*), the series always culminates with mirror divination. Whereas some of the secondary characters may fail to see the reflection of the 'intended' in the mirror(s), the heroine almost always does. Again, the author may give a realistic explanation. Instead of seeing the devil in the shape of the 'intended,' the girl may see the reflection of the hero himself who has sneaked into the room without the heroine noticing. This type of fortune telling always suggests a high level of fear for the participants. Ironically, more than one heroine, after seeing her beloved in the mirror(s), has been found unconscious or even dead.

   g) Also commonly depicted by authors is the *sviatki* ritual of mummery or the related practice of wearing masks. Mummery provides an appropriate ethnographic background for the action of the story and becomes motivation for mistaken identities or a change in the behavior of the participants. Mummery is more typical of stories with a rural setting, whereas masks are more typical of urban settings.

   h) Fortune telling and mummery were traditional rituals of the *sviatki* celebration, but the ultimate and typical goal for most of the participants was to find out with whom they would enter into matrimony. Although narrative descriptions of the *sviatki* folk rituals became less and less frequent during the course of the nineteenth century, the matrimonial motif remained prominent. Because the spring of the year continued to be a time of marriage, *sviatki* also continued in its role of looking forward to marriage. Thus, many of the *sviatki* short stories of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century ended in marriage or with a proposal of marriage.

   i) Many of the stories begin when family members or friends come together for holiday celebrations during the *sviatki* season, and story-telling is an integral part of the gathering. One of the participants is prompted by the on-going conversation or holiday
activities to tell a story. The narrator claims that the story happened either directly to
him/her or to a close acquaintance. He/she assures the listeners, and thereby also the
reader, of the truth of the uncanny or "supernatural occurrence" which is about to follow.

Dushechkina contends that story-telling ensued as a result of the bylichki and
byval' shchiny of the eighteenth century (35-40). These short stories, Dushechkina
theorizes, were related orally during the sviatki celebration to the young people in order to
convey a model of correct behavior in case the youth should come in contact with an
unclean spirit or perform a divination ritual improperly. As a result, story-telling, itself,
became a ritual activity of the sviatki celebration. As the Russian population became more
and more urban, the tradition continued in the form of stories which were read or thematic
poems (in particular the ballad "Svetlana") which were recited during the days of sviatki.
This tradition of telling stories was, in turn, inscribed in many of the sviatki short stories.

j) The motif of the journey, although common in both the early sviatki literary
tradition as well as the later, underwent slight modifications through the course of the
nineteenth century. In most of the earlier works (e.g., "Frol Skobeev," "Svetlana,"
Eugene Onegin, "Night Before Christmas," War and Peace), the literary journey motif
fulfilled the same function as its counterpart in the folk tradition, i.e., protagonists were
presented with an opportunity to separate from their families and undergo a maturational
change leading to marriage. In later works, however, the journey motif became
motivation for a meeting with the "supernatural," i.e., with a set of inexplicable
circumstances, often a consequence of the narrator's unfamiliarity with the surroundings.
Frequently it was simply the act of the journey itself which motivated the narrator to tell a
story to his fellow travelers.

The literary characters generally react to the above sviatki motifs in certain
representative ways. Because of the typically fearful nature of the motifs, the reactions
are also typically fearful. The characters generally respond to the motifs with 1) confusion 2) fear and/or 3) by dying.

1) **Confusion** on the part of the hero or heroine often results from the practice of mummer, a storm, or other natural circumstances. It often gives the work a humorous twist and once again allows for a “supernatural occurrence” with a realistic explanation. In some works confusion is related to travel and the hero or heroine’s feeling of not knowing where he/she is going.

2) **Fear** is perhaps the most common of all the sviatki sub-motifs. It may result from an encounter with an unclean spirit or other supernatural occurrence, and at the same time it may cause the death of the heroine (or on rare occasion the death of the hero). Although most typically the literary characters exhibit fear of supernatural powers, sometimes, as in the poetry of Evdokiia Rostopchina and Anna Akhmatova, the female personae express fear that their beloved will not be part of their future.

3) The act of **dying** might comprise the death of the hero or heroine, or the death of a secondary character. In early works the heroine often died of fright after an encounter with an unclean spirit or what seemed to be an unclean spirit. In later works, particularly works which followed the Dickens tradition, dying was more prevalent in Christmas stories when a poor person, frequently a child, was released from his/her miserable conditions through death. In still other works death is not related to the activities of sviatki or Christmas, but occurs for strange, unrelated reasons on one of the major holidays. Because of the time setting, however, the works still belong to the overall category of sviatki in literature.

2.2 Ethnographic Studies

Early ethnographic studies of the sviatki folk ritual provided a parameter that influenced much of the sviatki motifs in the literature of the nineteenth century. The
appearance of many of the studies coincided with the increased interest in the literary motif, both which were the evidence of the movement of romantic nationalism and the search for national identity (narodnost’). The studies provided a cultural context for the nineteenth century which helped writers discover the “Russianness” of their country and people. At the same time, certain authors who were attracted to the “oral literature” of the folk (e.g., Chulkov, Pushkin, Tolstoy) established their own collections of folk songs and conducted their own ethnographic studies.

At the end of the eighteenth century, very little ethnographic material was available in print. Chulkov had published several important works including a large collection of Russian folk songs which appeared in four volumes as the first Russian songbook (1770-1774) (Terras 150), and his Dictionary of Russian Superstitions (Slovar’ russkikh sueverii, 1782) which contained descriptions of some sviatki customs, but little else appeared until the first half of the next century. In 1827 the first work of V. B. Bronevskii, I. M. Snegirev, and M. N. Makarov began to appear. It was followed in the 1830s by the studies of I. P. Sakharov and at the end of the 1840s by the monographs of A. V. Tereshchenko.

Although the works provided in depth studies of sviatki rituals, texts of koliadki and podbliudnye pesni, and historical background on the ritual celebration, they were still selective in the choice of their material. Most sources focused on the texts of songs as well as descriptions of the various types of fortune telling, emphasizing that all activities of the celebration were, in fact, geared to the enjoyment of the youth, especially the young girls. The practice of mummery was covered in much less detail, and descriptions of games which involved mummery, e.g., mock funerals, were either omitted or mentioned with few particulars. Since later studies have shown such games to be highly erotic and what was probably considered by many as indecent, it is not surprising that few details were given. This was possibly due to the literary censorship which was highly enforced.
at the time and would have affected not only the ethnographic studies but also the content of the literary works themselves. Such discrepancies in investigations may also have been affected by the movement of romantic nationalism and the desire to present the most positive aspects of Russian culture.

2.3 The Eighteenth Century: Ironies, the Picaresque Tale, and the Sentimental Tale

Dushechkina speculates that as the Russian population became progressively more urban during the eighteenth century, a need was created to enable the people to maintain a sense of their rural traditions (13-25). Many traditions survived for a time in the new urban setting and were adapted to the new life style, but others were gradually forgotten. The survival of traditions was aided largely by what Dushechkina refers to as the “calendrical” newspapers and journals, i.e., newspapers and journals which oriented their printed material to the seasons and church and folk holidays of the calendar year, e.g., maslenitsa and sviatki. The periodicals were cyclical and were characterized by a repetition of and return to specific themes. The richest time of the year in terms of variety and volume of written material was the sviatki season because it encompassed three major holidays. Typical of this type of periodical of the eighteenth century is Mikhail Chulkov’s I to i se, the first edition of which appeared in January 1769. Chulkov offers the reader a source of ethnographic data both in ritual practices and traditional bylichki (Dushechkina 64-70). He describes numerous types of fortune telling customs and provides the text for several podbliudnye pesni. He also retells many of the bylichki, maintaining the sviatki folk setting but adding an interesting twist to a seemingly tragic ending for those young people who do not follow the rules of proper ritual behavior. Unlike the later stories in which the narrator tries to convince you of the truth of the events, however, Chulkov treats the stories ironically and the typical fear involved with divination brings about a
comical resolution. For example, during mirror-divination one young girl was confused when her beloved appeared to her dressed in women’s clothing. She wasn’t sure whether she had fallen in love with a man or perhaps a woman, but whoever the person, nine months later she was greeted with the cries of a newborn.

Concurrently with accounts of sviatki in the peasant culture, a literary tradition began which incorporated the sviatki rituals into a more urban setting, showing that the rituals did, in fact, survive for a time after people moved from the country. The earliest of these is the “Tale of Frol Skobeev,” a picaresque tale, written during the late seventeenth century or early eighteenth century but not published until 1853. Dushechkina remarks that this is the first time that the sviatki motif appears in Russian writing in a neutral context (58). In the old literary texts sviatki was either not mentioned at all or it was spoken of negatively. The Stoglav of 1551, for example, issues a warning to people that young girls are often seduced by young men during sviatki.\(^5\) Multiple versions of “Frol” existed, and in 1785 a variation of the story was published which was called “Novgorodskikh devushok sviatochnoi vecher” by Ivan Novikov. Dushechkina notes Novikov’s story because it was the first sviatki short story to appear in print as part of a book (60). This meant that the work was addressed to a reader with a different status, one who was better educated and maintained a library. Novikov’s work was followed in 1792 by Nikolai Karamzin’s “Natal’ia, boiarskaia doch’,” also patterned after the earlier “Tale of Frol Skobeev” but treated in a sentimental vein. Echoes of the same story appear in the nineteenth century in such stories as “Chudnyi gost’” by Olga Chiumina.

In both “Frol” and “Novgorodskikh devushok,” the hero engages in tricks (a typical motif of the folk tradition) to gain access to a girls’ posidelki. He then robs his beloved of her virginity, “kidnaps” her, and eventually marries her. The stories are comical and have no dire consequences for improper behavior. In fact, the outcome in both instances is positive: the couple receives parental blessing and is happily married.

\(^4\) convenience.

\(^5\) Additional citation needed.
Karamzin's story follows a similar plot (i.e., the hero connives to gain access to his beloved, he kidnaps her, and eventually the two marry), but the explicit eroticism is lacking, and Karamzin, in fact, makes no explicit mention of *sviatki*. We are told that the story takes place during the winter, but it may be before or after the ritual celebration. Because of the similarities in plot structure to the two earlier stories, however, the reader is led to believe that the action transpires during *sviatki*, and thus the story can rightly be considered part of the body of Russian literature which incorporates *sviatki* motifs.

Dushechkina identifies Nikolai Gogol's "Night Before Christmas" ("Noch' pered Rozhdestvom," 1832) as the first "quasi"-Christmas story (quasi because the time frame is Christmas Eve, but the action is very definitely part of the folk tradition of *koliadki* singing). I would, however, place the appearance of the first Christmas story much earlier, at the end of the eighteenth century when Chulkov's story "Bitter Fate" ("Gor'kaia uchast'," 1789) was published. Chulkov tells the story of a soldier who is returning home from the service on Christmas Day. When he arrives at the town, he goes directly to the church where he expects to find his family. He finds none of them there and continues on to the family's house. There he finds all the members of his family - but all are dead. There had been no foul play, but each had died that holiday morning due to different circumstances. Although Chulkov does not include any of the traditional Russian *sviatki* motifs, this story is a precursor of many of the stories that later displayed Western motifs. Thus at this early date in Russia's literary tradition, there is a connection made between travel, death, uncanny occurrences and Christmas. These same motifs will be echoed many times in later works such as Fedor Dostoevsky's "The Boy at Christ's Christmas Party" ("Mal'chik u Khrista na elke," 1876), Maxim Gorkii's "The Coachman" ("Izvozchik," 1895) and the more recent "Christmas Eve" ("Sochel'nik," 1992) by Aleksei Varlamov.
During the last three decades of the eighteenth century several comedies, comedy-operas and operas were staged which further popularized the sviatki motif (Dushechkina 71-75). One of the operas, Starinnye sviatki by S. N. Titov, with libretto by A. F. Malinovskii, was written in 1799 and ran successfully for approximately thirty years in Moscow and Petersburg. Both Pushkin and Zhukovskii saw it and reportedly highly praised the acting of the lead female, E. S. Sandunova (Dushechkina 73). Staged performances of sviatki dramas continued to be popular both for spectators and student acting groups throughout the nineteenth century.

2.4 First Half of the Nineteenth Century: Romanticism

2.4.1 Zhukovskii's Ballad “Svetlana”

What catapulted sviatki into its nineteenth-century literary popularity, however, was undoubtedly Zhukovskii’s famous ballad “Svetlana” which appeared in 1812. “Svetlana” evolved out of the ballad “Lenore” (1773) by German poet Gottfried Buerger. Although Zhukovskii’s faithful translation of the ballad, “Lenora,” did not appear until 1831, his initial, free adaptation of Buerger’s work, “Liudmila,” was published in 1808. “Liudmila,” which was also Zhukovskii’s first ballad, was a huge success. “Liudmila” is the story of a young girl whose lover is at war. He returns to take her with him to his home, but the home turns out to be the grave and the lover is a corpse. The ballad “Svetlana” reworks the same motifs of bridegroom and anxious heroine, but introduces the markedly Russian setting of sviatki fortune telling. Again the heroine’s lover is away. Svetlana’s friends engage in a series of fortune telling practices, and at their prompting, Svetlana tries divination with mirrors. She falls asleep and dreams that her lover comes for her and takes her to his hut. Like the lover of Liudmila, Svetlana’s lover seems to be
dead since at the end of the dream he appears in a coffin. Svetlana then awakes and shortly thereafter the real lover arrives safe and sound. The two end up happily married.

This version of the ballad appealed greatly to the Russian reader, partially because of its sviatki theme, and soon became part of the lives of all educated Russians. Shortly after its publication it began to appear in school readers. It was not only known by many people, but many people learned it by heart. In the unfinished long poem Captain Khrabrov (“Kapitan Khrabrov,” written 1828, published 1830) by Vasilii L’vovich Pushkin, uncle of Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin, the heroine Natasha recited the ballad from memory. In 1832 a musical version was composed to the words of “Svetlana,” and in 1846 an opera appeared which was based on it. Lines from the ballad surfaced in epigraphs of various literary works, including Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin and “The Blizzard.” In various memoirs of the nineteenth century, writers recorded that their families often recited the ballad at Christmas time. The tradition continued into the beginning of the twentieth century as we know from Aleksandr Blok who spoke of “reciting Zhukovskii on Christmas Eve,” meaning, no doubt, Zhukovskii’s “Svetlana”. His own poem “New Year’s Eve” (“Noch’ na novyi god,” 1901) refers to the heroine of the famous ballad. Thus, as Dushechkina points out, a ballad which had at its core a Russian folk tradition became part of that same tradition (91). Much that the urban dweller associated with the celebration of sviatki was garnered from familiarity with the ballad. “The subject [of sviatki] locked itself around the image [of Svetlana], the image emerged from the text, like a portrait from its frame, and began to live its own life” (Dushechkina 96).

Thus Svetlana, the maiden who, melancholy and sad because of the absence of her lover, turns to the mysteries of sviatki fortune telling for consolation, became an icon of “sviatki and the Russian maiden.” It was not until the twentieth century that, as Tatiana became more and more popular, she began to share the image with Svetlana. In my own,
admittedly unscientific, survey of general Russian readers, I have found that many people even currently confuse the two protagonists. They often attribute the actions of Svetlana to Tatiana and claim that lines from Zhukovskii’s ballad come from Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*.

Two principal motifs were associated with Zhukovskii’s lyrical heroine: 1) a sad and melancholy demeanor and 2) finding out about one’s beloved through the fortune telling of *sviatki*, in particular with the aid of mirrors. As with the *sviatki* motifs identified earlier, fear was the heroine’s dominant reaction. The motifs were further intensified by way of the explicit references to Svetlana which are made by Pushkin in *Eugene Onegin*. (This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.) A simple mention of Svetlana carries a significant amount of meaning. Not only are quotes from “Svetlana” common in epigraphs, but many poets refer to her in order to immediately evoke one of the above motifs. For example, both Evdokiia Rostopchina in her poem “A Light in the Front Room” ("Ogon’ v svetlitse") of 1840 and Blok in his much later poem “New Year’s Eve” make explicit reference to Svetlana, and through the simple mention of her name they have created an instantaneous image for the reader. L. Trefolev uses the name of Svetlana’s balladic sister, Liudmila, to conjure up fear in his poem “Mysterious Coachman: Epiphany Ballad” (“Tainstvennyi iamshchik: Kreshchenskaia ballada,” 1883). Because the ballad takes place during *sviatki*, however, the name Liudmila becomes almost synonymous with the name Svetlana. Anna Akhmatova makes multiple allusions to Svetlana in *Poem Without a Hero*. (This text will be discussed in Chapter 5.) The image of Svetlana is still alive in Russian literature as we can see from the recent collection of poems entitled *The Second Divination of Svetlana: A New Book of Poems* (Vtoroe gadanie Svetlany: novaia kniga stikhov, 1989) by Svetlana Kuznetsova.

Both poets and prose writers make indirect reference to Svetlana and Tatiana through the simple mention of fortune telling during *sviatki*, in particular fortune telling...
with mirrors. With it comes the fear which accompanies the fortune telling experience of both female protagonists. Afanasii Fet brings both Svetlana and Tatiana to the reader’s mind in his poem “Mirror to mirror” (“Zerkalo v zerkalo,” 1842). Anton Chekhov could be sure that readers would think of the two protagonists when he wrote his story “The Crooked Mirror” mentioned above. He offers, however, a comic and unexpected twist to his story, i.e., he continues Chulkov’s approach to ironizing the sviatki tradition.

2.4.2 Pushkin, Gogol, and Bestuzhev-Marlinskii

Dushechkina identifies three different areas in which the literature incorporating sviatki motifs developed during the first decades of the nineteenth century: 1) stories of the common people in which the folk tradition of sviatki represented a form of ideal life which was becoming a thing of the past; 2) the society tale of masquerades in which masks and costumes replaced the mummery from the folk tradition; and 3) the tale of the fantastic which was greatly influenced by the work of E. T. A. Hoffman. Numerous writers, including many lesser-known but also several of Russia’s illustrious authors, participated in this trend of including sviatki motifs in their works. Certainly the most famous such literary work is Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin. One might classify it in both the first and third categories above. The sviatki celebration is a part of the protagonist Tatiana’s idyllic youth. As she enters into adulthood, moves to the city, and marries, Tatiana’s connections to the Russian folk become a nostalgic memory rather than a daily reality. Additionally, her famous dream can be seen as a tale of the fantastic, the third category above. Other well-known works of the time period include “A Terrible Divination” (“Strashnoe gadanie,” 1830) by Aleksandr Bestuzhev-Marlinskii and the aforementioned “Night Before Christmas” by Gogol. Both are tales of the fantastic with very strong motifs of the sviatki folk tradition. The hero of Bestuzhev-Marlinskii’s story
embarks upon an unexpected, supernatural journey as he walks to a posidelki where he expects to see his beloved. Gogol’s story is one of the few narratives which is centered around the sviatki tradition of koliadki singing. The young hero, Vakula, is also whisked off on a fantastic adventure while going from house to house, trying to find his way home during a snow storm.

2.5 Mid-Nineteenth Century

2.5.1 Dickens, Andersen, and the Christmas Tree

In 1843 Charles Dickens’ first Christmas book, A Christmas Carol, was published in England, and in 1844 the first Russian translation appeared in the periodical Repertuar i Panteon (Dushechkina 142-146). Many more of his works were published in the ensuing years. The Christmas stories became extremely popular with the Russian reader, and because of them the nature of the sviatki short story, in particular, underwent a significant change. Dickens’ stories popularized what was in Russia a relatively unknown literary time-setting of Christmas, i.e., December 25. They also introduced into the story plotlines the aspect of social problems, in particular that of poverty. This new motif was accompanied by its solution or at least temporary cure - Christian goodness expressed at Christmas time. The stories of Hans Christian Andersen were also extremely popular in Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. Although he did not write as extensively about the thematic issues of Christmas, his works, just like those of Dickens, dealt with the societal problems of his day. His fairy tales, which were the most popular genre among his writings, sometimes satirized human behavior, in particular the arrogance of the aristocracy, at other times contrasted at once faith in the goodness of life and despair at its iniquities (Rossel xxvii-xxviii). Thus, Andersen’s use of the genre of
the fairy tale and his choice of thematic issues reinforced the new direction of the sviatki short story.

The Christmas tree also made its entrance into the set of sviatki motifs during the mid-nineteenth century (Dushechkina 150-159). Although the Christmas tree had been introduced into Russian life at the time of Peter the Great, it was initially only a part of the life of high society and remained so until approximately the 1840s by which time it had become a part of the lives of most city dwellers. It, too, soon became a popular motif for Russian authors.

Dostoevsky’s story “The Christmas Tree and Marriage” (“Elka i svad’ba,” 1848) cleverly combines the new motif of the Christmas tree, the motif of societal problems as introduced by Dickens, and the motifs of marriage and fortune telling from the folk tradition. In his story, the narrator is invited to a children’s ball. There he sees a man, Iulian Mastakovich, approach an 11-year old girl, kiss her on the head, and reprimand the young boy who is playing with her because he is from a lower class than the young girl. The girl is from a very rich family and her father has already promised 300,000 rubles for her dowry. In a sense, the narrator has become the fortune teller and Dostoevsky chooses this highly symbolic time of Christmas to reveal to him the young girl united with her ‘intended’ in life. Five years later the narrator happens to pass a church where a wedding is taking place. The same Iulian Mastakovich from the children’s ball and the now beautiful, 16-year old girl who has obviously been crying are being united in holy matrimony.

2.6 Second Half of the Nineteenth Century: Realism

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the sviatki short story (i.e., the forerunner to the generic “sviatki short story”) and other literary genres with sviatki motifs had evolved in much the same manner. Motifs of the folk tradition had dominated the
literature which was often fantastic and showed a sense of nostalgia for traditions of the country life. Under the influence of Dickens' Christmas stories and the fairy tales of Andersen, Western motifs became very popular among writers of the sviatki short story, and they soon merged with the already-established sviatki motifs, often to the exclusion of the traditional motifs from the folk ritual. This continued evolution is the predominant focus of Dushechkina's study.

In other literary genres, in particular the novel, the traditional folk motifs were embedded into the plotlines where they took on symbolic significance unique to each literary work. The Western motifs did not appear in the novel until the twentieth century with the publishing of Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago in 1955. Select works from this group will be the focus of my study in which I will analyze the way in which certain writers, i.e., Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Akhmatova, have inscribed motifs from the folk ritual in their corresponding works and the symbolic significance for that particular work. In the remaining portion of this chapter I will summarize both of the above tendencies, i.e., the continued evolution of the sviatki short story and the embedding of the ritual motifs in the plot of longer literary works.

2.7 The Sviatochnyi Rasskaz (Sviatki Short Story)

According to Dushechkina, by the 1870s the sviatki short story had evolved into a genre of its own (177). Whereas motifs of fortune telling and mummery appeared less and less frequently, the motif of the Christmas miracle became more and more common. Many stories maintained traditional motifs such as supernatural occurrences and matrimony, but they occurred with no mention of the celebration of sviatki folk rituals. The mix of Western and Russian motifs gradually congealed within the new genre. The prevalence of periodicals during the late nineteen hundreds encouraged the writing of short stories which in turn helped popularize the sviatki short story. The stories were
published in the winter issues of the newspapers and weekly journals and were extremely numerous. Many of the stories made use of a special framework which had been established for the plot and contained one or more of the *sviatki* motifs listed above. At the beginning of the story, participants gather during one of the *sviatki* evenings. The gathering may be family members at a home, passengers in a train, friends at a party, etc. During the evening's discussion, one of the participants is reminded of something that happened to him or to a close acquaintance of his which he then relates to the group. The related incident took place during the *sviatki* season of an earlier year, and the plot of the story is typical of the *sviatki* season, i.e., it contains a combination of the *sviatki* motifs. Many of the stories maintained a sense of the supernatural but usually had a realistic explanation.

### 2.7.1 Dostoevsky and Tolstoy

Both Fedor Dostoevsky and Lev Tolstoy expressed interest in the trend of incorporating *sviatki* motifs in literature. As mentioned above, Dostoevsky had written “The Christmas Tree and Marriage” in 1848, early in his writing career. In the same year he wrote the tale (*povest*) “Weak Heart” (“Slaboe Serdce”) which takes place during *sviatki* and contains the motifs of matrimony and confusion due to insanity. Although neither of the above stories displays the prescriptive nature of the later *sviatki* short story, they are representative of the evolving tendency to write about marriage in conjunction with *sviatki* but without the motif of fortune telling. Thus, because of the time setting and selection of motifs, they are part of the evolutionary process of the development of the *sviatki* short story. In 1876, very late in his career, Dostoevsky wrote “Boy at Christ’s Christmas Party” which treats the Dickens’ motifs of Christmas and social problems.
Tolstoy also included the *sviatki* motif in his unfinished story "*Sviatki evening*" ("*Sviatochnaia noch'," sometimes called "*Kak gibnet liubov'"") which he began in the Caucasus in 1852. In a realistic, Tolstoyan fashion, the unclean spirit/supernatural motif becomes an evening's erotic adventure, and the matrimonial motif is expressed as a young man's first experience of love. His sense of elation at the true love which he feels toward a beautiful young woman is juxtaposed to the sense of shame that he feels after losing his innocence to a prostitute while in a drunken stupor.

2.7.2 A Return to Irony: Leskov and Chekhov

Although periodicals were inundated with *sviatki* stories during the last decades of the nineteenth century, most were not considered great contributions to Russian literature. Of the many writers who tried their hand at composing the stories, none became so well-known within the genre as Nikolai Leskov and Anton Chekhov. Dushechkina attributes their success to the fact that the two writers were able to develop a new twist to the already fully-evolved genre by giving the stories a humorous ending. In doing so they brought the genre full circle by returning to a style similar to the ironies of Chulkov. Leskov wrote in the genre for almost twenty years, beginning with “Sealed Angel” ("*Zapechatlennyi angel*") which was published in 1873 (Dushechkina 181-194). A good example of his paradoxical and humorous ending is the short story “A Small Mistake: Secret of a Moscow Family” (“*Malen'kaia oshibka: sekret odnoi moskovskoi familii*”) which was published in a collection of twelve *sviatki* stories in 1886 and preserves the motifs of marriage, the supernatural, and echoes the motif of fortune telling and the plot lines of the *bylichki*. At the beginning of the story, friends are gathered during *sviatki*. One man tells the story of his aunt and uncle’s family in which there were three daughters: Kapitolina, Katerina and Olga. Only Kapitolina was married, but she and her husband
were still childless after three years. The young men would not court the other two daughters because they saw that the first one did not bear children. The mother of the family decided to go to a "miracle-worker" who lived in an insane asylum and ask that he pray that the daughter become pregnant. She wrote the request on a slip of paper since whatever was written down for the "miracle-worker" would come true. Shortly thereafter, one of the unmarried daughters, Katerina, started showing signs of morning sickness. The mother returned to the "miracle-worker" and found out that she had written the wrong name on the slip of paper. All ended well, however, when Kapitolina's husband found a man to marry Katerina. Then young men started to court the youngest daughter, Olga, as well.

Leskov was also, according to Dushechkina, the first to become a theoretician of the sviatki short story (181). He developed what he considered five criteria for the writing of a sviatki short story, although he, himself, did not always follow his own criteria. 1) The story should take place during the evenings of sviatki, sometime between Christmas and Kreshchenie. 2) It should be fantastic. 3) It should have a moral, if even just the disproof of a prejudice. 4) It should end happily. 5) It should make claims to be a true happening. Although many of the stories, including those of Leskov's, are fantastic in nature, they do not necessarily transgress the laws of nature. They are, instead, strange and amazing. "Leskov," states Dushechkina, "is not so interested in the transcendental in and of itself, instead [he is interested in] the nature of the origin and manifestation of the feeling of the transcendental in each individual person" (184). Although Leskov specifies a happy ending, many sviatki stories do not end happily. In fact, one might say that more end unhappily than otherwise. Stories patterned after the early bylichki frequently end with the death of a young girl telling fortunes. Later Christmas stories end with the death of a child. The tendency to write unhappy endings continued throughout the history of the sviatki short story.
During the early years of his writing career, Chekhov wrote different types of calendrical stories, many of which were *sviatki* stories. Most of the earliest stories are humorous sketches - parodies of motifs from the *sviatki* tradition. The story cited above, "The Crooked Mirror," is one of his earliest *sviatki* stories and a good example of his parody writing. Another example of this type is his story "Night in the Cemetery: *Sviatki* Short Story" ("Noch' na kladbishche: Sviatochnyi rasskaz," 1886) in which we see the motifs of the unclean spirit or appearance of a dead person, the supernatural, drunkenness, and story telling. The narrator tells the story of what happened to him one evening after a New Year's Eve party. He was returning home drunk from the evening's activities when he stumbled onto a headstone and cross and realized that he was in a cemetery. He was then frightened by the sound of light steps and moaning. He awoke the next morning in a strange room and discovered that he had been found at a stone mason's with a whining dog beside him.

In some of his later *sviatki* stories, Chekhov discarded the humorous tone and adopted a tragic one. These stories followed in the Western tradition but created what Dushechkina refers to as an "anti-*sviatki*" or "anti-Christmas" story, showing the hopelessness of the condition of poor people which is revealed during the Christmas season. "Vanka" ("Van'ka," 1886) illustrates this when a young, unhappy, orphaned apprentice boy sneaks a letter to his grandfather on Christmas Eve. He asks him to please rescue him from his miserable conditions. On the envelope he writes: "To the village, to grandfather Konstantin Makarych," and afterwards dreams that his grandfather receives and reads the letter. Chekhov shows that there is no miracle, no supernatural force that can change the fate of man.
2.7.3 Sviatki Anthologies

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century and into the first two decades of the twentieth century, many collections of sviatki stories appeared which were intended for purchase as Christmas presents (Dushechkina 209-214). Frequently the title contained the word "evening" (vecher) since the "evening" was considered the most appropriate time for telling such stories. As early as 1879 G. P. Danilevskii published his collection Sviatki Evenings (Sviatochnye vechera). This was followed by numerous collections of lesser-known authors as well as the collections of Leskov, Sviatki Stories (Sviatochnye Rasskazy, 1886), and Chekhov, Sviatki Stories (Sviatochnye Rasskazy, 1895). Many of the writers merged Russian and Western motifs. Some stories, however, such as "Christ's Child" ("Khristova detka," 1888) by Nikolai Vagner, continued to follow in the tradition of Dickens. Vagner depicts the Christmas miracle in a setting where an infant is found and saved on Christmas day. Other authors continued to incorporate the traditional Russian folk motifs, as, for example, F. V. Dombrovskii who wrote "Divination in the Churchyard" ("Gadanie na pogoste," 1889) and Olga Chiumina who wrote "Wondrous Guest" ("Chudnyi gost'," 1894). In both stories traditional divination practices result in a supernatural occurrence. In addition to collections of sviatki stories, books appeared which contained factual information about the ritual. In 1903 a volume was published entitled Sviatki Anthology: A Literary-Musical-Ethnographic Collection for Family and School (Sviatochnaia khrestomatiia: Literaturno-muzikal'no-etnograficheskii sbornik dlia sem'i i shkoly) compiled by E. Shvidchenko (B. Bystrov) which brought together not only sviatki stories by various authors but also ethnographic information about the folk celebration. The volume describes various sviatki rituals such as koliadki singing and different types of fortune telling and contains short sviatki plays written by Shvidchenko which were to be enacted during sviatki. It
also gives some historical background for the folk celebration and brief descriptions of the celebration as it is observed in other Slavic countries. In the introduction to the book, Shvidchenko explained that his goal was to provide a scientific study of sviatki from different points of view (e.g., historical, musical) and to give families and schools material with which they could plan their own sviatki holiday celebrations.

2.7.4 From Political Turmoil to Communism

The tradition of writing sviatki stories reached its height at the end of the nineteenth century and continued well into the twentieth. Two surges of writing occurred during the first two decades due to four primary reasons as identified by Dushechkina (248-49): the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian revolution of 1905-07, World War I and the Octobrist Revolution. During the Russo-Japanese War and the first Russian revolution, periodical publications increased dramatically. Many new political parties arose and all had the need of publishing their ideas and gaining support while at the same time avoiding censor. The sviatki short story with purely Western motifs, i.e., in the tradition of Dickens, was seen at this time as a societal tradition which promoted love and charity, and the political parties published them in their periodicals, using them as propaganda. When the world war broke out, there was once again a surge of sviatki stories. Reminiscent of Chulkov’s story “Bitter Fate,” the soldier began to play an important role in the plot of such stories which frequently told of his extraordinary struggle to return home on Christmas day. Later the sviatki motifs became a means of propaganda to fight the Bolsheviks.

Although the tradition in Russia of writing sviatki stories all but died at this time, it continued for some years in the writing of émigrés, including Kuprin, Bunin and Nabokov (Dushechkina 250). According to Dushechkina, émigrés were more than likely
trying to reinstate connections with their homeland by preserving folk and literary traditions. The tendency among émigrés, however, to continue the writing of *sviatki* stories also died with the political developments of the twentieth century.

Until about 1980 very little literature appeared which contained the word "*sviatki*" or "Christmas" in the title (Dushechkina 250-52). Although some stories may have been set during Christmas, the Christmas element, itself, disappeared except for the presence of the Christmas tree. The setting might have been chosen as a means of propaganda. For example, in “Christmas Party in Sokolniki” ("Elka v Sokol'nikakh," 1930) by B. D. Bonch-Bruevich, Lenin, in the year 1919, arrives at a Christmas party at a school in the country. His generosity and kindness to the school children follow in the tradition of Dickens' stories and are reminiscent of the traditional Father Frost.

2.8 Literary Works With Embedded Motifs

Concurrently with the development of the *sviatki* short story, the tradition of embedding traditional *sviatki* motifs into the plots of longer literary works continued, as, for example, in the *sviatki* episode of *Eugene Onegin*. Such works of the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries were, perhaps, not of great multitude, but they were certainly of great magnitude. Some of Russia’s best-known writers - Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak - inscribed motifs of fortune telling, mummery, marriage, and *sviatki* plays into their masterpieces. The motifs are not congealed as within the *sviatki* short story, nor are they simply a “colorful episode” as literary scholars often tend to see them. Instead, within each work the ritual motifs perform several key literary functions which ultimately relate to the transformational and transitional nature of the *sviatki* ritual itself. Because several of these texts will be analyzed in the subsequent chapters, I will not discuss any of them in
detail at this point. I will, however, point out the major works which fall into this category so that the reader has a complete picture of the Russian literary tradition.

2.8.1 The Novel

Both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy had written short stories in the tradition of the sviatki short story and chose traditional motifs from the same ritual to embed into the plots of major novels of the 1860s. From 1860-62 Dostoevsky worked on the novel Notes From the House of the Dead (Zapiski iz mertvogo doma) which he based on his prison experience in Siberia. In it he develops rather thoroughly the folk tradition of staging dramas during sviatki, in this case dramas staged by the prisoners. The sviatki plays constitute a transformational experience for the prisoners through which Dostoevsky accentuates the unacknowledged talent and the ultimate integrity of the Russian folk. These plays will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 in a comparative analysis with Akhmatova's Poem Without a Hero.

Much better known is the sviatki episode of Tolstoy's War and Peace (1863-69) which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. In this great work Tolstoy combines the motifs of a snow storm, the supernatural (experienced as an "enchanted" evening), fortune telling, mummetry, matrimony, story-telling, and travel. Ultimately the episode marks a transition into adulthood for the female characters Natasha Rostova and her cousin Sonia.

During the ensuing decades when the sviatki short story was at its height of popularity and during the first decades of Communist Russia, few works appeared which embedded sviatki motifs into their plots. The first novel of import to reintroduce the motif was Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago which he worked on for many years but did not finish until 1955. It was first published in 1957 in Italy but was not published in Russia.
until 1988. Pasternak, like many of his predecessors, chooses the highly symbolic Christmas season to signal a time of transition in the lives of the novel’s three main young people, i.e., Iurii Zhivago, Tonia Gromeko, and Lara Gishar. At the Sventitskii’s Christmas party, the fates of these three characters and that of Viktor Komarovskii intersect - the first time that all four are brought together in the novel - foreshadowing their future paths which will repeatedly overlap. The motifs which are part of this scene echo the Russian and Western motifs of Dostoevsky’s story “Marriage and the Christmas Tree,” i.e., the Christmas tree, societal problems as introduced by Dickens, and the folk motifs of marriage and fortune telling. Just as in the earlier short story, while gathered around the Christmas tree, the depraved and self-indulgent nature of an older and powerful man is exposed. Like Mastakovich in Dostoevsky’s story, Komarovskii’s greed causes him to take advantage of the beautiful Lara who is still a minor. Whereas Mastakovich’s greed is both financial and sexual, Komarovskii’s greed is only sexual. At the time of the party he has already seduced Lara and he will continue to take advantage of her, although without reaping the financial benefits that Mastakovich received. In this case, Komarovskii, himself, provides the money. The Christmas party marks Lara’s realization of the meaning and consequences of Komarovskii’s actions, i.e., she knows that he has used her, will continue to use her, and she will continue to comply. At the same Christmas party Zhivago and Tonia joyously announce their forthcoming marriage. Thus, for them the symbolic season signals the transition from adolescence into adulthood. Furthermore, similar to an appearance of one’s ‘intended’ during a divination ritual, Zhivago comes face to face with his future ‘intended.’ Although he has seen Lara once before, her appearance during the Christmas party and her attempted shooting of Komarovskii symbolically foreshadow the pain and destruction that she will bring to the marriage of Zhivago and Tonia.
2.8.2 Women Writers and Verse: Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva

Beginning during the later years of the nineteenth century and continuing much more dramatically during the first decades of the twentieth century, more and more women appeared on the literary stage. Many of these turned to sviatki motifs and included them in their writing. Literature at the beginning of the century strove to express more distinctly the voice of the female, and folk rituals in which women played the major role were well suited for the task. Numerous women (e.g., Vera Zhelikhovskaia, Olga Chiumina, Nadezhda Lukhmanova) wrote in the genre of the sviatki short story but did not achieve great renown. Two of the most famous Russian women writers of all time, however, turned to the sviatki rituals to express their voice in verse - namely, Marina Tsvetaeva and Anna Akhmatova. Early in her career Akhmatova wrote lyrical poems such as "High in the Sky" ("Vysoko v nebe," 1911) and "After the Wind and Frost" ("Posle vetra i moroza," 1914) which returned to the motifs of fortune telling and matrimony. One might even say that her poems made use of "anti-motifs" because the lover of the lyrical persona always fails to appear. Thus, their is no matrimony but only thwarted expectations. From 1940-1962 Akhmatova worked on Poem Without a Hero (Poema bez geroia) which incorporated the motifs of the sviatki folk tradition such as fortune telling and mummery. (This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.) In her tale "The Swain: A Fairy Tale" ("Molodets: skazka," 1924), Tsvetaeva, although she never explicitly mentions sviatki, incorporates the motifs of fortune telling and matrimony, which, in and of themselves, form associations with the folk celebration for the reader.

2.9 The Current Scene

Far from dying out, the tradition of writing literature which incorporates sviatki motifs is once again on the rise. After many years of Communist rule, the Russians are
searching again for *narodnost'*, a national identity. Contemporary writers show a renewed interest in the earlier writings of the *sviatki* tradition and are returning to a wide variety of the *sviatki* motifs. Just as collections of *sviatki* stories were published at the end of the nineteenth century, numerous collections have been published during the last decade in which the *sviatki* stories and poems of the nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries have been reprinted. The interests of the contemporary writer manifest themselves in both verse and prose, including the novel and the short story. In 1989 Svetlana Kuznetsova published a volume of her poems entitled *Vtoroe gadanie Svetlany: novaia kniga stikhov*, helping revive the name of the nearly two-hundred-year-old protagonist. Like many women and female protagonists before her, she, too, lights the divinatory candles and sets up the mirrors. Kuznetsova, however, "jokes" with the "dark powers" for she knows that "it is unreasonable to expect good from the unclean." The "second divination of Svetlana" is the "divination" of a "second Svetlana," one who is no longer fooled by romanticized fortune telling. In 1992 Aleksei Varlamov's short story "Sochel'nik" appeared in the Russian journal *Novyi mir*. The story is a reworking of some of the same motifs found in Dostoevsky's "Boy at Christ's Christmas Party" where a poor young boy dies on Christmas Eve. In 1993 E. Abrosim published a collection of *sviatki* stories which continue the tradition of merging Russian and Western motifs. Elena Arsen'eva's "dime-store" romance novel *Strashnoe gadanie* appeared in 1998. She returns to the earliest *bylichki* and places them in a contemporary romance-sex plot, similar to the ironic episodes related by Chulkov. At the beginning of the novel, the young heroine Marina is telling fortunes with candles and a mirror. She sees a figure in the mirror and wonders whether or not it has a tail, i.e., whether it is the devil or a man. Although she doesn't find out about the tail, she enters into "sin" with the "apparition" and later marries him. Only time will tell whether this trend in contemporary writing will
continue, and, if it does, what modifications or changes will be introduced in order to keep the sviatki motif alive into the twenty-first century.

Now I will turn to the analysis of the sviatki motif in three texts where its role is crucial. In each of these texts the motif is embedded in the plot and its symbolic significance affects an interpretation of other events.

Notes

1 Taken from Dushechkina’s list (202). She also includes the motif of “drunkenness,” but since this rarely, if ever, applies to genres outside the sviatki story, I have not included it in my list. Strange dreams or sightings by the hero can be explained by the fact that he was in a drunken stupor. Or the drunkenness of one of the secondary characters might explain strange noises or odd behavior observed by the hero or heroine.

2 Most of the motifs are, in fact, common to folk tradition in general. The motifs of fortune telling, mummerly, and marriage, however, are more peculiar to the Slavic Yuletide tradition.

3 Because of the frequency of the name “Tatiana” in my study, I have opted to omit the apostrophe in the Russian transliteration “Tat’iana” in preference of a spelling which more closely approaches the American spelling of the name. For the same reason I have also chosen to do this with the name “Ol’ga.” When quoting from a Russian source, however, I have retained the apostrophe.

4 The representation of a story-telling event is, in and of itself, a folk situation.

5 The Stoglav of 1551 is “a code of regulations and opinions, formulated by the Church Council” (Terras 447)

6 Many of the facts of this paragraph are as noted by Dushechkina, p. 84-98.


8 The framework is similar to what in English is termed the “memorate.”

9 As noted by Dushechkina, 251.

10 The name “Sventitskii” may have been chosen intentionally by Pasternak to evoke in the reader’s mind the word “sviatki.” Both have the same stem which means “holy.”
CHAPTER 3

SVIATKI IN PUSHKIN'S EUGENE ONEGIN

At the core of nearly the entire first half of Chapter Five of Evgenii Onegin is the observation of the sviatki ritual. The chapter contains a total of forty-five stanzas, the first twenty-four of which are about sviatki. Even if one disregards the first six which deal with winter in general and Tatiana's belief in the supernatural, there are still eighteen stanzas which are devoted to the celebration of sviatki in the Larin household.

Although many attempts have been made to analyze portions of this text, in particular Tatiana's dream, few critics have looked at the dream in connection with the entire ritual of sviatki. W.F. Ryan and Faith Wigzell, in their article "Gullible Girls and Dreadful Dreams. Zhukovskii, Pushkin and Popular Divination," describe each of the individual observances in the novel in connection with various documented folk performances of sviatki. They do not, however, go beyond the identification of the explicit references to the folk ritual, i.e., they offer no interpretation of its function(s). Elena Hellberg in her article "Kak v zerkale: gadanie i son Tat'iany" focuses exclusively on the fortune telling. She gives an even more atomized analysis of the ritual activities than Ryan and Wigzell, but the question of how this particular component relates to the rest of the novel and to the folk ritual in it is entirely neglected. It is my conviction that, in view of the amount of attention which Pushkin gives the sviatki ritual in Chapter Five, the relations between the novel and the ritual ought to be examined in a more holistic manner.
3.1 Pushkin and Folklore

Pushkin long nurtured a strong interest in Russian folklore which is evident in the many fairy tales that he wrote as well as the folkloric episodes of his poetry and prose, e.g., "The Water-Nymph," "The Tale of the Fisherman and the Golden Fish" ("Rusalka," "Skazka o rybake i rybke"). Various sources, including the existent Russian literary tradition, Pushkin's own personal experience of folklore, and his study of it, influenced his perception of the sviatki folk ritual and the way he incorporated it into his masterpiece. Although his own personal experience implanted in him the love and original knowledge of the Russian sviatki customs, literary tradition was probably the impetus for including them in Eugene Onegin.

The most evident source of inspiration for Pushkin is the literary tradition of sviatki which the author discloses to us through the explicit textual references to Zhukovskii's "Svetlana." Pushkin, following Zhukovskii's lead, was among the first and most prominent of the Russian writers to join the movement of romantic nationalism which spread to Russia from Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The search for a national identity (narodnost'), in fact, dominated the Russian literary scene as a topic of discussion as well as a dominant strand in thematics. By the 1820's the literary tradition of narodnost' was already well underway. Within that tradition, the folk celebration of sviatki was a popular motif for journals of the 18th century and was catapulted into popularity by Zhukovskii's ballad. Pushkin could in his own work rely on the reputation of a poem well known to virtually all of his Russian readers. In addition to the explicit references in Eugene Onegin to Zhukovskii's heroine, Pushkin without question closely replicates the ballad's sequence of sviatki events in his novel in verse. (This will be discussed in greater detail below.) The similarities are so striking that it seems as if Tatiana, as she begins her own fortune telling in Chapter Five, comes under
the influence of her literary predecessor and creates for herself a similar series of fortune-telling attempts, including Svetlana’s frightful dream. She cannot control her ultimate fate, however, which will be less happy than Svetlana’s.

Following the pattern of many western European countries, the movement of romantic nationalism permeated not only the literary scene of which Pushkin was the leading figure but was also felt in the increased interest in ethnographic studies and collections of Russian folk rituals that emerged at that time. Beginning in the later half of the eighteenth century and continuing with increased vigor during the first half of the nineteenth century, folklorists and ethnographers actively collected and recorded the songs and traditions of the Russian folk. Although the extensive ethnographic studies of Sakharov, Snegirev (1838) and Tereshchenko (1848) had not yet appeared in print, Pushkin was most certainly acquainted with the folkloric work of Mikhail Chulkov. Chulkov had amassed a large collection of Russian folk songs and published them in four volumes of the first Russian songbook in 1770-1774 (Terras 150). Pushkin kept a copy of this collection in his own personal library (Grechina 35). In 1782 Chulkov published his *Slovar' russkikh sueverii* which contained descriptions of some of the sviatki customs. Pushkin was more than likely familiar with this work as well. Although Pushkin could not have read Snegirev’s studies yet, he was personally acquainted with the folklorist. In September of 1826 Pushkin gave Snegirev a copy of Chapter Two of *Eugene Onegin* to read. According to the earliest rough draft, Chapter Five, the sviatki chapter, was begun at approximately the same time, in January of 1826, and was probably finished by the middle of the same year (Chizhevsky 256). Thus, it is likely that Pushkin and Snegirev actually spoke of the sviatki ritual.

Much of Pushkin’s knowledge of Russian folklore and also his emotional attachment to it was certainly garnered from his niania, Arina Rodionovna. His family does not seem to have been oriented toward the folk practices of their serfs, but his serf
caregiver was a storehouse of Russian folk traditions and oral lore. Both as a child and as an adult during his exile at Mikhailovskoe (when he wrote Chapters Four and Five of *Eugene Onegin*), Pushkin spent a considerable amount of time with Arina Rodionovna, listening to her Russian folk tales and singing of Russian folk songs (Troyat 20, 242). As is well-known, she has been immortalized in various Pushkin poems, and he himself declared that she was "the original of Tat’iana’s nanny" (Gordin 253). It may also partially be her influence which allowed this poet of the enlightenment to indulge in superstitious practices. In a rough draft of *Eugene Onegin*, Pushkin claimed to "love superstitious women" (Chizhevsky 257), an affectionate but ironic love inspired perhaps also by the nanny.

This interest instilled in early childhood, as well as the all-pervading need for a national identity which was felt "in the air" and at public debates, led Pushkin to organize his own collection of Russian folk songs and tales. Although little is written about Pushkin’s personal relationship to folk rituals, during his exile at Mikhailovskoe Pushkin must have witnessed many. As stated in Chapter 1, *sviatki* was very definitely a part of the folk observances of the Pskov region where Mikhailovskoe is located. We do know that Pushkin listened to and wrote down the songs, sayings and tales of the local serfs (Gordin 255). He was often seen wandering through the market place, in search of various forms of oral lore that issued from the mouths of beggars and peasants (Gordin 284).

3.2 Tatiana and Folklore

Pushkin prepares the reader for the coming of *sviatki* and its importance to the novel’s heroine by portraying Tatiana as a young girl who, although receiving a westernized gentry education, is also strongly influenced by the Russian folk tradition,
even though she does not know the Russian language properly. Similar to Pushkin himself, Tatiana's close relationship with her nanny, a peasant woman, helps develop her ties to the folk and her appreciation of their customs. In Chapter Three, for example, the nanny discloses to the young girl the peasant attitude toward love and marriage. When Tatiana first senses her attraction toward Onegin, she does not go to her parents or her sister but turns instead to her nanny for advice. From the nanny Tatiana learns that love is not an integral part of marriage - information which prepares Tatiana to repeat the loveless marriage of her mother. In Chapter Five the nanny gives advice concerning fortune telling in the bathhouse. Custom dictates that an older woman advise the young girls in divination practices, and nanny fulfills this role.

In contrast to the author-creator, however, Tatiana's family, although the same class as Pushkin's, contributes to and supports the young girl's fancy for folk beliefs. The Larins are a family steeped in folk tradition, and, almost as a prelude to the sviatki episode, in Chapter Two the narrator tells of their observance of the folk celebration of maslenitsa. It is no surprise, then, when in Chapter Five sviatki is looked forward to with such great anticipation by all: "Yuletide is here. Now that is joy!" ("Nastali sviatki. To-to radost,'" 5.7). Once again the whole family and all members of the household, both young and old, join to celebrate in traditional style.

At the beginning of Chapter Five Pushkin picks up this theme of Tatiana and folklore and develops it still further. He describes Tatiana's many superstitious beliefs and her intense love of winter - two characteristics which join forces to generate the passion and earnestness with which she enters the Yuletide fortune-telling season. Tatiana is the epitome of the 'Russian soul,' an instance of romantic nationalism made concrete. She is in love with the Russian winter and all that comes with it, particularly with the quintessential winter folk ritual of sviatki. The beliefs of the folk pervade her very being. She interprets omens as indicators for her life and her behavior.

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objects” foretell her “something” ("Tainstvenno ei vse predmety / Provozglashali chto-
 nibud’,” 5.5). A falling star causes her to whisper “her heart’s desire to it” ("Poka zvezda
eshche katilas’, / Zhelanie serdtsa ei shepnut’,” 5.6). A black monk or a running hare fill
her with “grievous forebodings” ("Predchuvstvi gorestnykh polna,” 5.6). One can
consequently expect no less from the most powerful and eagerly awaited fortune-telling
season of the year, the fortune telling of sviatki. Indeed, as stated above, sviatki in the
Larin household is looked forward to with great anticipation. And Tatiana Larina - a
young girl, in love with somebody who claims he does not love her, and steeped in the
traditions and superstitions of the Russian folk - eagerly engages in the seasonal rituals,
anxious to catch a glimpse of her future, hoping that some change might be in store for
her there. Tatiana does not try to alter the course of her future, but by knowing what fate
holds in store for her, she can prepare herself to meet it.

3.3 Tatiana’s Sviatki Experience

Unlike Tolstoy who, as we shall see in Chapter 4, depicts sviatki during the first
half of the ritual, i.e., during the “holy evenings,” Pushkin's prefers to describe the
second half of sviatki, i.e., the “frightful evenings,” as it takes place in the Larin
household. Since the sviatki celebration in the Larin household does not begin until after
the first snowfall which is the night of January second, it is clear that all of Tatiana’s
attempts at divination take place during the second half of sviatki. Considering the
terrifying nature of Tatiana’s dream, it is perhaps not without reason to think that Pushkin
intentionally selected these dates to accentuate her fortune-telling experience. The
presence of two daughters of marriageable age, Tatiana and Olga, naturally leads to the
one main objective of predicting their future: to establish who their future husband will
be. Hence, the only sviatki activity in which Tatiana takes part in her waking state is
divination. Imbedded within her final attempt at fortune telling, i.e., the dream
divination, however, are the horrible forms of mummers boding frightful tidings for her
future.

Although not part of the ritualistic fortune telling, Pushkin places emphasis on the
winter weather, and it seems that the very absence of snow contributes to the late start of
the seasonal celebrations. Nature has been waiting for the arrival of winter, and “real
winter” begins only after the first snowfall. This event itself appears to be a prerequisite
for merrymaking and the acknowledgment of sviatki. In turn, Tatiana’s own love for
winter and the evenings of sviatki connects her with Russia and Russianness:

Tatiana (being Russian
at heart, herself not knowing why)
loved, in all its cold beauty,
a Russian winter.3

Thus, the snow initiates winter and with it the sviatki celebration. Tatiana’s feelings
toward winter, itself, make her particularly susceptible to the ritualistic events.

3.3.1 Fortune Telling

Although we know that the sviatki performance in Eugene Onegin involves the
whole of the Larin household, the fate of the two young girls is most important. The
participation of Olga is only alluded to, however, whereas the narrator renders a detailed
description of the heroine’s involvement. Tatiana’s eagerness to discover her future is
reflected in the fact that she takes part in six types of fortune telling during the days
preceding Kreshchenie (the pouring of wax, the singing of podbliudnye pesni, the
reflecting of the moon in a mirror, asking a passer-by his name, fortune telling in the bathhouse and the conjuring up of a dream).

The first attempt at fortune telling is the wax pouring. This initial endeavor is the only one which offers a positive prospect, however insignificant, for Tatiana. At the same time, the interpretation of the divination results is also extremely ambivalent because it is as easy to imagine something positive as something negative in the shapes of the wax and the promise of “something chudnoe,” i.e., “something wondrous/magical/monstrous” (“chto-to chudnoe,” 5.8). At this point in the sviatki episode, however, Tatiana is still hopeful that the results of the evening’s divination will point to Onegin as her future husband. Therefore, Tatiana, as well as the reader, may understand the word in its positive sense, i.e., as something “wondrous” or “magical.”

As the narration of the evening’s activities progresses, however, the word takes on opposite shades of meaning. For Tatiana, the repeated negative or neutral results of divination gradually reinforces the negative definition of chudnoe. For the reader, whose interpretation of the verse-text is as much dependent on the vertical association of words as the horizontal, the frequent use of the word chudnoe in later stanzas also offers the possibility of a negative interpretation. The narrator describes Tatiana’s dream as a “chudnyi son,” translated by Nabokov as a “wondrous dream” (5.11). The monsters celebrating in Onegin’s hut are “chudovishcha” (5.16), however, a word that contains the same root chud-. In Pushkin’s description, the second half of the group of monsters is depicted as “eshche chudnee” (5.17). Charles Johnston translates this as “more fearful,” but Nabokov gives it as “still more wondrous.” Consequently, the reader is free to deduce that this “wondrous something” foretold by the pouring of wax comes to pass with the distressing and frightening events of Tatiana’s dream and can, in fact, more rightfully be interpreted as something “monstrous.”

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The fortune telling performances which follow become more and more gloomy in their predictions for Tatiana's future. The podbiudnaia pesnia which she is dealt during the ring-fortune telling, seems positive, but, in fact, does not bode Tatiana well:

The peasants there have wealth abounding,
they heap up silver with a spade;
and those we sing for will be paid
in goods and fame!

<<Tam muzhichki-to vse bogaty,
Grebut lopatoi serebro,
Komu poem, tomu dobro
I slava! >> (5.8).

Interpretations of this particular song vary regionally. As a general rule, gold and silver in podbiudnye pesni represent rich suitors (Tereshchenko 159), but the spade or the act of digging with a spade may be symbolic of a funeral (Andreev 31). In this version, the peasants “heap up silver” and thus all might seem to bode well. Pushkin, however, favors the interpretation emphasizing the symbolism of the spade. He immediately follows this verse with the remark that it is “sad-sounding” and “portends a loss,” and in his notes to Evgenii Onegin he explains that this stanza foretells death (Note 29 193).

It is worth emphasizing that Pushkin did not state directly in the novel that this song predicts death. His wording is much less definite and still retains, although to a lesser degree, the ambivalence which I pointed out in connection with the prediction of the pouring of the wax. The fact that Pushkin deemed it necessary to explain the stanza in a note indicates that he may have anticipated and even desired an ambiguous interpretations of the song. This ambivalent wording has affected critical interpretations of the text. Many critics, probably influenced by their knowledge of Pushkin's remark in his Sobranie sochinenii, consider this line a foretelling of the death of Lenskii. Although this is not impossible, it is not necessarily the only one in view of the vagueness of the text. The many symbolic parallels in both sviatki and the wedding ritual to death make another interpretation at least as plausible as this one. The death that Pushkin refers to may, in
In fact, be the ritualistic death that is later foretold to Tatiana in her dream, the death that she will go through when she marries the general, a man who is well-to-do and very capable of "heaping up silver" for his young bride. One must not forget Pushkin's remark that Russian "wedding songs are as mournful as a funeral lament" (*Sob. soch.* 1994, 255). Some Russian wedding "songs" are, in fact, "laments" and can hardly be distinguished from funeral laments. Pushkin was well aware that Russian girls approach their wedding as if going through a funeral, i.e., they mourn and lament the "death" of their former life.

Tatiana's next three attempts at fortune telling all prove unfruitful. First she holds a mirror up to catch the reflection of the moon and the reflection of her ‘intended.’ The results of this divination, however, are nil. Tatiana sees only the reflection of the moon in her mirror. Although this is not in itself a negative omen, it is the absence of any prediction, either positive or negative. As an absence of the positive, this fortune telling fails to console Tatiana's restless spirit. Subsequently, Tatiana rushes to catch a passerby and ask his name as the crunching of snow tells her of his approach. Certainly she must be quite taken aback when she hears the name Agafon, common among the peasants, but not among the men of her class. This is the third of four attempts at fortune telling which give Tatiana either ambiguous or negative indicators.

Tatiana next prepares for what later turns out to be an unrealized bathhouse-divination. In order to do this, she follows the advice of her nanny and orders the table set for two. Possibly because of the close intertextual connections with Zhukovskii’s "Svetlana," more than one scholar has misinterpreted this portion of Tatiana's *sviatki* involvement. A correct understanding of Tatiana's actions and the narrator's words are in fact very important for understanding the importance placed by Pushkin on the bathhouse scene and the following dream divination. Roberta Reeder, in her notes to Anna Akhmatova's *Poema bez geroia*, states that "Tatyana, like Svetlana, attempts to conjure up her lover, but he does not appear in the mirror" (*Complete* 839). Elena Hellberg also
claims that Tatiana uses a mirror for her divination in the bathhouse. Both critics, however, have overlooked the fact that although Svetlana combines both the mirror and the table set for two in her divination, in *Eugene Onegin* there is no mention at all of a mirror in conjunction with the bathhouse divination. They have also missed the point that in *Eugene Onegin* the whole bathhouse-divination never happens, i.e. there is no textual account of the divination. The narrator, although on the one hand gently mocking the fears of the provincial and romantic Tatiana, also tries to protect his beloved but extremely impressionable young heroine when he claims to share her fears of the ritual and refuses to tell fortunes with her. It is almost as if he, knowing how mirror divination frightened Svetlana, pretends to be afraid himself and, in doing so, exerts control over the narrative account of Tatiana's supper divination. With his ambiguous statement "we're not to conjure with Tatiana" ("S Tat'ianoi nam ne vorozhit'," 5.10), we are left with the impression that there was no supper divination, but in fact the textual evidence is inconclusive. In this fifth attempt at fortune telling there are no indicators for Tatiana and she is once again unable to gain a glimpse of her future. Thus also, the dream which follows assumes greater significance as the narrator's attempts to protect Tatiana are unsuccessful. He can control outer events but not the realm of the soul.

After five of the six attempts at fortune telling - wax pouring, *podbliudnye pesni*, moon reflection in mirror, asking a passer-by his name and the annulled divination in the bathhouse - Tatiana is promised nothing more definitive than "something wondrous." The sixth and final episode of fortune telling combines two very dangerous forms: divination with a mirror and dream divination. In the folk tradition, both mirror and dream divination invite the forces of the other world to reveal the future. Tatiana's mirror-dream divination thus has the potential of conjuring up a very powerful dream.
3.3.2 The Dream

Many critics have attempted to analyze Tatiana’s dream from Chapter Five on the basis of Russian folklore, in particular Russian folk tales and folk songs, but none has come up with an entirely satisfactory interpretation of its role in the dream, especially its symbolic function. For my discussion I will divide Tatiana’s dream into two halves: during the first half Tatiana walks to a raging stream, crosses it over a bridge with the help of a bear who comes out of a snowdrift, and then begins to flee through the woods from the bear. During the second half Tatiana loses three items of clothing as she runs through the woods, then stumbles and falls. The bear carries her to Onegin’s hut where a group of monsters is gathered. The second half ends when Tatiana awakens. Most folklorist-critics concur that the bear of the first half represents Tatiana’s future husband, and the fact that he helps Tatiana cross the stream foretells their marriage. There is not as much agreement, however, in regards to the interpretation of the second half. In Masterstvo Pushkina (1959) A. Slonimskii suggests that Tatiana’s visit to the house of frightening creatures ruled by Onegin signifies that she arrives at the home of her bridegroom (zhenikh) and that the dream expresses the fear of life in another’s home (356-57). Chizhevsky (1967) claims that “there is a definite connection between Tat’jana’s dream and Pushkin’s ballad “Zhenikh.” Tatiana’s arrival at the gathering of monsters headed by Onegin corresponds to the scene in the poem where the merchant’s daughter Natasha in her dream arrives at a hut and sees her fiancé cut off a young maiden’s hand. In this interpretation, both young girls are made to realize that their beloveds are unworthy of their love. Chizhevsky also suggests that the 1814 dream guidebook, The Symbolism of Dreams by G. H. Schubert, might have been used by Pushkin. In short, he asserts that “the interpretation of Tat’jana’s dream for the most part has been disgracefully neglected,” but only goes so far as to say that there seem to be
direct correlations between the dream of the first half of the chapter and the name day celebration of the second half (258-59). O. N. Grechina (1978) agrees that a possible interpretation of the dream might be based on Pushkin's fairy tale poem "Zhenikh" and that Propp's investigation of the folk tale might be used in the analysis. Tatiana's journey through the woods and subsequent arrival at the hut is comparable to the fairy-tale hero's journey through the dense forest and his subsequent arrival at the home of Baba-Iaga or another magical dwelling (35). Grechina goes on to suggest that the monsters are participating in a pre-event celebration of Lenskii's funeral (36). Iurii Lotman (1980) claims that the so-called funeral feast is in fact a demonically inverted marriage celebration (271-72). More recent analyses focus on implicit sexual actions. In his psychoanalytical analysis Daniel Rancour-Laferriere (1989) employs Russian folklore to prove that in her dream Tatiana imposes homosexual tendencies on Onegin to justify his rejection of her. In their 1992 article, W. F. Ryan and Faith Wigzell concur with Lotman that the demonic wedding is a possible interpretation but they caution that one should not overinterpret the dream and its prophetic qualities (665).

All of the above scholars base their interpretations of Tatiana's dream on the symbolism of Russian folklore. However, they virtually ignore the specific context in which the dream occurs, namely the celebration of the sviatki ritual. Only Ryan and Wigzell mention the fact that mock funerals were a frequent occurrence during the sviatki season (665). I would like to offer an interpretation which focuses primarily on the activities of the sviatki ritual and their symbolism.

For my interpretation, I will treat the dream as prophetic for one basic reason only: because I wish to view the dream as Tatiana would view it. In Russian folk culture dreams were often thought to carry prophetic messages and all the more so if they occurred during sviatki, a time of fortune telling and divining the future. Thus, the context of sviatki alone is argument to view the dream as prophetic from the heroine's
perspective. Daniel Rancour-Laferriere also argues that we must view the dream "from Tatiana's viewpoint" [emphasis is Rancour-Laferriere's], but he takes this stance in order to claim that the dream is not prophetic. He contends that it must be psychoanalyzed in reference to Tatiana's past experiences (e.g., Tatiana's running from Onegin in Chapter Three and her running from the bear in the dream). Rancour-Laferriere does not suggest, however, that Tatiana saw her own dream as symptomatic. In fact, he admits that she more than likely interpreted the dream as prophetic but states that "psychoanalysis of the Freudian kind does not accept a superstitious interpretation of dreams" (236). I would argue that a psychoanalytical interpretation does not preclude the possibility that the dream is prophetic from Tatiana's perspective. If we are to analyze the dream "from Tatiana's viewpoint," to use Rancour-Laferriere's words, then we must try to interpret it as she herself would interpret it. Tatiana does not psychoanalyze her dream but looks to it as a product of her divination ritual. She expects the dream to reveal her future to her. Her guides to interpretation include her dreambook, her knowledge of Russian folklore and specifically the framework of sviatki. Before I continue, however, I must clarify in greater detail my use of the term "prophetic." To state it again, the term does not imply that every action and figure in the dream corresponds to an action and person in Tatiana's future. Nor do I propose that the past events in Tatiana's life have no bearing on what she dreams. During her dream-like state, Tatiana's subconscious interprets the events of her past, and, as a result it projects what may be her future path. Using primarily the folklore of the sviatki ritual, I will show how Tatiana might interpret the second half of the dream as foretelling her own "death" and "funeral" - a symbolic death and funeral that mark her transition from a would-be romantic heroine to a realistic adult who is prepared to enter into a loveless life as the wife of a general.

Therefore, if the dream is subjectively prophetic, it cannot foretell Tatiana's arrival at her bridegroom's house or, as Lotman says, be a demonically inverted marriage.
celebration. Tatiana does not even come close to marrying Onegin. And the sounds comparable to a funeral repast cannot be in anticipation of Lenskii’s death. If such were the case, the monsters and Onegin would expect and welcome the arrival of Lenskii and Olga. Instead, the two arrive at Onegin’s hut suddenly and unexpectedly, just as the real-life duel occurs suddenly and unexpectedly. The interpretation that I propose is based above all on the folklore of the *sviatki* ritual, and will show this funeral repast to be in honor of the “death” of the novel’s heroine herself, Tatiana Larina.

I will first compare the *sviatki* ritual with the implicit and explicit textual references to it in the dream so that I may establish the presence of certain heretofore unidentified *sviatki* activities, primarily the performance of a mock funeral, through which we will see 1) Tatiana’s symbolic resignation to her future life with someone other than Onegin; 2) the figurative “death” of Tatiana during her flight from the bear, and 3) her participation in her own “funeral.” This will show that the dream only seemingly consists of two parts but is, in fact, a single continuum with a single theme, that of the heroine’s symbolic death which represents her transition from childhood and innocence to adult acceptance of the transitoriness of life. As Richard Gregg stated, “The aim of the artistic mystery [of *Eugene Onegin*] is, rather, to be translucent: dimly to suggest a truth which the artist declines to make explicit” (504). I will attempt to unveil some of those dimly suggested truths which will help our understanding of the dream. I will also offer an explanation of the dream as a whole, showing that it only seemingly consists of two parts but is in fact a single continuum with a single theme.

Unlike ethnographic accounts in which girls place a key, ring, comb, or bridge of twigs under their pillow, Pushkin’s heroine uses a mirror in order to conjure up her dream. In turn, her dream reflects events of her past life refigured as the path of her future.® Pushkin combines two very powerful forms of fortune telling - a mirror and dream - to bring about an exceptionally “magical” (*chudnyi*) and “terrifying” (*trashnyi*)
dream, which puzzles Tatiana with both its allusive and elusive nature. In an interesting
twist, whereas the narrator tries to spare Tatiana from a frightening dream like Svetlana’s,
the implied author intentionally nullifies the bathhouse-divination in order to combine the
mirror and dream and create a dream even more frightening that that of Svetlana. Thus,
through Pushkin’s own design, the narrator seemingly works counter to the author’s own
desires and by doing so, actually brings them to light.

Critics have already rendered interpretations which explain the bear and river-
crossing as symbolic of Tatiana’s future husband and journey into married life. I concur
with them insofar as the appearance of the bear makes Tatiana understand that her
husband will not be Onegin, but someone she’ll want to “run away from,” i.e., not want
as a suitor. I wish to reiterate some of their ideas so that this interpretation of the dream
based on the sviatki ritual will be complete. The dream itself combines a number of
sviatki components, many of which are typical of posidelki. As Ryan and Wigzell point
out, considering Tatiana’s ties with Russian folk beliefs, she would most likely have been
aware of the form of dream divination involving placement of a bridge of twigs under
one’s pillow, and would have called upon its symbolic meaning to help interpret her
dream (665). Although Pushkin’s heroine places neither bridge of twigs, nor comb under
her pillow, the powerful mirror which she has chosen conjures up a bridge of logs and a
body of water which she must cross. Tatiana has not consciously chosen the bridge of
twigs, and she does not ask for help in crossing one, but her dream confronts her with
such a predicament.

Thus, the first step of Tatiana’s journey is to cross the bridge. It has already been
pointed out that in the folk tradition the bridge itself is a common symbol of marriage
during the dreams of sviatki, and that the ‘intended’ is invited to help the young girl
across. In turn, marriage is a period of one’s life which links birth and death and is in
itself a simultaneous birth/death experience - death to the old life and birth to a new life
Liudmila Vinogradova claims that in the fortune telling of *sviatki*, the symbolic crossing of a body of water does signify marriage, but it places emphasis on the aspect of death rather than birth. Thus, by crossing the bridge of marriage in her dream, Tatiana has crossed the bridge leading to her “death.” Indeed, the bridge is a “fatal bridge,” a *gibel’nyi mostok*, and the bear who meets her there comes out of a snow-drift, a *sugrob*, which might be seen more appropriately as a coffin, a *grob*, for the bear invites Tatiana to join him in the ritualistic death that is part of marriage. The one whom Tatiana is intended to marry - and who also accompanies her to her “death” - is the big, hairy bear who offers her his paw. Although some wish to ascribe a definite personality to the bear, i.e., that of the general, Tatiana’s true future husband, I do not believe this to be the case. If we are to interpret the dream “as Tatiana would interpret it,” then we can also only use the facts and experiences that were a part of Tatiana’s life up to this point. At the time of the dream, only the reader can know that both the bear and the general are big and powerful. By contrasting the bear with the later appearance of Onegin in the dream, Tatiana can draw only one conclusion: her future husband is *not* her beloved Eugene.

The journey through the woods which Tatiana undertakes is of equal importance as the presence of the bear. It, too, is a typical component of the performance of *sviatki* and literally takes its participants from home and work to play and party, i.e., symbolically from single, unmarried life to games showing one’s readiness for marriage. Tatiana’s journey begins with her entry into wedlock as she crosses the bridge, but it is from her point of flight that scholarly interpretations of the dream vary and are deficient. Very few scholars even associate the motif of death with Tatiana. Rancour-Laferriere notes that the bridge which Tatiana crosses is, in fact, “downright ‘fatal’ (*gibel’nyi*), boding sure disaster of some kind.” He later states that “in folk songs, marriage is sometimes perceived by the bride as death” but does not develop the idea of Tatiana’s death any further. J. Douglas Clayton suggests that the dream may reflect two parallel
fears - Tatiana’s fear of defloration and the author’s fear of death. The two fears, however, are only paralleled and Clayton makes no attempt to tie Tatiana and death together. I will now show how this theme of death carries through the entire dream. I will illustrate how Tatiana succumbs to death or a “death-like” state during her flight through the forest and subsequently arrives at the hut to attend her own “funeral” where Onegin comes forward to take leave of her.

Pushkin gives us the most important clue for tracing the theme of death after Tatiana has arrived at the hut in the woods. The sounds emanating from the hut resemble those at a “big funeral” (“kak na bol’shikh pokhoronakh,” 5.16). Why should Pushkin have us believe that Onegin and the monsters are gathered as if at a funeral? There are no corpses or any other circumstances which would lead to such a conclusion. And I have already shown that an early funeral repast in honor of Lenskii’s death is illogical. Pushkin also notes that Tatiana, through whose eyes the scene is viewed, perceives “not a drop of sense in this” (“Ne vidia tut ni kapli tolkui,” 5.16). Could it be that the terrified maiden involuntarily interprets this funeral celebration of her dream as a prediction of her own ritual death and pending marriage?

In stanza XIV Tatiana loses three items of clothing as she runs from the bear: her golden earrings, a shoe and a kerchief. As discussed in Chapter 1, these items figure prominently in the fortune telling and games of sviatki and are associated with some aspect of the girl’s ‘intended.’ Thus as fortune-telling indicators, the objects of the dream allude to the bear as Tatiana’s ‘intended’ and symbolically suggest her resignation to her life with him in the form of her future husband. Just as some verses of the podbliudnye pesni sing of a bear crossing a river, Tatiana’s earrings have been torn from her ears after the bear crosses the river. Just as in the ritual of throwing shoes the first male to come from a certain direction is the girl’s future husband, a big, shaggy bear is the first to come along after Tatiana’s shoe has fallen. Just as the girls throw their scarves at the young
men during the singing of some songs, so Tatiana’s scarf falls in the path of the bear. Tatiana’s involvement in the fortune telling of sviatki during her waking state manifests itself in her dream to show that she must resign herself to marry someone other than her beloved Onegin.

Immediately following the loss of articles of clothing, Tatiana begins to “die” - a death that, from the point of folklore, represents the symbolic “death” that she will later experience at the time of marriage. At the end of stanza XIV, Tatiana begins to lose her strength, “she runs; he keeps behind her; / and then she has no force to run” (ona bezhit, on vse vosled, / I sil uzhe bezhat’ ei net, 5.14). Pushkin tells us more than once that she has either lost feeling or can neither, breathe, speak, nor move. At the beginning of stanza XV Tatiana falls and “she is insensibly submissive; / stirs not, breathes not” ("Ona beschuvstvenno-pokorna, / Ne shevel’netsia, ne dokhnet"). Pushkin again tells us of Tatiana’s state of being in stanza XIX as Onegin approaches her in the hut:

hastily
Tat’iana strains to flee:
not possible; impatiently
 tossing about, she wants to scream - cannot.

In stanza XX, when Onegin greets Lenskii and Olga, “Tatiana lies barely alive” (Tat’iana chut’ zhiva lezhit). From the time that Tatiana falls into the snow until she awakes in her bedroom, she makes no sound and almost no move of her own.

Pushkin confirms Tatiana’s “death” for the reader through his choice and placement of the words pokorna (“submissive”) and na pokhoronakh (“at a funeral”). In the third line of stanza XV Pushkin tells us that Tatiana has finally submitted to the bear. As he lifts her she is “insensibly submissive,” “beschuvstvenno-pokorna”. In line three and four of the following stanza, Tatiana hears noises as if “at a funeral repast,” “kak na
bol'shikh pokhoronakh". The words appear toward the beginning of consecutive stanzas and at the very end of the line. Although the stress for the word pokhoronakh would be on the last syllable, because of the meter, a secondary stress is anticipated and placed on the second syllable, making it even more comparable to the word pokorna. Thus, Pushkin establishes a vertical connection, both visual and near-homophonous, between the submissive Tatiana and the funeral celebration.

In the death-like state of her dream, Tatiana arrives at a funeral celebration and what might be interpreted as a posidelki where mummers in monster costumes prepare for the enactment of a mock funeral and await the arrival of the mock-corpse. In fashion typical of the season, a light burns brightly in the window of the hut, inviting friends to join in the merriment of the posidelki. The behavior of the monsters typifies the raucous, irreverent laughter of the mock funeral. Onegin, the apparent head of the group, seems to be expecting somebody's arrival as he glances toward the door, “Onegin at the table sits / and through the door stealthily gazes” (“Onegin za stolom sidit / I v dver’ ukradkoiu gliadit,” 5.17). Just as the mourners carry the often unwilling actor-corpse of the ritual celebration into the posidelki, the bear carries the unwilling Tatiana to Onegin's party.

When the monsters become aware that the object of their funeral celebration has arrived, they try to claim her and cry out “Mine! Mine!” (“moel moe!,” 5.19). Only Onegin, however, has such power. Just as the young girls in the mock funeral come forward to kiss the “corpse,” Onegin comes forward, and even though he does not kiss Tatiana, he places his head on her shoulder, a scene which has been noted by critics for its sexual implications. Just as at some posidelki participants are armed to beat away unbidden guests, the monsters of the dream are armed with hooves, tusks, beaks and horns. Onegin, too, is armed. When Lenskii and Olga make their entrance, Onegin first berates the “uninvited guests” (“I nezvanykh gostei branit,” 5.20), then draws his knife to attack. However, whereas the “corpse” of the mock funeral returns to life and joins the
celebration, Tatiana is not able to join the celebration of Onegin and his gang, and returns to life only by waking up.

As a significant deviation from the sviatki ritual, one should note the location in which Tatiana finds herself upon her arrival at the hut. According to tradition, during the mock funeral of sviatki the corpse is brought into the room where the participants of the posidelki are gathered. In Pushkin’s narrative, however, the bear places Tatiana in the entry way on the threshold: “and straight he goes into the hallway / and on the threshold lays her down” (“I v seni priamo on idet / I na porog ee kladet,” 5.15). She is thus separated from the participants by a door. It is as if she and the monsters of the funeral celebrations were inhabitants of two different worlds. Just as the fearful costumes of the sviatki mummers often sought to impersonate beings of the other world, the monsters under Onegin’s command are referred to as a “gang of house-spirits” (“shaika domovykh,” 5.18), spirits of the other world. Tatiana lies on the threshold of life with Onegin and these monsters. Physically she is powerless; she has neither the strength to enter and join the monsters nor to flee. She is unable to cross into this other world where Onegin rules. She manages only to open the door a little ways, and even that small attempt to unite the two worlds disrupts conditions in the hut, causing the wind to blow and the lights to go out. Only Onegin has the ability to cross the threshold. Although it is stated that he places Tatiana on a bench, “Onegin gently draws Tatiana / into a corner and deposits her / upon a shaky bench” (“Onegin tikho uvelkaet / Tat’ianu v ugol i slagaet / Ee na shatkuiu skam’iu,” 5.20), there is no evidence that he has removed her from the entry way and taken her across the threshold. Tatiana is unable to cross into the other world with Onegin. Onegin has bid her farewell and she must disassociate herself from him now.

Although less significant, there is one more element of narrative proof that Tatiana is indeed the object of a funeral celebration. When the bear arrives at the hut with Tatiana,
he instructs her to warm herself, “do warm yourself a little in his home!” (“pogreisia u nego nemnozhko!,” 5.15). This act echoes the sviatki custom gret' pokoinikov, warming the dead and paying tribute to the domovoi, the house-spirits.

3.4 Tatiana and Svetlana

It is also worthwhile to compare Tatiana’s celebration of the Russian folk ritual with that of her prototype in Russian folklore and literature, Zhukovskii’s Svetlana. As Pushkin patterns his heroine after the heroine of Zhukovskii’s ballad in the fortune-telling of sviatki, it is not unmotivated to believe that we will find here further proof for the above analysis of the dream. Both Svetlana and Tatiana participate in a series of divinations, culminating in a fearful nightmare. Slonimskii maintains that “the Russian folklore element [in Zhukovskii] includes only the description of the sviatki fortune telling” (356). Other motifs of the poem, he claims, come from German Romanticism. Grechina claims that Zhukovskii’s inclusion of various forms of fortune telling “plays no role in the plot of the ballad and is called upon only as romantic decoration” (31). Ralph Matlaw interprets Tatiana’s dream to foretell marriage to Onegin and thus claims that both Svetlana’s and Tatiana’s dreams turn out to be false. A closer look at “Svetlana,” in particular Svetlana’s dream, will tell us that many of its motifs are, indeed, representative of Russian folklore and that the dream does, in fact, foretell marriage with her beloved. After establishing this we will be able to see more clearly the correlation’s with Tatiana’s dream.

Pushkin makes direct mention of Svetlana a total of three times in Eugene Onegin. The similarities are important, but the differences between the two works are also significant. The first explicit mention of Svetlana appears early in Pushkin’s work. Although the reader learns about Tatiana in Chapter Two, it is only through the ramblings
of the narrator. The reader's first official meeting with Tatiana is in Chapter Three and coincides with Onegin's. It is at this point that Lenskii compares Tatiana with Svetlana:

"Tell me, which was Tatiana?"
"Oh, she's the one who, sad and silent like Svetlana, came in and sat down by the window."

Skazhi: kotoraiia Tat'iana?>>
— Da ta, kotoraiia, grustna
I molchaliva, kak Svetlana,
Voshla i sela u okna. — (3.5).

Not only does Pushkin mention Svetlana's name, but he uses the same two adjectives in describing Tatiana that Zhukovskii uses in describing Svetlana:

Dimly shines the moon
In the twilight of the fog —
Silent and melancholy
Dear Svetlana.  

Tusklo svetitsia luna
V sumrake tumana —
Molchaliva i grustna
Milaia Svetlana (2).

As mentioned earlier, the reader of the day was certain to have been acquainted with Zhukovskii's poem. Not only the name Svetlana would be familiar, but given the popularity of the ballad, many readers knew it by heart and would recognize the words *grustna* and *molchaliva* as coming from Zhukovskii's pen. We know that Tatiana models herself after many heroines of the literature that she has read and she more than likely also models herself after Svetlana. The early allusions to Svetlana only hint at the important role which the ballad "Svetlana" will play later in the novel.

The next two references to Svetlana are in Chapter Five, in the epigraph and as Tatiana prepares for fortune telling with mirrors. In both instances, the narrator stresses his desire that Tatiana *not* have a dream like Svetlana's. Tatiana, however, may be fearful but she is also daring. In spite of the narrator's measures to prevent her dream, Tatiana attempts to conjure up a dream which she hopes will leave her happily married with her
beloved, just as Svetlana, after her nightmare, was happily wed to her beloved. Her dream, however, is destined to take a different turn from Svetlana's.

Both girls engage in a series of fortune-telling rituals. Some of them are the same; others are different. Both writers speak of the practice of pouring melted wax into cold water as well as the singing of *podbliudnye pesni*. Zhukovskii elaborates on the latter by including one song about a blacksmith who is to forge a golden crown. The song sung for Svetlana predicts marriage whereas the song for Tatiana predicts sadness and loss. Both girls prepare for divination with mirrors. Svetlana goes to the front room *(svetlitsa)* whereas Tatiana plans to go the bathhouse. Both girls have the table set for two, but Svetlana has also prepared for her fortune telling with mirrors. Svetlana falls asleep in the front room during her divination, and from all appearances Tatiana abandons her attempts to have a meeting with her 'intended' in the bathhouse. While Tatiana's divination is clearly not actualized, one might be so bold as to say that Svetlana's mirror-candle divination is also not actualized, for Svetlana's terrors are all a product of her dream. She never actually sees anybody in the mirrors, and nobody joins her for the feast. Her dream, however, is nonetheless prophetic.

Immediately following Tatiana's aborted bathhouse divination, the fifth attempt at fortune telling, is her terrible dream which corresponds closely to the dream of Zhukovskii's heroine. The sequence of Svetlana's dream is much the same as that of Tatiana's later dream and can also be seen as foretelling the symbolic “death” of a former self and the leave-taking which results from marriage. Just like Tatiana, Svetlana is first accompanied on a journey by a male figure. Svetlana's beloved offers her his hand while the bear offers his paw to Tatiana. Whereas Svetlana embarks upon her journey willingly, Tatiana is unwilling. The male figure, her betrothed, takes Svetlana to a church, ostensibly to her wedding since “the choir is singing a wedding song.” There is, however, a coffin in the middle of the room. Svetlana and her escort then proceed to a
small hut which has a light in the window. The bear brings Tatiana to a small hut in the woods with a light in the window. Just as the bear disappears, Svetlana's escort also vanishes. Svetlana opens the door and enters the hut. Tatiana opens the door but is unable to enter. Svetlana finds herself in the hut with a coffin, and inside the coffin is her beloved who suddenly moves and frightens her, actions reminiscent of the sviatki mock funeral. Tatiana recognizes the master of the house as Onegin, her beloved. In each case another object enters the room and receives significant attention. A white dove alights on Svetlana's dead lover and then on her. Lenskii and Olga enter Onegin's hut. Each girl awakes after she finds herself in a hut with the terrifying figure of her beloved, troubled by her dream and not sure how to interpret it.

Thus, the motif of death accompanies Svetlana's dream-transition into married life, just as crossing the bridge into marriage brought Tatiana to her transitional death. Both Svetlana's and Tatiana's dreams end with segments of what could be seen as a seasonal mock funeral. Even though critics claim that the dream of Zhukovskii's ballad is primarily composed of motifs from German Romanticism, the above analysis demonstrates that Russian folkloric motifs are equally as important. The references in the ballad to marriage and death are definitely representative of the Russian sviatki. In fact, Zhukovskii supposedly took the idea of a frightening corpse from a north Russian folk tale. He also frequently uses the dove, a Christian symbol of the Holy Spirit, to replace the rooster of Russian folklore (Semenko 95).

Not only is the sequence of events in “Svetlana” and Chapter Five of Eugene Onegin very similar, but Pushkin intensifies the reader’s association of the two works through his choice of specific lexical items. I have already discussed the use of the words grustna (melancholy) and molchaliva (silent) which first establish a lexical correlation between Tatiana and Svetlana. Other lexical parallels present themselves in Chapter Five. Zhukovskii summarizes his ballad by saying that there are “many wonders” in it (“V nei
Similarly, the wax-pouring proclaims “a wondrous something” to Tatiana (“Ei chto-to chudnoe glasit,” 5.8). As Svetlana begins her divination with mirrors, she is “terrified to look back” (“Strashno ei nazad vzgUanut’,” 5). Likewise, Tatiana, as she runs from the bear in her dream, does “not dare to look back” (“Ona, vzgUanut’ nazad ne smeia,” 5.13). Svetlana arrives at her lover’s hut and “the door moves... squeaks... / quietly opens” (“Dver’ shatnulasia... skrypit... / Tikho rastvorilas’,” 11). When Tatiana comes to her senses after being brought to Onegin’s hut, “she opens / the door a little...” (“Nemnogo rastvorila dver’,” 5.18).

Just as Svetlana is evoked lexically in Pushkin’s Tatiana, so are connections drawn between the lover of the ballad and the hero of Pushkin’s novel. In her letter to Onegin, Tatiana asks him: “Who are you? My guardian angel / or a perfidious tempter?” (“Kto ty, moi angel li khranitel’, / Ili kovarnyi iskusitel’,” 3.letter). The reader of the day could not help but draw a comparison to Svetlana’s address to her own lover: “‘Relieve my sorrow, / angel-comforter’” (“‘Utoli pechal’ moiu, / Angel-uteshitel’,” 3). Tatiana likely modeled her query to Onegin after the words of her predecessor, and in her romantic fantasies she hoped for a lover of one extreme personality or the other, i.e., an angel or a tempter. The refractions in Zhukovskii’s text, however, support a third possibility as a designation for Onegin, i.e., a combination. Although Pushkin uses the word “guardian” (khranitel’) with “angel,” the word “tempter” (iskusitel’) in the following line auditorily much more closely resembles the word that Zhukovskii combines with “angel,” i.e., “comforter” (uteshitel’). Both have the same number of syllables and the same vowel sounds, although Pushkin’s “iskusitel’” reverses the initial two vowel sounds of Zhukovskii’s “uteshitel’”. The two words, in fact, are a rhyming pair and invite the combination “angel-tempter” (angel-iskusitel’) which becomes for the reader a third choice in describing the person of Onegin. Thus, one sees an Onegin who is neither totally “angel” nor totally “vile tempter,” but, in fact, a combination of the two.
On the one hand Onegin is similar to Svetlana's lover, i.e., he is Tatiana's angel, her beloved. On the other hand, the two men are very dissimilar. Whereas Svetlana's lover will later comfort her, Tatiana's beloved will tempt her.

As a contrast, lexical connections are later drawn between Svetlana’s beloved and the bear of Tatiana's dreams. In fact, it seems that Pushkin intentionally and playfully parodies the romantic and demonic lover of Svetlana's dream with a big, Russian bear, a symbol of *narodnost*, national identity. As Tatiana looks for a way to cross the bridge in her dream, "suddenly a snowdrift stirred" ("No vdrug sugrob zashevelilsia," 5.12), i.e., the bear stirred from the "snowdrift-coffin." As Svetlana views her dead beloved in the coffin in the hut, "the dead one stirred" "under the white linen" ("Chto pod belym polotnom / "Mertvyi shevelitsia," 14). Not only are the male figures, the symbolic future "husbands," associated lexically through the word "stir" ("zashevelit'sia"), but they both arise out of their symbolic death "receptacle" - the white snow of the snowdrift-coffin and the white linen of a coffin. Thus, Pushkin creates likenesses between Svetlana's lover and the bear of Tatiana's dream, but differences between the same lover and Onegin.

Although the girls and their dreams share many similarities, there are also substantial differences which set them apart. In the case of Svetlana, we know that there were other young girls present during the fortune telling, but the participation of the heroine is uncertain. When asked to join in the singing of the *podbliudnye pesni*, Svetlana informs her friends that she is not in the mood. On the other hand, Tatiana joins the house servants of the Larin household for her celebration. Although we know that she partakes eagerly in the celebration, there is no mention made of the participation of other girls, peasant or gentry, in the attempts at fortune telling. Her sister Olga must have participated in the festivities, but we hear nothing of her until the morning after the dream.

Additionally, the girls enter into the sviatki season with different hopes and concerns. Although both are "silent" and "melancholy," Svetlana displays a calm
resignation to her lonely fate. Her thoughts focus on her lover, wondering if he is unhurt and if he still remembers her. Her situation is much more closely reconstructed in the situation of Natasha Rostova in War and Peace. Tatiana on the other hand, enters the season eagerly and with great hope. She hopes to disprove her fears and find out that Onegin does, indeed, love her. Especially after her first attempt at fortune telling, she must be anxious to find out what the "wondrous something" of her future is. The differences in the girl's moods and their expectations account for dissimilarities in their participation in the festivities. It also accounts in part for the make-up of their dreams. Svetlana is not plagued by doubts as Tatiana is. She needs only reassurance that all will be well, although she does not necessarily receive this message in her dream. Tatiana, on the other hand, has already been rejected by Onegin. She senses that the part of her youth which romanticizes her loves and her future life is about to undergo a change. During the fortune telling of sviatki she looks for some ray of hope telling her that, in fact, her deepest fears are ungrounded. Her fears materialize, however, in her dream-prophecy of a life without her beloved.

Looking at the male figures in each of the dreams, we find another very important difference between the two episodes that shows that Tatiana, unlike her balladic predecessor, will not marry her beloved - information which Tatiana, herself, would have used to help her decipher her dream. In their respective dreams, each girl is escorted by a male figure to a hut and upon entering the hut encounters a male figure. Svetlana's escort is one and the same as the corpse in the coffin. It is her beloved who accompanies her into her wedded life and brings about her transitional death. She is destined to marry the man of her dreams. Two different male figures, however, appear in Tatiana's dream. The unknown bear accompanies her to her future and brings about her symbolic death-transition into marriage. She then encounters Onegin but because she has already "died" to her old life, she is no longer able to join him. Onegin, thus, must bid her farewell.
Both girls marry the figure who has accompanied them on their journey and both must bid farewell to their previous lives.

In both girls’ dreams there is another object which receives considerable attention. Svetlana sees a dove which first rests on her fingers, then flies to her “dead” lover. Tatiana sees the arrival of Lenskii and Olga and the killing of Lenskii by Onegin. Perhaps the presence of these two elements is a symbolic contrast of the ease or difficulty with which the two girls will enter into their married lives. For Svetlana the path is peaceful, just as a white dove is peaceful. In contrast, Tatiana embarks on a much more difficult journey, troubled by the death of Lenskii and by the fact that she will not marry Onegin.

Upon close analysis, one can see that the predictions of their earlier fortune telling have “come true” for both girls. Although the interpretation of each divination attempt is at best obscure and misleading, both for the heroines and the reader, none of them can be proven to be wrong. Svetlana was invited to sing the *podbliudnaia pesnia* of the blacksmith, telling him to make her a new, golden crown. When she meets up with her “dead” lover, he appears with a “crown on his forehead” (“na lbu venets”). The crown is a positive sign, a sign of marriage. The prediction of the *podbliudnaia pesnia* was thus actualized, and together Svetlana and her lover cross into the next stage of life, the stage of marriage. During the singing of fortune-telling songs in *Eugene Onegin*, Tatiana is warned of “loss” and “sadness” to come in her future. She, indeed, suffers loss and sadness at her impending ritual death and the relinquishment of her youthful fantasies, the future which was also revealed through the terrors of her dream. During the pouring of wax she was promised a “wondrous something” which evolved, however, into a “monstrous” something. One can only question, however, the name that Tatiana’s future husband was to have - Agafon. It is very unlikely that any general would have been given the peasant name “Agafon,” but Pushkin, who seems to be playing a joke on the
reader, never reveals the general's real name. Thus we cannot, in fact, prove the prediction to be wrong. Zhukovskii and Pushkin both carefully crafted the fortune-telling rituals of their respective works, and with the ambiguous nature of the divination results successfully perplex the characters and readers alike. When analyzed closely, however, the ambiguous nature allows them to be interpreted in a way which is in keeping with the folk belief, i.e., they do, in fact, predict the true future of the two heroines.

Zhukovskii follows the traditional ballad style of the early 19th century which calls for a presence of the bizarre or the supernatural. The ballad should also introduce a sudden, unexpected twist of events at the end. Although the ending is often somber or even tragic, Zhukovskii renders an ironic and humorous twist to his ballad. At the end his heroine marries her lover and Zhukovskii instructs Svetlana to laugh at the ballad, leading us to believe that the dream was in fact a lie:

Smile, my beautiful one,
At my ballad

"Here is unhappiness -- a lying dream;
Happiness -- is waking up."

Pushkin, too, provides an unexpected twist of events after the many parallels of the dreams of the two girls. Tatiana's dream is, in essence, a romantic ballad, a product of her fears and literary fancies, in particular her own knowledge of Zhukovskii's ballad. The similarities between the two "ballads" thus lead the reader to hope that Tatiana will, in fact, experience the happy fate of Svetlana. The parallelism of their dreams and lives, however, ends here as Tatiana encounters a new "twist" on her life's path. She is the heroine of a novel, and her realistic future does not contain the happy ending of Zhukovskii's ballad.
3.5 Tatiana and the Heroines of the Western Literary Tradition

I would like to digress momentarily from the sviatki analysis of Chapter Five and investigate Tatiana's relationship to her heroines from the western literary tradition, i.e., Clarissa, Julie, and Delphine in their respective works - Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747-48), Rousseau's *Julie or the New Eloise* (1761), and Mme de Staël's *Delphine* (1802). In his article “Tatiana’s Reading,” Stanley Mitchell compares the three girls with each other and with Tatiana. He points out that all three of the young women from Western literature are frustrated in their love for a man whom their family for some reason does not accept. Each also turns to religion for strength and comfort. And each experiences an early death. Mitchell points out that one might also include in this literary trend Werther from Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Although religion does not play an important role in Werther’s life, he, too, loves somebody with whom he cannot be united and as a result commits suicide.

When comparing Tatiana to the western heroines she models herself on, Stanley Mitchell also sees similarities in the loves of the four young girls but claims that, unlike the earlier three, “religion plays no part at all in Tatiana’s life” (11) and that she “has no recourse to religion when rejected by Onegin” (12). Perhaps Tatiana’s beliefs are not grounded in Christianity like her Western counterparts, but if one considers the broader definition of religion, then Tatiana, just like Clarissa, Julie and Delphine, also seeks strength and comfort in “religion.” Religion is defined as: “a personal set or institutionalized system of religious [religious = “relating to or manifesting faithful devotion to an acknowledged ultimate reality or deity”) attitudes, beliefs, and practices” (Webster 995). Pushkin’s heroine finds her ultimate reality and bases her attitudes, beliefs and practices on the traditions and beliefs of Russian folklore. Folk beliefs are her religion. According to folklorist Patrick Mullen, one should not try to draw a line
between folk beliefs and religion as they often overlap in function and structure. In cultural contexts, however, they are distinguished from each other in various ways (90). Each provides a structure for understanding and functioning in one’s surroundings. Therefore we can say that Tatiana models herself in every way after her literary predecessors. Just as Clarissa, Julie, and Delphine turn to religion for strength in problems of love, Tatiana turns to her Russian folklore to find answers to her questions about love. Just as religion enables the three westerners to face their future, Tatiana’s folk beliefs also empower her by enabling her to accept a marriage without love.

In her daydreams, Tatiana envisions herself in the role of one of these heroines:

Imagining herself the heroine
of her beloved authors —
Clarissa, Julia, Delphine —
Tatiana in the stillness of the woods
alone roams with a dangerous book.

Voobrazhaias’ geroinoi
Svoikh vozliublennykh tvortsov,
Klariisoi, Iuliei, Del’finoi
Tat’iana v tishine lesov
Odna s opasnoi knigoi brodit (3.10).

Imagining herself as one of these characters, Tatiana must also anticipate a similar course for her future. If she is a person like Clarissa, Julie, or Delphine, then she at least knows that she will experience love, albeit a tormented love. If her life continues on the same path as these characters, however, Tatiana also conjectures an early “death” for herself. Consequently, in her dream Tatiana’s subconscious manifests a ritualistic “death” which later materializes in her marriage to the general. Her folk religion gives her the means with which to understand the dream-premonition and the strength with which to face it. Tatiana sustains her religious faith in folk beliefs as long as she remains in her rural surroundings, but during her years in St. Petersburg, although she may still feel love for the folk and its culture, she no longer has “faith” in it.
3.6 The "Who?" Factor in Tatiana's Fortune Telling

All of these ambiguities and possible interpretations come with the fortune telling at the surface level of the novel's story. There is another level of fortune telling, however, which predicts in more detail the truth of both Tatiana and Olga's future. This prediction is explicitly stated and clear for the reader, but does not seem to be taken into account by the characters themselves. In order to understand its significance, we must consider who the participants are in Tatiana's divination attempts.

Sviatki fortune telling is generally performed as part of a social gathering; it is not usually something that a young girl engages in on her own. Not only is the social setting important, but the girls need the guidance of more experienced women to direct them and especially to help interpret the results of dreams (Snegirev 52-53). Consequently the setting for Tatiana's performance is quite appropriate. She is joined by members of the household who help provide a suitable environment for her fortune telling.

Still there is a strong emphasis on Tatiana's personal participation, and she appears as the main performer throughout the sviatki ritual in Evgenii Onegin. Throughout the six attempts at fortune telling, Tatiana is the only participant mentioned. If we carefully analyze the text, we will find that during the fortune telling there is in fact absolutely no direct mention of other people. From stanza VII we know that both "volatile youth divines" and "old age divines" ("Gadaet vetrenaia mladost,'" "Gadaet starost'"). Once the fortune telling has begun, however, the presence of others is only alluded to. The objects of fortune telling become animate as third person singular and plural subjectless sentences give a further "wondrous something" to the already magical evening. The wax itself "proclaims" its prediction to her ("[vosk] ... ei chto-to chudnoe glasit," (5.8)). "Rings come out in succession" ("Vykhodiat kol'tsy cheredoiu," 5.8) from the bowl filled with water. "The pitiful tune" of the podbludnaia pesnia "portends
bereavements" ("sulit utraty / sei pesni zhalostnyi napev," 5.8). "The sad moon trembles" and "the snow creaks" ("Drozhit pechal'naia luna ... sneg khrustit," 5.9). Although we know that Tatiana's nurse has given her advice about the bathhouse fortune-telling, and we can assume that the houseserfs prepared the table, we are told, in fact, only that the young heroine "ordered ... secretly / a table to be laid for two" ("Tikhon'ko prikazala v bane / Na dva pribora stol nakryt'," 5.10). In what at first seems to be and should be a celebration with many participants, the heroine is actually left on her own to discover her future. Even Tatiana's sister Olga, who is about to be married, does not make an appearance until after the final fortune telling. Moreover, Tatiana does not confide to Olga or anybody else the contents of her dream. Tatiana is virtually alone in her tormented attempts to make sense out of the prophetic indications of her fortune telling.

Tatiana does not consult or listen to the very women - the folk, in particular the older women - who have the knowledge necessary to help her interpret her bodings. Nevertheless, they know the true future of Tatiana and offer their "prophecy" for all to hear. The "prophecy" might be interpreted as the simple, mature wisdom of women who know, as the narrator tells us, that "hope to them [in old age] / lies with its childish lisp" ("nadezhda im / Izhet detskim lepetom svoim," 5.7). They know that the hopes of the impulsive young Tatiana are, in fact, nothing more than wistful fantasies, and she, just like most other girls of her class and upbringing, will in the end settle down with a military husband. The houseserfs are so certain of this that they sing the same prophecy from year to year:

the servant girls from the whole stead
told their young ladies' fortunes
and every year made prophecies to them
of military husbands and the march.

Sluzhanki so vsego dvora
Pro baryshen' svoikh gadali
I im sulili kazhdiy god
Muzh'ev voennykh i pokhod (5.4).
Whether intentional or not, Pushkin has revealed in these lines what all of Tatiana’s fortune telling was unable to disclose. In the eyes of the peasant women, Tatiana was never even a candidate to marry the wandering Onegin, and Olga was not to spend the rest of her life with a poet. In fact, both Tatiana and Olga did marry military men and did leave home. Olga married an officer of the uhlan regiment and left home to live where her husband was stationed. Tatiana left home, married a general, and went to live with her new husband in St. Petersburg. In her desperation and longing to have her hopes fulfilled and see or hear the name “Onegin” as her intended, Tatiana bypasses the wisdom of those who unquestionably would have told her otherwise. Additionally, the ungrammatical form of the word *muzh' ev* (“husbands”) stands out prominently and draws the reader’s attention to itself and the words of the servant women. Thus, Pushkin forces the reader to take note of the “prophecy” which goes unnoticed by the young Larin girls.

3.7 Interpretive Strategies

Pushkin capitalizes on the popular literary and folk traditions of *sviatki* in many ways. He exploits them both as a device to create conflict and tension. In his article “Folklore and Literature as Performance,” folklorist Roger Abrahams analyzes the way in which such a ritual may function. I will apply his theory to Pushkin’s use of *sviatki* in *Eugene Onegin*.

By choosing a popular ritual of the time, Pushkin creates a situation with which his reader can closely identify. Not only does she have an appreciation of *sviatki* as a Yuletide folk ritual, but she is also unquestionably acquainted with the literary tradition popularized by Zhukovskii’s Svetlana. Pushkin’s novel becomes the performance, and the reader becomes the audience. Her own knowledge encourages her active
participation in the performance of the ritual in *Eugene Onegin* and leads her to anticipate certain outcomes. At the same time the knowledge creates conflict because the reader’s expectations are not fulfilled. Or, one might say, the ambiguous nature of the *sviatki* events, in particular the dream, lead the reader to believe that her expectations have not been fulfilled since the answer to the riddle is buried under obscurities.

As an outcome of the folk ritual, the reader anticipates a prediction foretelling the future of Tatiana, i.e., who her future husband will be. The romantic literary tradition promises even more. It promises a happy future for the young girl, blissfully married to a man she loves. We see this not only in Zhukovskii’s ballad but also in tales such as “Frol Skobeev” and others of the 18th century. The ambiguities of Svetlana’s dream, however, have left the reader unsure of how to interpret its contents. Many felt and still feel, in fact, that the dream simply does not come true. Thus, for the reader, the outcome of participation in the *sviatki* ritual is wedded bliss, no matter what the fortune telling may portend. With this fore-knowledge the reader anticipates wedded bliss for Pushkin’s heroine, in spite of the similarly troubling dream which is equally difficult to decipher. Conflict results when this expectation is not fulfilled. Pushkin leaves the reader as puzzled as his protagonist at the meaning of her dream and delays the revelation of its significance until much later. Like all dreams, its prophetic nature will make sense only after retrospective interpretation, e.g., Tatiana’s “bear” becomes the general after she has married him. To the mature Tatiana, it turns into a fulfilled prophecy, i.e., it becomes filled with the content of her life as it turned out.

Pushkin also uses the ritual symbolically to represent the psychological development in the life of his heroine. In the life of nature *sviatki* represents a turning point, a return to life and growth which takes place only after the experience of death. In *Eugene Onegin* the ritual also symbolizes a turning point in the life of Tatiana. It is not a coincidence that the *sviatki* events occur mid-point in Pushkin’s novel. During the
first half of the novel we become acquainted with the personality of the characters and especially Tatiana’s youthful infatuation with a man of the world who in no way returns her feelings. The second half of the novel depicts a matured Tatiana who, in her resignation to her married life, bears little resemblance to the optimistic young maiden. The sviatki episode of Pushkin’s novel marks the transition from the first half to the second, from Tatiana’s youth to adulthood. As a young girl, Tatiana’s romantic inclinations lead her to imagine a life for herself that will follow the tragic path of her Western counterparts, a path that includes both unrequited love and death. Her illusions begin to shatter when she is rejected by Onegin, but she does not achieve the maturity and resolve of adulthood until she “dies” to her former life. Because of her predilection for Western literature, Tatiana anticipates some sort of “death” for herself, but the form that it will take is not revealed until her sviatki dream. In her dream this transitional stage in her life is symbolically depicted by her participation in the mock funeral of the similarly transitional sviatki ritual. Her knowledge of Russian folklore, in particular the symbolism of sviatki, gives her the means with which to interpret the dream. Through the symbolism of the dream Tatiana comes to understand that everything in life is transitory, and she must now “die” to her youthful fantasies, including her love for Onegin. That “death” will be finalized when she enters into matrimony. The bear of her dream, i.e., the symbolic husband of her future, will mediate Tatiana’s transition into adulthood, and she, too, in the tradition of her mother and niania, will marry someone she does not love. With the awareness of this initial, transitory “death” comes the additional realization of her ultimate mortality. Through the symbolic sviatki folk ritual of transition, Pushkin has allowed his heroine to transition through a rite of passage into her next phase of life.

Not only is sviatki a turning point in the life of nature, but it is also a time of looking to the future and trying to predict what it holds. Many critics and readers believe
and will probably continue to believe that the intimations of death are referring to the death of Lenskii. In my view, however, the inherent connection of sviatki with death and marriage provides a viable argument for the interpretation of the death theme as associated also with the ritual death of Tatiana and as a prelude to her marriage and family life which are to come in Chapters Seven and Eight. Tatiana’s fortune telling does not predict specifics although many events are foreshadowed in the dream, including the name day party and the soiree of Chapter Eight, Tatiana’s visit to Onegin’s country home, and the duel of Onegin and Lenskii. No bridegroom is named but by interpreting the fortune telling and dream in the context of sviatki, it becomes clearer what path Tatiana’s life will take. She will marry, but the bridegroom will not be the beloved Onegin. The prediction of the servant women further fulfills this ritualistic function. Within all of the confusion and uncertainty of the eighteen stanzas devoted to the Yuletide activities, Pushkin very clearly and precisely outlines the future of the two Larin daughters. Thus, Pushkin, by means of the sviatki ritual, allows his reader to see into the future of Tatiana and Olga.

Notes

1 Maslenitsa is a folk celebration which marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It is now celebrated immediately before Lent, similar to the French carnival and German Fasching.
2 The date referred to in Eugene Onegin would have been according to the Julian calendar as the current Gregorian calendar was not adopted until 1918. January 2 of the Julian calendar would be equivalent to January 16 of the Gregorian calendar.
3 All quotes from Eugene Onegin have been taken from Vladimir Nabokov’s translation. It is preferred because it is a more literal translation. Stanza and verse numbers will be indicated with Latin letters in the manner of “2.35,” i.e., Chapter Two, Stanza XXXV.
4 It is interesting to note that in his study of Russian sviatki, Snegirev quotes a twelfth-century patriarch who also refers to the costumed revelers as chudovishcha.
5 Although some scholars claim that this is the most powerful form of dream fortune-telling, I have not read a single ethnographic account in which the mirror is enumerated as an object for dream-fortune-telling.
6 Translations of Zhukovskii’s “Svetlana” are mine. Numbers indicate the stanza.
7 Emphasis in all cases has been added.
Tolstoy placed a high value on folklore. This is evident throughout his literary works, in his pedagogical materials and ideas, personal life style, and vast collections of folk songs and sayings. Consequently, there is a substantial body of scholarship on the use of folklore in his works. Most of the research, however, focuses primarily on folklore as verbal art, i.e., Tolstoy’s use of folk tales, legends, folk songs, proverbs, and sayings in his writings. Speaking of the importance of folklore in War and Peace, scholars traditionally, and most frequently, address three topics: 1) the role of folklore in the episode describing the evening at Uncle’s estate (Mitka’s playing of the balalaika, Uncle’s singing and playing of the guitar, and Natasha’s accompanying dance); 2) the transformation experienced by Pierre through his acquaintance with Platon Karataev; and 3) the power that the folk song exerts over soldiers in time of war (the singing of “Akh, vy seni”). Although quite extensive, the scholarship on Tolstoy’s use of folklore neglects almost completely the folk ritual of sviatki as performed by the Rostov youth in War and Peace. What exists is, as Dundes would say, a prime example of “identification” without “interpretation.” This episode is most often viewed as a one-dimensional and self-explanatory portion of the novel which presents the members of the nobility and the peasant youth engaging together in ritual merrymaking. In his article “Fol’klor v romane [Voina i mir],” V. M. Potiavin devotes less than a page to the
discussion of Tolstoy’s representation of the ritual. In his view this is a utopian moment presenting nobility and peasants united in brotherly love (128). E. E. Zaidenshnur, in his less-than-two paragraph discussion, claims that the “essential role” of the *sviatki* episode and other folklore episodes in the novel is to offer “small artistic strokes” which, for one, “enliven the action,” and for another, “add to the description of the characters” (45). N. M. Fortunatov does not even mention the *sviatki* episode in his chapter on Tolstoy in *Russkaia literatura i fol’klor (konets XIX v.*). I. P. Tiurikov’s “Fol’klor kak sredstvo psikhologicheskogo analiza v romane L. N. Tolstogo *Voina i mir*** is the only critical source that offers perceptive comments about this episode. Later in this chapter I will discuss his opinions in detail.

The focus of my investigation is the significance of the frequently overlooked, yet essential fusion of the folk ritual of *sviatki* into the narrative fabric of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*. I will examine the role of *sviatki* both in terms of the structure and the negotiation of meaning in the work. As a traditional folk performance, *sviatki* signifies a time of change and renewal in the life of nature and humankind. Consequently, it is also a time of divining the future. It is hardly coincidental that the narrative segments depicting *sviatki* in *War and Peace* appear at a time of change and transition to a new stage in the life of two female characters, Natasha and Sonia. At the same time, the same narrative segment acquires a purely literary function by becoming a means for predicting the development of several of the main plotlines in the novel. The central role of the *sviatki* ritual in *War and Peace*, I contend, is to signify and foreground a major turning point in the lives of these two young women.
4.1 Tolstoy and Folklore

Tolstoy, like Pushkin, was able to draw from numerous sources in his portrayal of *sviatki* in *War and Peace*. The strain of romantic nationalism prevalent in the Golden Age produced an extensive body of work on folklore, both literary and ethnographic. Tolstoy, therefore, had access to many more written sources from which to gain knowledge and inspiration. Certainly Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* was the most important of the literary offerings that Tolstoy had recourse to, but numerous poems and short stories containing folkloric elements were also available to him. (See Chapter 2.) Tolstoy was no doubt familiar with many of them.

Like Pushkin, Tolstoy collected folk songs, folk tales, proverbs and sayings from the folk. Primarily as a result of his interactions with the peasants of Iasnaia Poliana, Tolstoy managed to record numerous examples of oral folklore and incorporated many of them into his literary works. The examples of Platon Karataev’s folk wisdom and the singing of “Akh, vy seni” illustrate this. Platon Karataev conveys his wisdom to Pierre through folk tales, proverbs and sayings and with their help transforms his outlook on life. Likewise, when the soldiers sing the familiar words of one of their folk songs, they are, if only for a few brief minutes, transformed and removed from the miserable conditions of war. Tolstoy’s enthusiasm for folklore is also evident in the fact that he used this same material, material that he had gathered from the folk, to teach the peasant children. For example, Tolstoy first recorded several versions of children telling one particular folk tale. He then wrote out the folk tale in the manner that it was told by the children and used the written version to help teach the children to read, hoping that the familiar topic would stimulate interest. Although Tolstoy did not record any observations of peasant rituals such as *sviatki* or *maslenitsa* which were part of his adult life, given his
prolonged, close contact with the peasants, it is hard to imagine that he did not witness or
even participate in such celebrations.

Tolstoy certainly participated in sviatki rituals as a child. In his *Remembrances* of
1903-1906, he fondly recalls his childhood experiences of the winter celebration. It is
doubtful that these memories are absolutely accurate in light of the fact that Tolstoy wrote
them as a man in his late seventies, looking back almost seventy years into his childhood.
It is difficult to determine whether the novel is patterned after real life or whether, in fact,
Tolstoy has molded the memories of his childhood after his masterpiece. Just as the
character Sonia from *War and Peace*, after fabricating several “visions” during the mirror
fortune telling that she engages in, began to believe that she had really seen Prince Andrei,
it is very possible that Tolstoy, more than thirty years after writing of sviatki in such a
monumental novel as *War and Peace*, may have begun to believe that many of the details
of the narration which he had invented were indeed the truth. Individual events recorded
by Tolstoy in the *Remembrances* of 1903-1906 may not be a factual representation of his
early life, but this, I believe, is irrelevant for my study. There is no doubt that the
childhood experience preceded both the writing of the novel and the *Remembrances.*
Whether accurate or not, for some reason the sviatki celebration made a lasting impression
on the young Tolstoy.

The specific sviatki which Tolstoy recorded in his *Remembrances* took place
during the mid 1830’s, before Tolstoy was nine years old. What impressed the boy most
were the mummers, dressing in costume, and being and playing with the house-serfs.
The game of rublik is described in detail. In *War and Peace*, rublik is one of several
games played, but it is only mentioned by name. The mummers and house-serfs of the
novel, however, play a prominent role and interact throughout the sviatki evening with the
young people. The novel’s performance takes on a very different perspective, though,
because of the presence of girls of marriageable age. The activities of Natasha and Sonia center more naturally around fortune telling which Tolstoy does not even mention in his *Remembrances*. Further reference will be made to the mummers of Tolstoy’s *Remembrances* later in the chapter, but here I would like to point out some similarities between the novel and the *Remembrances*, interesting in and of themselves although not relevant to the actual analysis of the function of the *sviatki* episode in the novel.

As a child Tolstoy enjoyed the activities of the adults in the family, but what he and his siblings preferred were the games played with the house-serfs. As a rule, about 30 house-serfs dressed in costume arrived for *sviatki* amusement. They played games and danced to the tunes of old man Grigorii’s violin. From Tolstoy’s description, it was apparently not unusual for the gentry to socialize with the house-serfs and partake in their celebrations.

Tolstoy expresses especially fond memories of one house-serf in particular, the butler Vasili, but other than him, none of the serfs is identified. The seasonal ritual made an especially strong impression because it was at that time that the favorite butler departed from his service at the Rostovs. Tolstoy describes in detail the moments directly preceding his departure. “Suddenly the door of the pantry opened, and Vasili, somehow especially buttoned up, without any tray or dishes passed through the side of the hall into the study” (376). At the beginning of the *sviatki* episode in *War and Peace*, Tolstoy describes a very similar situation with Sonia:

Sonya passed to the pantry with a glass in her hand. Natasha glanced at her and at the crack in the pantry door, and it seemed to her that she remembered the light falling through that crack once before and Sonya passing with a glass in her hand. ‘Yes, it was exactly the same,’ thought Natasha (552).
It is almost as if Tolstoy, through the eyes of Natasha and the actions of Sonia, is transported back to his childhood, to the memorable moment when he saw the pantry doors open and Vasili pass through them.

Music also occupies an important place in the sviatki celebrations or the events leading to them, both in the Remembrances and in War and Peace. The mummers of Tolstoy's memory dance to old man Grigorii's violin. The father of the visiting Islen'ev family plays the piano and sings in an "unforgettable" voice. In the novel music does not play a role in the sviatki events themselves, but is part of the Rostov family's activities immediately preceding the arrival of the mummers. Natasha attempts to play the guitar, and Dimmler later plays a song on the harp. At the request of the countess, Nikolai plays the clavichord and Natasha sings. Just as Islen'ev's voice was unforgettable to the remembering author, Natasha sings that evening as she has never sung before and as she will not sing for a long time.

Tolstoy, even as a child, was obviously not a passive observer but an active participant in many folklore celebrations of the Russian people. His memories of participating in the sviatki ritual as a child are very joyous ones. That excitement stems primarily from the close contact with the house-serfs and dressing in costume. Tolstoy transplant these strong, positive feelings into the characters of Natasha, Nikolai and Sonia and creates for them an equally happy memory, albeit one that later becomes saddened for Sonia.

4.2 A Multi-Leveled Performance

Tolstoy's textuahzation of the sviatki performance in War and Peace unfolds on three different, although closely interconnected, levels. The first and most obvious one pertains to the plot (fabula) and involves the conscious and customary actions of the
literary characters during their participation in the *sviatki* ritual.\(^8\) The second level is used to create a specific *sviatki* mood by engaging both the actions and the emotional responses of the performers. This mood signifies subtle changes in the psychological maturation of the characters which will become explicit much later in the story. At this level one finds an intricate interplay of intentional moves and psychological responses on the part of the characters. The third level involves a disguised ritual performance which is beyond the personal knowledge and intentions of the characters but is of major importance for the future development of the two female characters. The omniscient narrator makes the significance of this level accessible only to the intended reader. The interaction of these three levels creates dramatic tension within the *sviatki* episode. Its effect is also perceptible in the fate of Natasha and Sonia during many of the later turns of the story (e.g., the death of Prince Andrei, the lack of attention paid to Sonia by Nikolai). The *sviatki* folk ritual as performed in the nineteenth century (as presented in Chapter 2) will serve as a grid for my main task, i.e., defining the three levels of narration within the *sviatki* episode. Finally, I will explore the functions of these levels within the textual continuum of the novel.

Compared with Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, the number of pages which Tolstoy devotes to the *sviatki* episode in *War and Peace* seems rather small. Only eighteen pages out of fourteen hundred seventy-three are devoted to the ritual.\(^9\) Upon closer examination, however, it becomes clear that, just as in Pushkin’s novel in verse, this relatively short segment of the novel plays an important role in the development of the characters that participate in the ritual celebration, particularly Natasha and Sonia.

At the first level of narration, the level of the plot, Tolstoy creates a *sviatki* episode which is a result of the conscious intentions and actions of the characters. Tolstoy elects to focus on only one evening of the two-week-long *sviatki* ritual. This is the third day of
the so-called holy evenings, i.e., the first half of *sviatki*. Although the evening starts out quite uneventfully, it quickly turns into a typical *posidelki* for the Rostov youth, complete with fortune telling, mummers, and *posidelki* dances and games, all refracted at the first level of narration. Strictly speaking, only Natasha, Nikolai and Petia were children of the Rostov family, but because Sonia, their orphaned cousin, was raised with them, she is included here as the fourth member of the Rostov youth.

At this point of the novel, both the circumstances and the mood of the characters demand divination. The desire of Natasha and Sonia to know about their future husbands is the motivation for incorporating the *sviatki* fortune telling rituals. Just like the ballad heroine Svetlana who wishes to find out about her fiancé, Natasha longs for news from her fiancé, Prince Andrei. And just as Pushkin’s Tatiana hopes that divination attempts will show Onegin to be her ‘intended’ in marriage, Natasha’s cousin Sonia hopes to find out that she will marry Nikolai. In addition, boredom has built up among the Rostov youth after three days of church mass and congratulatory visits from the neighbors.

Whereas the *posidelki* games and dancing of the evening’s activities are described in little or no detail, Tolstoy mentions the fortune telling frequently and describes it with many particulars. He first alludes to fortune telling at the Rostov home when Natasha asks to have a rooster, oats, and chalk brought to her, but she is in a fickle mood and quickly changes her mind. In an earlier variant of this section of *War and Peace*, the reference to fortune telling is more explicit. Natasha actually discusses with some older women the process of fortune telling with a rooster (791). No fortune telling takes place at this time in either version, but the mood has already been established. The explicit account of divination comes later, after the arrival of the Rostovs and their entourage at the home of the Meliukovs. They find the Meliukov girls pouring wax and looking at the shadows made by the figures. The desire of the Meliukov girls to foretell their future
complements that of the Rostov girls. Again, neither Natasha nor Sonia join this particular form of divination, but its presence in the story intensifies their excitement about the celebration of sviatki.

However, during the next session of fortune telling, also at the Meliukovs', Sonia responds to the challenge to partake in the most frightful type of divination. She is instructed to make a trip to the barn and listen for noises because they will predict her future. "Hammering and knocking," she is told, are negative signs, while the "sound of shifting grain" is positive (563).\(^\text{10}\) Tolstoy, like Pushkin and Zhukovskii before him, mentions specifically the fear which this location for fortune telling activities inspires. Sonia’s determination to go to the feared barn emphasizes her strong desire and determination to make sure that Nikolai is her ‘intended.’ Of all the girls at the Meliukovs, she alone dares to undertake the risk. In terms of the plot (siuzhet), however, this act of fortune telling never takes place, for Sonia never reaches the barn, waylaid en route by the enamored Nikolai.

The fourth fortune telling session occurs after the return of the young girls from their big evening at the Meliukovs. It takes place in Natasha's bedroom, where Natasha’s maid has prepared two mirrors. Each of the girls tries to see her beloved’s reflection in them. Judging by the ethnographic data, this is a somewhat a-typical location for the mirror divination. The presence of icons and other religious symbols made the house less than ideal for attempts to contact the other world. It remains unclear whether this choice of place was intentional or not, but in light of Tolstoy’s attention to detail, he may have deliberately structured the fortune telling attempt so that its improper procedure coincided with its failure to bring results. Although neither of the girls sees anything, Sonia makes up a “vision.” This made-up vision adds what I consider an important twist to the account. At this point the knowledge of the reader becomes superior to that of some of
the characters. The reader knows the truth, i.e., that Sonia invented all she said, but for Natasha, Sonia's account is truthful.

The description of another component of the sviatki ritual, namely the mummers is also developed in detail. In traditional fashion, the mummers, house serfs of the Rostovs, arrive at their master's house and begin to dance and sing. They are dressed as "bears, Turks, inn-keepers, and ladies - frightening and funny" (558). In the final version of the novel, Dimmler, the tutor, appears as a clown, although in the earlier variant he cross-dresses as a witch (796). The Rostov youth choose the traditional cross-dressing. Nikolai dresses as "an old lady in a hooped skirt" and Petia as a Turkish girl. Natasha disguises herself as a hussar, and Sonia, as a Circassian with black mustache and eyebrows.

Although all four of the young people cross dress, a significant change in personality is noted only in connection with Sonia's mood and behavior. The mask, in this case the mustachioed face, gives her the freedom to do things which ordinarily would be considered improper. "She [Sonia] was in a spirited and energetic mood unusual with her" (558), Tolstoy remarks. "In her male attire," he adds, "she seemed quite a different person" (558). The changes in Sonia are so major that at times Nikolai thinks he does not recognize her. Perhaps therefore he is inexplicably attracted to her. "'This Circassian with the moustache I don't know," he muses, "but I love her'" (561). "That evening Sonia was brighter, more animated, and prettier, than Nicholas had ever seen her before" (564), Tolstoy adds. It is the timid and shy Sonia, and not the vivacious and daring Natasha, who begs Mme Schoss to accompany the girls to the home of the Meliukovs and declares her lack of fear apropos the fortune telling in the barn. Her determination along with the new identity provided by the mask enable Sonia to do that which otherwise
would not be acceptable for her. Emboldened and liberated by the special powers of the mask, i.e., her assumed identity, she succeeds as never before in attracting Nikolai.

The events described above constitute the sviatki performance of the first level of the narration. The second level involves the atmosphere that is created through descriptions and conversations which, in and of themselves, are not core activities of the sviatki period, but rather symbolic representations of those events. For instance, no fire is lit to warm the dead nor is any mock funeral performed, but the other world enters into the Rostov household, even before the arrival of the mummers, through the conversation of Natasha, Nikolai and Sonia. Their discussion centers first around reminiscences of their childhood, then proceeds to a time before they were born and thus evokes the idea of metempsychosis and the question of memory.11 “’We must all die,’” (554) responds Nikolai when Natasha asks if he does not feel that all good in life has passed. The three continue their reminiscing and are no longer capable of distinguishing between what really occurred and what did not as they discuss “those impressions of one’s most distant past in which dreams and realities blend” (555). Natasha believes that one’s memories can take one back to before one was born, but she and Sonia disagree as to what form their souls might have occupied. Whereas Sonia formulates her ideas from the beliefs of the Egyptians, Natasha favors a more Christian explanation. “’The Egyptians believed that our souls have lived in animals, and will go back into animals again’” (556), claims Sonia. “’We were angels somewhere there, and have been here, and that is why we remember’” (556), counters Natasha. The discussion does not form a part in any sviatki events, yet it echoes the desire embedded in this ritual season to establish contact with the other world.

Tiurikov’s reading lends support to this interpretation. When Petia announces the arrival of the mummers to the members of his family, Natasha is singing for them. Upon
hearing the news, she stops singing, calls her brother an “idiot,” and starts sobbing violently. Natasha, Tiurikov comments, is frightened by Petia’s announcement about the mummers because they bring to mind the recent discussion with Nikolai and Sonia about metempsychosis (82). Natasha knows that among the mummers will be those dressed as animals, bringing to life Sonia’s statement about our souls transmigrating to animals. Natasha would like to believe that people existed earlier as angels rather than as animals, and the mummers have destroyed her “poetic illusion” of this. Tiurikov’s interpretation supports the idea that Tolstoy intentionally chose the “holy evenings” for the sviatki episode of *War and Peace* in order to avoid the terrifying aspect of the mummers displayed during the “frightful evenings.” Although Tiurikov does not mention Prince Andrei, surely Natasha’s fears for the safety of her beloved inspire visions of him dying and becoming an angel or an animal, similar to one of the mummers.

The second level of the sviatki performance, the level at which atmosphere is created through descriptions and conversations, is activated again during the Rostovs’ drive to the Meliukovs. The description of the landscape and Nikolai’s thoughts echo the motifs commonly found in many koliadki, i.e., the long journey, the bright moon and stars of the night sky, the difficulty in finding the host’s house, and a fantastic description of the house itself. As the mummers - Natasha, Nikolai, Petia, Sonia, Dimmler and the house serfs - travel several miles in their troikas to the Meliukovs, Tolstoy makes numerous references to the night sky and the sky-like reflection on the earth below. “The snowy plain, bathed in moonlight and motionless, spread out before them glittering like diamonds and dappled with bluish shadows” (559). Throughout the trip Nikolai thinks that they are traveling in the wrong direction and wonders how they will find their destination. He does not recognize any of the surroundings: “‘Where are we?’ thought he. ‘It’s the Kosoy meadow, I suppose. But no - this is something new I’ve never seen
before. This isn't the Kosoy meadow, nor the Demkin hill, and heaven only knows what it is!" (560). Nikolai compares the arrival at the Meliukov home with the arrival at a forest with "a glitter of diamonds and a flight of marble steps and the silver roofs of fairy buildings" (561). Again the characters are not really aware of the parallels to the koliadki songs, activated through their perception of the surroundings, but their feeling of a fairy-tale journey itself forms such ties via its very being and thus fashions their mood in a way typical of the season.

The third level of performance intensifies the effect of the first two levels even further. It involves developments that occur without the characters' knowledge and is created primarily through Tolstoy's semantics and syntax, i.e., by means of his choice of lexical items and the iconic principle of reflecting semantic structures. This level is a narrative counterpart of the sviatki ritual that evolves at the level of the plot (fabula). It is perhaps the most "true" sviatki and it unfolds simultaneously with the most obvious one, i.e., the sviatki performance of the first level. In its function of foretelling the future, the third narrative level of sviatki not only offers its prediction, but uncompromisingly subjects the characters to their fates.

By choosing the third evening of the "holy evenings" as the time for his account of the sviatki performance, Tolstoy avoids the issue of the power of the "magic of the first day" as well as the shocking nature of the "frightful evenings." Since the action takes place during the "holy evenings," the overall mood of his sviatki episode remains positive. Also significant is the fact that none of the fortune telling events involving Natasha and Sonia really takes place, because this creates a sense of playful performance rather than full-fledged ritual divinations. Therefore, it is not surprising that the changes (such as Nikolai's new attitude towards Sonia) which occur at the first level during the
sviatki episode do not prove to be lasting. It is the third level of the narrative which offers the reader a credible glimpse at the future of the characters.

At the third level of discourse and coexistent with the atmosphere of koliadki is the impression of fairy-tale magic associated with the troika ride to the Meliukovs. Nikolai sees the whole journey as something enchanted. The word volshebnyi - meaning "magical, bewitching, enchanted" - appears six times in the description of the landscape and of Nikolai's feelings. The repetition of the word is essential in establishing the fairy-tale associations, and since the Maudes' version does not render uniformity in the translation of the word, I offer my own. While gazing at the surrounding landscape, Nikolai thinks, "It's something new and magical" ("Eto chto novoe i volshebnoe.") [Emphasis added], a thought reinforced by the narrative description of "the magic plain" ("volshebnaya ravnina"). Nikolai believes they have arrived at "a magical forest" ("kakoi-to volshebnyi les") with "magical buildings" ("volshebnye zdaniia"). During the return home he feels once again that he is "in a magical kingdom" ("v volshebnom tsarstve"). Finally, he declares to Natasha that he thinks the whole evening has been "something magical" ("chto-to volshebnoe"). The high frequency of the word volshebnyi creates a feeling that one is indeed traveling through another world, and that this whole adventure takes place at the border between the real and the supernatural. It is a fusion of a volshebnaia skazka (a fairy tale) of the mind and a realistic description.

Within this "fairy tale kingdom" both people and places appear to be what they are not. Natasha and Sonia are profoundly transformed by this magic. Under normal circumstances Natasha is "emotional and romantic" and "central to the action," to use Harold Schefski’s characteristics, whereas Sonia is "rational and practical" and "peripheral" to the action. The two girls, however, fall prey to the magical setting created by Tolstoy. The transformational power of the sviatki ritual seemingly reverses the roles
of the two girls. Not only because of the unfolding of the events, but also because of the stylistic means employed by Tolstoy (i.e., syntax and lexicon), Sonia acquires romantic characteristics and assumes a central role, while Natasha becomes cautiously rational and moves to the periphery during the acts of divination.

Sonia takes on her new role as the young mummers set off for the Meliukovs. The masks, the costumes, the diamond-studded sky, the snowy plain, and the sviatki mood create the essence of a fairy-tale experience. In this enchanted world, Nikolai discovers a Sonia whom he has never seen before and whom he decides to marry: “The same happy smiling Circassian with moustache and beaming eyes looking up from under a sable hood, was still sitting there, and that Circassian was Sonya, and that Sonya was certainly his future happy and loving wife” (566). Tolstoy emphasizes Sonia’s new qualities which become evident because of the sviatki celebration by the demonstrative adjective “that.” It is “that Sonia,” as transformed by the sviatki performance, whom Nikolai wants to make his wife. The importance of the transformation is further emphasized by the fact that as soon as the sviatki costume is removed, and the previous Sonia, the one who normally lives in the Rostov household, reemerges, the intensity of Nikolai’s resolve subsides. In the end he never marries her.

The fairy-tale atmosphere of the sviatki journey is noted by Tiurikov who also remarks that the sequence of events during the magical evening in many ways follows the morphology of the fairy tale as outlined by Vladimir Propp (84). The hero-Nikolai leaves home on a journey and arrives at a magical kingdom. He disobeys his parents and pursues a girl who is not to their liking. He then returns home with his “bride.” Tiurikov adds that (according to Propp) the hero of the fairy tale returns from the magical kingdom having entered a new stage of his life, i.e., he has attained the independence of adulthood. However, Tiurikov fails to note that, because of the third level of the narration, an ironic
level, the *sviatki* divination functions as an implicit warning (aimed at the reader) that Nikolai is not Sonia's "intended" bridegroom and that the marriage will not materialize.

This is not surprising since during the fortune telling at the Meliukovs, outward appearances seem very promising for Sonia and Nikolai in terms of their desired union. Sonia leaves the house in order to participate in the divination in the barn, she accidentally meets Nikolai, they kiss, and then go to the barn together. Thus, at the first level, i.e., the ritual performance, the fortune telling is never carried out. Although Sonia is instructed to "stand silent and listen" (564) for the sound of knocking (a negative sign) or shifting grain (a positive sign), she neither stands still and listens, nor does she hear any knocking or shifting of grain. Moreover she interacts with Nikolai which is not part of the ritual. The actual fortune telling occurs only as one considers the third level, i.e., that of stylistic devices and narrative semantics. Thus, there are both "silence" and "knocking," indicators not perceived by Sonia, but by Nikolai. As Nikolai waits outside for Sonia, all has become "perfectly silent." The first thing that is heard as Sonia heads down the path is the "knocking" of feet on the steps, the feet of an "old maid." In view of the later developments in the life of the characters, this turns out to be the prophetic noise:

A tree in the garden snapped with the frost, and then all was again perfectly silent. His bosom seemed to inhale not air, but the strength of eternal youth and gladness.

From the back porch came the sound of feet descending the steps, the bottom step, upon which snow had fallen, gave a ringing creak and he heard the voice of an old maidservant saying, 'Straight, straight along the path, Miss. Only don't look back.'
'I am not afraid,' answered Sonya's voice, and along the path towards Nicholas came the crunching, whistling sound of Sonya's feet in her thin shoes. (564-65)  

Tolstoy chooses the same verb, *stuchat' / zastuchat', both to give Sonia her instructions for the barn-divination and to indicate the knocking of the old maid's feet. Accordingly, the knocking sound of the old maid's feet predicts Sonia's future as an old maid - an irony that escapes the characters but not the attentive reader.

During the course of the evening's fortune telling at the Meliuoks, an account was given about the voice of a spirit, a young lady's 'intended,' who visited her in the bathhouse. "'And how ... did he speak?'" inquired one of the girls present at the discussion. "'Like a man'" (563), responded the old maid telling the story. Sonia was not specifically instructed to listen for a voice, but during the implicit barn divination a voice does speak to her. And how did the voice speak to Sonia? It not only spoke like an old maid, but was in fact an old maid, thus "predicting" Sonia's ultimate destiny.

This passage might be interpreted as two different forms of fortune telling, both of which offer the same prediction for Sonia's future. The most prominent and probably most significant is the implicit barn divination. In this scene, Tolstoy's discourse is also informed by mirroring of words, phrases, and sounds. The semantic ambivalence of the mirroring offers another instance of implicit fortune telling that supports and strengthens the effect of the first. In the second half of the episode, the description of Sonia mirrors almost every action of the old maid mentioned in the first half, including: 1) the feet of the two females; 2) the sounds that the feet make; 3) the ground where they stand; 4) their voices; 5) their act of speaking, and finally, 6) the direct speech. Tolstoy describes the old maid in the above order but reverses the order in a mirror-like fashion for his description of Sonia. The syntactic mirroring as well as the knocking of the old maid's feet intimates Sonia's fate to become an old maid. Sonia does not notice either the noises,
nor the mirror-like parallels. Instead, Nikolai finds himself in the position of Sonia, but
he should not be there according to the ritual. This substitution obscures the significance
of the episode as a sviatki fortune-telling event. Its significance, encoded by
compositional and lexical parallelism can be discerned by the reader only in view of the
later developments of the relations between Sonia and Nikolai.

This third stylistic level with its implicit and ironically reversed divination is
activated for the last time when Natasha and Sonia try their luck telling fortunes with
mirrors after returning home. Although Sonia did not really see anything in the mirror
during this session, she does not want to disappoint Natasha and claims that she has seen
Natasha’s fiancé Prince Andrei. In this case, it is the future of Natasha that is foretold.
According to Sonia’s made-up story, she saw Andrei lying down. When Natasha is
alarmed because she fears this means that he is ill, Sonia immediately attempts to calm her
anxiety, providing additional made-up details which alter the interpretation:

‘No, on the contrary, on the contrary! His face was cheerful, and he turned to
me.’ And when saying this she herself fancied she had really seen what she
described.
‘Well and then, Sonya?...’
‘After that, I could not make out what there was; something blue and red ....’

It is only natural that Sonia claims to see the colors blue and red - colors of flags and
uniforms which were common sights during Russia’s war with France. Both the young
girls and the reader may see them as the colors of the French flag, thus alluding to the war
with Napoleon. Or blue may be the color of Andrei’s uniform and red the color of
blood. Knowing the developments of the novel, one might say that the colors allude to
Natasha’s future with Pierre Bezukhov who was raised in France. Or perhaps blue and
red symbolize here the colors used by most nations for the artillery which caused the
death of Prince Andrei. Since Tolstoy himself served as an artillery man in the Caucasus,
this is not improbable. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact significance of the two colors, but as part of this act of ”fortune telling,” they are most certainly connected with the fate of Natasha and, consequently, to the fate of Andrei and Pierre. Unbenownst to herself, Sonia’s words are, in fact, prophetic.

The fortune-telling episode with the mirrors as well as the previous one belong to the first level, but at the same time they also function on the third level, i.e., as compositional and stylistic devices that affect the structure of the plot (siuzhet) of the novel. Tolstoy’s playful transformation of the fortune-telling situation is not apparent to the performers of the sviatki ritual, instead it is aimed at the implied readers.

Schefski has already noted Sonia’s capacity to fulfill the role of messenger, reporting on the various crises in Natasha’s life (284). One must also add that she conveys important information not only to Natasha and other characters, but also to the reader. In the case of the divination with the mirror, she actually conveys two conflicting messages. In her desire to marry Nikolai, Sonia wishes for the return of Prince Andrei and his marriage to her friend because this will prevent Nikolai from marrying Andrei’s sister, Princess Mar’ia. That is why to Natasha she imparts the picture of a cheerful and healthy Prince Andrei. To the reader, however, she proffers Andrei’s hidden and true fortune. In the momentary confusion of Sonia’s fabrication, the reader glimpses the wounded and dying Andrei of Natasha’s real future.

The complexity of Tolstoy’s inscribed interpretative strategies is noted by Viktor Vinogradov. In his study “On the Language of Tolstoy” (“O iazyke Tolstogo”), he concludes that the full meaning of Tolstoy’s words can be decoded only by taking into account the fact that “the essence of things and notions is not directly conveyed in words, but is [refracted] through the prism of cultural and everyday traditions of the given society which are bound to calcified phraseology” (161). He detects two semantic levels in
Tolstoy’s texts. One is what Vinogradov calls the functional connections between objects and events, and the other one is the essence (sushchnost’) of these objects and events which can be obscured by “words/masks” (162). The message of the text, he maintains, is the result of the interaction between these two levels which takes place as the narrative unfolds. Consequently, Vinogradov discerns two different styles in Tolstoy’s works. One of them, in his opinion, is “misleading, romantically-elated, and does not adequately convey [the meaning of the references to] real life,” while the other calls “things by their ‘real’ names” and is intended as “an expression of the ‘authentic’ flow of events” (164). It is the task of the reader to identify and navigate between the two styles in order to adequately decode the authorial message.

What Vinogradov singles out as the “first style” of Tolstoy’s narratives is comparable to the first level of the presentation of sviatki in War and Peace, i.e., it can be regarded as misleading, influenced by the romantic tradition, and inadequately representing or foretelling the future of the literary characters. Taken literally, the portrayal of the events during the sviatki celebration camouflages rather than reveals the true significance of the episode. In turn, what I have defined as a second and third level of narration in this portion of the novel, corresponds to Vinogradov’s “second style,” because the decoding requires correcting the effect of “the prism” of the sviatki celebration as well as of its literary renditions (the best known being Tat’iana’s dream and participation in the sviatki ritual in Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin and Zhukovskii’s ballad “Svetlana”) by taking into account the actions of the characters and the events of the entire novel. In order to decode the fine points of Tolstoy’s message, the competent, contemporary reader was in all probability expected to filter the text through both of these traditions while keeping them within the context of the novel. However, the historical reader, or a reader unfamiliar with one or both of these traditions, could be in a
disadvantaged position. Because of his/her inadequate set of cultural references, he/she may not be able to penetrate beyond the stylistic level characterized by Vinogradov as "romantically-elated" and "misleading."

The first and third levels of narration, as I have identified them, further interact in a manner comparable to that defined by Vinogradov to formulate what I will term the "moral" of the sviatki episode. At the first level, both Natasha and Sonia participate in the fortune telling of sviatki, even though Natasha's involvement is to a much lesser degree than that of her cousin. In their youthful naiveté, both believe that the divination will reveal important facts of their future to them. Their approach to the rituals, however, differs significantly and is most evident during the evening's mirror divination. Natasha, when she looks into the mirror, sees nothing and is honest about her observations. Sonia, on the other hand, also sees nothing but fabricates a story in the hopes of manipulating her own fate. During the rest of the evening she tries equally to capitalize on the believed-in magic of sviatki. She allows the costume and mask of the Circassian to change her into somebody unrecognizable. On the way to the barn, she responds to the advances of Nikolai which in a sense "fabricates" a positive prediction for the incomplete divination. In essence, Sonia lies in an attempt to force the direction of her future.

Gary Saul Morson, in his analysis of narrative in War and Peace, offers an insightful explanation for Tolstoy's representation of the development of the events in one's life (85-129). Events happen due to a myriad of random factors, and it is possible for us to know only a small fraction of them. Therefore we cannot determine what will happen in any given situation. If we have a set plan for any endeavor, we will only be frustrated with complications. We must learn to be flexible and "negotiate the uncertainties" (86) for "the narratives we construct are always at war with the lives we lead" (129). As demonstrated by the sviatki episode, Sonia is not able to live in this
manner. She tries to determine her course of life and is not able to successfully "negotiate the uncertainties" which she encounters.

The third level of narration, which reveals to the reader the ironic truth about the future of the two girls, also interacts with the first level to advise the reader of this same view of life which Tolstoy holds. Natasha's frustration and concern about her beloved Prince Andrei reveal themselves in all honesty during the enchanted evening at the Meliukovs. Although her beloved will die, as revealed by the fake mirror divination at the third level, her openness and sincerity will in the end lead her to fulfillment in life. Sonia, on the other hand, will suffer the consequences for trying to force a particular "plan" onto her life. She cannot even accept the innocuous predictions of the fortune-telling fixation of young girls. Because she seeks to control the results of the evening and ultimately her whole existence, she, as revealed at the third level, will not obtain what Tolstoy considers to be fulfillment in life but is destined to be an old maid.

4.3 Accuracy of Depiction and Attention to Detail

Tolstoy took great care to create an appropriate atmosphere for the enactment of the sviatki episode of War and Peace, both in his choice of setting and characters. This is evident when one compares the final, published version of the novel with an earlier variant of the text as well as Tolstoy's Reminiscences, and when one takes into consideration the characters who were excluded from the celebration. In the folk tradition, the location and the people present at posidelki would affect the accuracy of divination attempts and the general atmosphere of the celebration. Tolstoy's attention to such detail only reinforces the hypothesis that he intentionally created the evening as a transformational time for some of his characters, i.e., Natasha and Sonia.
The earlier variant of the *sviatki* episode reveals, in particular, probable reasons for Tolstoy's choice of the Meliukovs' home for the enactment of the *posidelki* and the barn-divination. In the earlier variant, the Rostovs and serf-mummers go to Uncle's house to celebrate (796-97). The location of Uncle's house was a successful choice for the preceding episode in which Natasha performs a folk dance to the accompaniment of the balalaika. Perhaps Tolstoy wished to replicate the transformational, folk scene by selecting the same location for the *sviatki* episode, but, in fact, it proved to be inappropriate. In the earlier variant, "Uncle" is not overly enthusiastic at the arrival of the exuberant young mummers at his house. Nevertheless, his peasant lover, Anis'ia Fedorovna, helps the young girls in the art of fortune telling. She encourages the girls to go to the barn and instructs them as to the proper procedure for the divination. In the published version of *War and Peace*, Nikolai suggests that the mummers go to "Uncle's," probably because of the recent and very positive memory of the dancing and singing at his home after the hunt. The countess, however, suggests that they not "disturb the old fellow" (558) and that they go to the Meliukovs, instead, because Uncle's house is too small and they "wouldn't have room to turn round there" (558). The countess is certainly a wise woman because the Meliukovs' turns out to be the perfect location for the celebration.

Not only does the spaciousness of the Meliukov home allow for the *posidelki* games and dances which would have been rather limited in Uncle's small house, but the atmosphere is more conducive to the events which unfold that evening. Rather than the "old fellow" who has difficulty appreciating the enthusiasm of his young relatives, the arrival of the four Rostov troikas finds the daughters of Pelageya Danilovna Meliukova already involved in fortune telling. Their frame of mind not only parallels that of the
Rostov girls but in fact heightens it. The commonality of interests among the Meliukov and Rostov girls provides a more natural transition to the important barn divination.

Tolstoy’s first variant also places Anis’ia Fedorovna in a somewhat awkward position. In the previous episode at Uncle’s house, she is a smiling, barefoot figure who closes doors, fetches guitars, and serves food. Her only words are as she encourages the guests to take food. To make a sudden shift in personality to an instigator of fortune telling and an active participant in the evening’s events seems out of keeping. But since the Rostov girls are not experienced at fortune telling, they need an instructor. At the Meliukovs’, Pelageya Danilovna, herself, has experienced divination in a barn and helps create the magical evening for the girls. The main teacher of barn divination, however, is an old maid servant who lives with the family. Not only does she suggest that the girls try this form of fortune telling, but she frightens them with a story and accompanies Sonia outside to point her in the proper direction. It is the feet of this old maid that “knock” as they descend the steps. Thus, the change in location to the Meliukovs’ not only provides a larger facility and appropriate instructor, but the unmarried, unattached status of the “old maid servant” becomes the actualization of Sonia’s fortune telling.

A comparison of the published novel with Tolstoy’s Remembrances reveals possible reasons for Tolstoy’s attention to lighting details and his choice of mummer costumes. In his Remembrances Tolstoy recalls playing with the house-serfs during sviatki in the corner of a very dimly lit room. In his novel he recreates the sviatki mood of his youth through the dimly-lit, favorite corner of Natasha, Nikolai and Sonia. It is part of the sitting room and is especially dark in the area of the couch where the youth sit, accenting the light of the full moon which is apparent in the darkness. Tolstoy places emphasis on the lighting in order to create a scene which fosters an atmosphere conducive
to the intimate talks of the young Rostovs and thereby also the arrival of the mummers and the subsequent *sviatki* celebration.

When Tolstoy recalls the celebration of his youth, he describes the factual arrival of the serf-mummers in a similar manner to the arrival of serf-mummers at the home of the Rostovs: "The house-serfs, many of them, about 30, all dressed in costume, came into the house, played different games and danced to the violin playing of old Grigorii." The costumes included "a bear with a guide, a goat, Turkish men and women, brigands, peasant women [dressed as] men and peasant men [dressed as] women" (378). One specific year he remembers the Islen'ev family arriving dressed in surprising costumes: "there was an elegant dress-up costume, there was a boot, a cardboard clown." In the *Remembrances* Tolstoy tells with fondness of being dressed as a Turk, himself. Another especially impressionable sight for the young boy was the feminine counterpart, "Masha turchanka," "Masha the Turkish woman," the costume which he later gave to young Petia. The unusual costumes of the Islen'ev family did not work their way into text of *War and Peace*, except in the clown costume of the tutor Dimmler. More than likely Tolstoy preferred to stay with the more traditional costumes of the house-serfs and peasants rather than incorporate the unconventional and eccentric costumes of a gentry family. Since the post of tutor was neither gentry nor house-serf, however, Dimmler was the perfect person to don at least one of the strange but impressive costumes of the Islen'evs. Although it is the peasant men and women of his remembrances who cross-dress, in his novel Tolstoy assigns this role not to the Rostov house-serfs but to the four Rostov children. Because of its erotic nature, the costumes of the peasant women and men were most appropriate for young people wanting to attract a member of the opposite sex.
On the occasion that Tolstoy's aunt dressed him as a Turk, he recalls that she
drew a black mustache and eyebrows on his face. He further remembers that he was so
pleased with his new face that it was difficult to keep from smiling: "looking into the
mirror at his fact with its black mustache and eyebrows, I couldn't suppress a smile of
satisfaction, but I should have put on the majestic face of a Turk" (378). In War and
Peace, the excitement that Tolstoy experienced in his childhood guise is transferred not to
Nikolai or Petia, but to Natasha and especially Sonia. Natasha and Sonia dress, not as
Turks, but as a hussar and a Circassian, complete with black mustache and eyebrows.
Both girls that evening are transformed into something new and different. Tolstoy,
through Nikolai, remarks only once about the strangeness of Natasha's mustache and
eyebrows, but he comments on the magical qualities of Sonia's new face a total of nine
times.

A close look at the published text itself exposes another important component in
Tolstoy's choice of participants, or in this case, "non-participants." As the Rostov youth
and house serfs prepare to depart for the Meliukovs, the question arises as to who should
accompany them as a chaperone for the young girls. Count Rostov expresses desire to
dress up and accompany the young people, but the countess does not consent to let him
go because of his bad leg. Instead, the governess, Mme Schoss, a much less inhibiting
character, accompanies the girls. Thus Tolstoy gives Natasha and Sonia freedom from
parental supervision during their magical evening.

4.4 Natasha, Sonia and Literary Tradition

When one commences a comparative analysis of the sviatki episodes of two great
works discussed so far in this study, Eugene Onegin and War and Peace, one might be
surprised at the number of similarities between the two in regard to the sviatki motif and,
consequently, at the material that Tolstoy, a truly great author in his own right, seems to have “borrowed” from his predecessor. On the other hand, it is not at all surprising in view of the fact that Pushkin was regarded as the “national poet,” and he “taught subsequent novelists (especially Lermontov, Turgenev, and Tolstoi) what sort of actuality to capture and how to encode it” (Todd 356). Indeed, the plot and characters of the sviatki episode of Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin reverberate throughout the corresponding scenes of War and Peace.

A close reading of the sviatki episode of Tolstoy’s War and Peace, however, discloses not only refractions of Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin, but also other works such as Gogol’s “Night Before Christmas” and Bestuzhev-Marlinskii’s “A Terrible Divination.” In particular, alongside the image of Tatiana is the image of Zhukovskii’s Svetlana. I will discuss each of these literary refractions, beginning with a comparative analysis of Pushkin’s work since it is here that we see the greatest amount of intertextuality. Where appropriate I will draw connections to other works.

The most obvious similarity between the sviatki celebrations of the two works concerns the main characters, their relationship to each other, and their relations to the "supporting cast" of characters, especially to the peasants. Since the young maiden is central to almost all events during the traditional folk celebration of sviatki, one might expect the authors to focus upon a young girl of marriageable age. The fact that two girls - or to be more precise, two sisters/cousins - and their respective male counterparts appear in each of the accounts may be more than just a mere coincidence. It is conceivable that Tolstoy intentionally or unintentionally kept in mind the cast of characters in Pushkin’s novel.

At the same time, the actual renditions of the sviatki episodes show differences in detail and emphasis of characters. Whereas Tatiana, the female protagonist of Evgentii
Onegin, is the main participant in the fortune telling events with her sister Olga making an appearance only during Tatiana's dream and at the end of it, Natasha, the protagonist of War and Peace, plays a more passive role. In contrast, Sonia, Natasha's orphaned cousin who has been raised with her as a sister, is the center of attention in the corresponding episode of War and Peace. The fact that Olga and Natasha are already betrothed significantly alters their purpose for partaking in the festivities. They have no need of discovering who the 'intended' of their future life is. Both of their fiancés, however, are killed shortly after the sviatki narratives. Tatiana and Sonia, on the other hand, participate in the events of this magical time with great passion and determination. Both girls are in love but unsure whether that loved one returns her love. Each has set herself the goal of finding out if her 'intended' is indeed the same person with whom she is in love.

Tolstoy develops the contrast between Natasha and Sonia not only through a reverse in the intertextual references to the protagonist and secondary Larina sisters, Tatiana and Olga, but also by alluding to the literary prototype for all such sviatki fortune telling, Zhukovskii's Svetlana. As discussed in Chapter 3, although Tatiana and Svetlana share many features, Tatiana is an active participant in the season's rituals while Svetlana takes part in the divination only through the coaxing of her friends. Looking at the two young girls of Tolstoy's work, we find that the differences between Natasha and Sonia bear striking similarity to the two earlier protagonists. In their relationship to the fortune telling of sviatki, Tolstoy has given the qualities of Svetlana and Tatiana to the characters of Natasha and Sonia, respectively, intensifying the already close intertextual bonds with the earlier works.

When viewed in the sister/cousin relationship of Tatiana/Olga and Natasha/Sonia, Natasha's role in the sviatki celebration much more closely resembles that of Olga than Tatiana. The strong opposition between Tatiana and Svetlana concerning their enthusiasm
about the seasonal festivities, however, underscores a further intertextual relationship between Natasha and Svetlana which is stronger than that between Natasha and Olga. Neither Svetlana, Olga, nor Natasha participate aggressively in the fortune-telling events of the evening, i.e., Svetlana must be encouraged by her friends; Olga is not present during the textual narration; and Natasha does not show interest in performing the barn divination. Differences arise, however, when one considers the beloved men of the three girls. The men in the lives of Svetlana and Natasha are both far away at war. Each of the girls is therefore concerned with the state of being of her beloved, hoping that he alive and well and wishing for his immediate return. Olga, however, does not need to seek reassurance about the status of her betrothed. Her beloved Lenskii is, at this point in Pushkin's novel, quite safe and sound.

A comparison of all five young girls lends support to the earlier argument that Tolstoy does, in fact, use the ritual to convey what he sees as a basic principle of life. Although all the girls engage in the sviatki fortune-telling rituals with varying degrees of enthusiasm and active participation, Svetlana, Tatiana, Olga, and Natasha (I include Olga with some reservation since description of her involvement in divination is negligible.) allow the fortune telling and its subsequent results to take its natural course. They all participate in the rituals with, on the one hand, a naive belief in the powers of the rituals, and, on the other hand, honesty in regards to the results. Only Svetlana marries her beloved, but all go on to lead respectable and fulfilled lives. Sonia, however, is neither honest about her participation in the rituals nor her expectations in life. Because she cannot be open to life and the uncertainties that it brings, she will not be able to experience it in its fullness as a married member of society.

Returning to the comparison between *Eugene Onegin* and *War and Peace*, similarities exist also between the young men who are objects of the girls' affections.
Both of the betrothed men, Lenskii and Prince Andrei, die an early and violent death. Each of the deaths is hinted at during the earlier fortune telling. In each case the fortune telling involves the use of a mirror, and its message is revealed to the uninvolved girl, i.e., in her dream Tatiana sees Lenskii, Olga's betrothed, killed in a duel, and Sonia claims to have seen Prince Andrei, Natasha's betrothed, in the mirror. The other young men, Onegin and Nikolai, are unsure how to approach the women in love with them. Both show affection to the girls during the celebration of sviatki, but in each case the affection is inspired through the magical qualities of the folk ritual. Onegin shows tenderness toward Tatiana when he places his head on her shoulder, a vision inspired by Tatiana's dream. Nikolai falls in love with the attractive, costumed Sonia, a product of the fairy-tale evening at the Meliukovs. In neither case does the relationship progress to marriage. Although Nikolai might have been willing to marry the poor Sonia, his inclinations are highly discouraged by his family. Onegin did, in fact, seek out the strong Tatiana but found a woman resolved to stay with the man she had married.

Not one of the four girls involved marries the man she loves at the time of the sviatki celebrations. Fulfilling the purpose of sviatki divination, however, the fate of each of the four girls is determined through some compositional equivalents of fortune telling whose ultimate meaning is revealed not to the girls themselves, but to the reader. Whereas in each of the novels the girls receive confusing or misleading messages in response to their attempts at divination, another level of fortune telling performance foretells their true narrative destiny. Pushkin reveals the future of Tatiana and Olga through the fortune-telling songs in which the maid-servants of the Larin household each year foretell soldier-husbands for the girls. The message of the songs, however, goes unnoticed by the two girls. Tolstoy reveals the destiny of Natasha and Sonia through a
syntactically-constructed mirror divination and a lexically-constructed barn divination, available only to the intended reader.

The secondary characters of each of the two works also bear strong likeness to each other. Both Pushkin and Tolstoy include in their sviatki episodes a mix of gentry and peasants, young and old, married and single, men and women. In both cases the peasant women give advice to the young girls and recount stories of their own experiences. It is also they who in the end divine for the reader the true future of Tatiana, Olga, and Sonia. Tatiana's niania instructs her in the proper method of bathhouse divination, and the old maid of the Meliukov household coaches Sonia on barn divination. The maid-servants sing the truth about the future of the two Larin daughters, and the feet and voice of the Meliukov's servant predict the future for Sonia.

Additionally, one finds strong parallels between the specific activities which constitute the sviatki episode of the plots of the two works. Each of the novels focuses on the performance of fortune telling and the presence of mummers at posidelki (if we can assume that the get-together in Tatiana's dream is a posidelki and that the monsters are in actuality mummers). It is not surprising that Pushkin and Tolstoy would both emphasize the motif of fortune telling, since in the folk tradition, fortune telling holds for young girls the answers to their restlessness and uncertainty concerning the future. The motif of mummery creates an aura of the supernatural and offers a setting for developing new identities. The two novels are, however, in opposition to each other in the degree to which the girls (excluding Olga) actually take part in the divinatory practices. In Eugene Onegin Tatiana actively engages in all the fortune telling. In fact, she is the only performer of whom the reader is aware. Although a cursory reading of the divination activities leave one with the impression that Sonia and Natasha also actively engage in fortune telling, they, in fact, do not complete any of their attempts. Tolstoy uses the
descriptions of fortune telling to create a seasonal mood as well as the illusion that the two female characters have, in fact, made an attempt to probe into their future.

One also finds similarities between the individual methods of fortune telling in both novels, each including divination with wax, with a mirror or mirrors, and divination in the bathhouse or barn. Pushkin and Tolstoy both speak of the bathhouse/barn fortune telling as being very frightful, and in both cases the attempt is canceled. Although there are differing reasons for the aborted endeavors, a look at an earlier version of *War and Peace* shows some very interesting parallels between the two works. In what may be another case of allusion to Pushkin, Tolstoy wrote, but later rejected, a version in which Natasha refuses to go to the barn because she is too frightened. Among all the forms of fortune telling in each of the works, the fortune-telling with mirrors is most important for Tatiana and Natasha, as well as for the reader, even though each girl experiences an unproductive attempt at mirror divination. Although Tatiana obtains no results from her mirror-moon divination, her future unfolds through the combined fortune telling of the mirror and the dream. While Natasha and Sonia see nothing during their mirror divination, Sonia's desire to please and calm Natasha makes her attempt to predict Natasha's future, thus revealing Natasha's destiny to the reader.

Although mummers also play an important role in each of the novels, the costumed characters and the corresponding *posidelki* events are themselves interpreted very differently by Pushkin and Tolstoy. In *Eugene Onegin* the mummers are refracted as the frightful monsters whom Tatiana sees in the hut. Their bodies are grotesque, surreal combinations of different animals, a witch, or a skeleton, or a strange windmill who dances. There is nothing humorous about them. Onegin, Lenskii, Olga and Tatiana are somehow removed from the horrifying nature of the mummers in that they do not wear costumes. But Onegin's actions toward Tatiana and Lenskii are equally as terrifying in
both their erotic and murderous qualities. On the other hand, the costumes of the mummers of *War and Peace* are funnier than they are terrifying. They encourage laughter and the friendly interaction of the participants. The four Rostov youth join fully in the celebration by donning their own costumes as members of the opposite sex.

For Pushkin the mock funeral is the most significant event at the *posidelki* of Tatiana’s dream and is only one of the allusions to death in the seasonal ritual which bodes unpleasant developments for Tatiana’s immediate future. In contrast, games, fortune telling, and general merry-making highlight Tolstoy’s depiction. Tolstoy chooses a much gentler approach to foretelling the future of Natasha and Sonia. In *War and Peace* the *posidelki* and fortune telling leave the two girls with an exciting day and at least some hope. Although all three girls face futures filled with many hardships and much turmoil, they approach them with different attitudes. Natasha and Sonia face their futures without the sense of foreboding with which Tatiana must face hers.

Perhaps the dissimilarities in the type of mummers and *posidelki* recounted by the two authors, as well as the differences in the general mood created by them, are also the reason for their choice of opposite time periods of *sviatki*. The events at the Larin household begin on the third of January, in the very middle of the frightful evenings. At the Rostovs all action takes place on the third day of *sviatki*, the very middle of the holy evenings. Consequently, Tatiana is greatly disturbed by the frightful events of her dream, but Natasha and Sonia are both given hope, and Sonia, in particular, is optimistic.

Not least of all, the two narrative accounts bear striking resemblance in the magical and meaningful journeys that they portray. Each of the two *sviatki* evenings begins at the home of the main families, i.e., the homes of the Larins and the Rostovs. The events of the evening, however, take the main female characters away their home to another location. In her dream Tatiana travels away from home and family to Onegin’s
hut in the woods. She crosses a river, runs through snow and finally reaches a forest. She flees blindly with no path to guide her. It is the bear who helps her across the river and, after she falls, carries her to what he calls his friend's house. The friend/Onegin and his companions are at what might be termed a posidelki and are in the act of celebrating what seems to be a mock funeral. The journey of War and Peace is not a dream, but it is very dream-like, a feeling conveyed through the repeated use of the word volshebnyi.

The trip carries the Rostov youth, along with other mummers, away from their own home to the home of friends, the Meliukovs, where the posidelki takes place. As in Eugene Onegin, the participants travel through snow and forest to reach their destination. Nikolai carries Sonia in his troika as he drives his horses down a road which appears totally foreign to him. When they arrive at their destination, the Meliukovs, too, are in the process of celebrating sviatki. In each case, the journey represents a transitional period in the life of the heroine(s), marking their departure from childhood and adolescence and their arrival into the adult stage of their lives.

In addition to the many parallels of the journeys in the two novels, the representation of the magical journey in War and Peace also refracts the magical journeys of yet other literary works of the sviatki tradition. On the one hand, the magic of the troika ride of the Rostov youth is comparable to the simple “magic” felt by Annushka in “The Tale of Frol Skobeev” as Frol transports her to his home to become his wife. Sonia’s hopes for a wedded future with Nikolai are equally transforming. On the other hand, the fairy-tale qualities of the journey resonate with the miraculous and mysterious properties of the fantastic journeys experienced by the heroes of Bestuzhev-Marlinskii’s “A Terrifying Divination” and Gogol’s “Night Before Christmas.” In all cases, the journeys function in a similar way to those in Eugene Onegin and War and Peace. They transport the heroes/heroines to a new stage in their lives.
Although less significant than the actual sviatki events, both authors treat the winter weather and environment in similar ways. At the beginning of their respective accounts, Pushkin and Tolstoy bring attention to the weather, as if proper winter snow and cold were prerequisites for the celebration of sviatki and in and of themselves are responsible for calling forth the celebration. The winter scenery creates a suitable mood and becomes a core part of the ritual itself. In Eugene Onegin, although it is already the beginning of January, the winter does not officially arrive until the first snowfall which is consequently a cause for celebration: “Winter! The peasant, celebrating / in a flat sledge inaugurates the track” (“Zima!.. Krest’ianin, torzhestvuia, / Na drovniakh obnovliaet put’,” 5.2). Thus also the celebration of sviatki is delayed until the “frightful evenings.”

The weather of War and Peace also prompts an observation of sviatki: “the calm frost of twenty degrees Reaumur, the dazzling sunshine by day, and the starlight of the winter nights, seemed to call for some special celebration of the season” (551). Special attention is also given by both authors to the stars and the moon of the night sky. For Pushkin the “the splendid choir of heavenly luminaries” (“Svetil nebesnykh divnyi khor,” 5.9) takes on divine qualities as Tatiana tries her luck at moon-fortune telling. For Tolstoy the magic of the night sky is actually found in the glittering diamonds reflected in the snow. The brilliance of the sky gives added emphasis to the magic generated by the season. Even the sounds produced by the combination of snow and winter cold constitute important components of the season’s rituals. The crunching of snow indicates to Tatiana the approach of a passer-by: “the snow creaks... a passer-by” (“Sneg khrustit... prokhozhii,” 5.9). The same sound in War and Peace, the sound of Sonia’s feet as they echo those of the old maid, alerts Nikolai of her approach.

One of the most significant parallels between the two novels lies in the fact that each presents two levels of narration which predict the future. On the surface level, the
story of each text is advanced with the celebration of *sviatki*. Tatiana is frustrated with each attempt to see her future, and in the end is left with an overwhelming feeling of "deep anxiety" (5.14). Olga experiences nothing, but she has no reason to believe that her forthcoming marriage to Lenskii will not take place. Sonia receives no promises from the fortune telling of *sviatki*, but is given hope through her experience of the incomplete barn divination - the only bliss she is to know with Nikolai. Natasha's disquietude is calmed by Sonia's made-up vision during the mirror fortune telling. Each girl is left with false or uncertain feelings about her future.

Underlying the outer narrative text of each novel is the concealed fortune telling which the characters either refuse to pay attention to, as in the case of Pushkin's account, or are incapable of seeing, as in Tolstoy's episode. In each case, however, the predictions are available to the reader. Although not part of the explicit divination attempts of Tatiana Larina, the servant women sing a fortune-telling song each year which foretells the fate of their young mistresses, Tatiana and Olga. Although the young Larina girls pay no heed to the servant women who would shatter their dreams with the ultimate reality of gentry life, the reader, on the contrary, is forced momentarily to focus on the prediction because of the ungrammatical form of the word *muzh'ev*. It serves to dispel the magical qualities of the seasonal fortune telling, i.e., although Tatiana seeks a romantic future of love, her future will be no more than the loveless marriages of her mother and her *niania*.

Sonia and Natasha's fate is predicted in much the same way. Although they themselves are unconscious of the path of their true destiny, the reader has access to the concealed fortune-telling episode. Sonia's destiny to be an old maid discloses itself through the knocking of a shoe and a mirror construction. Again, it is a servant woman who unknowingly makes this prediction. Natasha's questionable future with Prince
Andrei is laid bare through the made-up mirror fortune telling. In contrast to Pushkin, however, Tolstoy does not draw the reader's attention to the predictions. Instead they are concealed by the enchantment of the first level of narration. They, too, however, dispel what are for Natasha and Sonia the magical qualities of the evening and promise only disappointments which are a reality of life.

The two novels further resemble each other in the physical placement of the *sviatki* episode, i.e., the place occupied by the folk ritual in relationship to the preceding material and the material that follows. In each novel the *sviatki* celebration appears approximately halfway through the work. The *sviatki* of the Larin household appear at the beginning of Chapter Five (of eight chapters), slightly over halfway through the novel. The Rostov youth celebrate toward the end of Book 2 (of four books), nearly halfway through. The physical placement is indicative of the role that the ritual plays in the life of the young girls. In each case the *sviatki* celebration is a turning point in the lives of the female participants. One might even say that it is even a turning point for the novels in their entirety. In the first half of each of the works, the lives of the young girls are characterized by youthful infatuation and romanticized ideas of love and marriage. As far as the reader can tell, Onegin, Lenskii, Prince Andrei and Nikolai are the first serious loves for these girls. The second half of each of the novels depicts young girls with the added responsibilities and uncertainties of adulthood. The dreams of youth have been shattered by reality. Tatiana resigns herself to being married to somebody she does not love. Sonia surrenders herself to spinsterhood. Natasha and perhaps Olga find that they can love another. Just as among the folk, the *sviatki* ritual is the culminatory celebration for the youth before they enter into marriage, the *sviatki* ritual of *Eugene Onegin* and *War and Peace* is a rite of passage from youth to adulthood for the four female characters. Just
as the ancient ritual observed the return to the sun and the promise of new life, the literary representations in the two works signify the transition into a new life for each of the girls.

4.5 Interpretive Strategies

A brief review of the interpretative strategies employed by literary scholars demonstrates that indeed there are a number of different approaches to the _sviatki_ episode in _War and Peace_. One reading of the _sviatki_ celebration regards it simply as a realistic scene, i.e., as a means of establishing verisimilitude. This is certainly a legitimate strategy, especially since the _sviatki_ celebration was part not only of the life of the Russian peasants, but also of that of the gentry as Tolstoy knew it. It is important to realize, however, that this is not the only legitimate strategy.

Another rather widely used approach is employed, for example, by Potiavin. It focuses on the ideological message of the text. The episode, according to this critic, is intended to demonstrate the strong bond between the members of the nobility and the peasants. What is not noted in this interpretation is the fact that the ideological point is encoded by means of a specific, theme-centered, literary strategy. I would like to point out that, in the revered tradition of Zhukovskii and Pushkin, who had already made use of the _sviatki_ celebration to assert the Russianness of their female protagonists, Tolstoy uses a segment informed by this ritual to show the Rostov children as, to use the Romantic parlance, intuitively united with the soul of the nation. By choosing to present them engaged in the same folk ritual, Tolstoy not only invests these characters with a highly valued attribute, but also introduces an intertextual connection with a strong and well-known literary tradition. Thus he offers the Russian reader not only a set of ideological norms for evaluating the literary characters, but also a set of already familiar interpretative strategies to help navigate the structure of the discourse.
Furthermore, just as in Pushkin’s novel, it is significant that the *sviatki* episode is placed approximately in the middle of the novel, i.e., toward the end of the second book of *War and Peace*. This is a strategically important junction as far as the psychological development and the process of socialization of the main female character, Natasha Rostova, is concerned. In addition, the scene is relevant in terms of the building of the secondary, but also important character, Sonia. The first half of the novel tells the story of Natasha and Sonia as children and adolescents, their games, their crushes, their innocence. In the second half they appear as young women who must deal with the challenges of adult life. They are able to inflict pain on others themselves, but they are also hurt more than once. The *sviatki* episode seems like an initiation rite which transports the two girls into the new, adult phase of their lives.

John Hagan, for instance, focuses on the significance of this episode for the psychological development of both Natasha and Nikolai (238-40). For him the celebration of *sviatki* is a key event marking a major turning point in the maturation of these two young people. The hunt and the magical evening spent with Sonia help Nikolai overcome his anxieties triggered by political conflict and personal desires and to reach a state of emotional and intellectual peace. Conversely, the same two events, as well as the evening at Uncle’s home, transport Natasha from a time of inner peace to a time of psychological turmoil. For some reason, although Sonia is an essential figure in the *sviatki* celebration, Hagan makes no mention of her. As Schefski points out, however, Sonia’s character develops as a contrastive parallel to that of Natasha. Indeed, in order to fully appreciate the changes in Natasha, one must also understand the transition in the life of Sonia signified by the *sviatki* celebration. Unlike Nikolai, she does not move from internal confusion and strife to peacefulness. Unlike Natasha, she does not vacillate between inner peace and emotional distress. Sonia has her own trajectory which spans
from the hopes and inflexible calculations of childhood and adolescence to a complete resignation to her unfulfilled future life, and the sviatki episode in its intricate structure and implicit ironic reversals is capable of accommodating the different prospects of the two young women.

The sviatki folk ritual in War and Peace symbolically marks the passage of the childhood of Natasha and Sonia, again bearing a resemblance to the passage of Tatiana’s childhood, also marked by the sviatki celebration of Eugene Onegin. As a transformational point of the agrarian year, the sviatki ritual signifies the return of sunlight and the beginning of new life and growth. In Tolstoy’s novel it represents a transformational time in the lives of the two female characters. Natasha looks forward to new life and maturation. The blissful experience of childhood is replaced by tempestuous passions and anxieties which, in turn, lead to the peace of a happy matrimony and the bliss of motherhood. For Sonia, however, because she is unable to adjust to the uncertainties of her life, the transformation leads to a loss of hope for the emotional fulfillment of marital life and child bearing. Whereas Natasha goes through a transition which eventually brings her to the ultimate fullness of life, Sonia enters the ultimate in voids, a life alone.

The fairy-tale theme in the ride to the Meliukovs further reinforces the impression that the sviatki ritual celebration marks a transitional stage in the life of the Rostov youth. According to Propp it is a magical location away from home where the hero undergoes ritual initiation into adulthood after which he/she returns home as a new person, soon to become part of the married community. The fairy tale kingdom of the Meliukovs, in Tiurikov’s interpretation, signals the reader that “the heroes have entered a new stage of their development, at the time of physical, spiritual, and moral maturity” (84). Consequently, adds Tiurikov, the scene preceding the journey to the Meliukovs in which
the youth reminisce about their past takes on added significance for they are taking leave of their childhood and adolescence at the intuitively felt threshold of adult life.

The textualization of *sviatki* in *War and Peace* fulfills an additional function, namely, that of its traditional role of predicting the future. Although Tolstoy keeps the "frightful" future of the two young girls from them, he nevertheless reveals the future by means of the implicit fortune telling. The reader is thereby offered a chance to realize that Sonia will become an old maid and Natasha will not marry her fiancé Prince Andrei. Of course, it is up to the reader to interpret adequately the respective segments of the text by filtering the information through the cultural tradition of *sviatki* and the *sviatki* divinations.

Finally, by means of intertextuality and the contradictory fortunes revealed at the different levels of narration, Tolstoy, like Pushkin, uses the folk ritual as a literary device to create conflict. Roger Abrahams' analysis can again be used to illuminate Tolstoy's use of *sviatki* in *War and Peace*. Like his predecessor, Tolstoy creates a situation with which his contemporary readers can closely identify, but this time the situation is further complicated by the appearance of *Eugene Onegin* and other literary works of the *sviatki* tradition. Not only do the readers of Tolstoy's time have an appreciation of *sviatki* as a Yuletide folk ritual, but they are also unquestionably acquainted with the established literary tradition and with both of the famous female protagonists and participants in the ritual celebration, Svetlana and Tat'iana. Again, the knowledge further encourages the readers' active participation, leading them to anticipate certain outcomes. At the same time such knowledge creates uncertainty and ultimately conflict by suggesting a variety of end results. On the basis of the folk ritual, the readers anticipate an actual prediction of the future of the two girls, disclosing the identity of their future husbands. The literary tradition, however, complicates these expectations since the troubling dreams of Svetlana
and Tat’iana (to take the best known literary cases) are followed by very different
developments. Zhukovskii’s heroine, although distraught by a dream of her beloved in a
coffin, ends up happily united with him. In contrast, Pushkin’s protagonist, who is also
puzzled by a nightmare, marries a man who is not her true love.

Tolstoy retains the complexity of the literary renditions and, at the same time,
further heightens the dramatic interest in the episode by forestalling the disclosure of the
true prediction and sending mixed messages to the reader. As stated earlier, outward
signs lead the reader to anticipate a wedded future for Sonia and Nikolai as well as for
Natasha and Prince Andrei. But none of the apparent signs is a genuine result of the
fortune telling of sviatki and they have no bearing on future events. Because the sviatki
ritual at the first level of narration fails to fulfill its traditional function, a sense of conflict
arises. It is only through a close reading and an awareness of the presence of hidden
fortune-telling messages that the conflict can be resolved. A careful exploration of the
interaction of the three levels of narration present in this episode is a prerequisite for
understanding the significance of the references to the celebration of the folk ritual of
sviatki as well as of the role of this particular episode in the context of the character
development of the two female characters, Natasha and Sonia.

Notes

1 See work of M. S. Al’tman, I. Borisova, N. M. Fortunatov, R. Gel’gardt, G.
2 Bk. II, Pt. IV, Ch. VII.
3 Bk. IV, Pt. I, Ch. XII-XIII, Pt. III, Ch. XIII.
4 Bk. I, Pt. II, Ch. II.
5 Bk. II, Pt. IV, Ch. IX-XII.
The number of pages are according to the 1938 edition of L. N. Tolstoi: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo "Khudozhestvennaia literatura. All English quotes are taken from the Maudes' translation.

The Russian text is given as the main reference because, although the English is a close rendition, the totality of the mirror image is not preserved. Also in referring to the action of the old maidservant's feet, the Russian verb is a form of "to knock," not "to descend," an important fact in establishing the hidden fortune-telling.

14 The Russian flag had the same colors as the French flag - red, white, and blue - but it is doubtful that the blue and red that Sonia saw refer to it since the Russians usually carried the tsar's flag into battle rather than the flag of the country.

15 Translations of Vinogradov are mine.

17 Zhukovskii's ballad was especially popular throughout the 19th century and into the 20th. Shortly after being composed, it became part of the school curriculum and was published in school anthologies. It was frequently memorized and recited at Christmas and New Year's gatherings (Dushechkina 88-92).
CHAPTER 5

IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS: SVIATKI REFERENCES IN AKHMATOVA’S
POEM WITHOUT A HERO

“Poem Without a Hero” will be a challenge to its interpreters for some time yet as they strive to decipher its subtext and intertext, and some aspects of the poem will probably remain obscure.

- Victor Terras

Although the literary tradition of including sviatki motifs in Russian literature reached a lull during the years of Soviet rule, Anna Akhmatova, in the opinion of many, the greatest female Russian poet, followed in the footsteps of other renowned Russian writers by inscribing the sviatki motif into her masterpiece, Poem Without a Hero, on which she worked for more than twenty years. Not only does the work reflect the great personal suffering of the poet and the tragic decline of her homeland, but it also reworks with great originality the two-hundred-year literary tradition of sviatki. The “Hall of Mirrors” that Akhmatova presents to the reader at the beginning of her poem refracts characters who represent multiple personalities and lines rich with semantic ambiguities, and creates a multi-faceted, intertextual refraction of the many sviatki poems, stories, and novels in Russian literature. Thus, the folk ritual expands its traditional, symbolic meaning to absorb a new and multi-faceted symbolism.

While all good literary works continually invite discussion, Anna Akhmatova’s Poem Without a Hero not only invites discussion but, as noted by Terras in the epigraph, puzzles literary scholars with its subtext and intertext. While this analysis does not claim
to solve all mysteries connected with Akhmatova's masterpiece, it does shed light on the significance of the sviatki rituals inscribed in the work. Hopefully the thoroughness of such a precisely focused study will contribute substantially to the understanding of the work as a whole. After a brief exploration of Akhmatova's relationship with folklore, I will analyze the way in which she inscribes the sviatki folk ritual in Poem. Through a close reading I will first identify the ritual elements which are present in the work. Next I will investigate the intertextual allusions in Poem to other Russian literary works which incorporate sviatki motifs. Finally, I will examine Akhmatova's own set of sviatki poems as a means for interpreting Poem Without a Hero.

5.1 Akhmatova and Folklore

Unlike her predecessors of the nineteenth century, Pushkin and Tolstoy, Akhmatova did not acquire her knowledge of Russian folklore from extensive living in the country. Although she may have witnessed some folk celebrations during the summers that she spent with her family in Ukraine or later when she spent time on her mother-in-law's estate in Ukraine, this was not Akhmatova's prime source for learning about Russian folk customs. Like Pushkin and Tolstoy, however, Akhmatova was enticed by various genres from the oral tradition. Of particular interest to her were folk songs, chastushki, spells, and laments (Griakalova 50) which all found their way into her poetry.¹ Many of her earlier love poems reveal similarities to folk songs through lexicon and syntax. Some of her very short poems read like chastushki. As her poetry matured and the calamities of the twentieth century increased, Akhmatova looked toward the folk lament as a model for her prayers and supplications for the dead and dying of her homeland. Eventually she turned to the idea of historical memory and writing in epic style (52).
In her study of folklore in Akhmatova’s poetry, N. Iu. Griakalova attributes much of Akhmatova’s attraction to folklore to the literary tastes at the beginning of the twentieth century (49). There was a tendency at the time to accentuate the lyrical female voice, i.e., emphasize women’s feelings and opinions, often through the use of folk genres. This was the case with the two leading female poets of the twentieth century, Akhmatova and Marina Tsvetaeva. It resulted in a duality within Akhmatova’s early poetry which was not typical of the Acmeist movement. Like the Acmeists, Akhmatova expressed interested in the “world culture” which was seen as tangible and dynamic, but unlike them, she was also drawn to the more symbolic and seemingly “unchanging” Russian folk culture. In her poetry Akhmatova often combined Western motifs with Russian folk motifs and used traditional folk meter or syntax.

Akhmatova chose figures from the folk tradition to symbolize her poetic talent and inspiration. Early in her career, her Muse is presented as a Russian peasant woman (Griakalova 52). Later the image of the Muse changed but still remained within the folk tradition, i.e., she took on the qualities of a lamenting mourner, for the love poems from Akhmatova’s younger years could not express the feelings and ideas aroused by the horrors of the twentieth century (59). Most of Akhmatova’s fellow artists had experienced tragic deaths, and she felt that she alone of her generation had survived in order to mourn the others. Since lamenting was considered a woman’s genre, it is not surprising, therefore, that Akhmatova’s Muse acquired this new image.

Griakalova notes that the folk lamenter performed a specific social function by taking on the grief of others (60). This is certainly true about Akhmatova’s role as a person able to voice feelings that were often not just her own, but conveyed emotional experiences shared by large groups of her countrymen. Moreover, during World War II the genre of the lament became quite popular among the folk and became an additional impetus for Akhmatova to cast her lyrical persona in this traditional female role. One of
her poems from 1942, the tenth poem from the series "The Wind of War," conveys Akhmatova’s vision of herself as a lamenting mourner for the Russian people:

And you, my friends from the latest call-up!
My life has been spared to mourn for you.
Not to freeze over your memory as a weeping willow,
But to shout all your names to the whole wide world!

A vy, moi druz’ia poslednego prizyva!
Chtob vas oplakivat’, mne zhizn’ sokhranena.
Nad vashei pamiat’iu ne styt’ plakuchei ivoi,
A kriknut’ na ves’ mir vse vashi imena!

Some of Akhmatova’s exposure to folk genres came through direct contact with songs, fairy tales, etc., but much more was probably filtered through the literary tradition and especially through the works of Pushkin. Later I will discuss Akhmatova’s Poem Without a Hero in relationship to Pushkin’s novel in verse for the later work has many intertextual references to the earlier one. Pushkin’s work also inspired Akhmatova in regard to the folk genre of the skazka, the tale or fairy tale. For example, Akhmatova’s poem “Tale of the Black Ring” (“Skazka o chernom kol’tse,” 1917-1936) was motivated in part by Pushkin’s “Tale of Tsar Saltan” (“Skazka o tsare Saltane”) and in part by his ballad “The Bridegroom” (“Zhenikh”) (Griakalova 57).²

Besides Pushkin, Akhmatova was undoubtedly exposed to other literary renditions of folklore themes, in particular sviatki, from a very early age. At school she unquestionably read and possibly memorized Zhukovskii’s “Svetlana” and Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin and knew well Tolstoy’s War and Peace, but being an avid reader, she was familiar with many more works of classical and contemporary literature. During Akhmatova’s youth, i.e., the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the genre of the sviatki short story was extremely popular, and it would be hard to imagine that she had not read numerous short stories as well as novels and poems with sviatki motifs. Although her parents reportedly owned nothing more than a large volume of Nekrasov (Reeder, Anna 6-7), Akhmatova’s reading interests extended
far beyond this nineteenth-century poet and she had access to other books through friends and public libraries. One of Akhmatova’s best friends reports that during her years at Tsarskoe Selo, Akhmatova “read a lot of books which were allowed and not allowed” (Reeder, Anna 7). Among them must have been a selection of sviatki texts.

Judging by some of the literature during the first decade of the nineteenth century, it would not have been unlikely for Akhmatova to have participated in school performances of koliadki, sviatki plays, fortune telling, and masquerade parties as well as other folk traditions. E. Shvidchenko’s Sviatki Anthology of 1903 was written especially for use in schools and families, so that teachers, parents, and students would have a textbook for the singing of koliadki and the enactment of sviatki rituals. In a novel from the same time period, Young Girls: Remembrances Of Boarding School Life (Devochki: Vospominaniia iz institutskoi zhizni) by Nadezhda Lukhmanova, sviatki rituals are featured more than once. The girls attending the boarding school express great interest in the seasonal rituals. Their curiosity has been piqued by what they have learned through the studies of “Svetlana” and Eugene Onegin, and they wish to find out more. One year they ask a young worker at the dormitory to explain to them some additional forms of divination. Another year the girls dress in costume and dance for the music teacher and one of the resident directors. What was true of the girls’ activities and interests in the boarding school certainly held true for life in other schools as well.

Additionally, Akhmatova undoubtedly participated in the masquerades which were a very popular feature of the Russian literary social life at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many Russian folk traditions reinforced and merged with the Western traditions of carnival and masquerade which were so popular at the time. The folk tradition of mummery, thus, corresponded to and merged with the Western tradition of masquerades as practiced among the urban literary socialites. Artists of the day commonly dressed in costume for masquerade balls, and masquerade plays were often staged in conjunction
with folk festivals or major folk holidays (Reeder, Anna 410). The fixation on masquerades was, in fact, part of the overall interest in _commedia dell'arte_ which was so prevalent among artists at the time. Literary works such as Aleksandr Blok’s cycle of poems “Snow Mask” (“Snezhnaia maska,” 1907) and Akhmatova’s poem “Masquerade in the Park” (“Maskarad v parke,” 1912) reflect that interest.

5.2. _Poem Without a Hero_- Versions and Synopsis

The text of _Poem Without a Hero_ exists in many versions, each of which is considered a completed text. For the purposes of this study I have used the edition published by Roberta Reeder in _The Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova, Vol. 2_, in Russian and English (Zephyr Press, 1990. It is basically the same text which appears in the Struve-Filippov edition of Akhmatova’s _Works_ with some recourse to the Zhirmunskii edition of the text, both of which have established authority. Any discrepancies which may appear between the variant texts are irrelevant to this investigation of the _sviatki_ motif in _Poem Without a Hero._

The _poema_ begins with “In Place of a Foreword,” dated April 3, 1943, in which Akhmatova explains when and why she started to write the poem. This is followed by three dedications, dated December 27, 1940, May 25, 1945, and January 5, 1956, respectively. The first two are dedicated to the main male and female protagonists of the poem, Vsevelod Kniazev and Olga Glebova-Sudeikina. Kniazev was an aspiring young poet who committed suicide in 1913 over an unhappy love affair with Glebova-Sudeikina, a close friend of Akhmatova’s. He believed that she had fallen in love with his rival, Aleksandr Blok. Ultimately, however, his suicide symbolized for Akhmatova Kniazev’s avoidance of the many terrors that were to come in the “real” twentieth century. The third dedication is to Akhmatova’s “Guest From the Future,” Isaiah Berlin, whom
she met in 1945. Following the dedications is a short introduction in which Akhmatova explains that she is now viewing her past life as if from a tower in the year 1940, i.e., from the height and distance given by the momentous events of almost three decades. The main text of the poem consists of three parts, a triptych, and the first part is divided into four chapters with an interlude after Chapter One. Each of the chapters, as well as the remaining two parts, begins with one or more epigraphs and is followed by "stage directions," creating the impression of a drama-like poem. Part one of the triptych, "The Year Nineteen Thirteen: A Petersburg Tale," begins New Year’s Eve of the year 1940 as the literary persona prepares to tell fortunes with candles and mirrors. The divination transports her to a New Year’s Eve ball of the year 1913, where she finds herself watching the arrival of a group of mummers, fellow artists from the year 1913, who are almost all dressed as literary characters. During the next three chapters, the relationship between the male and female protagonists, i.e., Kniazev and Glebova-Sudeikina, and the rival develops until Kniazev kills himself in the last chapter. In Part Two, "Tails," the literary persona has become identified as the author of the first part of the poem, i.e., Part One, "The Year Nineteen Thirteen." She discusses with her editor the content of Part One and describes her process of writing it. Part Three, "Epilogue," takes place June 24, 1942 and is dedicated to the city of Leningrad/Petersburg. In it she addresses her own evacuation to Tashkent during World War II as well as the terrors experienced by her city and country as a result of this war.

5.3 The Sviatki Ritual in Poem Without a Hero

Although Akhmatova’s portrayal of sviatki in Poem Without a Hero does not bear such a strong resemblance to a folk performance as the texts previously discussed, an understanding of the ritual is every bit as essential to an analysis of the complete work, as
was the case earlier. Akhmatova herself stated in her prose on *Poema* that “the sense of Christmas, New Year’s, and Epiphany Eves is the axle upon which the whole thing revolves, like a magic carrousel” (“Oshchushchenie Kanunov, Sochel’nikov — os’, na kotoroi vrashchaetsia vsia veshch’, kak volshebnaia karusel’,” 232). Considering the significance which she assigns to this time of the year, it is surprising how little research has been done to investigate its role in *Poem*.

Both Pushkin and Tolstoy describe their corresponding *sviatki* episodes in great detail and generate a very realistic rendition of the *sviatki* folk ritual, i.e. the narrative description creates verisimilitude with a traditional folk celebration of *sviatki*. They offer the reader a picture of young gentry girls as they partake in the customs of the Russian folk. Love is the motivating factor for the girls to engage in the seasonal ritual, and through fortune telling they try to identify their husbands of the future. Like her literary predecessors, Akhmatova, too, draws upon the rich literary tradition of mummers and mirror and candle divination, but she imbues the seasonal activities with her own symbolism. Even though she may have been familiar with folk sources, she relies more heavily on intertextuality to communicate with the reader. Pushkin and Tolstoy both make similar use of the folk ritual by inscribing it into a fictional novel. While both writers allude to many historic and contemporary figures, the characters of their novels are fictional. Akhmatova’s *Poem*, on the other hand, is highly autobiographical. The characters almost all represent acquaintances from Akhmatova’s life. Thus, any understanding of the inscribed folk performance in *Poem Without a Hero* depends largely on the reader’s knowledge of three major points: 1) the folk ritual; 2) the literary tradition of *sviatki*; and 3) Akhmatova’s biography.

In comparing Akhmatova to her literary predecessors, one might use the term “anti-*sviatki*” to refer to Akhmatova’s treatment of the Russian folk celebration. Dushechkina applies the term to stories such as “Van’ka” (discussed in Chapter 2) by
Chekhov which, through their unhappy endings show that there is no supernatural force that can change the fate of man. Akhmatova’s writing does not indicate a lack of faith in supernatural forces. The literary persona of *Poem* encounters the “supernatural” in a vision which is brought about through mirror and candle divination. The outcome of the fortune telling, however, is opposite to the expected one, i.e., instead of looking to the future, as one would expect, the divination transports the persona to her past. In that sense, the term “reverse-

*sviatki*” might be an even more appropriate designation for Akhmatova’s method of inscribing the ritual. Akhmatova reverses the outcome in other instances as well. For example, the *sviatki* celebration of Akhmatova’s dream, instead of bringing about new life and growth, shows death and destruction. (Each instance will be discussed more thoroughly later.) *Poem* is often noted for its many mirror images, and in this instance Akhmatova has created a “mirror image” of the folk ritual. Not only do the mirrors in *Poem* reverse images but they also reverse the traditional outcome of the ritual activities. Other scholars in addition to myself, including L. G. Kikhnei, David Wells and Wendy Rosslyn, have noted some of the strange reversals of outcomes which result from Akhmatovian *sviatki* activities and have also attributed it to the artistic “mirror imaging.” I would add that this is not a characteristic unique to Akhmatova’s treatment of *sviatki* in *Poem Without a Hero*. Akhmatova takes this approach toward *sviatki* throughout all of her poetry, from the earliest poems to the last. (This will be discussed in the section “The Personal Axis.”) She gives the ritual her own personal interpretation, bringing it to life again after a long hiatus during Soviet rule, a temporary “rest” in its two-century-long literary tradition.

Part One of Chapter One opens with the *sviatki* ritual of mirror divination. There is no explicit description of the event, and the reader must come to that conclusion him/herself through the allusions offered by the author: epigraphs from Zhukovskii’s “Svetlana” and Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*; the time setting of New Year’s Eve, 1940; the
setting of the white hall of mirrors; and the opening lines in which the literary persona states that she has "lit the sacred candles." The persona, however, does not wish to find out who her future husband is which would have been the traditional goal of such an act. Such a goal for the persona-Akhmatova would, of course, have been senseless. In the year 1913 she was already married to Nikolai Gumilev and by the year 1940 she knew who her subsequent husbands had been. The results of her attempt at divination are, in fact, opposite those for which it is intended. The nature of sviatki divination implies the foretelling of future events. The official definition of "divination," however, contains an additional perspective. Divination may also imply the discovery "of hidden knowledge usually by the interpretation of omens or by the aid of supernatural powers" (Webster 369). Instead of revealing the mysteries of the protagonist’s future, the mirror divination in Poem exposes the enigmas of her past.

From New Year’s Eve of 1940, Akhmatova’s protagonist is transported to a vision of the New Year’s Eve of 1913. In a frightful scene, shades of friends from that year arrive uninvited at the hall of mirrors, dressed as mummers. They are all fellow artists from Akhmatova’s generation who have since died or been forced into exile or emigration. The fellow artists are all guilty of one major sin: they share in the blame for the catastrophes that beset Russia after 1913. On the eve of cataclysmic world events, i.e., World War I followed immediately in Russia by the February and Bolshevik Revolutions of 1917, the friends were preoccupied with their artistic and erotic self-interests and ignored the warning signs of the disastrous changes that were in store for Russia. Because of their self-absorption, they are all guilty of allowing these changes to take place. Even within the persona’s vision they are so engrossed in their own merrymaking that they cannot be frightened away by the antidotal ritual crow of the rooster. To them, “the cock’s crow is just a dream” (“Krik petushii nam tol’ko snitsia,” 1.1.130), and they continue with their revelry. Thus, the act of the rooster is reversed.
Instead of dispelling the formidable dream, the rooster’s crow becomes the dream of those whom it is supposed to scare. The appearance of sviatki mummers is indicative of the literary scene before the 1917 revolution and its tendency to bring together traditions from the West and from Russian folklore. The New Year’s Eve mummers are in part inspired by German romanticism, especially the Kunstmaerchen (art fairy tales) of E. T. A. Hoffmann. Akhmatova alludes to Hoffmann’s tale “The New Year’s Eve Adventures” (“Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht”) in which there are also strange reflections in mirrors and an appearance by the diabolic Dr. Dapertutto. At the same time the mummers are representative of the Russian folk tradition, in particular the sviatki rituals.

It is not surprising that Akhmatova formulates her New Year’s Eve scene with allusions both to Hoffmann and the Russian folk ritual. By its very nature, i.e., the presence of supernatural events and occurrences, the representation of the sviatki folk celebration in literature is particularly amenable to the influence of German Romanticism as seen especially in the ballad genre and the influence of Gottfried Buerger on Zhukovskii’s ballad “Svetlana”.

Although the vision of the literary persona takes her into her past, looking to the future is still a key motif of her fortune-telling ritual. Within her vision a supper has been prepared, not for “them,” i.e., the shades of the friends of the past, but ostensibly for her “guest from the future” who has been identified by critics as Isaiah Berlin. However, just as her literary predecessor Tatiana was unable to carry out this form of divination, Akhmatova’s persona is also unable to execute hers. Tatiana abandoned her attempt out of fear, but the persona’s “guest from the future” is unable to join the celebration because he is still alive. Again Akhmatova reverses the result of the traditional folklore ritual. During such mirror and supper divination of the folk practice, the young girl should be visited by a spirit from the other world who takes on the form of a living human being, the girl’s ‘intended’ in life. In this case, however, the visitor in the vision is a living
human being who is denied admittance because he lacks the essential, other-world quality. In a sense, however, the “guest from the future” is, indeed, in the most literal meaning, from another world. He is from the West, the other side of the Iron Curtain, and therefore unable to enter Akhmatova’s life.

Within the context of Poem, Akhmatova actually introduces the unknown guest before his appearance during the fortune telling ritual. The “Third and Last” dedication is written in honor of the future visitor, and here, again, Akhmatova reverses the traditional consequences of the supper divination. In its traditional enactment, the young girl should be visited by the guise of her future husband, the girl’s ‘intended,’ promising her marriage and the hope of fulfillment in life. At the point of the mirror divination, of course, Akhmatova is already 51 years old, i.e., no “young girl.” Even during the year 1913, the time of the supper divination, she has no need of a husband. Instead of the traditional ‘intended’ and a promise of fulfillment in life, we learn in the dedication that the “guest from the future” brings disaster to the lyrical persona: “It is death [or “disaster”] that he bears” (“on pogibel’ mne prineset”). He will not be a “beloved husband” (“milyi muzh”). Instead, Akhmatova and the future guest “will disturb the Twentieth Century” (“smutitsia Dvadtsatyi vek”), alluding to the events which, apparently, Akhmatova held him and herself responsible for - the Cold War, no less. Akhmatova dates the third dedication “January 5, 1956 (Le Jour des Rois).” The date January 5, Epiphany Eve, may refer to Berlin’s last visit to Akhmatova before the Zhdanov decree. Reeder suggests that Akhmatova does not use the Russian term Kreshchenie for the religious holiday because it pertains to the baptism of Christ (Anna 397). Instead, she uses the French expression “The Day of the Kings” because it alludes to the gifts which the magi bear for the Christ child. In this case, Berlin comes bearing a gift for Akhmatova - the gift of disaster.
The above sviatki rituals in Poem have been noted by other critics, including Kikhnei, Wells and Rosslyn, although they did not note all of the reversals. Even though scholars have also remarked on the dual nature of Akhmatova’s poem/drama, and have commented on its similarities to the Russian folk theater, all have failed to draw any correlations between the poem/drama and a key activity of the sviatki season, i.e., the performance of sviatki plays. Again, the blending of Western cultural traditions with traditions from the Russian folk supports the hypothesis for the presence of such ritual activities. The Symbolists, in particular, were interested in both the Italian commedia dell’arte and the Russian folk theater, including the winter and spring theatrical performances. This is hardly surprising since the commedia grew out of the European tradition of Carnival. The Symbolists’ attraction to the Italian folk comedy stemmed in part from the desire to unite the audience and performers in the theatrical experience. This, too, is one of the main characteristics of the folk theater where spectators interact extensively with the performers on stage. Thus, by virtue of the fact that Poem Without a Hero is written in the form of a dramatic poem which takes place during sviatki, one can rightfully hypothesize that the chapters and parts may in some way be connected to the winter theatrical performances of sviatki. I will discuss later in more detail how these plays bear an ironic resemblance to the sviatki plays enacted by the prisoners in Dostoevsky’s Notes From the House of the Dead.

5.4 The Historical Axis: The Hall of Mirrors and the Importance of Intertextuality

Since intertextual allusions play a key role in any interpretation of Poem, including this investigation, I will first explain the way Akhmatova uses them in Poem as well as many of her other works. According to David Wells, allusions in Akhmatova’s works are found at different levels. A word or phrase that alludes to the specific work of another
writer may, in turn, through that allusion indirectly intimate a second or third work: “Quotation and allusion in Akhmatova is rarely monologic.... [A] significant feature of Akhmatova’s use of allusion is that quotations of which she makes use very often have dialogic polemical implications in their own right” (9). For example, when Akhmatova quotes Pushkin, she may be alluding to other works which either directly or indirectly allude to the same Pushkin text or which the Pushkin text itself alludes to. Once again the “Hall of Mirrors” refracts multiple intertextual allusions. Thus, an analysis of Poem requires that one delve deeply into the possibilities for secondary and tertiary allusions, allusions which can be termed “polylogic,” for they maintain simultaneous dialogues with several interlocutors.

Although a more complete understanding of Poem can be obtained only through a thorough investigation of all its intertextual references, this study will limit itself to the intertextuality concerning sviatki. Of primary concern will be the intertextual references to Zhukovskii’s “Svetlana,” Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin, and Dostoevsky’s Notes From the House of the Dead. References to other literary works, e.g., to Tolstoy’s War and Peace and Chekhov’s sviatki stories will also be investigated. Until Wells’ 1986 article “Folk Ritual in Anna Akhmatova’s Poema bez geroia,” little research had been conducted to identify the folk elements in this particular work or to determine their significance. While Wells’ study and that of Kizhnei and Rosslyn identify some of the more explicit textual allusions to the corresponding works of Zhukovskii and Pushkin and analyze their significance, other important, more implicit references to the same two works have until the current study not been identified. Nor do any of the studies investigate the sviatki references in relationship to other literary works with sviatki motifs. Not a single scholar has even mentioned the possible connections of Poem to the sviatki plays in Dostoevsky’s Notes From the House of the Dead. If what Wells says about allusions in Poem is indeed
true, then one must consider the manner in which the ritual is refracted in other works of the literary tradition of *sviatki*, not just those which are explicitly referred to.

5.4.1 Tatiana, Svetlana, Natasha, and Sonia - Fortune Telling and Mummery

Akhmatova leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that she intended to draw associations between her *Poem* and the *sviatki* episodes of Zhukovskii's "Svetlana" and Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Most obviously, lines from each of the earlier works are found in epigraphs of *Poem*. Also quite obvious, just as Svetlana's dream and the first half of Chapter Five of *Eugene Onegin* take place during *sviatki*, so does the action of Part One of Akhmatova's work. Svetlana, Tatiana, and the lyrical persona of *Poem* at this time all engage in fortune telling. And finally, the bizarre New Year's Eve vision of the literary persona of *Poem* is more than vaguely reminiscent of Svetlana's and Tatiana's disturbing dreams.

Before discussing further similarities, it is necessary to understand how Akhmatova has created a system of doubles among the literary characters of *Poem*. Critics have frequently noted that most characters cannot be tied to a single prototype, i.e., they have double personalities and represent two or more acquaintances from Akhmatova's life. Even the literary persona claims to have doubles, e.g., the "real-life" Olga Glebova-Sudeikina and the fictitious Donna Anna. The system of doubles works much like the reflections in Chekhov's "Crooked Mirror" which, because it is crooked, reflects the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful. Unlike the Chekhov's mirror, however, the mirrors of Akhmatova's *Poem* do not distort but create new and more refined and complex images. Whereas the mirrors reflect reverse images of the folk ritual, they create original but similar images of the characters. The diversity in the reflections of hall of mirrors is more like the variety in the many mirrors of a fun house.
Each mirror has its own special quality (e.g., it is convex, concave, rippled, etc.) and changes the shape of the image in a unique way, resulting in numerous doubles who are at the same time unique individuals.

What critics have not noted, however, is the unstated ironic double of Poem’s persona from Pushkin’s novel in verse - namely, Tatiana Larina. By contrasting herself - a middle-aged widow, survivor of two world wars, and sufferer of innumerable other hardships - with Tatiana Larina - a young, immature girl who still dreams of a marriage of love - Akhmatova creates a situation which contrasts the romantic dream of the nineteenth century with the appalling truth of the twentieth century. A detailed investigation of the intertextuality between Chapter Five of Eugene Onegin and Part One, Chapter One, of Poem Without a Hero reveals that Akhmatova, in her dramatic poema, stages her own rendition of what is perhaps the most fearful scene from Pushkin’s novel, i.e., the funeral repast that Tatiana witnesses in her dream. Through the multiple allusions to “Svetlana,” the sviatki episode of War and Peace, and in particular Eugene Onegin, Akhmatova compares the childish fears of the immature, naive Tatiana as well as the fear of other similar heroines to the nameless horrors which she experienced as she lived through the first half of the twentieth century - fear for the death of her city, her country, her generation, her family, and fear of her own death. In and of itself, this idea is not new. Critics have long understood fear and death to be main themes in this work. Incomplete in their understanding, however, is the substantial role that intertextuality and the sviatki events play in establishing the presence and intensity of that fear by contrast to the experiences of the last century.

The first and most prominent allusions in Poem to the earlier literary tradition of sviatki are the epigraph to the “Third and Last” dedication (“Once on Epiphany Eve...,” Zhukovskii) and the second epigraph to Chapter One of Part One (“We are not to tell fortunes with Tatiana,” Pushkin). Both epigraphs function as the type of allusion defined
by Wells, i.e., both are much more than dialogic, and operate on more than one level. The line “Once on Epiphany Eve…” is the very first line of Zhukovskii’s ballad and thus obviously alludes to the fortune-telling activities of his heroine Svetlana. At another level, however, the epigraph makes a much stronger allusion to Pushkin’s Tatiana. Pushkin himself begins Chapter Five of *Eugene Onegin* with an epigraph from the same ballad by Zhukovskii, “Never know these frightful dreams,/You, O my Svetlana!” The fact that the two writers, i.e., Pushkin and Akhmatova, begin these sections of their corresponding works with epigraphs from the same poem creates, in the case of *Poem*, a bond to the secondary allusion which is perhaps more important than the bond created to the primary source of the epigraph itself. By mention of Svetlana’s frightful dream, Pushkin intimates in his epigraph the fearful dream of Tatiana that is to follow. Akhmatova, by alluding to the same ballad in the same literary form of an epigraph, without mentioning the word “fear,” thus also alludes to the fearful vision of her protagonist. Furthermore, she creates a web of allusions which includes not only the explicitly mentioned ballad and the secondary allusion to *Eugene Onegin*, but reaches beyond to form tertiary allusions. Just as the mirror refracts many times, the allusions refract each other and include other literary texts which allude to Zhukovskii and Pushkin. This one epigraph in *Poem* consequently encapsulates the many nightmares and fear which have resulted from girls telling fortunes. The very first line of the dedication, “Long enough I have frozen in fear,” reinforces the allusion to the girls’ fear but at the same time mocks it. Even the combined fear of all such young girls who have only one major concern in life, i.e., to find out about their future husbands, grossly pales in light of Akhmatova’s fear that the “guest from the future” bears death and that together they “will disturb the Twentieth Century.”

The second epigraph to Chapter One, “We are not to tell fortunes with Tatiana,” is taken from Chapter Five, stanza ten of *Eugene Onegin*. Just like the epigraph from
Zhukovskii's "Svetlana," the epigraph from Pushkin carries meaning at more than one level. Although Akhmatova is quoting from *Eugene Onegin*, it is precisely in this stanza that Pushkin alludes to Svetlana's fortune telling with mirrors:

> But suddenly Tatiana is afraid…
> And I—at the thought of Svetlana—
> I am afraid; so let it be…
> we're not to conjure [tell fortunes] with Tatiana (5.10).

Akhmatova has once again produced a "polylogic" allusion. By alluding to Tatiana's terminated bathhouse divination, Akhmatova simultaneously - and for a second time - alludes to Svetlana's terrifying dream. And again, because of the nature of Akhmatova's allusions, the initial "dialogue" quickly refracts through multiple literary works. Although no mention is made of fear in either of the two epigraphs, the polylogue summons forth the motif which all such instances of mirror or bathhouse divination hold in common - fear. Again, however, the fear of these sheltered girls who, in fact, had very little to fear, refracts ironically the fears of the twentieth century which were brought on, according to Akhmatova, by the immaturity and self-centeredness of the artist-mummer friends (and the author herself) of 1913 who are about to visit her.

The second epigraph to Part One performs one additional function which one can view from two different angles. Through the negation of fortune telling, it assures the reader that there will, in fact, be fortune telling with an ominous dream or vision as a result. The narrator of *Eugene Onegin* also makes this remark, i.e., "We are not to tell fortunes with Tatiana," only to follow it immediately with a description of Tatiana's horrifying and portentous dream. Following the pattern of Pushkin, Akhmatova thereby guarantees the unfolding of an event of even greater magnitude. On the other hand, rather than an affirmation of fortune telling through negation, one might interpret the epigraph as a simple statement of fact. No, "we are not to tell fortunes with Tatiana" - nor Svetlana, nor Sonia, nor any of these young girls. Their divination attempts center around their
own personal lives and are very narrow in scope. On the other hand, what Akhmatova is about to reveal through her divination concerns the whole of Russia, in particular the 1913 generation of artists of which she was a part.

Following the epigraphs, Akhmatova continues in her drama/poema an intricate system of intertextuality which establishes her lyrical persona as an ironic parallel to Tatiana Larina and depicts events which are parallel to those of Tatiana's dream. Akhmatova sets the tone for Poem with stage directions which show her persona engaging in the act of mirror divination. The New Year's Eve fortune telling reinforces the important connection begun in the epigraphs to the literary protagonists Svetlana and Tatiana and also to Sonia of War and Peace, all of whose experiences of ritual divination bear a strong resemblance to that of Akhmatova's persona. Each of the girls chooses one of the most fearful types of divination to find out about her future. Svetlana uses candles and mirrors while Tatiana has a table in the bathhouse set for two. Sonia goes to the barn to listen for fortuitous sounds. Akhmatova's protagonist lights sacred candles in a hall of mirrors. This is the first instance within the text of the poem itself of an allusion that is more than monologic. In her notes to Akhmatova's famous Poem, for example, Reeder equates the act of mirror divination with Pushkin's Tatiana: "Tatyana ... attempts to conjure up her lover, but he does not appear in the mirror" (839). Not only is there no evidence that Tatiana's fortune telling in the bathhouse was ever carried out, although she has places set for two, no mention whatsoever is made at this point of either candles or mirrors:

On the nurse's advice, Tatiana, planning that night to conjure, has ordered in the bathhouse secretly a table to be laid for two (5.10).

Tatiana does, however, place a mirror under her pillow in a further attempt at fortune telling. And just as for Svetlana and the later Akhmatova, fortune telling with mirrors
results in the disquieting visions of the night. Because of Pushkin’s allusion to Svetlana, her mirror divination, and the fear which inspires Tatiana to abort her own attempt, as well as Tatiana’s subsequent mirror divination and resulting dream, a picture is created in the minds of many critics and readers of Tatiana telling her fortune with mirrors and candles. Thus, Akhmatova’s allusion to mirror divination forms associations to Tatiana via the fortune telling of Svetlana. Through these two works, the original reference in Poem to mirror divination again prompts a “polylogue” which refracts the act of mirror fortune telling from many angles and sides, i.e., through multiple literary works.

Accompanying the Poem’s mirror divination is again the motif of extreme fear. In Akhmatova’s system of ironic reversals, however, instead of projecting the unknown future in a fictitious novel, her mirrors and dream refract real events of the past based on her own memory.

After the initial correlations have been drawn to the earlier works, a series of allusions to Tatiana’s dream begins, allusions which refer to perhaps the most fearful point of her dream, i.e., Tatiana’s arrival at Onegin’s hut and her observance of what closely resembles a funeral repast. When Tatiana and the bear first arrive at the hut in the woods, he places her in the doorway between two rooms, i.e., on the “threshold,” from where she hears strange sounds and shortly thereafter sees strange beings:

and straight he [the bear] goes into the hallway
and on the threshold [na porog] lays her down (5.15).  

Tatiana comes to, looks:
no bear; she’s in a hallway;
behind the door there’s shouting and the jingle
of glasses as at some big funeral.
Perceiving not a drop of sense in this,
she furtively looks through the chink
what then? She sees ... at a table
monsters are seated in a circle (5.16).
Akhmatova’s persona, instead of greeting her ‘intended’ in the mirror, also finds herself in the doorway, i.e., “on the threshold,” listening to strange noises and observing the costumes of her mummer-guests:

Instead of the expected guests, shades from the year 1913, under the guise of mummers, pay a visit to the author (Stage directions for Part One, Chapter One).

There are splashes of coarse conversation
   A resurrection of all the ravings,
       But the clock has not yet struck...
Seized by unbounded anxiety,
   I myself, like a ghost in the doorway [na poroge],
       Guard my last vestige of peace. (1.1.9-14)

Akhmatova’s mention of a “resurrection” and “ghost,” “shadow,” or “shade” (ten’) lead one to believe that she is, in fact, not the first to stand in a doorway and witness such bizarre happenings. Certainly the persona has resurrected her departed friends who have arrived as mummers, but in the tradition of the Poem’s frequent double meanings, she has also resurrected the figure of Pushkin’s Tatiana who observed the monster-mummers from the doorway in Onegin’s hut. The persona-protagonist of Poem thus momentarily takes on the identity of Tatiana, and Tatiana becomes her ironic double. The nature of the young and sheltered Tatiana opposes that of the older and experienced Akhmatova, creating a contrastive pair of doubles. The nineteenth-century literary heroine Tatiana represents what Akhmatova could have been a century earlier, and, conversely, Akhmatova represents what Tatiana would have been a century later. Akhmatova’s persona has not resurrected only Tatiana Larina, however. The web of allusions extends further, and in this scene she has also resurrected the figure of Natasha Rostova for a group of mummers also arrives quite unannounced at the home of the Rostovs, causing Natasha great fright. The mummers symbolize Natasha’s fear that her soul may have come from an animal or may return to one after death. Similarly, the protagonist of Poem Without a Hero knows that she, too, was one of these self-absorbed mummer-artists in
her youth and she fears that she must join them now by dying soon. Once again, however, the intertextuality creates an ironic situation which allows Akhmatova to ridicule the girls for their inconsequential concerns. It is as if she were saying to them, “Silly girls! You do not know what life is about. Look through my doorway and you will see something that really warrants fear.”

At a later point in her work, in stanza XIII of Part Two, “The Other Side of the Coin,” Akhmatova once again uses the phrase “on the threshold” to refer to fate/destiny: “On the threshold stands—Destiny” ("Na poroge stoit—Sud’ba."). This line leads to a choice of interpretations of the earlier scene, a personal interpretation and an historic one. One might understand that the persona’s personal “Destiny” is thus intertwined with the threshold where she now stands, the threshold between the living and the dead. She and Tatiana share the same destiny which is to bear witness to death, the death of the two young poets, Lenskii and Kniazev. By capitalizing the word, Akhmatova also gives it the status of a character in Poem, a character who interacts not just with the individual persona, but with the historic generation of artists. Thus the persona stands on the threshold with the Destiny of the Russian people as a witness of that which will bring them to ruin. She stands on the threshold to the year 1914 which Akhmatova identifies as the beginning of the “real Twentieth Century, not the calendar” (“ne kalendar’nyi—nastoiaschchi Dvadtsatyi Vek,” 1.3.383-84), the beginning of Russia’s decline.

In both Tatiana’s dream and Akhmatova’s vision, one person stands out amidst all the strange looking people-creatures. Tatiana notices Onegin who alone does not appear as a monster. He is visibly the master of the house, in command of the creatures, and the only one (until the arrival of Lenskii and Olga) whom we might call a living, human being, i.e., the only one to whom animal or other fantastic features are not ascribed:

But what were the thoughts of Tatiana
when ‘mongst the guests she recognized
him who was dear to her and awesome [strashen] --
the hero of our novel! (5.17)
In *Poem* the guest from the future arrives, i.e., the guest whose blood is still warm. He alone is alive and therefore is not allowed entrance into the celebration of the shades of Akhmatova’s dead friends. In contrast to the mummers from the past, and just like Onegin in Tatiana’s dream, there is also no evidence that he is wearing any type of costume:

And reflected in all of the mirrors  
Is the man who didn’t appear.  
Who could not get into the hall.  
He is no better than the others and no worse,  
But he doesn’t waft on Lethe’s chill,  
And his hand is warm (1.1.82-93).

Whereas Akhmatova’s guest from the future cannot enter the hall where the festivities are taking place, Onegin is present with his suite of monsters. Tatiana cannot cross the threshold and join his world, but he, on the other hand, is capable of crossing the threshold into Tatiana’s world. He has the power because he is part of Tatiana’s present life and at the same time maintains his own realm separate from that of Tatiana’s.

Akhmatova’s guest, although part of her world at the time of the writing of this stanza, appears in her New Year’s vision of 1913 when he was not yet part of her life. Therefore he is unable to join either her or the merrymakers.

In both texts, shortly after the appearance of the one exceptional person, i.e., Onegin and the guest from the future, there is a cry which causes all the people-monsters to scatter. Both heroines are left in the dark to face their fate. Tatiana, however, is not totally alone. She is left with Onegin, the “enigma” of her present life, and must finally reconcile herself with the fact that he is not her “guardian angel” but a “demonic tempter”:

all point as one at her,  
and everybody cries [vse krichat]: “Mine! Mine!” (5.19).  

“Mine!” Eugene fiercely said,  
and in a trice the whole gang vanished;  
the youthful maid remained with him  
twain in the frosty dark (5.20).
Akhmatova’s protagonist, on the other hand, finds herself completely alone in the dark. By herself she must face what she terms “the bitterest drama,” the sins of a generation of fellow artists and the loss of a beloved city:

A cry [krikt]:
“Hero to center stage!”
Don’t worry: now he will certainly come
To take the place of the hulking one
And sing about sacred revenge...

Why are you all running off together,
As if each had found a bride,
Leaving me face to face
In the dusk with the black frame,
From which stares what has become
The bitterest drama,
The still un lamented hour? (1.1.138-149).

Tatiana’s dream leaves her face to face with Onegin so that she may take leave of him and her present life and move into a new stage of growth. It is her rite of passage from childhood and adolescence into adulthood. The vision in Poem, on the other hand, reveals the persona’s whole past life to her and helps her interpret it and simultaneously reveal it to others within the context of the sviatki rituals. She does not take leave of a particular person but of the haunting nightmare of her sinful generation.

In their respective dreams, both protagonists next have a premonition of violent death. Tatiana watches as Onegin draws his knife and kills the young poet Lenskii. Poem’s persona does not witness a killing, but she hears a clear voice utter the words, “I am ready to die” (1.1.160). Osip Mandelstam, Akhmatova’s good friend and fellow poet, made the remark to Akhmatova in 1934, but in this context of Poem the words are attributed to the young poet Vsevolod Kniazev who commits suicide (Reeder 771, 773).

The words echo Lenski’s thoughts shortly before the duel:

It matters not; fate’s law is just.
Whether I fall, pierced by the dart, or whether
it flies by — all is right:
of waking and of sleep
comes the determined hour (6.21).
Furthermore, before dying each of the young men writes a poem to his Olga, imploring her to be faithful to him after he has died. Lenskii asks Olga to remember him as his spouse:

"Friend of my heart, desired friend, come, come: I'm thy spouse!" (6.22).

Akhmatova uses lines from Kniazev's own poetry to Glebova-Sudeikina, and his words directly precede the words of Mandelstam. In the true style of Akhmatova's reversals, Kniazev calls to Olga to keep his memory as "his widow":

I hear a whisper: "Farewell! It's time! I will leave you alive, But you will be my widow, You -- Dove, sister, light of my life!" (1.1.152-55).

The many correlations between Lenskii and Kniazev suggest that the premonitions of their death at similar points in the unfolding of the two plots can hardly be coincidental. Both were aspiring poets who died young because of an unhappy love affair caused by their irrational and immature jealousy. Both young poets idealized the objects of their love who were both named Olga, but neither Olga reciprocated the devotion. Both Lenskii and Kniazev jump to conclusions because of trifling, insignificant incidents. Lenskii's ire waxes as he watches Onegin dance with Olga, and Kniazev's jealousy is aroused after seeing Blok with his Olga. Both rivals are in no way committed to their flirtatious gestures, and neither of the Olgas remains true to her dead love. Both deaths were senseless and reflect a lack of concern for anything greater than the lovers' own personal and ultimately insignificant sorrow. Ultimately the suicide of 1913 is every bit as ridiculous as the duel of the early nineteenth century.

Finally, the disquieting vision of each of the women disappears. Each finds herself once again in her own room. Both then recognize the arrival of another person. Tat'iana awakens to find the sun rising and shining through her bedroom window:

She looks—'tis light already in the room;
dawn's crimson ray

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plays in the window through the frozen pane;  
the door opens. Olga flits in to her (5.21).

Instead of the rising sun which greets Tatiana, however, there is only darkness for the persona of Poem:

The torches go out, the ceiling descends. The white mirrored hall becomes the author's room again. Words from the darkness (Stage directions after 1.1.160).

Who is knocking?  
Everyone is here.  
Is it the guest from behind the mirror? Or  
The one who suddenly flashed by the window... (1.1.164-168)

Whereas Pushkin here just refers to the dawning of a new day, the light-dark contrast which arises at the end of the two dreams may, in fact, have been intentional. By creating her own description in opposition to Pushkin's, i.e., the "reverse" of his, Akhmatova ascribes new meaning to the earlier work when analyzed in contrast to her own. After her troubling nightmare, Tatiana is greeted by light, symbolic of the fact that she now leaves her storybook fantasies behind and transits to a new phase of her life. The future which she enters is safe and secure, albeit not the one she had imagined for herself.

Akhmatova's persona, on the other hand, returns to darkness, symbolic of the darkness which will enshroud her life during the next decades in Russia. Her reality is every bit as troubling as her disturbing dream, perhaps even more so. Tatiana is also greeted by the arrival of her sister Olga who is a part of her present. In Poem, however, there is only a knocking which may have one or more implications for the persona's future. Since the knocking occurs in the darkness, it is most probably an omen of "something negative," just like the knocking in the barn that Sonia was to listen for in War and Peace. In this case, such knocking could be interpreted as the nighttime knocking which all Russians feared during Stalinist times. Or perhaps, as Akhmatova suggests, it signifies the arrival of the "guest from the future" who is also fated to bring Akhmatova "something
negative.” Wells suggests that the earlier ringing of a bell at the arrival of the mummers may allude to a midnight visit from the secret police (*Anna* 113). While this is certainly a possibility, in the spirit of *Poem*’s multiple meanings, I would offer an additional interpretation for the first instance of knocking/ringing at the door. The ringing occurs as a part of the protagonist’s vision, i.e., during the year 1913, when she “freezes” in the doorway “as if remembering something” (“kak budto pripomniv chto-to”). The persona remembers the revelry of her artist friends, and when she hears the ringing, she understands that she has returned to face them and the sins of her generation. The later knocking, however, seems to have aroused her from that same vision and thus transpires in the year 1940 when the threat and fear of such nighttime “knocking” was very real.

In a comparison of Tatiana’s later married life with the general and the masquerade of *Poem*, Rosslyn points out a reversal in the roles of the two heroines which relates to the above light/dark opposition (“Not” 76-78). Tatiana, she argues, when faced with the glamour of her new society life, is not taken in by it. In her heart she maintains her love for the countryside. Akhmatova “looks to Tat’iana as a model who is not seduced by the masquerade and thus stands as a beacon of morality in an immoral society.” *Poem*’s literary persona, she continues, was taken in by the attraction her generation had for wearing masks. She is guilty of having played many roles and her conscience “is still reproaching her for sins committed long ago.” The fact that Tatiana, after her nightmare, wakes up to sunlight thus symbolizes the integrity with which she enters her new stage of life. *Poem*’s heroine, conversely, wakes up in darkness, symbolizing the sin which she carries into her life.

Remembering that Akhmatova’s *Poem* bears many similarities to a drama, when we consider the above parallelism in its entirety, we find that from opening stage direction to closing stage direction of Part One, Chapter One, Akhmatova has “staged” her own rendition of the second half of Tatiana’s famous dream. The fact that she chose the scene
which resembles "some big funeral" (5.16) is significant. As I have established in Chapter 3 of this work, I believe this scene from Pushkin's work to represent Tatiana's own funeral, and she has arrived to participate in it as the "corpse" of a mock funeral, symbolically marking her passage into a new phase of life. There is no way of knowing how Akhmatova interpreted the scene. Even if she did not recognize the scene as a mock funeral, she might nevertheless have interpreted the funeral repast to be in honor of Tatiana. Considering the understanding in Russian folklore of the rights of passage and their importance in the life of the young women, one might see this episode as symbolic of Tatiana's right of passage into adulthood without recognition of the ritual performance. Furthermore, by the time of Akhmatova there was an established literary tradition which associated the motifs of mirror divination not only with fear but with the act of dying. In the case of mirror divination, death often came to the young girl who was telling fortunes. Akhmatova was probably aware of both of the above associations, and therefore it is not implausible that she also associated the dream scene in Onegin's hut with the symbolic funeral of Tatiana. Below I have given two possible interpretations of Akhmatova's scene, each based on a different understanding of the episode in Eugene Onegin. Again, in light of the many double meanings and the frequent personal/historical parallels, both interpretations are possible.

If, indeed, Akhmatova understood this to be a symbolic funeral for Tatiana, then she may well have intended the corresponding scene in Poem to be interpreted as a gathering in preparation for her own funeral. She senses that she is on the threshold of life and death, and because she shares in the sin of her fellow, deceased artists, she must soon die and join them. This is her "Destiny." By the time she finished her work in 1962, Akhmatova had, of course, realized that her death, in relationship to the 1940s, i.e., the perspective from which she wrote the poem, was not imminent. During the 1940s, however, her fear of some sort of political reprisal, including the possibility of
prison camp and/or death, was very real. If, on the other hand, Akhmatova interpreted the scene from *Eugene Onegin* to be a wake, not in honor of Tatiana, but perhaps for the soon-to-be-dead Lenskii, then her analogous scene may be an early wake for the soon-to-die Kniazev. Or, if one thinks in terms of the work as a whole, perhaps the wake is a prelude to the “death” of the great city of Leningrad. In their dreams, both she and Tatiana similarly bear witness to the senseless death of a young poet. In contrast, however, during her lifetime Akhmatova also witnesses the death of her generation and her city. The death and sinning of the individual inhabitants can only lead to the degeneration of the city and its own ultimate “death”. Considering the references in Part Three, “Epilogue” to the city of Peter the Great, this is also entirely feasible. The epilogue is dedicated to Akhmatova’s city of Petersburg, a city which lies devastated from the war. Likewise, all three epigraphs to the epilogue refer explicitly or implicitly to the death and destruction of the city. The first epigraph is from Pushkin’s poem “The Bronze Horseman”: “I love you, creation of Peter.” Whereas this epigraph may indeed allude to Akhmatova’s love for Petersburg, underlying the explicit allusion is the implication of the subsequent content of the poem in which the city’s flood causes the hero Eugene’s misfortunes. The second epigraph, “May this place be empty...,” is the curse reportedly uttered by Tsaritsa Avdot’ia after she was abandoned by her husband Peter the Great and sent to a convent (Reeder, *Complete* 844). The third epigraph is from one a poem by Innokentii Annenskii, “And the deserts of mute squares, / Where people were executed before dawn,” and alludes to the execution of political prisoners in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, all three epigraphs either directly or indirectly allude to the “death” of Petersburg and support an historical interpretation of the staged funeral scene of Part One, Chapter One.

With the above interpretation in mind, i.e., the implicit inscription of a series of events from Tatiana’s dream in *Eugene Onegin* within the text of Akhmatova’s *Poem*, we
may affix a new and alternative interpretation to certain lines which appear later in the text. In Part Two, "The Other Side of the Coin," the inscribed author of Part One describes her relationship to her own work and the evolution of its writing. In stanza XX she tells of the "hundred-year-old charmer" which is interpreted by critics as a reference to the genre of the romantic *poema* created by Byron and adopted by Pushkin and his followers:

But the hundred-year-old charmer
Suddenly wakes up and wants
To play. It has nothing to do with me.
She drops her lacy handkerchief (*Kruzhevnoi roniaet platoshki*),
Narrows her eyes languidly and, from behind the lines,
Lures with a Bryullovian shoulder (XX).

Although the allusion is to the genre of the romantic *poema*, Akhmatova also referred to *Eugene Onegin* as a *poema* and preferred that genre designation over Pushkin's label of "novel in verse": "Let us recall the first Russian *poema*, *Evgenii Onegin*. Let us not be confused by the fact that its author called it a novel" (Wells, *Anna* 125). Thus, in Akhmatova's system of doubles and layered allusions, Pushkin's "*poema* *Eugene Onegin* becomes a viable option as an interpretation for "the hundred-year-old charmer."

Reeder explains that the charmer then lures the author "with those wonderful, sensual shoulders depicted in the paintings of Bryullov in the mid-nineteenth century" (*Anna* 425). Other critics conclude that this refers to Olga Glebova-Sudeikina who was considered a Bryullovian beauty. Is it not possible, however, that the heroine of Pushkin's *poema/novel*, innocent, young Tatiana Larina, who has charmed readers for a hundred years, also enters Akhmatova's life as a Muse in ironic contrast to the sinful Olga Glebova-Sudeikina? Tatiana, too, drops her handkerchief as she runs from the bear, shortly before arriving at Onegin's hut: "Now she lets fall her handkerchief" ("*To vyronit ona platok,*" 5.14). As she goes outside for her moon-mirror divination, the narrator describes her "in her low-cut frock" ("*V otkrytom plat'itse,*" 5.9), seductive clothing that is hardly appropriate for a winter's evening. Many women of the mid-nineteenth century
attempted to copy the hairstyle and general appearance of what they felt was the image of Tatiana, and this, including the "alluring shoulder," is refracted in the paintings of Briullov (e.g., his paintings of M. I. Alekseeva, 1837-40, and A. Ia. Petrova, 1841). His 1834 painting of Zhukovskii's Svetlana also reveals the seductive bare shoulders. Thus, Tatiana and Glebova-Sudeikina at the same time try to lure the author, as if from opposite ends of a spectrum - Tatiana with her appealing honesty, innocence, and naiveté, and the seductive Glebova-Sudeikina as a racy and risqué temptress. But Tatiana cannot, in fact, tempt the wise and discerning Akhmatova whose own memory has no recollection of the idyllic life of a young daughter of the gentry. Rejecting Tatiana, Akhmatova also symbolically rejects the traditional form of the romantic *poema*. The transgressions of Tatiana's ironic counterpart, Glebova-Sudeikina, however, are a part of the lives of Akhmatova and her generation and thus succeed in enticing her as subject matter for her *poema*.

Akhmatova forms the association between the literary persona of *Poem Without a Hero* and the Tatiana Larina of Chapter Five of *Eugene Onegin* solely through her involvement in dream/mirror divination and the visit of the frightful mummers of her past. Unlike Tatiana, *Poem*’s persona has no need to find a husband, and she has ignored the merrier and less frightening forms of divination, e.g., wax-pouring, fortune telling with a rooster, in favor of one of the most fearful types. Such a strong identification with a single event from Tatiana’s life further ironically emphasizes the two foremost motifs within that event, i.e., fear and death. The fear of the sheltered Tatiana contrasts with the indescribable fear of a woman who has experienced untold personal tragedies as well as the horrors of two world wars and Stalin’s rule, and the comparably foolish and unnecessary deaths of two young poets, Kniazev and Lenskii, ironically refract the unnecessary torture and deaths of millions of Akhmatova’s fellow citizens.
5.4.2 Dostoevsky and the Staging of Sviatki Plays

Although much has been written about the intertextual connections of Akhmatova’s *Poem Without a Hero* and Pushkin's works, little research has been done on the intertextual references in *Poem* to the works of Dostoevsky, in particular his novelized prison memoirs *Notes From the House of the Dead*. According to Reeder, Dostoevsky, “along with Dante, the Bible, and Shakespeare, was one of the most important influences on Akhmatova’s life” (*Anna* 402). The fact that Akhmatova “stages” Part One and Part Two of *Poem Without a Hero* as a *poema/àxama* during the Russian sviatki season gives further cause to investigate possible allusions to the sviatki plays which Dostoevsky describes in *House of the Dead*. It is fully comprehensible that a work which is based on Dostoevsky’s own years in prison might influence Akhmatova when writing about what many term the “prison” years of the Russian writer and artist in general. Additionally, when Akhmatova began *Poem*, her son, Lev Gumilev, was in exile in Siberia. He was arrested in 1938 and sent to Siberia a year later where he remained until 1945. The exile of her son was an impetus for Akhmatova, during the writing of *Poem*, to recall other family and friends who had been arrested, exiled, or imprisoned in Siberia. In 1935, prior to Gumilev’s exile, Nikolai Punin, an art historian with whom Akhmatova lived for many years, had been arrested and later released. He was again arrested in 1949, several years after Lev Gumilev’s release, and sent to prison camp where he died in 1953. Mandelstam, famous poet and friend of Akhmatova, had died in 1938 in a transit camp while en route to Siberia. Furthermore, these twentieth-century horrors experienced by Akhmatova’s loved ones recalled for her the misfortune of her nineteenth-century mentor Dostoevsky.

Because the topic has not been investigated and because the allusions in *Poem* to *House of the Dead* are not explicit, I wish first to examine another poem, “Prehistory,”
written by Akhmatova concurrently with *Poem*. The analysis of “Prehistory” will show that Dostoevsky’s imprisonment and exile were most definitely on Akhmatova’s mind at the time she wrote her *Poem Without a Hero*. “Prehistory” is the first of seven elegies in the series “Northern Elegies.” Akhmatova began work on “Prehistory” and *Poem Without a Hero* in 1940, while she was still in Leningrad. She finished “Prehistory” in 1943 during her evacuation stay in Tashkent where she also completed the first version of the *poema*. Throughout “Prehistory,” Akhmatova alludes to statements made by Dostoevsky regarding the negative forces which were at work in Russian society during the second half of the nineteenth century and weakening it. The generation conflict, for example, created strife between parents and children and was portrayed by Dostoevsky in his novels *The Devils* and *Brothers Karamazov*. The poem also makes multiple references to Dostoevsky’s biography, including locations in Petersburg which were part of his life; to his works, especially *Brothers Karamazov*; and finally, to his imprisonment in Omsk and the mock execution that he experienced on Semenovskii Square. The biographical references are made in reverse order, sketching his life from his last years in Petersburg to his mock execution. Akhmatova’s last reference to Dostoevsky in “Prehistory” actually brings his life full circle by combining the allusion to the mock execution with mention of his later writings, claiming that “page after page / Stinks of Semenovskii Square” (lines 53-54). Susan Amert maintains that the reverse order of events “underscores the pivotal role of the mock execution and penal servitude in Dostoevsky’s life” (76). Dostoevsky himself, she points out, declared that the mock execution was for him a “figurative death,” and the penal servitude lead “to his conversion to Russian Orthodoxy and his new understanding of the Russian people” (76). Amert further contends that Akhmatova’s references to Dostoevsky’s experience in Siberia symbolically represent the life which awaited numerous twentieth-century writers (76-77). Many of them were also sent to Siberia, and for some the executions were very real.
Even the title of the elegy “Prehistory” reveals Akhmatova’s perception of Dostoevsky’s life in relation to life in the twentieth century. The nineteenth-century societal problems and penal servitude and exile of Dostoevsky were the “prehistory,” a mere foreshadowing, of the grim realities which visited Russia in the twentieth century. The artists of the twentieth century had not heeded Dostoevsky’s “prophecies” and wake-up calls to the nation and were therefore destined to a fate even worse than his. Again and again in his novels and publicistic works Dostoevsky advised the intelligentsia to remember the narod, the folk, to listen to them and to help guide them, but Akhmatova’s generation had become so self-absorbed that they had in fact forgotten the narod and were thus faced with revolutions and their subsequent terrors.

A comparison of Poem Without a Hero and Chapter 11, “The Stage Show,” of Notes From the House of the Dead (the chapter in which Dostoevsky relates the staging of the sviatki plays) reveals an ironic contrast between the two works. In Poem, the literary persona has written a “drama” in which she “stages” a sviatki scene of divination, consequently conjuring up masqueraders from the year 1913 who arrive at her house and in turn “stage” several dances and other performances. As the Akhmatova-persona of Part One, “1913,” watches from her vantage point of 1940 when her son was in exile, the “plays” of her fellow artists evoke for her images of another time and another literary work in which plays were staged in Siberia, namely the sviatki plays performed by the convicts in Dostoevsky’s Notes From the House of the Dead. The vision of the dead friends at the Fountain House, where Akhmatova’s apartment was located, produces an ironic analogy with the “House of the Dead” of Dostoevsky’s novel, for with the arrival of the masqueraders at Fountain House, Akhmatova’s house has become not just a metaphoric, but a literal “House of the Dead.”

A contrastive analysis of the two sets of “plays” shows that the motifs (i.e., the type of performance - primitive vs. refined, the effect of the plays on the actors -
transformational vs. destructive, and the social background of the actors - the *narod* vs. upper class) are in many ways in ironic opposition to each other. The plays in Dostoevsky's work are folk plays performed by prisoners serving hard labor, and for several reasons one might classify their performance as "crude art." The plays themselves have no written scripts. Instead, the prisoners produce them from memory and improvise when necessary. The actors wear makeshift costumes that they have put together from various items in the prison. The convict-audience crowds into a small space, and many are forced to stand. The content of the plays is bawdy, and actors enjoy poking fun at their superiors. Spectators, in turn, laugh and applaud enthusiastically. The convict-orchestra, although capable of playing simple folk instruments such as the balalaika, cannot produce decent sounds with the more refined violin. As they play, performers dance to the loud and fast "Kamarinskaia" folk dance, and one of the characters, a Brahmin, does "a peculiar sort of Brahmin dance" (203).

In direct contrast to the performance of Dostoevsky's convicts, the "plays" of Akhmatova's artist friends are extremely refined. The "actors" wear extravagant costumes that identify them with literary characters from European literatures, e.g., Don Juan and Faust. As the masqueraders arrive, the persona's bedroom magically expands into the white mirrored hall of the Fountain House and comfortably accommodates them all. Although the characters themselves do not speak, Akhmatova, through her writing, "speaks" lines of poetry from such renowned poets as Pushkin, Blok, and Mandelstam. The orchestra plays "as if from another world" ("kak s togo sveta," 1.2.239), and the prima ballerina, the swan, "flies" over the Marinsky stage, a theater renowned for its refined artistic performances. In this passage Akhmatova alludes to Anna Pavlova whose finest dancing was considered to be in "The Dying Swan." Even the coachmen participate in performances of refined art as they wait outside and dance "around the bonfires" (1.2.257) to keep warm, an allusion to the "Dance of the Coachmen" from Stravinskii's
ballet Petrushka. The motif of highly refined art intertwines itself with a second and contrastive motif of the decadent life style of the artists. While they produce the finest of art, they are also absorbed in senseless and frivolous pursuits of self-interest, including triangle love affairs and suicide.

In both House of the Dead and Poem, the effect of the performances on their respective “actors,” i.e., the degree to which the plays transform the actors, is in direct opposition to the degree of refinement of the plays, forming a second ironic contrast between the two works. In each work the staging of plays symbolizes the fact that the performers are thereby enabled to escape from their unpleasant conditions of existence. The daily life of the convicts in House of the Dead consists of hard labor, poor food, filth, and overcrowded conditions. During the production of the sviatki plays they are able to forget this, if even just for a short while, as the actors create magic on stage. The performance of the actors not only transforms them but also the entire audience. Whereas the convicts’ earlier Christian celebration of Christmas resulted in drunkenness and rude behavior, the “Russian folk theater,” as noted by Julie de Sherbinin, “becomes the locus of the transcendental experience” (344). Akhmatova’s “performers” - of which she considers herself a part - also use the costumes and masks to escape their world. Their masks hide them from reality and from the unhappy narod, and through their acting they remain insensitive to the cataclysmic changes that are happening in their own society. Instead of uplifting and transforming the actors, the “plays” are destructive and provide the means for the artists to continue in their decadent complacency. Thus the actors - including the author - are partially to blame for the many catastrophic events which followed the year 1913, and had the members of Akhmatova’s generation not hid behind masks but faced the narod, history might have evolved differently. For Dostoevsky, the sviatki plays are positive, i.e., they enable the convicts to transcend briefly the appalling conditions of their prison existence. For Akhmatova, however, the acting of Part One
brings reverse results. The plays of *Poem* do not provide a fleeting escape and transcendental experience, instead they are permanent blinders and a way of life.

Rosslyn brings up the debate of whether the masquerade activities in *Poem* symbolically result in “renewal and regeneration” or “degeneration and decline” (“Not” 69). She disagrees with Wells who maintains that the presence of the carnival component itself speaks for a “theme of rebirth and regeneration” (“Folk” 84). He returns to the historic values of the carnival in Russian folk tradition, i.e., the symbolic and simultaneous presence of both death and rebirth. He argues that the “denial of a regenerative ending is implicit in the Poema’s treatment of Carnival” and adds that “this ironic treatment of conventions tends in its turn to undermine the feeling of destruction and to restore the exaltation of Carnival” (“Folk” 84-85). Rosslyn counters that the “behaviour of the role-players is inappropriate to their circumstances” and that the masks lead to insensitivity “to reality and failing to perceive its significance” (“Not” 80).

Both scholars make valid arguments, but, in my opinion, a more viable solution lies in a compromise of the two. The traditional function of carnival does imply a presentation of death and a subsequent rebirth, but when reflected in Akhmatova’s mirrors, the sequence is reversed. Life is followed by death without a new birth and a new life. As Rosslyn suggests, the resultant picture of the poem/drama is one of degeneration and decline, i.e., the beginning of a decaying twentieth century, the sins of a generation, and the destruction of a city. If, however, one views the staging of the plays in *Poem* as a whole, including dedications, Part One, Part Two, and the Epilogue, one can say that, like *House of the Dead*, Akhmatova’s play does, in fact, render a “transcendental experience.” Unlike Dostoevsky’s plays, however, neither players nor audience are transformed by virtue of the acting. The acting itself has partially caused the degeneration. At this point Akhmatova moves from folk ritual to Christian expiation, and as Reeder suggests, she follows the example of Dostoevsky where an “individual
frequently not only atones for his own sins but takes on the sins of others as well” (Anna 393). Akhmatova, as the only member of her generation of artists who is still alive, has taken the sins of her entire generation upon herself. By making a record of these sins (which also include her own) in her work, she has succeeded in expiating them, creating a “transcendental experience” for herself and the fellow artists of her generation. Thus, as Wells suggests, there is “renewal and regeneration” but it does not come through any aspect of the folk tradition. Instead it emerges as a Christian rite. In an ironic contrast to the plays of House of the Dead, Akhmatova has reversed the roles of the Christian and the folk ritual. In Dostoevsky’s novel, the observation of the Christian holiday instigates revelry whereas the folk plays transfigure the prisoners. In Akhmatova’s poem/drama, the situation is the opposite. The folk plays promote merrymaking while the Christian expiation transforms.

A third ironic contrast, a contrast of the social and economic background of the “actors” of the two plays, reveals perhaps what Akhmatova, if trying to view the scene through Dostoevsky’s eyes, may have understood as an underlying cause of her generation’s inability to see what was happening around them. The convicts of Dostoevsky’s experience were members of the narod, the folk who had suffered cruel and unjust treatment from owners and society in general. During the performance of the sviatki plays, however, they were given the opportunity not only to transcend the miserable conditions of the prison camp in which they lived, but to rise above the lowly position they held in society. During the staging of the plays the actors became “celebrities” and proved that they were, in fact, “artists.” In spite of the “crude” nature of their plays, their acting, according to the protagonist Gorianchikov, was remarkable. Not only were the actors able to shine in front of the other convicts of the narod, they proved to the special guests at the performances, those who were wielding or had wielded some sort of power over them, i.e., prison officers, supervisors, and guards, and the gentry-
convicts, that they were capable of something outstanding. Pride in their achievements infected not only the actors but also the other convicts of the narod for the outstanding performances represented what they as a group - the narod - was ultimately capable of doing.

The “actors” of Poem Without a Hero, on the other hand, have isolated themselves from the rest of society, in particular from the narod. They are educated members of the upper class, acting only for each other. Like Dostoevsky’s convicts, these actors are also victims of their circumstances, for in their desire to pursue their artistic and other self interests, they do not see what is happening around them. They hide in the cellar cabarets such as the Stray Dog, as if in a bomb shelter. Instead of escaping exploding bombs, however, the artists of 1913 are drowning out the voices of the narod which sounded in the 1905 revolution and continue to sound. Akhmatova and her friends are so absorbed in their own decadent behavior that they fail to carry out the mandate given to them by Dostoevsky. They neither listen to the narod nor do they help guide them. Akhmatova, the surviving member of these artists, understands that she shares equally in the guilt of her generation and takes the sins upon herself. She reveals them in her poema/drama, and thereby atones for them.

The allusions to House of the Dead may, in fact, have multifaceted implications. Not only are the “performances” of the respective works in ironic opposition to each other, but the references in the epilogue of Poem to Akhmatova’s son and the gulag generate a second ironic contrast between the system of penal servitude of the nineteenth century and the gulag, the prison camps of the “real” twentieth century. The prison inmates of the nineteenth century, although faced with horrid living conditions, torture, and execution, still did not know the possible extent of prison life. Even in the deepest, darkest “hell” of their lives, i.e., their lives in prison, there was still an opportunity for art. Through that art, the convicts were able to create a transcendental and uplifting
experience for themselves. Their counterparts of the twentieth century, however, i.e., the inmates of the Stalinist camps, were not even allowed this small pleasure. Their horrors were beyond description. Not only did the camps “exterminate” all trace of art and humanity, but they exterminated the physical self as well.

5.5 The Personal Axis: The Importance of Sviatki in Akhmatova’s Own Work

Akhmatova broadens the sviatki polylogue through epigraphs and textual allusions to her own earlier poems. In the first epigraph to Part One, Chapter One, immediately preceding the epigraph from Chapter Five of Eugene Onegin, Akhmatova quotes one of her own poems from 1914 about the winter holiday: “The New Year’s holiday stretches out luxuriantly, The stems of the New Year’s roses are moist. - Rosary.” In its primary function in the poema, the epigraph interacts with the second epigraph from Eugene Onegin and the third from Don Juan (“In my hot youth -- when George the Third was king…”) to reinforce the notion that the “fears” of one’s youth, in this case the youthful fears of Akhmatova, are indeed silly in comparison to the real “fears” that millions of Russians faced later.

Furthermore, the epigraph supports the hypothesis that Akhmatova adopts the perspective of an anti- or reverse-sviatki in her rendition of the folk ritual. The general tone of the epigraph at first seems optimistic, but for Akhmatova’s readers familiar with her poetry, it conveys a different message. In this poem (“After the wind and frost,” “Posle vetra i moroza”) and in others about this same sviatki holiday, Akhmatova’s tone is all but optimistic. The ritual activities do not bring the desired happiness but result in melancholy and dejectedness. Fortune telling does not bring the sought-after beloved but leaves one lonely and alone, impressions which pale against the later misfortune associated with sviatki but are nevertheless reversals of the quintessential ritual outcome.
Akhmatova expresses a sense of resignation to a less than perfect future as revealed paradoxically during this particular holiday season. Her gloomy associations with the *sviatki* season begin with the very earliest poems and persist through her latest works. The above poem, one of her earliest, informs the reader of the thief who has stolen her heart and will more than likely soon return it. The thought is frightening to her. In another poem from the same year she speaks of the Yuletide season as empty ("Empty White Yuletide," "Pustye belye sviatki") and bemoans the fact that she has nowhere to go. The earlier poems about the *sviatki* season reflect feelings of melancholy as a result of unrequited love.

While Akhmatova’s poems of the 1930s still reflect the theme of love, later New Year and *sviatki* poems address the sadness at death and separation because of war and political exile. In her poem "Incantation" ("Zaklinanie") written in 1936, she cleverly negates the typical incantation used during the supper divination of *sviatki* to call to an unknown love at Easter time: "Uninvited, / Unbetrothed -- / Come have supper with me" ("Nezvannyi, / Nesuzhenyi -- / Pridi ko mne uzhinat."). It is as if the literary persona has given up on the traditional folk rituals, never having been rewarded by them. She now turns to another time of the year and hopes that by reversing the rituals they will accommodate her. Another poem, "To the New Year! To New Bitterness!" ("S Novym Godom! S novym gorem!" January 1940), written only four years later, illustrates the same ironic negation but the motif has changed to pay homage to those "who have gone to the fields to die." The references to *sviatki* in *Poem Without a Hero* fall into this new and more mature era of her poetry. They no longer refer to unrequited love but to the destruction brought about in the first decades of the Soviet Union. Akhmatova’s negative associations with the New Year persist even into some of her very last poems. In the second poem "Untitled" ("Bez nazvaniia") of the "Moscow Trefoil" ("Trilistnik moskovskii") which she worked on from 1961-63, a few years before her death,
Akhmatova contrasts the festive, sviatki atmosphere in Moscow with the anticipation of her own inevitable departure: “No, no one has ever separated like this, / No one from anyone, and this is our reward / For our heroic deed.”

5.6 Interpretative Strategies

The sviatki folk rituals of Akhmatova’s Poem Without a Hero perform two primary functions but they lose their traditional significance as a folk performance. On the one hand, they function as an anti-ritual. They interpret events from Akhmatova’s past instead of predicting circumstances of the future. They do not provide a transition to new life and growth, but instead are a means for exposing decadence, decay, and historical cataclysms as refracted in the life of a victim and “eyewitness.” “New life” is found, not by means of the traditional folk ritual, but through a Christian expiation of sins, i.e., only through Akhmatova’s confession and acceptance of the sins of her generation as her own. Both the fortune telling and the plays provide a setting which enables Akhmatova to do this. The rite of mirror and candle divination calls forth the guilty artists, and their performance in the plays exposes their sins, acting as a means of confession and allowing Akhmatova to atone for them and for her own.

On the other hand, the rituals refract other works from the sviatki tradition, primarily Eugene Onegin and Notes From the House of the Dead, and through ironic contrast and comparison with the nineteenth-century novels impart meaning to the elusive symbolism of Akhmatova’s Poem. In Part One, Chapter One, of Poem the actors perform a rendition of the scene of the “funeral repast” from Tatiana Larina’s fortune-telling dream in Eugene Onegin. It affords not only an intertextual means for Akhmatova to begin the narration of her own vision, but through the ironic contrast to Tatiana’s dream, Akhmatova scoffs at the protagonist’s petty concerns as well as those of the
young poet Lenskii. Just like the jealousy which brought Kniazev to kill himself, Lenskii's jealousy and Tatiana's fears while fortune telling seem inconsequential when contrasted with the horrors of the twentieth century. Likewise, the motif of drama in Poem evokes a like motif in House of the Dead as Akhmatova presents the artists of her own generation in ironic contrast to the convicts of Dostoevsky's prison of the nineteenth century. The plays of Dostoevsky's convicts are crude and unpolished, but the connection to the narod produces a transcendental experience. The plays of Akhmatova's friends, on the other hand, are elegant and refined, but their inattentiveness to the concerns of the narod has brought on destruction and untold horrors. In this new Russia, there will be no room for transformational art in the gulag which will become a part of many of their lives.

Notes

1 Chastushki: four-line ditties which are often recited in a sing-song manner.
2 Akhmatova also highly regarded Nekrasov's descriptions of the Russian villages and countryside, and echoes them with her own rural motifs of rye, windmills, and cranes, for example (Griakalova 51).
3 Akhmatova did not simply add on to the end of the original text with each rewrite, but she expanded the texts from within, i.e., she changed individual lines, removed or added names, or augmented the text with new stanzas or even a dedication, all the while maintaining the original continuity. What is considered the earliest completed version already consisted of the three main parts, the triptych, i.e., "The Year Nineteen Thirteen," "Tails" ("The Other Side of the Coin")," and "Epilogue," but, during the twenty-two years that Akhmatova worked on it, the poem more than doubled in length. Akhmatova began the writing of her poem December 27, 1940, while still in Leningrad and completed the first version of "First Dedication" and Part One, "The Year Nineteen Thirteen," at that time. She wrote Part Two, "Tails," a few days later, shortly after the New Year. "Epilogue" was finished in August 1942, after Akhmatova had been evacuated to Tashkent. She continued to make substantial changes, both additions and deletions, until 1962. The "Guest From the Future," for example, first appeared in the 1946 edition, and the "labor camp" theme does not appear until 1962.
4 Viktor Zhirmunskii (1881-1971) was an eminent scholar who edited the first scholarly edition of Akhmatova's work (Reeder, Anna 256). His edition of Poem Without a Hero is well established, and his extensive notes have aided many readers in understanding the many allusions in Poem. The Struve-Filippov edition was published in 191
1967 and contains certain passages which were omitted in the Zhirmunskii edition (Reeder, Complete 838).

5 Quotes from Poem Without a Hero will be indicated with part, chapter, and lines for Part One, and part and stanza or line for Part Two and Epilogue.

6 Vsevolod Meyerhold - theater, opera, and film director - took the name Dapertutto as a pseudonym when he was publisher of the journal Love for Three Oranges (Reeder, Complete 772).

7 Akhmatova met her “guest from the future” Isaiah Berlin, then provisional First Secretary of the British Embassy in Moscow and later distinguished Oxford professor, in 1945 when he visited her home at the encouragement of a Russian literary scholar V. N. Orlov (Reeder, Anna 286). His last visit to her home before returning to Moscow was January 5, Epiphany Eve, 1946. Akhmatova believed that her visits with him were responsible for the re-arrest of her son, Lev Gumilev, and for the Zhdanov decree of 1946 which called for her expulsion from the Union of Soviet Writers. According to Berlin, she also had no doubt that their brief acquaintance “had started the cold war and thereby changed the history of mankind” (Reeder, Complete 48). Although the notion seems rather exaggerated, it was not totally unfounded. Winston Churchill’s son Randolph was in Russia as a journalist and was visiting Leningrad at the time of Berlin’s first visit to Akhmatova’s home (Reeder, Anna 286-87). Churchill needed Berlin as an interpreter, and having found out that he was visiting Akhmatova, he went to the Sheremetev Palace in search of him. Since he didn’t know which was her apartment, he stood outside and simply yelled Berlin’s name until he appeared. At that point Berlin realized that his visit to Akhmatova was potentially very dangerous for her. If any contact with foreigners was considered highly suspicious, how much more suspicious would it seem to have contact with two foreigners, including the son of Winston Churchill.


9 Another such effort of the Symbolists was the revival of the Greek choral principle. See Crone’s article for a comparison of Poem with the Greek drama.


11 Akhmatova’s expressed dislike of Chekhov and Tolstoy does not preclude the possibility of their sviatki writings having an effect on the writing of Akhmatova.

12 Emphasis in all cases has been added.

13 In describing the orchestra’s playing of the “Kamarinskaia,” Gorianchikov, the protagonist of House of the Dead, writes: “This was the Kamarinskaya in full swing, and it would really have been a fine thing if Glinka could have heard it as it was played in our prison.” In 1848 Glinka composed a “Kamarinskaia” which is musically a very complex piece. At times Glinka also imitates traditional folk instruments such as the balalaika.

14 Stravinskii’s ballet Petrushka is, itself, a fusion of Western and Russian folk motifs. On the one hand, it is based on the Western love triangle Pierrot-Columbine-Harlequin. On the other hand, it refers to the Petrushka character and Petrushka play of the Russian puppet theater which probably appeared in Russia during the 17th century (Warner, Rus. Folk 109).

15 Wells uses the term “carnival” to include the folk rituals of sviatki and maslenitsa.
CONCLUSIONS

The *sviatki* motif has proven to be very popular throughout the history of nineteenth and twentieth century Russian literature. It has created a significant literary tradition, from the early tales of the eighteenth century to the more recent works of the end of the twentieth century. One of the reasons for its high degree of popularity is to be found in its nature as a folk ritual and the extent to which well-known Russian writers incorporated it in their works, creating a rich intertextuality. The *sviatki* motifs found in Pushkin, Tolstoy and Akhmatova differ greatly from their equivalents in the highly popularized *sviatki* short story. Whereas the *sviatki* short story developed into a subgenre of its own, the *sviatki* motif was incorporated into genres of verse and prose, as illustrated by the three chosen works.

Both Pushkin and Tolstoy describe a *sviatki* folk ritual in which the narrative description approximates a traditional folk celebration of *sviatki*. Their young heroines try to see into their future at a transitional stage in their lives when they are moving from adolescence into adulthood. Akhmatova imbues the seasonal fortune telling and mummery with her own symbolism, creating a “reverse”-*sviatki*. Her more than fifty-year-old author-persona looks into the past to expose a transitional stage in her life and the life of her country, the passage from the nineteenth century to the “real” twentieth century. Although each writer uses intertextuality in order to emphasize a point of transition in the psychological development of his/her characters, the method of intertextualizing and the significance of each transition varies. Pushkin creates a balladic dream for his heroine which resembles both the frightening dream of Zhukovskii’s Svetlana and the mock
funeral of the folk celebration. It aids the young Tatiana in her transition into an adult life which does not conform to her idealistic, youthful fantasies and expectations. Tolstoy, by means of intertextual allusions to Zhukovskii's ballad and Pushkin's novel in verse, shows his characters to play roles which both parallel and contrast with the roles of the characters in the earlier works. Through the comparison he thus parallels and contrasts the transition of two of his female characters, Natasha and Sonia, into their adult lives. The opposition of their roles within the narrative performance of the folk ritual symbolically marks the subsequent opposition in the fulfillment of their adult lives.

Akhmatova also turns to intertextuality to help convey the message of her poema. She contrasts the sviatki performance of her persona ironically (and primarily) with the dream in Eugene Onegin and the plays of House of the Dead in order to emphasize the magnitude of the terrors of the twentieth century, showing that the insignificant fears of young fortune-telling girls, in comparison, are senseless, and even the worst hell of the nineteenth century cannot come close to the hell through which the Russians of the twentieth century had gone.

The importance of the sviatki ritual in each of the three works is evidence of its significance in the folk tradition and in more than two hundred years of literary tradition. The fact that the folk ritual has reappeared as a motif in literature of the 1980s and 1990s in all genres proves that it still has lost neither cultural nor literary importance. Further research is needed to examine the ways in which post-Soviet writers choose to embed the ritual in their works. Judging by the title of a collection of poems by Svetlana Kuznetsova, "Second Divination of Svetlana," it seems that writers will continue to depend upon intertextuality as a key means of communication.
GLOSSARY

chudnoe - wondrous, magical, monstrous.

chudovishcha - monsters.

gadanie - fortune telling

grustna - melancholy.

igra v pokoinika, igra v pokhorony - mock funeral game

iskusitel' - tempter.

khranitel' - guardian.

koliadki - special songs sung during the Yuletide season.

Kreshchenie - Epiphany, January 6.

kut'iai - a wheat dish served at funerals; also often served Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and the eve of Epiphany.

molchaliva - silent.

narod - the folk.

narodnost' - national identity.

podbliudnye pesni - fortune-telling songs.

poema - a long poem, sometimes compared to an epic poem.

posidelki (also called besedy or vecherki) - traditional evening get-togethers.

riazhenye - mummers

riazhenyi - the intended, beloved

stashnye vechera - the frightful evenings from January 1 to January 6.
suzhenyi - the intended, beloved

sviatochnyi rasskaz - sviatki short story

sviatye vechera - the holy evenings from December 25 to January 1.

uteshitel' - comforter.


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