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## **The Androgynous Mind**

### **A Contrastive Analysis of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Boris Pasternak's *Zhenya Luvers' Childhood***

One of the main concerns of modernist novel-writers was, as that of their predecessors had been, the representation of reality; only the answers given to the 'question of questions', "What is reality in the novel?" (Hugh Walpole) changed. By 1932, when this question was asked, the writers of the age had all tried to give an appropriate reply in their novels or 'self-commentaries'. As early as 1919 Virginia Woolf expounded her view of reality and the principles of representation of the new novel in her 'manifesto', entitled *Modern Fiction*. In this essay, like in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1924), she repudiates the methods and aims of the writers whom she calls 'materialists' and defines those of her own by this opposition. Traditional mimetic realism, represented by such 'materialists' as Bennett, Galsworthy and Wells, did not live up to the expectations of the age any more for "in or about December 1910 human character changed".

New conditions in modern experience needed a new mode of representation, but the changes in art were also motivated by a partly unconscious desire to compensate for the collapse of social and moral value systems. The function of art was not to represent 'objective' reality but to create a reality which is again in harmonious unity with the world, with the universe.<sup>1</sup> The efforts made to re-

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Fry in his introduction to the catalogue for the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition, 1912 writes: "These artists ... do not seek to give what can, after all, be but a pale reflex of actual appearance, but to arouse the conviction of a new and definite reality. They do not seek to imitate form, not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life. ... In fact they aim not at illusion but at reality." (Fry 239)

establish the primordial unity of life could only be realised on the conceptual plane, in the artist's consciousness. Within the modernist paradigm this ambition takes shape most conspicuously in the rebirth of the androgynous principle.

In the archaic state of culture opposing poles, like male and female, represented the different sides of the same principle and the idea of androgyny appeared quite natural. As a result of the differentiation of principles in the course of cultural development, the two members of this binary opposition became independent from each other. It led to the appearance of two gender-specific modes of perception on the basis of which two gender-specific languages sprang and penetrated the literary genres as well. In the early 20th century, in this age of final and fatal differentiation, the crucial task for art was to satisfy the desire to regain the sense of unity and to create the age of a new 'synchretism'.<sup>2</sup> The artist's main dilemma in the age of modernism is manifested in the different ideals of immortality represented by the two sexes. Béla Hamvas in his article about the 'androgynos' defines them the following way: "A férfi tevékenysége halhatatlannak lenni az örök monumentumban; a nő tevékenysége halhatatlannak lenni a mulandóságban."<sup>3</sup>

Hamvas emphasizes that man rejects to live life, rather he creates an 'object' that can be preserved in eternity; woman lives the moments of life to the fullest which then, by themselves, add up to become eternal. The gap between the two can only be bridged in the androgynous mind.

Both in Virginia Woolf and Boris Pasternak's idea of androgyny the two types of creation are harmonised and brought to a synthesis. In their essays and novels they are concerned with the possibility of preserving primary sensual impressions in art (the

Boris Pasternak in his article "Some Propositions" ("Nyeskol'ko polozheniy", 1919) defines his theory of reality in the following way:

Живой, действительный мир - это единственный, однажды удавшийся и все еще без конца удачный замысел воображения. Вот он длится, ежмгновенно успешный. Он все еще - действителен, глубок, неотрывно увлекателен. В нем не разочаровываешься на другое утро. Он служит поэту примером в большей еще степени, нежели - натурой и моделью. (112-113)

The real, living world is the only plan of imagination which has once succeeded and which goes on being endlessly successful. Look at it continuing, moment after moment a success. It is still real, deep, utterly absorbing. It is not something you are disappointed in next morning. It serves the poet as example, even more than as model or pattern. (Livingstone 31/6)

<sup>2</sup> cf. O. M. Фрейденберг, *Миф и литература древности*. Москва, 1978. А. Белый, "Будущее искусство" в: А. Белый, *Символизм как миропонимание*. Москва: "Республика", 1994.

N. Frye: *Myth and Metaphor. Selected Essays 1974-88*. ed. R.D. Denham, Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Hamvas, 12. "Man's pursuit is to become immortal in the eternal monument; woman's pursuit is to be immortal in evanescence." (J.Baróthy)

child's or woman's type of perception), of grasping and including the fleeting moment in universal human experience. It appears quite explicitly in Virginia Woolf's seminal essay *A Room of One's Own* where the author describes the androgynous mind as an essential condition for the forming of the creative consciousness.<sup>4</sup> The main theme of both Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Boris Pasternak's *Zhenya Luvers' Childhood* is the birth of the artist through the stages of uniting feminine and masculine traits within the creative mind. In the present paper I would like to follow up some of the stations of this process by looking at the relations of Lily Briscoe to the Ramsays, and those of Zhenya Luvers to Tzvetkov and her parents.

The first part of Virginia Woolf's novel, 'The Window' centres on the figures of Mr and Mrs Ramsay. Mrs Ramsay symbolizes the female principle in life, we see her as caring mother, devoted wife, attractive woman, goddess and housewife. She draws almost everybody she meets under her spell, and they all want to unravel the mystery surrounding her. The only one who does not seem to admire her enough is Augustus Carmichael, the poet. Although Lily Briscoe resents Mrs Ramsay's social practices and her ideas about a woman's duties she cannot withdraw herself from her influence. Mrs Ramsay's ultimate femininity is also underlined by the symbols of fertility and womanhood associated with her personality: trees, flowers, plants, the sea, the moon, etc. Mr Ramsay's figure bears all the attributes of a purely masculine image. Mrs Ramsay's intuitive creativity is counterpointed by his dry intellectuality. He has no eye for everyday practicalities, he is "timid in life", in his relationship with his children or Lily Briscoe. He is a philosopher; his books are about "subject and object and the nature of reality." Thinking of his work Lily always imagines a scrubbed kitchen table - something simple, clear and real. His thinking is very rational; it is demonstrated through the description of the linearity of his mind's working:

For if thought is like ... the alphabet ranged in twenty-six letters, all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q.

(40)

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<sup>4</sup> "... in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; ... The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually cooperating. If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have an intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties." (96-97)

Though he reaches Q he cannot get to R. He is driven to his wife by the feeling of failure to ask for her sympathy. There are many other references to his intellectual barrenness, and the imagery associated with him, despite his many books and children, implies sterility. He must resort to female creativity, symbolized by the image of the fountain, which suggests not only Mrs Ramsay's fecundity, but also her fertilising capacity. The dichotomy between female fertility and male sterility is further emphasized by the sexual imagery of the passage, which, in the description of James's partaking in this social-sexual intercourse, is not free from Freudian overtones, either:<sup>5</sup>

And James, as he stood stiff between her knees, felt her rise in a rosy-flowered fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs into which the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of his father, the egotistical man, plunged and smote, demanding sympathy.

(45)

However, the archetypicality of the figures of Mr and Mrs Ramsay is treated with an ironic stance and the descriptions are sometimes more reminiscent of the stereotype than the archetype, which is probably also due to Woolf's inherent feminism. Mrs Ramsay's declared ignorance ("Books, she thought, grew of themselves. She never had time to read them.") underlines her husband's intellectual superiority, and thus the stereotypes of the insensible, but lovely woman and the knowledgeable, but impractical man come into prominence.

And he wondered what she was reading, and exaggerated her ignorance, her simplicity, for he liked to think that she was not clever, not book-learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful.

(130)

And Mrs Ramsay, leaving the argument entirely in the hands of the two men, wondered why she was bored by this talk, and wished, looking at her husband at the other end of the table, that he would say something. ... For if he said a thing, it would make all the difference.

(103)

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<sup>5</sup> cf. Kaivola 31-31, Blotner 184-186 and Pratt 143-153

The description of the different ways of striving for immortality, as it has been mentioned above, is also gender-specific. Mrs Ramsay tries to realize her ideal of eternity by making "the moment endure," to create a sense of unity for a moment, at least. Mr Ramsay yearns for lasting fame, and wants to achieve it by his books. B,la Hamvas describes man's ideal of immortality as something that wants to break into timelessness, but instead of transferring himself, man creates a substitute, e.g. pyramids, symphonies, military campaigns (the poetic variant of the same idea can be found in Osip Mandel'shtam's 'Tristia' of 1918 <sup>6</sup>) that he transfers, but not into eternity, only time lengthened. Instead of dissolving his existence he raises a monument into which he builds himself and by that he wants to become eternal. Mr Ramsay suffers from the thought that he will not be remembered and, at the same time, he is aware of the impossibility of his desire:

His fame lasts perhaps two thousand years? (asked Mr Ramsay ironically, staring at the hedge). ... The very stone one kicks with one's boot will outlast Shakespeare.

(42)

According to Hamvas, woman's ideal of immortality is just the opposite of man's ambition. Woman's immortality lies in the transitoriness - to become immortal in the irrevocable disappearance of the passing moment. That is why, he writes, singing and dancing, fruits and flowers, food and clothes, moods and emotion and thought and society and body are female. Everything that disappears without trace, that happens only once and is impossible to reproduce is, paradoxically, eternal. Man's ideal of immortality is in remembrance, woman's is in oblivion (this idea, which is the basic dilemma of the Russian acmeist movement, too, finds its resolution in the poetry of O. Mandel'shtam.)<sup>7</sup> During the dinner party Mrs Ramsay is fully aware of the experience she undergoes:

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<sup>6</sup> Не нам гадать о греческом Эребе,  
Для женщин воск, что для мужчины медь.  
Нам только в битвах выпадает жребий,  
А им дано гадая умереть. (124)  
... We cannot foretell the Greek Erebus,  
Wax is to women what bronze is to men.  
In battle alone does fate confront us,  
But they are telling fortunes to the end. (J.G. Harris)  
<sup>7</sup> see Hamvas, 9/24, 25, 10/27

There is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby; so that again tonight she had the feeling she had once today already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that remains for ever after. This would remain.

(113-114)

Lily Briscoe's vision at the end of the book unites the two types of creation. But not till she is able to cope with the figures of Mr and Mrs Ramsay can she finish her painting.

The second part of the novel, briefly and impersonally describing ten years' time of destruction, marriages, births, and deaths inscribed in parentheses, serves as an axis between the first and the third parts. Certain symbolically significant motifs turn up from 'The Window' (e.g. the 'bed', the 'shawl'), others anticipate the most important images of 'The Lighthouse': e.g. the 'sleeper', asking the ultimate questions of the sea, refers to the artist, and her vision. In part 3 phrases, sentences from part 1 are repeated, comparisons are constantly evoked (between Lily's painting and Mrs Ramsay's creativity, e.g.).

The two major symbols, Lily's painting and the voyage to the lighthouse are developed in parallel, in alternating sections within 'The Lighthouse'. The memory of Mrs Ramsay connects the two, and the *sine qua non* of the completion of both is the unravelling of her mystery. Both the painting and the idea of the voyage originate in the first part; they are not only compared to each other, as two ways of expressing creativity, but they also co-exist with their first-part versions. The intricate system of relations - of people to each other, to their earlier selves, or to objects and inanimate things - interweaves through the book. The problem in Lily's painting, after ten years of abandonment, is still the same: "how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left." She has to find the appropriate form to fill the 'glaring' space in the centre of the picture. In part 3, section 5, when she begins 'to model her way into the hollow' with the help of memories, for the first time she is able to formulate what it is exactly that she wants:

Beautiful and bright it should be on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly's wing; but

beneath the fabric must be clamped together with the bolts of iron.

(185).<sup>8</sup>

The surface is associated with feminine attributes, but in its deep structure the picture must be masculine; the metaphor recalls Mrs Ramsay's train of thought about

the admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric, upholding the world.

(part 1, 114)

Lily realizes that the picture is to be the product of an androgynous mind. While working on the last phase a series of scenes appear to Lily Briscoe from the past: Mrs Ramsay sitting silent, 'looking out to sea'; the lives of the Rayleys in cinematic episodes and also an imagined scene when Lily 'would feel a little triumphant, telling Mrs Ramsay that the marriage had not been a success' and that all has gone against her wishes; and Mrs Ramsay's shape at the age of twenty through William Bankes's eyes. Lily reaches a state of mind in which all her memories of Mrs Ramsay blend into one and remains 'that abstract one made of her,' in which she feels the emptiness left by Mrs Ramsay, and that enables her to mourn for her and at the same time, to come to terms with her own creation:

'you' and 'I' and 'she' pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint. ... One might say even of this scrawl, not of that actual picture, perhaps, but of what it attempted, that it 'remained forever'.

(194)

With that last, silent utterance, which recalls Mrs Ramsay's thoughts during the dinner party, (see above) the two types of creation mould into one, and for a moment the two personalities unite as Lily wished a long time before:

What art was there, known to love or cunning, ... ? What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored? Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs

<sup>8</sup> The descriptions of the picture and Lily's views of art point out the most important problems of contemporary painting, especially the role of impressionism as source of the post-impressionist movements - for further analysis see R. Fry and A. Gehlen

Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, ...  
nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy  
itself, which is knowledge

(58)

From the 'waters of annihilation' she emerges triumphantly - she has internalized Mrs Ramsay's figure. Empowered by this epiphanic moment she continues her painting until 'something incongruous' catches her sight: Mr Ramsay's boat.

Mr Ramsay; the man who had marched past her, with his hand raised,  
aloof, at the head of a procession, in his beautiful boots, asking her for her  
sympathy, which she had refused.

(196)

Her thoughts and senses turn towards him. She realizes that she has not solved her problem as she thought: "for whatever reason she could not achieve that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces; Mr Ramsay and the picture; which was necessary" (208).

The image of the 'razor edge of balance' suggests that it can only be achieved for a very short time, for a moment, perhaps. Her hostility towards Mr Ramsay is not actually resolved until she feels she is able to give him "whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning." (224) With the 'act' of giving Lily becomes capable of completing her picture. The vagueness of 'whatever' leaves room for doubt, but it should be something more than the sympathy Mr Ramsay had demanded. It enables both of them to complete their quests; for Mr Ramsay it means harmony in his relationship with his children, with the memory of his wife, and it holds out hopes for him of getting rid of his fatal sterility. At the same time it endows Lily with the capacity to reconcile the feminine and the masculine principles in herself, shadow and light, life and death, ephemeral and eternal in her picture. The moment is crowned by her mystical connection with Carmichael, an independent poet, who has submitted neither to Mrs Ramsay's feminine charms, nor to Mr Ramsay's masculine ideas of order. Their spiritual communion suggests that Lily, by transcending the question of sexes, by reaching a state of androgyny, has achieved artistic independence.

In *Zhenya Luvers' Childhood* (Detstvo Luvers) Boris Pasternak examines the process of a girl's sexual and spiritual growth parallel with the forming of her

creative consciousness. The title itself is symbolic of the content. First of all, it reminds the reader of titles of traditional biographies - the use of the surname without the first name, in the original, puts the stress on the future significance of the person. At the same time the name Luvers, because of its foreign origin, lacks the female ending; it is masculine-sounding in Russian. But if it were a man's name it should be declined, then the book would bear the title 'Detstvo Luversa'. The idea of androgyny, which in Pasternak's oeuvre is also closely related to the creative capacity, appears already on the level of morphology.<sup>9</sup>

Since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the theme of the child has frequently been used in literature to symbolize innocence, imagination or sensibility.<sup>10</sup> The modernist artist is still concerned with innocence, but as F. Björling points out, not with moral innocence but with perceptive and cognitive innocence. In the artistic concepts of turn-of-the-century Russian art childhood, on one hand, became a central theme because of this innocent, unprejudiced perceptiveness of the child that helps the artist to get rid of his cultural consciousness. On the other hand, the child's mythological thinking and use of language offered a possible way for the artists to return to the archaic state of human existence, to primordial unity, at least in art. Pasternak imitates the working of the child's mind - first he focuses on a small detail, then he follows his heroine, as she slowly comes to understand what she sees, what is happening to her. For example, in the second section of the first part Zhenya is thinking of the French governess, whose name she has forgotten and can only remember that she first shouted at her, then cut the blood-stained piece out of the bearskin. The meaning of the episode is slowly developed through a series of metaphors (the birth of spring in painful labour; the swollen lamps) until, in a humiliating scene, Zhenya, full of shame and guilt, tells her mother about her menstruation. Her mother does not explain it to her; it is Zhenya's task to come to terms with her own womanhood. This way of perceiving is characteristic of all the important events in Zhenya's life. Nothing is explained to her; myriads of impressions fall upon her and she waits passively until everything finds its place and becomes clear.<sup>11</sup> Her natural ignorance

<sup>9</sup> The girl's first name, Zhenya is also ambiguous - it is the short form of both Yevgenyi (male) and Yevgenyia (female).

<sup>10</sup> For further analysis see P. Coveney, particularly chapter 1 ("The Cult of Sensibility and the Romantic Child"), and F. Björling 130-137

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Woolf in *Modern Fiction* expresses a very similar view of the open intentionality of consciousness: "Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with sharpness of steel. From all sides

proves to be necessary in the process of reaching maturity; it is reinforced by a passage about life:

Жизнь посвящает очень немногих в то, что она делает с ними. Она слишком любит это дело и за работой разговаривает разве с теми только, кто желает ей успеха и любит ее верстак. Помочь ей не властен никто помешать - может всякий. ... чтобы человек не замешивал своей тупости в устройство своей бессмертной сути, заведено много такого, что отвлекает его пошлое любопытство от жизни, .... Для этого заведены все заправские религии, и все общие понятия, и все предрассудки людей, и самый яркий из них, самый развлекающий, - *психология*. (59-60)<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, the reader will not get a psychological characterization of Zhenya Luvers, her thoughts and emotions are projected on the surrounding physical world. So all the changes: the journeys, the different times of the day, illnesses, the boundaries: the Urals,<sup>13</sup> the fence separating their garden from the street, and the meetings with strange people (most importantly with Tzvetkov, the lame man) are symbolic of the different phases in the girl's intellectual growth which, together with biological maturing, represent the grades leading to the unfolding of her creative capacity.

At the beginning of the narrative, identity with the world is still perfect - the connection between the 'signifier' and the 'signified' is natural and essential. The episode described on the first pages of the book takes place at night when the small girl is woken up by the noises of the adults playing cards and gets frightened by the lights of the factory on the other side of the river. Her father tells her very abruptly: 'It's Motovilikha.' The name has a soothing, magical effect on the child; she goes back to sleep at once. The night symbolizes the state preceding the awakening of consciousness, when the name of something is identical with what it refers to.

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they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old;" (88)

<sup>12</sup> "Life initiates very few into the secret of what it is doing with them. It loves its purpose too well, and as it works it speaks only to those who wish it success and love life's workbench. No one has power to assist it, though anyone can hinder. ... to prevent ... man from involving his own stupidity in the formation of his immortal essence - several things have been introduced to divert his vulgar curiosity from life, ... For this purpose all decent true religions were introduced, all general concepts and human prejudices, and the most resplendent of these and the most entertaining - *psychology*." (C. Barnes, 160)

<sup>13</sup> cf. Han 111-114, Jungren 489-500

Pasternak finds this sexless state of mind of the child ideal and although Zhenya grows out of it by the morning she keeps the freshness of the mode of her perception throughout her adolescence, and it plays its part in the forming of the creative mind. The unity of language and consciousness splits up, but the motif of names remains crucial.<sup>14</sup> The maturing girl is no more satisfied with the names of certain concepts (e.g. the Urals, Asia); her sensations, experience have to prove their being, their reality. Her relationship with words is different from that of her brother's, who already has acquired the conventional, adult use of language. From the aspect of philosophy of language Zhenya's use of language is ontological, substantial, concerning the very essence of things, while her brother's is conventional. Answering his sister's question 'Why is it Asia?' he points at the map and explains to her how the Urals were agreed on to separate the two continents. For Zhenya it is incomprehensible - she has to experience this boundary in her own existence, in her own development. The understanding of the sentence 'Mother is pregnant', towards which the plot is moving throughout the narrative,<sup>15</sup> is the longest process of comprehension and is also identified with the understanding of her own womanhood. There is another process developing parallel with it and arriving at its climax at the same time: it is the realization of the meaning of the concept 'stranger'. Looking at the two together helps one to see that the girl, in her special way, has grasped and resolved in herself the dichotomy of 'self' and 'other'. Although the two existing parts of this fragmentary book are called 'Long Days' and 'The Stranger', directly referring to Zhenya's first menstruation and Tzvetkov, the motifs of her likeness to her mother and of the stranger develop together. The child's awareness of other people and her own self evolves from the beginning of the book, step by step. I will look more closely at the most important stages of this process through the story.

The forms of appearance of the 'stranger' are always masculine: the factory, her father, Tzvetkov, the soldiers, her little brother, etc. The lights of the factory, Motovilikha were unfamiliar, strange, but the building with its dim shapes seemed to her exciting, kind and attractive. Many years later, she finds her parents' treatment of their children alien, especially her father seems to her a complete stranger when he is angry,<sup>16</sup> and

<sup>14</sup> cf. Han 107-109, Szöke 29-37

<sup>15</sup> cf. Björling 144-151

<sup>16</sup> Когда он приходил в раздражение, то становился решительно чужим человеком, чужим начисто и в тот самый миг, в который он утрачивал самообладание. (58)

Чужой не трогает. (58)<sup>17</sup>

Yet the 'other' father, the insensitive and pitiful one, as his children more often saw him, was terrifying, unlike the merely irritated stranger. After moving to Yekaterinburg, the girl gradually gets to know the house, the servants, and the garden. One day, sitting on a wood-stack, she accidentally catches sight of three women in the neighbouring garden. Judging from their position she thinks they are sleeping. From another chance look it turns out that they have been looking at a map which she now sees in the hands of a crippled man. This is the first occasion she catches a glimpse of him. At this point of the narrative the other motif, her mother's pregnancy, joins the Tzvetkov line. Zhenya, feeling the smell of her mother's medicine, realizes that there is an indefinable similarity between her mother and Aksinya, the janitress, (who, as it later turns out, is also pregnant) something that does not exist between Aksinya and herself, for example. Yet it is a resemblance that all people share; she thinks:

В чем-то совсем неуловимом. Она остановилась. В чем-то таком, - она задумалась, - в таком, что ли, что имеют в виду, когда говорят: все мы люди ... или одним, мол, миром мазаны ... или судьба кости не разбирает, ... (79)<sup>18</sup>

She intuitively comes upon truths that foreshadow the coming events, and at the same time drive her closer to the understanding of 'self' and 'other'. The first grown-up who takes the trouble to explain to her something she does not understand in the conversation of adults is a Belgian man, Neygarate, a guest of her parents'. He tells her about compulsory military service and the army and she suddenly sees the regiments as a gathering of individual people in uniform for whom she begins to feel sorry. According to A. Livingstone her feeling pity is "a moral as well as an existential development. The concept of 'person' enters her mind, like other concepts, only when it has become filled with a particular feeling."<sup>19</sup>

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"But when he was irritated he became a stranger - a stranger totally and at the very instant when he lost his self-control." (Barnes 159)

<sup>17</sup> "And the stranger awoke no feeling in them." (Barnes 159)

<sup>18</sup> "Something quite indefinable. She stopped. Something like ... she paused to think. Maybe something like what people mean when they say 'We are all human', or 'We are all cast in the same mould', or 'Fate makes equals of us all ...'" (Barnes 178)

<sup>19</sup> Livingstone (1963) 81

It is the Belgian from whom she first hears the name Tzvetkov; but the name and the image of the lame man are not yet connected. (In the same episode, there is also a more direct reference to her mother's state.)<sup>20</sup> The next section is wholly dedicated to Tzvetkov; it follows Zhenya's train of thoughts about him. On their way to the bookshop she and her brother catch sight of him, and first he seems to be very familiar to her - an old acquaintance from her 'childhood in Perm'. Seryozha tells her that he lives in his friends' house and he is a friend of Neygarate's. Then, as they are walking home, she realizes that the street she saw from the top of the wood-stack in their garden is not at all foreign to her, as she has previously thought; she knows it very well. This cognitive method then is applied to the decoding of Tzvetkov's figure. It suddenly strikes her that she saw the lame man (also from the wood-stack) in a garden, teaching geography to three young women, and that this is the man the shop-keeper called Tzvetkov and thought of him that he was the children's tutor. The name and the image of the man are connected now. This moment is an important stage in the process of understanding the concepts of 'self' and 'other', 'female' and 'male'. From this point on, his image persists in the girl's thoughts and becomes equal with the other person in general: one morning, walking on her own in ominous weather, she sees a cart with a large heap of clumsily arranged furniture on it, and she imagines the unknown proprietor catching cold while unpacking his things.

И она представила себе человека, - человека вообще, валкой, на шаги разрозненной походкой расставляющего свои пожитки по углам. ... А потом схватит насморк, озноб и жар. Непременно схватит. (90)<sup>21</sup>

A. Livingstone underlines the point that Pasternak, by using italics here, emphasizes "the moment of opening consciousness, of a sudden clarity and knowledge and a sort of involvement."<sup>22</sup> Her illness, which starts on the following day and lasts for two weeks, is a chaotic period with images whirling in her head in

<sup>20</sup> Да, возьмите, это ваша. Я не кончила. Читала и плакала. Доктор вообще советовал бросить. Во избежание волнения. (85)

"... Here, take this. It's yours. I haven't finished it. But I wept as I read it. The doctor advised me to leave it - to avoid getting over-excited." (Barnes 184)

<sup>21</sup> "And she imagined the man - *any* man in fact, with a shaky and uneven gait - setting out his belongings in various corners of a room. ... But then he would catch a cold, he would catch a chill, and fever. Most certainly he would." (Barnes 189)

<sup>22</sup> Livingstone (1963) 81.

a nightmare. Illness is a universal metaphor of change, rebirth, and is also frequently used by Pasternak in his poetic works, together with other metaphors, like 'rain', 'night', or 'fever' (which are all present in this section of the novel, too) to describe the state of mind prior to the act of creation. Zhenya, after waking up, is congratulated by her mother on her recovery and it strangely coincides with her own feelings.<sup>23</sup> She begins to see her mother differently, with more sympathy and understanding. She puts questions to the others and to herself concerning changes:

По-видимому, не изменилась мама. Совсем не изменился отец.  
Изменились: она сама, Сережа, распределение света по комнате,  
тишина всех остальных, еще что-то, много чего. (91)<sup>24</sup>

The girl is groping her way towards grasping her mother's state: she tests her mother's accent and is relieved to hear that it is not at all like Aksinya's as she has expected. Nature is once more symbolic of both her and her mother's state: winter promises to come prematurely - it is October, but

Все напряглось и ждет, ... снегом уже вторую неделю полны тучи  
через край, мраком чреват воздух. (92)<sup>25</sup>

On the eve of the tragic accident after her parents have left for the theatre and the snow-storm has blown over, Zhenya is sitting at her desk doing her seemingly endless arithmetic exercise unconsciously. When considering the possibility of her parents' arrival she calms herself with a casual remark that they will not get upstairs soon, as they first have to take off their fur-coats and besides 'mother is pregnant'. This thought is born naturally, with ease after a long gestation period. The events

<sup>23</sup> Вошла мать и, поздравив ее с выздоровлением, произвела на девочку впечатление читающего в чужих мыслях. Просыпаясь, она уже слышала что-то подобное. Это было поздравление ее собственных рук и ног, локтей и коленок, которое она от них, потягиваясь, принимала. ... Вот и мама тоже. Совпадение было странно. (91)

"In came Mama and greeted her on her recovery, producing on her an impression of someone thought-reading. She had heard something similar already as she woke. It was the congratulations of her own hands and feet and elbows and knees, and she received them as she stretched herself. And now Mama was here. The coincidence was strange." (Barnes 190)

<sup>24</sup> "Mama had not changed apparently. Her father - not at all. What had changed was she herself, Seryozha, the distribution of light in the room, the silence of all the others, and something else, many things ... " (Barnes 190)

<sup>25</sup> "Everything was tense and expectant. ... For a second week the clouds were full to overflowing with snow and the air was pregnant with darkness." (Barnes 192)

following the accident are reminiscent of the first episode in part 1: the girl is woken up in the middle of the night. She hears voices and recognizes them all at once, but it takes her some time to realize that the woman who is screaming is her mother. Nobody explains to her what has happened, but in her 'exile' at her friend's house she works out for herself that her mother has had a miscarriage and feels deep sympathy for her. At the same time it leads her to the realization that she herself is 'terribly similar' to her mother:

Это было ощущение женщины, изнутри или внутренне видящей свою внешность и прелесть. (102)<sup>26</sup>

The change in her is at once exemplified: before learning about Tzvetkov's death she sees him in a vision through the window hold up a lamp then walk away. The picture of the dead man comes from within, too, she sees him through her mind's eye. He has ceased to be a 'stranger', and has become a part of her own self; however it appears on the conscious level only when she is informed that Tzvetkov was killed in the same accident which caused her mother to miscarry. Although she is not that child any more who was woken up by the unknown lights that night a long time ago, the magic-mythological thinking of the child is preserved in her: she feels guilty for bringing this man into the life of her family by noticing him, and she feels responsible for the deaths of both her little brother and Tzvetkov. For the first time the narrator gets involved directly and interprets the impression the lame man had on the girl as generating the feeling of Christian love and compassion in her:

... и значение его заключалось в том, что в ее жизнь впервые вошел *другой* человек, третье лицо, совершенно безразличное, без имени или со случайным, не вызывающее ненависти и не вселяющее любви, *но то, которое имеют в виду заповеди*, обращаясь к именам и сознаниям, когда говорят: не убий не крадь и все прочее. "Не делай ты, особенный и живой, - говорят они, - *этому, туманному и общему*, того, чего себе, особенному и живому, не желаешь". (107-108)<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> "It was the inner sensation of a woman perceiving from within her own outward appearance and her charm." (Barnes 202)

<sup>27</sup> "And its significance lay in the fact that this was the first time another human being had entered her life - a third person, totally indifferent, with no name (or only a fortuitous one) and arousing neither love nor hate. It was the person the Commandments have in mind, addressing men with names and

With the recognition of evangelical love the process of internalization of the 'other' into the 'self' ends here - and at the same time Zhenya's growing into womanhood is, in all aspects, also completed. As it has already been referred to, the concept of the 'stranger' is closely connected to the masculine principle, and in the case of Tzvetkov, her father, suffering from a mortal disease, and her still-born brother, is also related to death. The female principle in her seems to accept, to engulf the male and give birth to it again in the creative act. The moral responsibility Zhenya feels for Tzvetkov gives her the capability or even the compulsion to recreate his figure in a work of art. On the level of the plot it appears in the above-mentioned vision when the girl can clearly see the already dead man.

The state of mind which produces such visions is prior to the development of the creative consciousness as can be seen in *To the Lighthouse* as well. Lily Briscoe, before she draws the final line in the middle of her picture, sees Mrs Ramsay sitting in front of the window knitting. Sensibility, moral and not only artistic, is one of the factors that allows both 'heroines' to arrive at a state of mind which is necessary for the creative act. Lily Briscoe's feeling sympathy for Mr Ramsay and Zhenya Luvers' feeling of deep mourning and responsibility for Tzvetkov help them to develop their artistic independence. It also explains why female creativity is put in the centre: it is the masculine principle that evokes feminine sympathy, moral sensibility and, paradoxically enough, this non-aesthetic, but ethic category contributes to the accomplishment of the creative consciousness. The routes they follow are very similar. First they come out of their neutral state and face their own femininity (helped by the mother-figures of Mrs Ramsay and Madame Luvers), then they come to accept the 'stranger', the 'other'; the male principle.<sup>28</sup> By moulding feminine and masculine traits in themselves they become capable of rising above the biological sexes and attain the state of artistic androgyny. It is the war in *To the Lighthouse* and the Urals in *Zhenya Luvers' Childhood* which play the role of the dividing line in the heroines' individual growth. They also mark the change in Lily and Zhenya's personalities,<sup>29</sup>

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consciousness, when they say 'Thou shalt not kill', 'Thou shalt not steal', et cetera ... 'As a living human individual,' they say, 'you must not do to this featureless generalised man what you would not wish for yourself as a living individual.'" (Barnes 207-208)

<sup>28</sup> cf. Hamvas 13/41: "Ha az androgynos nem realizálódik, azért történik, mert egymást nem ismerik fel. Felismerni annyit jelent, mint elválasztani. Ha az elválasztás nem történik meg, nem történhet meg az egyesülés."

<sup>29</sup> "the war had drawn the sting of her femininity. Poor devils, one thought, of both sexes." (Woolf (1927) 191)

and at the same time also serve as an axis or even a mirror in the construction of the novel (see above).

The symbol of the lighthouse has frequently been a matter of discussion.<sup>30</sup> It is, in my view, besides being the symbol of the androgynous mind (the success of the voyage is the precondition of the artistic act), a final, universal symbol - an axis mundi, from which the entirety of life can be viewed in its oneness.

The Urals, similarly, are a universal symbol. As a natural boundary between Europe and Asia, they symbolize the dividing line between Western and Eastern cultures, and all the other boundaries that are important in Zhenya's growth: those between 'self' and 'other', male and female, child and adult, life and death. From Zhenya's viewpoint the symbolic boundary between these opposing poles is not so much dividing, rather a 'uniting' concept which provides a state of balance she is trying to find.

The study of the major motifs and symbols and the principle of androgyny in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Boris Pasternak's *Zhenya Luvers' Childhood* has made it possible to point out some of the similarities between the two novels.

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<sup>30</sup> cf. Cohn 127-36, Daiches, Friedman 149-169, Freedman, Kaehele and German 189-210

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