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## Androgyny as an Exemplary Feature of Marina Tsvetaeva's Dichotomous Poetic Vision

The peculiar treatment of sex in Marina Tsvetaeva's poetry has been noted by a number of literary critics. Simon Karlinsky, for example, points out the "reversal of sex roles" of the main characters in the fairy tale *Tsar'-Devitsa* (*The Tsar-Maiden*) and comments on the "interesting and significant" nature of this phenomenon "when viewed within the whole of Tsvetaeva's work and in terms of her personal biography."<sup>1</sup> In reference to the same work, George Ivask stresses the intermingled masculine and feminine features of the main characters: "Ona—deva-iunosha, voin, voevoda, Russkaia Zhanna d'Ark. . . . On—zhenstvenen, on—iunosha-deva, nebesnyi gusliar" ("She is a maiden youth, a warrior, commander of an army, a Russian Joan of Arc. . . . He is feminine, he is a youth-maiden, a heavenly gusli-player").<sup>2</sup> More recently, Antonina Gove has stressed the peculiar qualities of the poet's female personae in terms of the poet's rejection of the feminine stereotype and the limitations of the woman's social role.<sup>3</sup>

Although each critic distinguishes different aspects in the sexual make-up of Tsvetaeva's characters, they all fail (with the possible exception of Gove) to move beyond description of the phenomenon to an adequate interpretation of Tsvetaeva's sexual perspective. While Gove's study is useful in its application of a sociological approach to this phenomenon, Gove overlooks the intimate connection between the sexual peculiarities of Tsvetaeva's characters and the very center of her universe. The purpose of my essay is to establish a link between the androgynous make-up of Tsvetaeva's characters and the dichotomous nature of her vision.

It should be noted at the outset that even though this study might be interpreted as part of the recent resurgence of scholarly and public interest in the topic of androgyny, it differs from most investigations in one important respect. In order to avoid the methodological and theoretical errors which may result

1. Simon Karlinsky, *Marina Cvetaeva: Her Life and Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 224.

2. Iurii Ivask, "Tsvetaeva—Maiakovskii—Pasternak," *Novyi zhurnal*, no. 95 (1969), p. 168.

3. Antonina Filonov Gove, "The Feminine Stereotype and Beyond: Role Conflict and Resolution in the Poetics of Marina Tsvetaeva," *Slavic Review*, 36, no. 2 (June 1977): 231–55.

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from too zealous an insistence on the timeliness of androgyny, I deemphasize the reactive nature of androgyny and resist the temptation to enlist feminist tenets to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of the concept. A brief comparison of two approaches to androgyny will make this distinction apparent.

An illustration of the first approach can be found in the work of Carolyn Heilbrun, who argues that considerable progress has been made by the feminist movement in bringing about social and ideological changes which, in turn, have made the idea of androgyny more acceptable. Today, she notes, "one may speak of androgyny without assuming a defensive tone."<sup>4</sup> Yet the "defensive tone" continues to color what should be a more objective scholarly investigation. Heilbrun, for example, maintains that "androgyny seeks to liberate the individual from the confines of the appropriate,"<sup>5</sup> making a topical and timely (rather than a universal and timeless) statement. This description of androgyny suffers from its time-reactive and time-dependent nature and from its confinement to the variable, "the appropriate." As long as the time and culture are considered to be hostile to manifestations of androgyny, this description stands. However, as soon as the assumed conflict between "the androgynous" and "the appropriate" dissolves, so does the description. Similarly, Gove's assertion that the peculiarities of Tsvetaeva's female personae ensue from the poet's rejection of the feminine stereotype is confining also because it characterizes the new feminist consciousness of the modern reader more aptly than it does that of the poet. It is doubtful that this interpretation can be sustained throughout the whole of Tsvetaeva's poetic *oeuvre*, although it may be appropriate as one of several possible readings evoked and made prominent by contemporary sentiment.

A conceptually and temporally less confining approach to androgyny is articulated by June Singer. A Jungian psychoanalyst, Singer finds little need to link androgyny to the contemporary political and social climate and instead looks for and finds manifestations of the androgynous principle throughout human cultural history. An examination of Western and Eastern philosophies, religions, mythologies, as well as of gnosticism, alchemy, and astrology leads her to conclude that the principle of androgyny "is not reactive but intrinsic."<sup>6</sup> This formulation of the androgynous principle is more expansive and less dependent on temporal and cultural variables. Since it is intrinsic, the androgynous principle may exist either in conflict with its milieu or, in contrast to Heilbrun's description, in harmony with it.

Singer's interpretation of androgyny approximates more closely Tsvetaeva's representation of the concept in her poetic world. Androgyny for Tsvetaeva was not so much a reaction to the social, political, and cultural context of her time (she liked to stress that her poetry was beyond contemporary literary and cultural currents) as an intrinsic quality of her artistic method. In other words, androgyny would have been manifest in Tsvetaeva's work regardless of her milieu.

It is not my purpose to delve into sociological, psychological, ideological, or other interpretations of androgyny in Tsvetaeva's poetry. To do so would

4. C. Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1973), p. xii.

5. *Ibid.*, p. x.

6. J. Singer, *Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), p. xi.

necessitate a concentration on the “reactive” aspect of androgyny. Instead I shall attempt to demonstrate that the very existence of and penchant for androgynous characters in Tsvetaeva’s work is intrinsic to and determined by her poetic vision. This vision, intimately connected with the poet’s artistic method and temperament, is dichotomous and leads the artist to rest her creation upon a series of dichotomous antitheses. It also leads Tsvetaeva to search for means, of which androgyny may be one, of generating dichotomous pairs.

An examination of androgyny in Tsvetaeva’s work presupposes some agreement over the meaning of the term. A common dictionary definition of “androgynous”—“having the characteristics of both sexes, both male and female in one; hermaphroditic”<sup>7</sup>—may be satisfactory for biologists, but it is inadequate for most sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, or other investigators who seek to examine androgynous phenomena in their respective areas of research. Sociologists, for example, differentiate between the set of biological terms, “male,” “female,” and “sex” (all included in the above definition), and the set of terms, “masculine,” “feminine,” and “gender,” which correspond to androgynous phenomena in social and human sciences.<sup>8</sup> In this essay, the term “androgynous” will be used in reference to a condition which suggests “a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes,”<sup>9</sup> or a condition wherein two opposite elements (masculine and feminine) lie in the matrix of one.

A passage from the essay “Geroi truda” (“A Hero of Labor”) describes an instance which attests to Tsvetaeva’s ability to reconcile the masculine and the feminine in the matrix of one. In it Tsvetaeva describes a contest initiated by Valerii Briusov for the best poem written on two lines by Pushkin:

Но Эдмонда не покинет  
Дженни даже в небесах.

Tsvetaeva considered entering the contest but was hesitant to do so since she had never written a custom-made poem, and, essential for the present discussion, she was unsure of the gender of “Edmonda”:

idea byla soblaznitel'noi! No—stikh na temu!) Stikh—po zakazu! Stikh—po manoveniiu Briusova! I vtoroi kamen' pretknoveniiia, ostreishii,—ia sovsem ne znala, kto Edmonda, muzhchina ili zhenshchina, drug ili podrug. Esli roditel'nyi padezh: kogo-chego?—to Edmond vykhodil muzhchinois, i Dzhenni *ego* ne pokinet, esli zhe imenitel'nyi padezh: kto-chto?—to Edmonda—zhenshchina i ne pokinet svoiu podругu Dzhenni. Kamen' ustranilsia legko. Kto-to, rassmeiavshis' i ne poveriv moemu nevezhestvu, raskryl mne Pushkina na “Pire vo vremia chumy” i udostoveril muzhestvennost' *Edmonda*.<sup>10</sup>

7. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., s.v. “androgynous.”

8. See, for example, the discussion in Ann Oakley, *Sex, Gender and Society* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1972), and in Singer, *Androgyny*, particularly pp. 14–42.

9. Cf. C. Heilbrun's statement: “Androgyny suggests a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes” (Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, p. x).

10. Marina Tsvetaeva, “Geroi truda,” *Proza* (New York: Izdatel'stvo imeni Chekhova, 1953), p. 223; emphasis in original.

The grammatical basis for Tsvetaeva's perplexity is not very convincing. Her reference to the identical endings for different inflectional forms of the masculine and feminine variants of the same name is clearly an intentional excuse for expressing something more fundamental, even at the risk of appearing ignorant of Pushkin's work and presenting herself as a "biased" reader who transfers her own preconceptions onto those of the poet. Tsvetaeva's tendency to unite opposing elements, seen here in the morphosemantic mixture of genders, may be substantiated by an analysis of her lyric poems and particularly of the fairy tale *Tsar'-Devitsa*, the single most elaborate example of androgyny in Tsvetaeva's work.

Androgynous representation of a character can be achieved through the depiction of pronounced attributes of the opposite sex in that character, or it can be established by playing down or removing altogether the telltale properties of a character's stated sex. A male character, for example, can be portrayed with explicitly feminine features, or his masculine traits can be minimized. The cycle of poems entitled "Sergeiu Efron-Durnovo" ("To Serge Efron-Durnovo") provides an illustration:

Как водоросли Ваши члены  
 Как ветви мальмэзонских ив . . .  
 Так Вы лежали в брызгах пены,  
 Рассеянно остановив

На светло-золотистых дынях  
 Аквамарин и хризопраз  
 Сине-зеленых, серо-синих,  
 Всегда полузакрытых глаз.<sup>11</sup>

The fair, frail, gentle, relaxed humanity of the portrayed person focuses the reader's attention on features kindred to men and women, and the character's dissolved masculinity accounts for this impression.

A similar method of androgynous characterization is employed by Tsvetaeva in the seven-poem cycle "Georgii" ("George"). The effeminate nature of the main character is revealed clearly in the characterization of Saint George the Dragon Slayer:

О тяжесть удачи!  
 Обида Победы!  
 Георгий, ты плачешь,  
 Ты красною девой  
 Бледнеешь над делом  
 Своих двух  
 Внезапно-чужих  
 Рук.<sup>12</sup>

11. Marina Tsvetaeva, "Iunosheskie stikhi," *Neizdannoe: Stikhi, Teatr, Proza* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1976), p. 15.

12. Marina Tsvetaeva, "Georgii," *Nesobrannye proizvedeniia* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971), p. 154.

Association with a nonmasculine figure, created by metaphorically comparing Saint George to a beautiful maiden, is reinforced by the verbs *plachesh'* and *bledneesh'*, descriptions characteristic of nonmasculine manifestations of feelings rather than the triumphant composure of a victorious warrior. In the cycle as a whole, a similar impression is conveyed by a string of diminutives: *sedletso tvoe*, *kop'etso tvoe*, *sviataia ikonka-litso tvoe*, and *rozovyi rot svoi na dve polovinochki*. An association with a female figure is implied in the word combination *prechistyi iunosha*, which at once evokes a more usual lexical unit, *prechistaia deva* (pure virgin).

The intensely expressive and polysemous nature of poetic language can cause a simple item of attire to become a powerful means of androgynous characterization, as illustrated in the poem "Ale" ("To Alia"). One of the greatest Greek heroes, depicted here as a young boy, is dressed in feminine attire:

Ах, несмотря на гаданья друзей,  
 Будущее—неприглядно.  
 В платьице—твой вероломный Тезей,  
 Маленькая Ариадна.<sup>13</sup>

A strong indication of Theseus's androgynous nature is his attire, *v platitse*, a diminutive noun describing what is usually an item of feminine clothing. The unit itself is emphasized by its strong position at the beginning of the verse line and by the subsequent pause indicated by the dash.

These are representative examples of male androgynes in Tsvetaeva's work. The list can be continued to include the androgynous tsarevich in *Tsar'-Devitsa* (to be discussed in more detail below), Herzog of Reichstadt in the poem of the same title, Hippolytus of the dramatic work *Fedra* (*Phaedra*), numerous unnamed personae in Tsvetaeva's lyric poems and even descriptions of actual acquaintances in her correspondence.<sup>14</sup> By admixing feminine or nonmasculine characteristics—such as emotional sensitivity, physical delicacy, states of physical and psychological repose, and so forth—in her male personae, Tsvetaeva elicits recognition of them as androgynous.

Female androgynous characters, however, are more prevalent and conspicuous than males in Tsvetaeva's poetic world. Tsvetaeva also uses more numerous and diversified means in the depiction of androgyny in her female characters. A striking example of a female androgyne, depicted in a fashion similar to her treatment of male androgynes, can be found in the short play *Prikliuchenie* (*An Adventure*). The play is based on an episode from Casanova's memoirs and features the female character, Henry-Henriette, in whom feminine and masculine elements coexist conspicuously. The play opens with Henry-Henriette appearing in Casanova's room late at night dressed as a hussar. When questioned by Casanova as to the reasons for her late visit, Henry-Henriette, in no haste to disclose her real identity, responds ambiguously, using terms equally descriptive of both a man and a woman:

13. Tsvetaeva, "Ale," *Neizdannoe*, p. 43.

14. See, for example, a passage in Tsvetaeva's letter to O. E. Chernova-Kolbasina: "Eto pis'mo Vam peredast M. L. . . . Iz mnogikh liudei—za mnogie gody—on mne samyi blizkii: po ne-muzhskomu svoemu, ne-zhenskomu,—tret'ego tsarstva—obliku . . ." (Marina Tsvetaeva, *Neizdannye pis'ma* [Paris: YMCA-Press, 1972], p. 177).

. . . В страшнейший огонь  
Гусаров и женщин ведет—любопытство.<sup>15</sup>

Casanova is quick to discern the ambiguity and responds in kind:

Всё в мире—только имена!  
Кто скажет: месяц, кто: луна . . .  
Анри—сегодня, завтра—Генриетта . . .<sup>16</sup>

Before her identity is disclosed, every reference to Henry-Henriette by herself, by Casanova, or by other characters is made in the masculine gender:

И перед вами—ваш сосед:  
Гусар и бравый собутыльник.<sup>17</sup>

The same is evident in the following example:

. . . Всему  
Виной—мальчишка сей порочный.  
Чуть ночь настанет, быстр и бодр  
Сей лодырь покидает одр  
Свой, моему одру соседний.<sup>18</sup>

Describing her past to Casanova, one character, a captain, even mentions a duel she fought for a woman: “Dralas' / S pol'skim vremenshchikom—za komandirshu!”<sup>19</sup> Tsvetaeva thus achieves an androgynous depiction of Henriette by an admixture of the masculine element in the description of her attire and speech, past and present actions, and in her dramatic characterization.<sup>20</sup>

Besides combining masculine and feminine traits, Tsvetaeva employs a number of other techniques to depict her female personae as androgynous. One of the most common devices is direct references to mythological or folkloric androgynous figures, such as Artemis or Antiope (both figure in *Fedra*), Brunhilde (in the cycle “Dvoe” [“A Pair”]), an amazon or a tsar-maiden, and so forth. Frequent references or allusions to amazons or horse-women, for example, are found in poems sympathetically portraying various female personae:

Ты будешь невинной, тонкой,  
Прелестной и всем чужой,  
Пленительной амазонкой,  
Стремительной госпожой.<sup>21</sup>

15. Marina Tsvetaeva, “Prikluchenie,” *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Moscow, 1965), p. 584.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 584.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 580.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 584.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 594.

20. Many examples discussed in Gove's study, “The Feminine Stereotype and Beyond,” and interpreted as instances of the poet's rejection of the female stereotype are illustrative of the same method of androgynous representation.

21. Tsvetaeva, “Ale,” *Severnnye zapiski*, 1916, no. 3, p. 54.

Such portrayals of lyrical personae account for the impression that an amazon, or perhaps a horse-woman, represents a desirable ideal and is compatible with the lyrical persona most often identified as the poet herself (compare “*Ia dumaiu o tekh . . . / Ob odnogrudykh tekh,—podrugakh tekh! . . .*”<sup>22</sup> with “*Est' zhen-shchiny—ikh volosy kak shlem*”<sup>23</sup>).

Images of a tsar-maiden, a folk androgynine frequently found in Russian *byliny* and fairy tales, are more recurrent in Tsvetaeva's lyric poems:

Коль похожа на жену—где повойник мой?  
Коль похожа на вдову—где покойник мой?  
Коли суженого жду—где бессонница?  
Царь-Девницею живу—беззаконницей!<sup>24</sup>

Here the conventional female roles of wife, widow, and bride are questioned and rejected in favor of the already existing androgynous image of the tsar-maiden. As this example indicates, reference to an already familiar androgynine is an effective and economical means of androgynous representation. The reader versed in the Russian oral tradition or merely sensitive to the hyphenated word (which denotes both a female and a male) can identify the androgynous nature of a lyrical persona whenever reference is made to the image, for example:

Не по праву я тебе—и тебе  
И тебе еще—и целой орде.  
Пышен голос мой—да мало одеж!  
Вышла голосом—да нрав нехорош!  
Полно, Дева-Царь! Себя—не мытарь!  
Псарь не жалует—пожалует царь!<sup>25</sup>

An example of yet another means by which Tsvetaeva establishes the androgynous nature of a female persona is the image of a tsar-maiden in the poem “*Bog!—Ia zhivu!*,” quoted here in full:

Бог!—Я живу!—Бог!—Значит ты не умер!  
Бог, мы союзники с тобой!  
Но ты старик угрюмый,  
А я—герольд с трубой.  
  
Бог! Можешь спать в своей ночной лазури!  
Доколе я среди живых—  
Твой дом стоит!—Я лбом встречаю бурю,  
Я барабанщик войск твоих.  
  
Я твой горнист.—Сигнал вечерний  
И зорю раннюю трублю.

22. Tsvetaeva, “*Remeslo*,” *Nesobrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 198.

23. Tsvetaeva, “*Iunosheskie stikhi*,” *Neizdannoe*, p. 74.

24. Tsvetaeva, “*Koli milym nazovu—ne soskuchish'sia!*,” *Nesobrannye proizvedeniia*, p.

25. Tsvetaeva, “*Iunosheskie stikhi*,” *Neizdannoe*, p. 120.

Бог!—Я любовью не дочерней,—  
Сыновне я тебя люблю.

Смотри: кустом неопалимым  
Горит походный мой шатер.  
Не поменяюсь с серафимом:  
Я твой Господеи волонтер.

Дай срок: выиграет Царь-Девица  
По всем по селам!—А дотоль—  
Пусть для других—чердачная певица  
И старый карточный король!<sup>26</sup>

In this poem, reference to the folk androgyne is reserved for the last stanza, yet the androgynous nature of the lyrical persona is communicated well before the first reference to the tsar-maiden. This poem, in fact, illustrates how the androgynous nature of a persona can be established at the morphological level.

The use of grammatical gender for stylistic purposes has been studied extensively.<sup>27</sup> Gender can be considered a stylistic device if the reader, consciously or subconsciously, transfers male or female characteristics to an object as a result of its grammatical gender. In this way additional meanings are generated.<sup>28</sup> A close examination of the above poem supports the assumption that Tsvetaeva consciously employs masculine grammatical forms to describe a female figure and thereby communicates the figure's androgyny at the morphological level.

The poem is remarkable in that, except for the last stanza, every member in the series of nouns denoting the authorial "I" is masculine in gender: *soiuznik*, *gerol'd*, *barabanshchik*, *gornist*, *volonter*. The characterization of the lyrical persona by means of a nonfeminine lexical environment is extended further by the use of the present tense of the verbal forms (as opposed to the past tense where gender distinctions are manifest): *zhivu*, *vstrechaiu*, *trubliu*, *liubliu*, *ne pome-niaius'*. A desire to avoid presentation of the lyrical persona in feminine terms is also evident in the second stanza in the phrase "Dokole ia sredi zhivvykh." In terms of gender distinction, the phrase is neutral, unlike a conceivable equivalent, "Dokole ia zhiva," which is indicative of a female speaker. Perhaps the most direct point of departure from the overtly female nature of the persona is found in the third stanza in the opposition: "Ia liubov'iu ne dochernei,— / Synovne ia tebia liubliu." The use of the gender-neutral adverb, *synovne*, instead of the conceivable feminine adjective, *synovnei*, is consistent with the pattern.

26. Tsvetaeva, "Bog!—Ia zhivu!", *Neizdannoe*, pp. 124–25.

27. See, for example, the works of T. V. Shanskaia, "Stilisticheskoe ispol'zovanie kategorii roda," in *Voprosy stilistiki*, V. P. Vomperskii, gen. ed. (Moscow, 1966); E. V. Shcherba, *Izbrannye trudy po russkomu iazyku* (Moscow, 1967); and A. F. Gove, "Gender as a Poetic Feature in the Verse of Zinaida Gippius," *American Contributions to the Eighth International Congress of Slavists*, vol. 1: *Linguistics and Poetics*, ed. Henrik Birnbaum (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, 1968), pp. 379–407.

28. "Slova raznogo roda ispol'zuiutsia dlia sozdaniia olitsetvorenii pri assotsiativnom perenose na grammaticheskoe poniatie roda razlichii sushchestv muzhskogo i zhenskogo pola. Etot priem ves'ma rasprostranen v poezii i v ustnom narodnom tvorchestve" (see M. N. Kozhina, *Stilistika russkogo iazyka* [Moscow, 1977], p. 129).



In the fourth stanza, the strongly expressed masculinity of the persona is further reinforced by the accompanying metaphor: “Kustom neopalimym gorit pokhodnyi moi shater.” Here the persona’s masculine grammatical accompaniment is strongest: the masculine gender of each noun reverberates in a string of modifying adjectives and pronouns, such as, *kust neopalimyi*, *pokhodnyi moi shater*, and *tvoi Gospoden volonter*. (By contrast, in the previous stanzas only the noun *gornist* is preceded by the masculine pronominal form *tvoi*.) One can conclude, therefore, that the tsar-maiden of this poem has an additional, grammatical, androgynous charge. This instance of androgynous characterization at the grammatical level might be an example of a more general principle and deserves further study.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, another device favored by the poet to establish an androgynous characterization of her female characters is closely related to the principle by which relationships among characters are formed. Specifically, whenever alliances are established between Tsvetaeva’s female androgynes and other characters, the latter are usually either of the supernatural order or are distinctly masculine, or both. In both the prologue and the conclusion to the *poema*, *Na krasnom kone* (*On the Red Steed*), for example, the poetic persona insists that she is guided by the divine power of inspiration, which is not that of the Muse, traditionally a feminine figure, but that of the red steed rider:

Не Муза, не Муза  
Над бедною люлькой  
Мне пела, за ручку водила.  
Не Муза холодные руки мне грела . . .

Не Муза, не черные косы . . .  
.....

Не Муза, не Муза,—не бранные узы  
Родства,—не твои пути,  
О Дружба!—Не женской рукой,—лютой  
Затянут на мне—  
Узел.<sup>30</sup>

In the two previously quoted poems the lyrical persona allies herself with God (“Bog, my soiuzniki s toboi!”) and with the tsar (in the poem “Ne po pravu ia tebe”). In the poem, “Drugie—s ochami i s lichikom svetlym” (“Others—[dally] with bright eyes and a pretty face”), her benefactor is none other than Aeolus.<sup>31</sup>

29. Antonina Gove also notes the importance of the grammatical gender in androgynous characterization. Discussing the poem “Vskryla zhily,” she maintains that in this poem one finds “another instance of Tsvetaeva’s many attempts to remove the barrier between the masculine and the feminine, in this case on the grammatical—hence subconscious—level” (Gove, “The Feminine Stereotype and Beyond,” p. 254).

30. Tsvetaeva, “Na krasnom kone,” *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, pp. 436 and 441. I see here a direct reference to, and a polemic with, two of Pushkin’s poems, “Muza” and “Naperstnitsam volshebnoi stariny.”

31. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

The predominance of female androgynous characters in Tsvetaeva's work can lead to the conclusion that female characters are more significant and, in a sense, superior to her male characters. It is also possible to transfer to her female characters the rare and outstanding qualities of the poet herself. Before such inferences are made, however, it is useful to examine a major work by Tsvetaeva in which male and female androgynous characters exist side by side. The fairy tale *Tsar'-Devitsa* demonstrates that, in Tsvetaeva's poetic universe not only are male and female forms of androgyny complementary, but that they can exist in perfect harmony, only if each character is a truly whole—androgynous—being, however.

Written in 1920 and published in 1922, the subject matter of *Tsar'-Devitsa* was borrowed, by Tsvetaeva's own admission, from a Russian fairy tale recorded by Afanas'ev.<sup>32</sup> Other treatments of the same motif existed,<sup>33</sup> some of which,

32. "Ia prochla u Afanas'eva skazku . . . i zadumalas' . . ." (Tsvetaeva, "Poet o kritike," *Nesobrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 613).

33. The image of the tsar-maiden is found in the Russian oral tradition. Innokentii Annenskii, looking for the roots of Turgenev's symbol of beauty as applied to his female personages, found it in *byliny*: "Sredi etikh skuchnykh stepnykh skazok . . . est' odna, v kotoroi izobrazhaetsia udalaia polianitsa. Bogatyr' osharashivaet ee raz po razu svoei shalygoiu podorozhnoi, a krasavitse chuditsia, chto eto komariki ee pokusyvaiut. I vot, chtoby prekratit' eto nadoevshee ei shchekotan'e, Nastas'ia Mikulichna opuskaet bogatyrja s ego konem v svoi glubokii karman. Priekhav na otdykh, ona vprochem, ustupila zhenskomu liubopytstvu i, naidia bogatyrja po svoemu vkusu, predlozhila emu tut zhe sotvorit' s neiu liubov'. Konets byl pechalen, no ne v kontse delo" (Innokentii Annenskii, *Knigi otrazhenii*, 2 vols. in 1 [Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1969], 2:17. I am grateful to Professor Simon Karlinsky for pointing out this work to me).

Another image of the tsar-maiden is found in the collection of Russian fairy tales prepared by Chulkov, entitled *The Tales of Alesha Popovich*. The main hero of these tales encounters the tsar-maiden in the fields of Lithuania on his way to Kiev: "Ona ezdit po svetu, pobivaet bogatyrei i nedavno, proezzhaia russkoi zemleiu, nadelala uzhasnye razoreniiia." The fairy tale "Skazka o molodil'nykh iablokakh i zhivoi vode," retold by A. N. Tolstoi, describes a female *bogatyr'*, *Sineglazka*, in a similar manner (see, for example, A. N. Tolstoi, *Russkie narodnye skazki* [Moscow, 1948], pp. 93-124). Folk tales about the tsar-maiden recorded by Afanas'ev, for example, "Tsar'-Devitsa," "Skazka o sil'nom i khrabrom nepobedinom bogatyre Ivane Tsareviche i o ego prekrasnoi supruzhnitse Tsar'-Devitse," "Skazka o trekh korolevichakh," and "Utitsa zlatokrylaia ili skazka o Petretsesareviche i supruge ego Tsar'-Devitse," published in a separate edition in 1820, as well as the famous *Konek-Gorbunok* by P. P. Ershov, all depart from the image of the tsar-maiden in the *byliny* in that they all portray a beautiful, gentle maiden rather than a woman-warrior. Compare, for instance, the description of the tsar-maiden in *Konek-Gorbunok*:

Царь-девица, так что диво!  
 Эта вовсе не красива:  
 И бледна-то, и тонка,  
 Чай, в обхват-то три вершка;  
 А ножонка-то, ножонка!  
 Тьфу ты! словно у цыплёнка!  
 Пусть полюбится кому,  
 Я и даром не возьму

(Ershov, *Konek-Gorbunok* [Moscow, 1974], p. 73). Among the other Russian poets attracted to this motif, the most notable is Derzhavin, who wrote his "Tsar'-Devitsa" in 1812. The heroine of Derzhavin's work approximates that of the *byliny* and is depicted as a super-

if not all, were available to the poet, but Afanas'ev's tale was Tsvetaeva's point of departure. A comparison of Tsvetaeva's *poema* and the folk tale<sup>34</sup> reveals not only Tsvetaeva's view of the essence of the folk tale, but the very core of her poetic vision as well.

The feature which most strikingly distinguishes Tsvetaeva's main characters from those of the folk tale is their androgyny. The poet makes this clear at the very outset of the *poema*. The main male character is introduced in the second stanza as one who is *not* like anything a main hero of a fairy tale is expected to be: he is neither a robber, a rider, an archer, nor a superman:

Как у мачехи у младенькой—сынрок в потолок,  
Не разбойничек, не всадничек, не силач, не стрелок,  
Вместо щек—одни-то впадинки . . . .<sup>35</sup>

. . . . .

The tsarevich's masculinity is dissipated in a string of diminutives: *razboinichek*, *vsadnichek*, *vpadinki*. Moreover, as seen from this illustration, Tsvetaeva introduces him not as a young man nor as the tsar's son, but as a stepson, thereby linking him to a female figure, the stepmother. The link is supported by the stepmother/stepson parallel characterization. The stepmother's aroused eroticism, for example, is contrasted with the tsarevich's pronounced lack of interest in women. The contrast is particularly apparent during the stepmother's unwelcome visit to the tsarevich:

“Дай подушечку поправлю!”  
—Я и сам примощусь!—  
“Как же так тебя оставлю?”  
—Я и сам обойдусь!—

“Ай пониже? Ай повыше?”  
—Мне твой вид постыл!—  
“Видно разум твой мальчиший  
Звоном по морю уплыл.”<sup>36</sup>

The lack of *mal'chishii razum* (boy's prudence) in dealing with women is particularly noteworthy. Therefore, the masculinity of the tsarevich, in terms of his

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woman of great beauty and physical and intellectual power, more inclined toward riding, hunting, and combat than toward courtship.

Tsvetaeva's fairy tale in its depiction of the tsar-maiden echoes Derzhavin's version much more closely than Afanas'ev's and is closer to the one originated in the *byliny*. However, she departs from the *byliny* in her portrayal of the man who wins the tsar-maiden's love.

Among other works which utilize the image of the tsar-maiden is the opera *Khrabryi i smelyi vitiiaz' Akhrideich*, written by Catherine II.

34. Actually two versions of the fairy tale recorded under numbers 232 and 233 are found in vol. 2 in A. N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie skazki*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1957); see also *Russian Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed., comp. A. Afanas'ev, trans. Norbert Guterman (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), pp. 229–34.

35. Tsvetaeva, “Tsar'-Devitsa,” *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 341.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 343.

physical appearance and the absence of manly vocational and amorous interests, is undermined in the very beginning of the *poema*.

There is nothing in the Afanas'ev tale to suggest the effeminate nature of the tsarevich. On the contrary, the folk tale (and all other sources which treat this motif) depicts him in the traditional manner as a superman:

The next day Prince Vasiliï waited for an opportune moment, then he struck his steed between the ears with a mace, and the steed fell to his knees. Then the fair swain bridled him with a hundred-pound bridle, saddled him with a Circassian saddle, and mounted him. When the steed came to from the *bogatyr's* blow, he carried Prince Vasiliï over highlands, meadows, and valleys for three days and three nights straight. When the steed was finished, he was wet, not from sweat, but from blood.<sup>37</sup>

But in Tsvetaeva's *poema* he is transformed into a weak, effeminate, diminutive young man, interested in neither making war nor in women:

Лежит Царевич мой бессонный,  
Как лебедь крылья разбросал;  
"Все отдал бы, весь сан престольный,  
Кто бы мне душу распротал!

Не естся яблочко румяно,  
Не пьются женские уста,  
Все в пурпуровые туманы  
Уводит синяя верста.

Каким правителем вам буду,  
Каким ероем-силачом—  
Я, гусяришка узкогрудый,  
Не понимающий ни в чем!

Как с конницей—свяжусь—пехотой,  
Когда до бабы не охоч!"  
И, опершись на локоточек,  
Такой унылый смотрит в ночь.<sup>38</sup>

In contrast to the tsarevich who cannot conceive of mounting a horse (or a woman), Tsvetaeva's tsar-maiden is inseparable from her steed. Her place is in front of an army of warriors:

"Здорово, стан сильномогучий!"—  
Гремит громоподобный глас.  
Рече—и, рассекая тучи,  
Промеж рядочков понеслась.

37. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie skazki*, 2:233.

38. Tsvetaeva, "Tsar'-Devitsa," *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 348.

Конь с Дѣвицею точно сросся,  
 Не различишь, коли вдали:  
 Хвост конский, али семишёрстый  
 Султан с девичьей головы!<sup>39</sup>

In the Afanas'ev tale (number 232), the tsar-maiden first appears on a ship surrounded by thirty maidens. Nothing suggests her masculinity except the title of the fairy tale, "Tsar'-Devitsa," and perhaps her initiative in courtship. But these are quickly counterbalanced by the valorous feats of the tsarevich in pursuit of his beloved. In the second version the six-regiment army gathered by the tsar-maiden is mentioned, but this masculine deed, far from being followed up later in the fairy tale, is neutralized by the subsequent appearance of the tsar-maiden surrounded by numerous female companions (*mamki* and *nian'ki*). In Tsvetaeva's *poema* expectations evoked by the title, *Tsar'-Devitsa*, are fulfilled. Indeed, Tsvetaeva's maiden is a hero, not a heroine. She appears first in the story as a warrior, with almost every appellation in the masculine gender:

Посередке же, с простертой рукой—  
 Не то Ангел, не то Воин какой.

Что за притча? Что за гость-за-сосед?  
 Не то в латы, не то в ризы одет!<sup>40</sup>

The reversal of features traditionally associated with men and women is particularly prominent in the scene when the tsar-maiden, looking at the sleeping tsarevich, compares him to herself: his hands are small and soft, hers are big and strong; his hair is thin and silky, hers is thick and coarse. The tsar-maiden in Tsvetaeva's fairy tale has all the attributes of a traditional folk male hero. If she is the tsar-maiden, he is a maiden-tsar:

Просияла Царь-Девица:  
 Терем враз озолотила.  
 "Баб не любишь? Драк не любишь?  
 Ну, тебя-то мне и надо!  
 Как, к примеру, Дева-Царь я,  
 Так, выходит,—Царь-ты-Дева!<sup>41</sup>

Tsvetaeva's portrayal of the maid as an androgyny is not her only point of departure from the Afanas'ev tale. She goes still further in breaking with the oral tradition. The description of the tsar-maiden in the *poema* is perhaps not out of tune with images of such women existing in Russian *byliny*. However, the depiction of the male counterpart to the warrior-woman as a weakling is unprecedented. The poet's departure from the specific tale and the oral tradition overall prompts one to imbue the androgynous representation of the male character of the *poema* with still greater significance. This significance becomes fully ap-

39. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 344.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 354.

parent only when the androgynous natures of the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich, albeit so different, are juxtaposed.

The poet emphatically states that the weak tsarevich and the strong tsar-maiden make a perfect pair. Being so different, the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich nevertheless have so much in common that it is difficult to tell them apart:

—Гляжу, гляжу, и невдомек:  
Девнца—где, и где дружок?

Ты расплетись верёвнице!  
Где юноша? Где девнца?<sup>42</sup>

The tsarevich transported into the domain of the feminine and the tsar-maiden into that of the masculine are perfectly compatible. Either has enough of the opposite element, masculine or feminine, to make a congenial pair on *either* side of the sexual barrier. The tsarevich is feminine enough to meet the tsar-maiden in the feminine domain, and the tsar-maiden is sufficiently feminine to remain there:

Тот юноша?—лицом кругла,  
Тот юноша?—рука мала:

Одной косы две плеточки,  
Две девнцы-красоточки.<sup>43</sup>

The tsar-maiden is endowed with enough masculinity to meet the tsarevich in the realm of the masculine, and he is masculine enough to be there in the first place:

Да больно вид-то их таков,—  
А ну-ка двое пареньков?

Тот девнца?—глядит насквозь!  
Тот девнца?—коленки врозь!

Одной руки суставчики,  
Два юноши-красавчика.<sup>44</sup>

Tsvetaeva thus reconciles the differences in the sexual identities of the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich. She envisions, however, inevitable rational inquiries into the definitive sexual nature of the pair. Poetic ambiguity aside, who is the tsarevich, man or maiden? Who is the tsar-maiden, maiden or man? To those who want to tell them *apart* at the moment of the *union*, Tsvetaeva responds: See what you wish, let the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich be men to women and let them be women to men:

42. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 364–65.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

Чтоб не испортил нам смотри  
Неверный разум наш Фомин,—

Где Царь не приложил печать,  
Там надо надвое решать:

Кто сам с косою да в юбочке—  
Тому пускай—два юноши.

Кто вокруг юбок веется—  
Тому пускай—две девицы.<sup>45</sup>

An examination of this passage suggests two points. First, it is clear that the poet is not bothered by which gender the reader might attach to the main characters, as long as the pair is not separated. The poet, yielding to the reader's habitual acceptance of the male/female sexual partitioning and sensing the reader's resistance to absorb this irrational fancy, divides the *reading public* into men and women while preserving the unity of the tsarevich and the tsar-maiden. Second, the burden of making a choice between masculine and feminine identity of the main characters is placed on the reader: to women they are men, to men they are women. Free from sexual labels up to this point ("Gde Tsar' ne prilozhil pechat"), the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich can be labeled by the reader. This method of establishing their sexual identity is, however, a concession to the rational reader, for, in the course of the *поэта*, the androgynous nature of the main characters has been foremost in the poet's mind. If the reader does not accept this concession, then the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich must be accepted for what they are. However, to do so the beholder must be either an androgyne himself or admit that to represent the main characters in strictly masculine or feminine terms is to misrepresent them. Rather than taxonomically labeling the reader and the character, the poet invites the reader to take another, better, look at the pair:

А ну как зорче поглядим—  
И вовсе все обман один,

И вовсе над туманом—дым,  
Над херувимом—серафим?<sup>46</sup>

The tsar-maiden and the tsarevich, Tsvetaeva suggests, are the two angels, the seraph and the cherub.

The suggestion that the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich are perhaps both angels is intrinsically significant, more significant than the hierarchical difference between cherubim and seraphim.<sup>47</sup> Both are angels of a higher order. To see the

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. The cherub is "any of the second order of angels, usually ranked just below the seraphim and described as excelling in knowledge" (*Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, s.v. "cherub"). I do not attach any particular significance to the slight differences

main characters of the *poema* as two angels is to render the issue of their sexual identity irrelevant. One is not usually puzzled over an angel's sex. One should, therefore, not be overly concerned with the sexual identity of either of the main characters, for they are also the two angels, or two kindred souls. In this lies the key to Tsvetaeva's predilection for androgynous characters.

The unbroken unity of the tsarevich and the tsar-maiden as a pair, as has been seen earlier, is of ultimate importance to the poet. In deference to the reader, Tsvetaeva willingly moves them from one sexual domain to the other, but constantly preserves their kindred unity. Both versions of the fairy tale state that the tsar-maiden and the tsarevich were destined for each other. The poet underlines their betrothal and their kinship by marking them off with a sign of androgyny. By portraying them both as androgynes, Tsvetaeva explicitly states their kindred nature and distinguishes them from the rest of the world. No matter what their differences, the rest of the world (that is, the reader) is made to see them, at the moment of their union, as a kindred pair. Thus, in this fairy tale, one of the functions of androgyny is to serve as an external sign, an indication of the profound kinship between the tsarevich and the tsar-maiden.

There is, however, another less obvious reason for the androgyny of this particular pair and of other of Tsvetaeva's poetic personae. An analogy can facilitate understanding of the second function of androgyny in Tsvetaeva's poetic world. Tsvetaeva's ultimate goal in writing is to uncover the essence—also referred to as the “soul” by Tsvetaeva—of things. In her poetry, the soul is perceived as immortal, invisible, weightless, and so forth, and defies what can be called, using Tsvetaeva's language, “terrestrial” categories of matter, measure, weight, and so forth. To express the soul is to weigh it down. Writing for Tsvetaeva is descending into matter. To make, for example, the invisible soul visible, she must resort to “terrestrial” language:

It is impossible to talk weightlessly about weightlessness. My goal is to affirm, to give weight to an object! However, to make this “weightlessness” of mine (the soul, for example) have weight, I need something from this world's vocabulary and wares, a certain measure of weight which is familiar to this world and is affirmed in it.<sup>48</sup>

To express the weightless soul in “terrestrial” language, it is necessary, therefore, to use a certain measure of weight already familiar to earthlings. Similarly, to express the asexuality of the soul, Tsvetaeva is compelled to resort to a certain ter-

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in rank of the angels and believe that the primary reason for naming the tsar-maiden a seraph rests with her leaning *over* the sleeping tsarevich. The phrase “nad tumanom—dym” (“over the fog—smoke”), parallel to the phrase “nad kheruvimom—serafim,” does not support the slight vertical subordination expressed in the latter phrase because it is very difficult to distinguish between the fog and the smoke: “It is a manifestly difficult task, often requiring arbitrary considerations, for an ordinary observer to decide whether he is enveloped in a thin water fog, or a light haze (British “mist”), or a light obscuration by smoke and dust. Even the dense fog reported in cities may be caused as much by smoke as by water” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1956 ed., s.v. “fog”).

48. Tsvetaeva, “Poet o kritike,” *Nesobrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 597.



restrial measure of "sex," and in choosing this, the poet is guided by her poetic vision and temperament.

One of the most conspicuous characteristics of Tsvetaeva's poetic and personal temperament is defiance and revolt against the existing order of things. Tsvetaeva used to say that her instinct always sought and created barriers in life and poetry. This *à rebours* quality reverberates in the poem "Rolandov rog" ("Roland's Horn"):

Одна из всех—за всех—ПРОТИВУ всех!—<sup>49</sup>

The phrase *protivu vsekh* is made particularly prominent by its position in the line and by the stylistic coloration of the archaic form *protivu*. Tsvetaeva's defiant nature is perhaps best expressed, however, in her motto: "Ia esm', i ia idu naperekor!" ("I am, and I act *à rebours*!").

Tsvetaeva's world view is generally described by her critics as dualistic. Margaret Troupin argues in her dissertation on the collection of poems *Remeslo* (*Craft*) that:

Marina Tsvetaeva has a dualistic world view: everything for her is either in the realm of BYT or BYTIE. The former is mundane life; and the latter includes everything exalted that transcends it. This duality (which can roughly, and inadequately, be translated as LIFE and BEING) is so essential to her nature that when Prince Sergei Volkonskii wrote a book at her instigation and inspiration, he called it, in her honor, *Byt i Bytie*.<sup>50</sup>

In her dissertation, "Escape from Earth: A Study of the Four Elements and Their Associations in Marina Cvetaeva's Work," Ieva Vitins points to another antithetical pair, earth and heaven, as crucial to the understanding of Tsvetaeva's poetic world and describes the different stages in the poet's attitude toward earth. (The latter encompasses the poet's childhood home, childhood itself, Moscow, and Russia.) Vitins concludes that ultimately the poet sought to escape from it: "It is away from this all-too-material earth, this place of exile and confinement, that the poet continually strove to escape and fly back to her original home, to the other worlds of poetry, correspondence, and timelessness."<sup>51</sup> Rejecting one pole of the antithesis, earth, and striving for the other, heaven, might be regarded as characteristic of a poet of Romantic orientation, who predictably would have a dualistic world view. Other studies and essays about Tsvetaeva by such critics as Marc Slonim, Alexander Bakhrakh, George Ivask, and Simon Karlinsky also refer to Tsvetaeva as a "poet of Romantic orientation," a "belated Romantic," a "belated Symbolist," and a "poet of Platonic orientation." All of these descriptions suggest the dualistic predisposition of the poet.

49. Tsvetaeva, "Rolandov rog," *Isbrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 168.

50. M. Troupin, "Marina Tsvetaeva's 'Remeslo': A Commentary" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1974), p. 2.

51. Ieva Vitins, "Escape from Earth: A Study of the Four Elements and Their Associations in Marina Cvetaeva's Work" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1974), p. 2. See also Vitins, "Escape From Earth: A Study of Tsvetaeva's Elsewheres," *Slavic Review*, 36, no. 4 (December 1977): 644-57.

Without denying the existence of various conceptual antitheses in Tsvetaeva's world view,<sup>52</sup> it is essential to refer to these antitheses as "dichotomous" rather than "dualistic." It can be argued that the distinction between these two terms and the ensuing implications are crucial for understanding the artistic function of androgyny in Tsvetaeva's work and its central place in Tsvetaeva's poetic world. A brief discussion of the distinction should make this apparent.

In ordinary language the terms "dualistic" and "dichotomous" tend to be used interchangeably. The primary meaning of the word "dualistic" may be defined as "a dividing or a division into two; two-fold division."<sup>53</sup> The primary meaning of the word "dichotomous," on the other hand, may be defined as "having or consisting of a pair or pairs; paired."<sup>54</sup> Although these subtle differences in meaning are often obscured in common usage, they are more apparent in the usage of the words in philosophy and logic. As a philosophical term, "dualism" is defined as "the doctrine that recognizes two radically independent elements as mind and matter, underlying all known phenomena."<sup>55</sup> The important part of this definition is the existence of two radically independent elements. The definition of the word "dichotomy" in logic, on the other hand, is "a distribution or a separation of ideas by pairs; the division of a class into two subclasses opposite to each other by contradiction."<sup>56</sup> This definition says nothing about the radically independent nature of two elements. On the contrary, it assumes that both elements belong to one class.

The rationale for describing Tsvetaeva's world view as dichotomous rather than dualistic centers on this distinction. Even though Tsvetaeva's poetic model of the world may be described by a series of antitheses, the relationship between the conceptual poles of each antithesis is not that of radical independence but rather that of mutual interconnection. In other words, Tsvetaeva's various antithetical notions do not pertain to distinct realms, hermetically sealed and mutually exclusive, but, on the contrary, are related and represent opposite sides of one and the same phenomenon.

A number of examples can be cited to support this premise. Commenting on Rilke's death in a letter to his secretary, Tsvetaeva expressed the idea that, while still alive, Rilke was cooperating with higher forces of inspiration, whereas after death he became one with these forces. She follows this thought with the remark: "Ne uvid'te vo vsem etom *russskoi mistiki!* Rech'-to ved' o *zemnykh* delakh. I samoe *nebesnoe* iz vdokhnovenii—nichto, esli ne pretvoreno v zemnoe delo"<sup>57</sup> ("Do not see *Russian mysticism* in all of that. I have in mind *earthly* affairs. Even the most *heavenly* of inspirations amounts to nothing if it is not embodied in an earthly deed"). Juxtaposing the earthly and the heavenly, Tsvetaeva draws correspondences between them and establishes their interdependence. Similarly, the following example shows that Tsvetaeva was more preoccupied with reestab-

52. For a description of Tsvetaeva's poetic model in terms of a series of antitheses, such as body versus soul, love versus poetry, the terrestrial world versus the Elysian Fields, see Anya M. Kroth, "Dichotomy and 'Razminovenie' in the Work of Marina Tsvetaeva" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1977).

53. *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language*, 1899 ed., s.v. "dualistic."

54. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, s.v. "dichotomous."

55. *Ibid.*, s.v. "dualism."

56. *Universal Dictionary*, s.v. "dichotomy."

57. Tsvetaeva to E. Chernosvitova, in *Novyi mir*, 1969, no. 4, p. 199; emphasis added.

lishing the unity of soul and body (mind and matter) than with their disparity: "Vse eti deleniia na telo i dukh—zhestokaia anatomiia na zhivom, vybornichestvo, estetstvo, bezdushie"<sup>58</sup> ("All these divisions into body and spirit is cruel anatomy upon the living, punctiliousness, aestheticism, heartlessness"). Various "dualistic" manifestations of Tsvetaeva's poetic vision are not so much twofold representations of externally conflicting principles as they are integral, though antithetical, parts of a whole, of a one. This is evident in the following letter to Maxim Gorky: "Ne znaiu, poliubite li Vy moiui liubov' k chemu by to ni bylo, vseгда vkluchaiushchuiu liubov' k nemu obratnomu i iakoby ego iskluchaiushchemu. Bol'she skazhu, kazhetsia—obratnogo net, prosto ocherednoi Lik—edinogo"<sup>59</sup> ("I don't know if you will become fond of my love for anything whatever, love always inclusive of its opposite which, as it were, excludes it. I'd go even further to say that the opposite seems nonexistent, it is simply yet another Image—of a whole"). Another relevant example which demonstrates the poet's predisposition to see things dichotomously is provided in the dramatic work *Ariadna* (*Ariadne*), in the description of an encounter between Bacchus and Theseus on the isle of Naxos. At first, Theseus hears only the voice of Bacchus, who is hidden from view, and inquires about to whom this voice belongs. In response, he hears a series of short descriptions, in fact, revealing characteristics immediately attributable to Bacchus, such as, "he who was born twice" or:

Тот, чьей двойственностью дwoится  
Взгляд у всякого, кто прозрел.<sup>60</sup>

In other words, Bacchus, the glorious androgynous himself, is described as one who is able to see things as twofold, in pairs, dichotomously. Moreover, those who follow Bacchus learn wisdom from him by acquiring his aptitude for dichotomous vision.

Just as the duality of Tsvetaeva's world view was noted by her critics, either implicitly or directly, the interrelation and correspondence between the poles of various antitheses were ignored by all but a few of Tsvetaeva's critics. An awareness of the subtle connection between any two antithetical poles can be deduced, for example, from Joseph Brodsky's characterization of Tsvetaeva as a "poet pragmatic by nature but with Romantic poetics."<sup>61</sup> Like Brodsky, *Ariadna* Efron, Tsvetaeva's daughter and the author of very interesting memoirs, is not deluded by the contradictions intrinsic to Tsvetaeva's outlook. She emphatically states that dualism was alien to Tsvetaeva's nature: "Tsel'nost' ee kharaktera, tselostnost' ee chelovecheskoi lichnosti byla zameshana na protivorechiakh; ei byla prisushcha *dvoiakost'* (no otniud' *ne dvoistvennost'*) vospriiatii i samovyrazheniia"<sup>62</sup> ("The integrity of her character, the wholeness of her personality was based on contradictions; *dichotomy* [but *not* at all *duality*] was inherent in her perception and self-expression"). Consequently, recognition of the dichotomous,

58. Tsvetaeva to A. Bakhrakh, July 1923, in *Mosty*, 1960, no. 5, p. 315.

59. Tsvetaeva to M. Gorky, October 4–7, 1927, in *Novyi mir*, 1969, no. 4, p. 203.

60. Tsvetaeva, "Ariadna," *Isbrannye proizvedeniia*, p. 675.

61. Based on lecture notes from a seminar on poetry conducted by Joseph Brodsky, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan, 1972.

62. A. Efron, "Stranitsy bylogo," *Zvezda*, 1975, no. 6, p. 181; emphasis added.

rather than dualistic, origins of Tsvetaeva's antithetical pairs is essential for an understanding of certain aspects of her poetry and, what is more pertinent to our discussion, it is instrumental in the interpretation of the phenomenon of androgyny.

Androgyny and Tsvetaeva's dichotomous vision are interrelated and mutually supportive. As previously suggested, to express the sexlessness of the soul, Tsvetaeva must resort to a certain measure of "sex." The terrestrial world offers two choices for sexually identifying characters. Tsvetaeva could have chosen one sex over the other, for example masculine over feminine or vice versa. To have done so, however, would have meant acceptance of the division and duality of sex and would have been inconsistent with the poet's world view. Moreover, one should not forget that Tsvetaeva felt compelled to use an earthly measure to make the heavenly soul terrestrially palpable. To "prefer" one sex over the other (the "choice" itself being forced upon the poet) would have been contrary to her defiant nature. On the other hand, combining both characteristics of divided sexual domain and reconciling them in one being, the result being the androgynous natures of her poetic personae, captures the dichotomous nature of Tsvetaeva's perception and self-expression, as well as the defiant aspect of her personality. Consequently, Tsvetaeva's androgynous characters are imprinted with the poet's temperament, vision, and artistic method. It would be difficult to find another concept possessed of the same power to capture simultaneously several substantive peculiarities of Tsvetaeva's art. The poet's dichotomous vision, artistic method, and poetic temperament all find full expression in the phenomenon of androgyny.