

FANTASY AND REALITY IN ABRAM TERC'S EARLY PROSE

A DOCUMENTARY-NARRATOLOGICAL STUDY

COLOFON

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L'ironie irrite. Non pas qu'elle se moque ou qu'elle attaque mais parce qu'elle nous prive des certitudes en dévoilant le monde comme ambiguïté. Leonardo Sciascia: "Rien de plus difficile à comprendre, de plus indéchiffrable que l'ironie".

Milan Kundera, *L'art du roman*

Ах, если бы все это оставалось на бумаге! Нас губит не искусство, но связь искусства с действительностью.

Андрей Синявский-Абрам Терц, *Спокойной ночи*

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PREFACE

In February 1966, at the end of an internationally reported trial in Moscow, Andrej Sinjavskij and Julij Daniël' were sentenced to seven respectively five years of forced labour for making and disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda. The alleged propaganda appeared in the form of prose fiction — a dozen fantastic stories, a literary-philosophical essay and a collection of aphorisms and philosophical rêveries — which had been published in the West under the pseudonyms Abram Terc respectively Nikolaj Aržak. It was in the middle of the Cold War.

The first section of this study of Sinjavskij-Terc's early prose will be devoted to this once notorious trial. In the first chapter I will attempt to place this juridical cause célèbre as well as this controversial literary oeuvre in their historical-artistic context. The second chapter will be devoted to the formulation and scope of the charge. In the third I will describe the arguments that Sinjavskij put forward in the courtroom on his own behalf; Roman Jakobson's concept of the split functions of the literary communication will serve as a model here. During the trial Sinjavskij, in his capacity as reader of his own work, was clearly interested in accentuating certain aspects of his writings and disregarding some other; yet in spite of his awkward position at that moment, the comments he made "in the dock" on various literary issues shed an interesting light upon his artistic views and methods.¹ Interpretations made by other readers who were somehow involved in this affair will be discussed as well: those of the judge, prosecutor, social accusers, defence attorney, witnesses à charge and décharge, supporters and opponents both within and outside the courtroom, press reporters etc. All of them were passionate readers with their own interests and preoccupations, who nolens volens performed a duty and played a role. Thus it seemed as if the theme of role-playing and masquerade which is so prominent in Terc's writings was brought to life in a curious way.² At the same time the scandal surrounding Abram Terc enables readers in later years to form an idea of the interpretative norms which were current during the Soviet period, and to decide at which points Terc's writings were clearly deviant.

The second section of my study will focus on these writings, particularly on those that figured as the principal corpora delicti at the trial. The satire *Ljubimov* was such a bone of contention, as well as certain passages taken from *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* and *Mysli vrasploch*. Moreover, I will devote a separate chapter to the science fiction story *Pchenc* to which Sinjavskij referred in his final speech, although it was published shortly after the trial. I have chosen to examine these texts as a unified whole, that is to say as a set of variations on recurrent themes. My analysis of their semantic structure will be based on the model

proposed by Jan van der Eng in his influential article 'On Descriptive Narrative Poetics'. According to van der Eng, the sequences of actions, character and spatial surroundings which make up the semantic structure of a text acquire relief through chains of parallelisms, variations and antitheses, and manifest themselves as dispersive and integrational series of motifs. Gaps in the information with their strong effect of suspense play a prominent part in the description of these series. In my analysis I will focus my attention on those narrative devices which largely explain the flood of responses to these writings as well as the great variety and the vehemence of these responses. In order to describe this "clash of interpretations" I will use Tzvetan Todorov's theoretical model for the literary fantastic as a point of departure. If necessary, I will relate the views that Sinjavskij expressed during his questioning on various themes such as the relationship between fantasy and reality, author and reader, to similar statements he made during his emigration period.³ The fact that these views did not noticeably change in the course of the years is an indication that Sinjavskij in 1966 refused to be intimidated by his prosecutors and managed to resist the temptation to make statements which he felt prompted to revoke later. In an interview in 1989 he answered upon questions concerning his present view on the position he had taken at the trial:

Я думаю то же самое, что и в 1966 году. Смешно и недостойно предъявлять политические обвинения художественному творчеству. А ежели такие обвинения законны, то вообще творчество нужно прекратить. (1989 а: 3)

In short, the first section will concentrate on the documentary aspect and the second on the narratological aspect, whereas the practice of analyzing and interpreting narrative texts is of crucial importance throughout this study. Indeed, the trial against Sinjavskij and Daniël' clearly demonstrates that the interpretation of literary fiction may have far-reaching consequences for the author's personal life. In addition, it demonstrates that such interpretations can hardly be isolated from the interpreting subject, who brings in his personal views into the reading process as well as the interests, prejudices and preoccupations of the social group to which he belongs. My next statement will be one that is central to van der Eng's narrative theory, viz. that the semantic scope of a literary text does not restrict itself to a complex of intratextual links, but can be related to other texts and to extratextual reality. In my view, a strictly autonomistic approach to Terc's fantastic stories which come so close to literary parody, meets with too many and too serious restrictions, as it puts up a barrier to the road to reality which Terc declared to seek for.

The fact that I have assigned a prominent place to Sinjavskij's readings of his own work does not mean that I wish to place the concrete author back in his

traditional role of fully unified extratextual authority, the object of worship for the common reader. For reasons of principle Sinjavskij himself has always firmly rejected such a role. My proposal will be to regard him rather as a unique guide, entitled to shed a particular light unto the surrealistic universe that emerges from his writings. In my view, the literary “credo” with which he ends *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* — it is his intention to pursue the truth through the absurd and the grotesque — offers a well-considered foundation to the mentioned approach.

In summarizing, it is my intention to avoid absolutizing the *intentio auctoris* or the *intentio lectoris*. Instead I will hold on to the, possibly traditional, viewpoint that the best way to approach Abram Terc’s fantastic stories is by following a consequent semantic line throughout; otherwise these stories may easily fold up under a burden of mannerisms and double entendres, or perish in a deconstructivist abyss of unlimited semantic shifts. It stands to reason that I do not make a pretence of having found the “real” meaning of these labyrinthine texts or the “real” intention of their chameleonic author. Terc’s oeuvre, which abounds in playful and sinister nonsense, clearly resists any singular definite interpretation, while leaving full space to the area of non-signification which according to some critics is immanent in the structure of fantastic fiction. What is more, in the final analysis an element of indeterminacy will persist in any work of literature.

Notes

- 1 Though these may be of equal importance, I will not pay any special attention to those of Sinjavskij's arguments which do not primarily affect his writings. In his final address to the court he protested in an eloquent plea against the atmosphere of demagoguery and secrecy surrounding his arrest and trial, and against the various forms of intimidation his family had had to undergo in the months before the trial. These arguments may be called self-evident and have been mentioned already at various occasions.
- 2 Abram Terc elaborates the theme of masquerade in the first chapter of his autobiographical novel *Spokojnoj noči*. (1984) Here the first person narrator, whose name is Andrej Sinjavskij, describes the trial as a "феерия" starring actors, director and public; he himself is compelled to play a part in this spectacle by a quirk of fate. His deportation following upon the sentence is described as a "цирковое турне". (28)
- 3 Sinjavskij was released in June 1971, sixteen months before the official end of his sentence. His fame saved him from being banished from his hometown Moscow, although this form of internal exile was the usual additional punishment for ex-convicts. In 1973 he was given permission to emigrate to Paris, where he received an appointment as professor in Russian literature at the Sorbonne. He died 25 February 1997 in France.

The majority of his writings from his emigration period was published in his private publishing house Sintaksis, which also edited the literary journal of the same name. Under his pseudonym Abram Terc he wrote i.a. *Golos iz chora* (1973), *Progulki s Puškinym* (1975), *V teni Gogolja* (1975), *Kroška Cores* (1980) and *Spokojnoj noči* (1984); under his own name Andrej Sinjavskij appeared i.a. *Opavšie list'ja V.V. Rozanova* (1982), *Osnovy sovetskoj civilizacii* (2001) and *Ivan-durak: Očerok russkoj narodnoj very* (1991). For the most complete bibliography of Sinjavskij-Terc, see C. Theimer Nepomnyashchy.

Daniël' served out his five-years sentence and was released in 1970. The poems he wrote in captivity were published in Amsterdam in 1971 under his real name as *Stichi iz nevoli*. He died in December 1988 in Moscow.

CHAPTER I: THE TRIAL IN CONTEXT

A. Introduction

The trial against Andrej Sinjavskij was not to be the last literary trial to raise a public scandal. One will remember the case of the British novelist Salman Rushdie who was sentenced by an Islamic court in 1989 for writing a supposedly blasphemous novel.¹ Neither was it the first trial of this sort. In his closing speech to the court, Sinjavskij made a statement that at a first sight may seem surprising:

Еще никогда не привлекали к уголовной ответственности за художественное творчество. В истории литературы я не знаю уголовных процессов такого рода — включая авторов, которые тоже печатали за границей, и при чем резкую критику. (*Belaja kniga*: 300)²

In fact, throughout the ages all sorts of secular and religious authorities have taken offence at literary works, and various fiction writers have been subject to criminal proceedings. It was certainly not only in Russia that the appearance of the novel involved certain risks for its maker. In this context may be recalled Milan Kundera's characterization of the novel as being the genre that, in taking after Penelope, at nights unties the tapestry woven by theologians, philosophers and scientists the day before. (1986: 193) During the last two hundred years numerous novels, poems, short stories, essays and dramas have been banned, confiscated and burnt throughout the Western world. Their authors suffered sentences which vary from fines, house arrest, forced exile, imprisonment, labour camp, psychiatric treatment to the death penalty. On the one hand, since the age of Romanticism novelists and poets have been revered as the moral consciousness of society, whereas on the other hand it was this very pedestal which made their position increasingly precarious. Michel Foucault e.g. stresses the drawbacks and limitations of the cult spun around the author as being a chosen individual. Until well into the 17th and 18th century, he claims, hardly any interest at all was shown in the person behind the text, who for that reason mostly remained anonymous. Only authors of studies on cosmology, medicine, physics, geography etc. could claim the status of public personalities. However, this situation was gradually reversed. It prompts Foucault to the challenging proposition that authors began to be mentioned only when it became necessary to allocate blame:

Texts, books and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, "sacralized" and "sacralizing" figures) to the extent that discourses could be transgressive. (148)

Over the years the tendency to transgress prevalent norms and prescriptions took on, more and more, the form of an imperative peculiar to literature. It became a role that many writers cherished.³

Following Foucault's reasoning, it may be argued that the alleged crime of accused writers throughout the ages lies precisely in the transgression of taboos enforced by ideological and religious authorities. Jan van der Eng posits a direct connection between the transgressive nature of literature and its cathartic function:

It probably is the complexity and the totality of its approach to human existence that imparts a liberating potency to literature: liberation from dogmatic and stagnant forms of religion, thought, political views, and so on. It is this cathartic function that makes rigidly ideologically structured societies approach good literature with such fear; it explains why they manipulate, censure, and persecute it. (...) It may even be argued that a great work of literature will always transcend the limits of any form of cultural organization, however liberal and variegated that organization may be; otherwise the ever renewed value of such a work and the frequent discovery of its hitherto unnoticed aspects would be unexplainable. (1988: 51-52)

In several of his writings Sinjavskij-Terc has underlined, and warmly acclaimed, the transgressive character of art:

Искусство подбирает у жизни не общие правила, а нарушения правил и начинается с выведения быта из состояния равновесия, тяготея к сфере запретного, непривычного, беззаконного. (Terc 1975 b: 134)

A similar vision is expressed even more daringly in an article in which he describes his own reaction on hearing the authorities brand him as being a normal criminal:

Когда я это впервые услышал, я, надо признаться, испытал не унижение, а чувство глубокой внутренней удовлетворенности. Еще бы! Искусство приравнивается к преступлению. И даже не к политическому, а к уголовному преступлению. Искусство приравнивается к воровству и к убийству. Значит, оно что-то стоит! Оно — реальность! И, может быть, на самом деле — искусство, всякое искусство, — это преступление? Преступление перед обществом. Перед самой жизнью ... (Terc 1978: 114)

Many literary trials in the past can be called “educational” as they encompass an implicit warning towards the reading public. It is not far-fetched then to posit a direct relationship between literary fiction and criminal law, as may be amply illustrated by the assaults made by moralists throughout the 19th century on the allegedly baleful influence of prose fiction. A study of so-called “crimes passionnels”, written more than a century ago by Louis Proal, a judge in Rouen, may serve as an example. In it the author draws direct parallels between the crimes he encounters in his daily practice and the corruption of contemporary literature. Corrupt ideas taken from novels by i.a. George Sand, Flaubert, Goethe and Dostoevskij have perverted the minds of many gullible, mostly young and female, readers. Their authors, it is implied, can be held at least partly responsible for the increase in divorce-, murder- and suicide cases in contemporary society. The book ends with a plea for a renewed “healthy” form of literature, one that will exert a salutary influence on the reader. (Harskamp: 52-54)

Curiously enough, Sinjavskij and Daniël’ were attacked by their most vicious opponent, the social accuser Zoja Kedrina,⁴ in the name of these same traditional values — law and order, patriotism, common decency, family values etc. In the abusive speeches which she directed against Sinjavskij in the official press and in the courtroom resounds a similar belief in the critical influence of literature on the thought and ways of the reader, for better and for worse. In effect, her pleas for “healthy” literature — healthy in the sense of easily understandable, morally pure and didactically warranted — nowadays sound surprisingly outdated and naive. It stands to reason that such a profound belief in the potency of the spoken and the written word places a great deal of responsibility on the writer. In the 20th century a similar belief has outlived mainly in totalitarian states. As Václav Havel, the former dissident who became president of the Czech Republic, said in a speech in 1989:

Yes indeed, I am living in a system in which words can overturn the whole structure of the government, in which words appear to be more powerful than ten military divisions, in which Solženicyn’s words of truth were considered so dangerous that the author, if necessary by force, had to be put on an aeroplane and sent into exile. (303)⁵

In Russia, punitive and repressive measures taken against writers have assumed differing forms in the course of time. Before the revolution these were mainly of an administrative character (publication ban, house arrest, custody, exile). During the Soviet period an estimated two thousand writers have been arrested, of whom fifteen hundred were sentenced to death or perished in labour camps. Mandel’štam, Pil’njak, Gumilëv, Babel’, Mejerchol’d, Charms, Vvedenskij, Kljuev and Florenskij are just a few of the best known among them. If we assume that

Sinjavskij in his remark that the trial in question knew no precedent did not allude to his own steadfast refusal to confess guilt, it is plausible that he meant to underline the peculiar nature of this trial — a combination of a Stalinist show process and the legal procedure in a constitutional state, during which a literary text is figuring as the *corpus delicti*. We could name the following three aspects of the trial as belonging to the last mentioned type:

- The mere fact that a trial was staged marked a break with the arbitrary rule in the recent past. It indicates the authorities' anxiety to retain at least a facade of legitimacy. It was therefore accompanied by a number of jubilant comments in the official press, in which the humanity and superiority of the Soviet judicial system were praised. The contrast was striking indeed. As it has been amply documented by now, during the Stalin period suspects of political crimes were usually tried in secret by a so-called "trojka" composed of a representative of the Office of Public Prosecution, the Communist Party and the secret police NKVD. Relatives were left ignorant of the convicted's destiny, the nature of the charge and the length of the sentence.
- In comparison to past practices, Sinjavskij and Danièl' were treated mildly during the preliminary investigation, unless one chooses to consider complete isolation as a form of maltreatment. The given sentences were severe indeed — Sinjavskij received the maximum of seven years — yet it could reasonably be expected that both convicts would outlive their sentence.
- During the trial the defendants were given the opportunity to speak their minds, as were the defence attorneys and the witnesses à décharge. However, Sinjavskij's attorney E.M. Kogan did not have the courage to plead for acquittal, but merely put forward some extenuating circumstances such as the somewhat deviant nature of his client.⁶

The following three aspects may be considered to be a reversion to Stalinist practice:

- The mere fact that a person is put on trial for holding some specific ideas, views or convictions. It makes this case a clear example of what the Germans pointedly call "Gesinnungsstrafrecht".
- Beforehand an atmosphere of critical danger is created in the courtroom. Imperialist powers, it is claimed, are actively preparing a military attack on the Soviet Union; given this situation, the disseminating of anti-Soviet propaganda appears to be a deed of sheer treachery. A carefully selected audience sets the

tone by jeering at the defendants, thus creating the atmosphere of a marketplace trial. Long before the verdict is given, the state prosecutor, judge and even the defence attorney assume the defendant's guilt, which makes the final verdict a foregone conclusion.

- Something similar occurs outside the court room. Months before the verdict is passed, a libellous campaign is launched by the official press. It was a relatively recent phenomenon, as in tsarist Russia the press was usually an instrument biased towards the regime's intellectual opponents. In 1922, however, Lenin first advocated the tactics of what he called "tumultuous educational trials accompanied by a lot of noise in the press" (Jansen: 162), thus paving the way for the first show processes. In the following years the show trial proved to be an effective instrument for impressing the masses and settling scores with political rivals, in the first place the Party of the Socialist Revolutionaries. Intentionally, such press campaigns are both detailed and imprecise. On the one hand, the defendant is overtly called by his name and many quasi-relevant details taken from his private life and the lives of his relatives are mentioned; on the other hand, the precise nature of the charge remains unclear to the public. All relevant information is submitted to the stringent censorship which was the norm before Gorbačëv launched his policy of glasnost'. Only the prosecution side of the case is reported; comments made on behalf of the defendant are silenced or distorted. The latter, moreover, has no access to the reactions in the outside world. Just as covered with secrecy as the course of the trial is the content of the incriminating texts. The reasons given for this secrecy are firstly, that decent Soviet citizens need to be protected from vulgarity; and secondly, that the writer's offence is so enormous that words alone cannot express it. At this point accusations become completely out of proportion: Sinjavskij and Daniël' are named traitors, fascists, psychopaths, cannibals, sex-maniacs etc. For such perverted criminals, it is suggested, even the most severe punishment is testimony of the generosity of Soviet jurisdiction.⁷

The performance of the judge L.N. Smirnov, chairman of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR and at that moment one of the Soviet Union's leading jurists,⁸ displays the same combination of formal correctness and totalitarian misuse of power. There are times when he strictly adheres to the formalities of legal procedure, e.g. when he corrects the prosecutor's gibes to Daniël' (*Belaja kniga*: 179; 188); yet others when he joins the prosecutor in his insinuations (181) and makes accusations as if these were established facts (245-246).

In summarizing, the question as to whether this trial may be called unique cannot be answered with a mere yes or no. On the one hand, many writers in the past have shared Sinjavskij's fate; yet on the other hand, it was indeed the first

trial in which the principal evidence against the writer was his literary work, and the only one conducted in the hybrid form that has just been described.

B. The aftermath

Although some crucial facts connected with Sinjavskij's arrest are still unclear to this day,⁹ there is no denying the fact that the trial staged against him and his friend has become a landmark in Soviet cultural history. In retrospect, it may be termed indicative of the changing political-ideological climate in the middle of the sixties, as it symbolically marked the end of Nikita Chruščev's relatively liberal Thaw period and the beginning of the more repressive policy launched by the newly appointed Party Leader Leonid Brežnev. (December 1964) Its consequences have been far-reaching, as it led to a polarization of viewpoints both within the Soviet Union and abroad. In the Soviet Union itself the direct result was a growing antithesis between the supporters and opponents of the destalinization policy, whereas the scandal surrounding it accumulated in a lot of negative publicity in the international press which put the Soviet government to a great inconvenience at that stage of the Cold War. The avalanche of criticism from prominent politicians, intellectuals and artists in many countries as well as from various social and political organizations including many Communist Parties, has certainly contributed to the fact that the trial against Sinjavskij has remained unique in its kind. In the following years troublesome writers were forced to leave the Soviet Union or were sentenced under other articles than the by now disreputable articles 70 and 190. (see Chapter II)

Sinjavskij and Daniël' were not the only ones who saw their case in a broader context. The verdict on their writings was seen by many as a direct assault upon the basic premises of literary fiction and even more as a hardly concealed attempt to intimidate the reading public. From the viewpoint of the Soviet authorities the trial turned out to be a tactical miscalculation, as it had some unforeseen and undesired long-term consequences. Whereas on the one hand censorship and control became more stringent, on the other hand the scandal surrounding the trial gave a firm incentive to the just beginning samizdat movement which was to become a factor of importance in the following years. The gap between official and unofficial literature deepened, whereas the authorities appeared to be unable to exert full control over social-cultural life. Thanks to samizdat the banned writings of Terc and Aržak acquired some name in literary circles in the Soviet Union, which encouraged young writers to follow their example and to liberate themselves from the bonds of the socialist-realist doctrine. One consequence went far beyond the social-cultural context: the case Sinjavskij-Daniël' also gave a strong impetus to the movement in defence of human and civil rights. The mere

fact that both writers refused to admit guilt has deeply impressed their Russian contemporaries, as it signified a break with the common practice which Varlam Šalamov described as the repugnant tradition of self-accusations and false confessions:

Нужно помнить, что Синявский и Даниэль первыми принимают бой после чуть ли не пятидесятилетнего молчания. Их пример велик, их героизм бесспорен. (*Belaja kniga*: 407)

Процесс Синявского — первый открытый политический процесс при Советской власти, когда обвиняемые от начала до конца — от предварительного следствия до последнего слова подсудимых — не признавали себя виновными и приняли приговор как настоящие люди. Обвиняемым по сорок лет — оптимальный вариант возраста подсудимого на политическом процессе. Первый процесс за четыре с лишним десятилетия. Не мудрено, что к нему приковано внимание всего мира. Со времени дела правых эсэров — легендарных уже героев революционной России — это первый политический (такой) процесс. Только правые эсэры уходили из зала суда, не вызывая жалости, презрения, ужаса, недоумения ...¹⁰
(*Belaja kniga*: 406)

Since the advent of glasnost', Šalamov's letter from which the cited fragments are taken, was published in full under the author's real name, as was — by stages — the complete oeuvre of Sinjavskij and Daniël'. Already in 1989 the Moscow publishing house Kniga edited *Cena metaforj ili prestuplenie i nakazanie Sinjavskogo i Daniëlja*, which comprises the greater part of Terc's oeuvre written before 1965, as well as some documents connected with the trial.¹¹

In retrospect, the question as to the current interest of this oeuvre seems to be more than justified. Will it stand the test of time, or does it appear somewhat outdated now as a result of the sweeping changes that Russia has gone through in the past two decades? Undoubtedly, many taboos prevalent during the Soviet period have been mitigated or replaced by others.¹² What is more, Russian reality has proved itself to be more fantastic than even Terc could have imagined in his boldest fantasies. Should we conclude then that his work has lost much of its significance, now that the poison it was once supposed to contain has lost its virulency? Although explanations and predictions regarding the enigmatic phenomenon of the ever fluctuating literary taste lie far beyond the scope of this study, I would venture to say that the significance of Terc's oeuvre is not limited to its social-cultural context. While it may have been ahead of its time in the days it was written, ever since it has found enthusiastic and critical readers both in Russia

and the West. The statement with which *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* (1956) ends — the absurd fantasy is the most appropriate means to render a truthful image of contemporary reality — may easily be extended to our own time, as it is amply illustrated by the fact that the young Russian readers and writers of the so-called “new” or “other” prose have enthusiastically embraced fantastic realism. Not surprisingly, in later years Sinjavskij has often expressed his admiration for writers such as Vjačeslav P’ecuch and Tat’jana Tolstaja, who are drawing inspiration from Russian modernism as he did himself. At the end of his life he declared to have great confidence in the future of Russian literature. (1989a: 3; 1992: 33)¹³

Apart from the intrinsic literary value of this oeuvre, its reception is of historical interest as well. As is well known, the history of the reception of a literary work, oeuvre or genre leads to the disclosure of the aesthetic norms and codes governing the taste of a given period. (see e.g. Hansen Löve: 9-10 and passim.) An understanding of these norms is the precondition for determining whether and why a particular work was perceived by contemporary readers as deviant or transgressive. Indeed, an open-minded reader nowadays will have some difficulty to comprehend why Sinjavskij was sentenced to the maximum penalty because of these apparently unoffensive writings. One cannot find in them any appeal whatsoever to subversive activities, nor any defamation of explicitly named Soviet officials and institutions. What is more, at a first reading Terc’s early work seems to lack any political message. Only in *Sud idet*, *Ljubimov* and *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* some passages can be traced which may be said to have a political undertone. However, these passages, when taken together, do not cover more than a few pages, whereas the writings scrutinized by the prosecution consist of more than five hundred pages. Apart from that, the incriminated passages mostly consist of vague hints which easily lend themselves to various interpretations. Even in those cases when the narrator is more explicit (as e.g. in *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*) his argument clearly abounds in ambiguities. Two points about the small number of explicit references to the Stalinist terror should be made. Firstly, the prosecution failed to notice that these fragments lack any denunciative tone. The narrator in *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* writes in the first person plural, thus indicating that he accepts his part in the collective responsibility for the terrible ordeals Russia had passed through in the preceding decades.¹⁴ Secondly, these fragments do not offer new controversial facts. Since Chruščev’s secret speech at the XXth Party Congress in 1956 which heralded the destalinization, a relatively substantive camp literature had come into being. Even if it is true that its authors had to be aware of serious limitations,¹⁵ this does not alter the fact that denying the Stalinist excesses had stopped to be the official policy.

In order to understand the controversy around Terc I propose to examine the formulation and presentation of the charge first. A close reading of the documents connected with the trial as well as the press coverage of it, can only lead to the conclusion that the prosecution's alarmed reaction upon Terc's writings can hardly be named a literary interpretation in the proper sense.¹⁶ Rather it seems to be an emotional response called forth by some particular key- or headwords, in which respect it may be compared with the allergic reaction of a hypersensitive body to superficial stimuli. The two defendants were seldom given the opportunity to explain a passage in greater detail, as they were immediately interrupted and confronted with a following, equally controversial keyword (e.g. Lenin, Kolyma, abortion). As Sinjavskij said in his final speech:

Никого не интересовал анализ содержания, а интересовали только отдельные формулировки, антисоветские формулировки, штампы, которые можно приложить на лоб Даниэлю и Синявскому, как на повесть. (*Belaja kniga*: 304)

Further it should be noticed that in the course of the interrogation the prosecution expanded the notion "anti-Soviet" to such a degree that finally any word or phrase was labelled as anti-Soviet which touched upon some delicate or forbidden theme. Similar "white spots" could be related to the political crimes and errors of the recent past, to the equally unmentionable social evils in present society, or to the official taboo on religion and sexuality. Eventually, as so little overt political subversion was to be found in Terc's writings, the prosecution aimed its criticism at their supposed immorality: Terc was said to raise the basest instincts in man by his cynicism and obscenity. However, the tone and spirit of these accusations may have sounded somewhat outdated even in those days. For one thing, Michail Šolochov's epos *Tichij Don*, which was awarded one of the first Stalin prizes, includes passages full of atrocities and sexual violence which are more explicit than comparable passages in Terc's writings. In addition, Šolochov's protagonist can hardly be said to conform to the idealized image of the positive Soviet hero.¹⁷ Therefore I take the position that the controversy surrounding Sinjavskij cannot be explained simply by the controversial themes he addresses in his writings. I will attempt to show that these provide an example of artistic rather than political subversion, in other words that the transgression in casu was rather structural than conceptual. One of Terc's most striking characteristics is that he consequently disrupts the formal structures which might express an unequivocal viewpoint. As it seems to me, precisely this characteristic has caused the prosecution's profound unease. At the first glance already, Terc impresses the reader by his versatile display of artistic skill. He shows a clear delight in vital disorder and a distinct preference for narrative discontinuities, i.e. the type of

lacunas in the information which Wolfgang Iser has termed “Leerstellen” (284 et passim) and Roman Ingarden “Unbestimmtheitsstellen”. (261 et passim) Such gaps which the reader has to “fill in” are based on narrative strategies which deviate from generally accepted literary conventions.

It is not without reason that the social accuser Zoja Kedrina took offence not merely at some controversial themes and motifs, but especially at the author’s penchant for formal narrative experimentation. She complained about the нарочитая запутанность изложения of his writings, and felt clearly embarrassed by his style of narration which impressed her as some kind of incoherent muttering (бессвязное бормотание). (*Belaja kniga*: 108) Comparable criticism came from the prosecutor, who denounced Terc’s претенциозность, манерничанье, использование в качестве приема сна, бреда, злоупотребление маниакальными состояниями. (*Belaja kniga*: 289) As it seems, stylistic eccentricities of this sort were experienced by certain groups of readers as more shocking than the descriptions of excessive violence in Šolochov’s traditional realistic novel. Indeed, there may be some hidden truth in a quip that Sinjavskij made many years later: allegedly, his conflict with the Soviet government was based mainly on стилистические разногласия. (1989b: 34)

Terc’s oeuvre, therefore, can be placed somewhat outside current political-ideological taxonomies, in other words, it should be named deviant rather than hostile. Sergej Chmel’nickij, erstwhile Sinjavskij’s friend and the protagonist for the personage with the same name in *Spokojnoj noč’i*, described in 1986 the impression which Sinjavskij’s writings made on him in the fifties:

Вещи, которые он мне тогда читал, захватывали меня своим рассудочным каким-то безумием, абсолютной чужеродностью тому, что я в ту пору знал — и в жизни, и в искусстве. (...) Я же себя чувствовал там, как в доме с привидениями: интересно, дух захватывает, но вот выходишь оттуда, — и как хорошо! (428)

A similar indeterminacy appears to be more threatening to a teleological bipolar value system (pro or contra, friend or foe, black or white) than open resistance, which at least can easily be placed within such a system. In this respect it is as if Terc offers a self-portrait when he describes the famous hero of the 19th century classics, the superfluous man, as

какое-то сплошное недоразумение, существо иных психологических измерений, не поддающихся учету и регламентации. Он не за Цель и не против Цели, он вне Цели, и этого быть не может, это фикция, кощунство. (*Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*: 428)

If so desired, one can situate here the rational element in the charge against Sinjavskij. It makes Kedrina's irritation comprehensible up to a certain point: it is the frustration of a paranoid decipherer who is confronted with a code he is unable to break. The fact that in this way the reader is granted a considerable amount of freedom can hardly have been a recommendation in her eyes. Indeed, it puts Terc's oeuvre outside the didactical tradition that is so prominent in Russian literature and criticism, particularly in the theory and practice of socialist realism. However, this oeuvre clearly fulfils the requirements of phantasmagoric art which Terc formulated in the final passages of *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*.

In this context I would like to mention Rosemary Jackson's study on fantasy as the literature of subversion. It centres around the thesis that the taboos prevalent in a given society are reflected in its fantastic literature:

The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made "absent". (4)

Jackson therefore sees fantastic literature as a telling index of the limits of a given dominant cultural order. Her study, which relies heavily on notions derived from Michail Bachtin, Tzvetan Todorov, Sigmund Freud and various neo-Marxist and feminist theoreticians, describes fantasy as a literary mode which strives to counteract official restrictions both in language and in life. In her view, the transgressive character of fantasy resides in the way it represents reality – which includes some specific discourse – not in the mere fact that it touches upon certain taboo-ridden themes. After all, escape literature such as pornography does the same thing and is not transgressive at all. According to her, fantasy explores the limits of language and subverts conventional notions of what actually constitutes reality and truth:

Many fantasies from the eighteenth century onwards (...) subvert and interrogate nominal unities of time, space and character, as well as questioning the possibility, or honesty, of fictional re-presentation of those unities. (175)

For that reason she characterizes fantasy as an art of unreason and desire, and also as the art of estrangement, resisting closures, opening structures which categorize experience in the name of a "human reality". (ibid.)

Without a doubt, this thesis can well be applied to Sinjavskij-Terc, albeit with some reservation. To begin with, at moments Jackson fails to clarify what criteria she follows in order to distinguish the fantastic from the mimetic mode.¹⁸ Her characterization of fantasy as being the art of transgression, subversion and desire may easily be extended to texts which are usually rated with the mimetic antipole.

Many heroes of Čechov and Gor'kij e.g. are stirred by a similar indefinable desire for absolute meaning, and many realistic novels have shocked the reading public for various reasons. In later years Sinjavskij-Terc has maintained that every artist, regardless of genre, period or personal views, is a dissident — if not in the narrow political sense of the word, than at least in relation to some settled tradition or to life itself. He ends an article written in 1978 with the daring statement:

Диссидентство оказывается просто синонимом искусства. (Terc: 114)

To him, it is this quality which shapes the artist's sense of identity and self-esteem:

В этой беззаконности, собственно, и заключается весь восторг и весь вопрос писательства. На какое большое произведение ни посмотри — либо взрыв, либо вывих. (Terc 1974: 150)

Sinjavskij's view is in line with George Steiner's statement that all serious art, music and literature is a critical art:

Be it realistic, fantastic, Utopian or satiric, the construct of the artist is a counter-statement to the world. Aesthetic means embody concentrated, selective interactions between the constraints of the observed and the boundless possibilities of the imagined. Such formed intensity of sight and of speculative ordering is, always, a critique. It says, that things might be (have been, shall be) otherwise. (11)

My second point is that Jackson's view on fantasy as the art of estrangement can hardly be called new or surprising. In the course of the years numerous theoreticians have credited literary fiction with the capacity to counteract the inevitable automation of our observation, thus renewing the reader's lost capacity for fresh sensation. Long before Viktor Šklovskij made *остранение* the central concept of his literary theory, the criterium of being or making strange was acknowledged by philosophers from classical Antiquity up to the age of Romanticism. (Erlich: 153-153) Some of them ascribed this quality exclusively to poetry, some others mainly to prose, to the arts in general or even to such a vague notion as the creative imagination. However, one may concur with Jackson's assertion insofar as fantastic, more than mimetic, literature plays off differing categories against one another — viz. those of extratextual reality, the subjective perception of this reality and the expression of this perception in language. The fantastic makes these categories more explicit, intensifies the tension between them and at times elevates their friction unto a major theme. According to Todorov, one finds therefore in fantastic literature

la quintessence de la littérature, dans la mesure où la mise en question de la limite entre réel et irréel, propre à toute littérature, en est le centre explicite.
(176)

My third point is that Jackson directs her criticism exclusively against the capitalist patriarchal order which has been dominant in Western society over the last two centuries. (176) In doing so, she leaves the best illustration to her thesis unmentioned, which in my view is the communist patriarchal order in the Soviet Union under Stalin and Brežnev. Indeed, the lot of Sinjavskij and Danièl' provides a clear example of how fiercely a given social-cultural-political order may react if an author ventures to transgress the limits imposed to him officially.

In concluding, Terc's early writings can be read as an indication of what at the time of their appearance could impossibly be said or written in the Soviet Union, or to be more precise, in what form it was forbidden to write in those days.

Notes

- 1 Sinjavskij and Rushdie, two novelists who have fallen victim to political and religious intolerance respectively, defended themselves using a similar argumentation. Both consider the attack on their person and work to be an attack on the basic principles of literary fiction. Rushdie characterizes his controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* as prose fiction that aspires to the rank of literature, and defends it against those who erroneously treat it as an anti-religious pamphlet, a failed piece of historiography or an attempt of murder. (see his essay *In good faith*). Arguments put forward both by Rushdie and Sinjavskij in their own defence are the fictionality, polyvalency and narrative stratification of literature. (see Chapter III) Both writers reject the interpretation of their opponents, both deny having intended to offend or undermine. To a certain extent, they even express their loyalty towards some fundamental aspects of the ideological-normative system in the name of which they were persecuted, in casu Soviet communism and Islam. (see also Rushdie's essay *Is nothing sacred?*) In 1989 Sinjavskij was one of the many writers who publicly declared his allegiance to Rushdie after the pronouncement of the "fatwa".
- 2 Cf. the comment made by Boris Zolotuchin, defence attorney for the well-known samizdat editor and defender of human rights Aleksandr Ginzburg at the Trial of the Four in January 1968: "Дело Синявского и Даниэля было первым открытым процессом, во время которого двум литераторам вменялось в вину содержание их произведений. И раньше были известные случаи, когда писатели подвергались критике и назывались антисоветскими в связи с содержанием их произведений. Так было с 'Днями Турбиных' Булгакова и с 'Красным деревом' Пильняка. На нашей памяти история с романом Бориса Пастернака 'Доктор Живаго'. Но никогда никто из этих литераторов не привлекался к уголовной ответственности". (*Process četyrěch*: 230) (see also note 6, 10, and Chapter II passim.)
- 3 Foucault's proposition undoubtedly contains a certain amount of bravado as it is made almost without any argumentation. On the other hand, he does not advocate idealization of the author as a hero or martyr for a sublime cause, and rejects the image of the author as an "indefinite source of significations which fill a work", "as a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention". (159) He predicts, and applauds, the final disappearance of the authorial function in future society, which will be less fixated upon individualism and property than contemporary society is. The individual authorship of the maker of an artifact or the authenticity of a certain work — seen as the property of the maker — will then no longer occupy a central position. Of more importance then will be the creative input of the individual recipient, who is interested more in the functioning of the work than in its maker-possessor.
- 4 Zoja Kedrina, contributor to the Stalinistically oriented journal *Oktjabr'* and Sinjavskij's former colleague at the Institute of World Literature, represented the Writers' Union at the trial. On February 12th, she condemned the works of

both writers on aesthetic and moral grounds in her function of social accuser or public prosecutor (общественный обвинитель), an informal function in Soviet judicial proceedings which has no direct equivalent in the Western legal system. (see Chapter II, note 1)

- 5 The dissident writer Lev Kopelev formulated a similar thought in his article 'Ne pokladat' oružija slova' (1981). He quotes Heinrich Böll approvingly, who in the first place referred to nazi Germany: "Не случайно, что именно там, где дух воспринимают как опасность, прежде всего запрещают книги и подвергают жестокой цензуре газеты, журналы, радиосообщения. Во всех государствах где царствует террор, слова боятся едва ли не больше, чем вооруженного восстания. (...) И язык становится последним прибежищем свободы". Kopelev translated this fragment into Russian and distributed it during the sixties via samizdat.
- 6 At the same occasion he mentioned his client's tendency to fantasize and his interest in eroticism; in mitigation he claimed that his client exposes the erotic peculiarities of his characters as being sinful. However, he did not touch on the flaws in the formulation of art. 70 or the inconsistencies it may lead to when put into practice. In theory a Soviet lawyer was entitled to do so, but according to the literary scholar Vjačeslav Ivanov, who wrote a report on Terc's work by special request of an official juridical commission, a similar bold approach was out of the question under the circumstances. (Personal communication by V.V. Ivanov, Spring 1990 in Amsterdam.) (see also Chapter II and III)

Two years later the defence attorneys at the Trial of the Four (see note 2) took one step further. The four defendants — Aleksandr Ginzburg, Jurij Galanskov, Aleksej Dobrovol'skij and Vera Laškova — were the unofficial compilers and editors of *Belaja kniga po delu Sinjavskogo i Danièlja*. It is true that D.I. Kamenskaja, Galanskov's attorney, did not directly bring up art. 70 for discussion, yet she intentionally put it in perspective by relating it to its disreputable predecessor art. 58, the article aimed against counterrevolutionary crime, which had force of law in the period 1926-1961. (see Chapter II.) Their conclusions were even more daring. B. Zolotuchin, Ginzburg's attorney (see note 2) requested that his client be acquitted without delay for which reason he lost his membership of the Communist Party. Galanskov insisted on his innocence throughout, supported by his attorney Kamenskaja. Laškova, the typist of *Belaja kniga*, declared to have no intentions to engage in unofficial writings again, yet she did not express her regrets for having assisted in making *Belaja kniga*. Their attorneys tried to persuade the court to apply in this case the recently adopted art. 190, which imposed a less severe punishment. (see Chapter II.) Only Dobrovol'skij's attorney did not plead for acquittal or commutation, but begged the court to show mercy on his psychologically unstable client, the only one of the four who had made a full confession. (Dobrovol'skij's often inconsistent accusations against his three companions had been accepted and used by the court as conclusive evidence of their guilt.) He was sentenced to two years of hard labour, Ginzburg to five, Galanskov to seven, Laškova to one. Therefore she was released shortly after the trial, as they had been held in custody for a year already.

- 7 The Soviet writer and Nobel Prize laureate Michail Šolochov argued during an emotional speech at the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party that the judgement on both writers in fact had been too lenient. Lidija Čukovskaja confronted him in reply with the consequences of his words: Does Šolochov plead the death penalty for his colleague writers, who did receive already the most severe punishments? If so, he is breaking a respectable tradition in the history of Russian literature — through the ages Russian writers have defended one another, and refused to act as each other's hangman. ('Otkrytoe pis'mo pisatel'nicy L. Čukovskoj M. Šolochovu' in *Belaja kniga*: 390-394)
- 8 The judge's bias becomes manifest e.g. in his questions to the witness à décharge Igor' Golomštok. (*Belaja kniga*: 273-275) Golomštok, Sinjavskij's friend and co-author of a monograph on Picasso (Izd. Znanie, 1960), was sentenced to six months imprisonment for refusing to testify against his friend. In *Belaja kniga* the judge is described as follows: “Крупный мужчина лет 58, идущий слегка наклонив голову по-бычьей, целеустремленный, весь облик его отчетливо начальственный.” (158); cf. Kopelev's description: “Смирнов — холеный, самоуверенный барин, допрашивал подсудимых нарочито презрительно”. (*My žili v Moskve*: 201) However, V.V. Ivanov regarded Smirnov foremost as a representative of the political-judicial system that formed him, i.e. as a jurist who perhaps was not better, but definitely not worse than the majority of his colleagues. He surely compared favourably with the judge at the trial of Iosif Brodskij in Leningrad in 1964; her behaviour was complete безобразие, according to Ivanov. More in accordance with Stalinist mores was the performance of the prosecutor O.P. Temuškin, who did not even for a moment conceal his hostility to Sinjavskij and Daniël'. His ideological position is clear as well: he understands freedom of speech as “свобода воспевать подвиги наших людей”. (*Belaja kniga*: 295)
- 9 It is quite conceivable that secret instructions have been given through more informal channels. In 1990, V.V. Ivanov (see note 6 and 8) informed me about a visit which Party Leader Brežnev in 1965 paid to Konstantin Fedin, the Secretary General of the Writers Union at that moment. They discussed among other things the case Sinjavskij-Daniël'. Brežnev expressed his growing irritation over the impertinence of the Soviet intelligentsia during the last few years and wished to give them “a good lesson”. Thereupon he and Fedin weighed the pros and cons of an educational process against both writers. (Fedin's housekeeper reported their conversation to Ivanov.) Sinjavskij himself did not rule out the possibility that his arrest was the result of a secret exchange of information between the KGB and CIA. (see Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 322-323, note 5)
- 10 Here Šalamov is referring to the last process against the leaders of the Socialist Revolutionaries in 1927. His letter, included in *Belaja kniga* anonymously, was published under his real name in *Ogonek* 19, 1989, as well as in *Cena metafory*. It served as a major corpus delicti at the Trial of the Four in 1968 (see note 2 and 6). Aleksandr Ginzburg declared not to know the author's real name, but he suggested that it might have been someone who had personally experienced the Stalinist terror. (*Process četyrech*: 242)

- 11 The title *Cena metafori* may be seen as referring to the price Sinjavskij and Daniël' had to pay for their literary work, notwithstanding its metaphorical, artistically modelled character. This anthology includes Terc's early prose, except *Mysli vrasploch*, as well as some documents connected with the trial, except the interrogations. The redactors L.S. Eremin and E.M. Velikanov declared not to have been entirely free in their selection: "Расширить документальную часть сборника оказалось затруднительным по причинам, мало от нас зависящим". (525) In 1992, i.e. after the dissolution of the USSR, the Moscow publishing house SP Start edited Abram Terc's collected works in two volumes with a preface by V. Novikov.
- 12 Perhaps unnecessarily, I would like to remind that here we touch a widespread phenomenon. Even the most open and permissive society imposes certain limitations to the freedom of speech as the mentioned freedom comes easily into conflict with other, equally acknowledged, rights and freedoms. The limits between what is permitted and what is not cannot always be drawn sharply and may change rapidly. In an internally divided society full of suppressed tension, as the former Soviet Union was, censorship functions also as a conflict avoidance strategy. It brings to mind the central notion in Sigmund Freud's classical study *Totem und Tabu*: taboos are the strongest prohibitions a society may impose in order to ensure its continued existence.
- 13 Jurij Arabov, poet and scenario writer for Aleksandr Sokurov, has argued in a recent interview that in his view fantastic realism with its fancy for irony and the grotesque is more compatible with the Russian mentality than Western postmodernism is. The authors he names in this connection are Gogol', Dostoevskij, Belyj and Bulgakov. "Причем смех в русской культуре сопрягается с духовной вертикалью, с устремленностью к конечным вопросам, а постмодернизм этими вопросами не занимается. Для него они такие же объекты, как шнурки от ботинок". (in: 'Samoe trudnoe ličnaja porjadočnost', *Literaturnaja Gazeta* nr. 27, 2-8 ijulja 2003, p. 4)
- 14 In the following incriminated passage from *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* the pronoun "we", or derivations from it, figures 7 times in 14 lines: "Чтобы навсегда исчезли тюрьмы, мы понастроили новые тюрьмы. Чтобы пали границы между государствами, мы окружили себя китайской стеной. Чтобы труд в будущем стал отдыхом и удовольствием, мы ввели каторжные работы. Чтобы не пролилось больше ни единой капли крови, мы убивали, убивали и убивали. Во имя цели приходилось жертвовать всем, что у нас было в запасе, и прибегать к тем же средствам, какими пользовались наши враги — прославлять великодержавную Русь, писать ложь в 'Правде', сажать царя на опустевший престол, вводить погоны и пытки ... порою казалось, что для полного торжества коммунизма не хватает лишь последней жертвы — отречься от коммунизма. Господи, Господи! Прости нам наши грехи!" (411)

As an indication of the semantic richness and polyvalency of this essay may serve the fact that reviewers who have tried to summarize and paraphrase it, disagree on essential points. According to Rufus Mathewson e.g., the use of the

first person plural in the mentioned passage is one of Terc's ironic strategies: "Affecting to answer a query put by a curious Westerner, the responding 'we' speaks at times as a bewildered believer whose extravagant defense of the Soviet world has just the opposite effect". (342, note 3)

- 15 As is well known, Aleksandr Solženicyn's story *Odin den' Ivana Denisoviča* was allowed to appear in *Novyj mir* in 1962, presumably as a result of Chruščev's personal intervention. Apparently Boris Pasternak's novel *Doktor Živago* was considered to be more controversial, as it was not published in the Soviet Union until 1989. In many cases the considerations of Soviet censorship are left to guesswork. Undoubtedly, the mere fact that it is hard to find any logic in it makes up an essential part of the effect of a similar repressive policy.
- 16 At this point I follow the criteria formulated by Jan J.A. Mooij in *Tekst en lezer*: "A literary interpretation should explain a work in its entirety and create coherence between its sustaining elements; it should be based upon an explicitly formulated thesis and be sustained by valid arguments; it should not lead to unacceptable conclusions or withhold relevant facts which might yield a differing result. In addition, the interpreter should indicate beforehand which data he will take as starting points. His interpretation should be formulated in objective, cognitive terms which further a meaningful discussion and do not preclude counter-arguments in advance". (42-43)
- 17 The central hero Grigorij Melechov is tormented by uncertainties of every sort and kind, for which reason he never becomes an ardent supporter of the revolutionary case. Meanwhile it was held against Sinjavskij that his writings display a striking lack of positive heroes.
- 18 It becomes even more unclear in the fifth chapter of her book, which suggests the possibility of a dialogue between the fantastic and realistic modi within separate realistic-naturalistic novels. However, I do not consider this a flaw in Jackson's argument, but rather the result of her deliberately broad and flexible definition of the literary fantastic as a perennial mode, present in works by authors as different as Petronius, Poe and Pynchon. (3)

CHAPTER II: THE CHARGE AGAINST ANDREJ SINJAVSKIJ

A. Introduction

In this chapter I will try to answer the following questions: How was the charge against Sinjavskij-Terc exactly formulated? Was it based on facts, as the prosecution claimed it was, or rather on interpretations? In what manner and to what degree were the terms “word” and “deed” used respectively manipulated by the judge, prosecutor and social accusers? If we accept their claim that Sinjavskij’s case was based exclusively on facts, what in casu were the criminal facts he was accused of? If we assume, however, that Sinjavskij’s crime was essentially verbal, does the form in which he uttered his allegedly offensive notions play a role of any significant importance? Were these notions overtly formulated in the text or hidden between the lines? Did it make a difference in what shape his works had been printed and at what place and by whom they had been spread? What methods were applied to prove Sinjavskij’s guilt?

In order to answer these questions I will firstly examine art. 70 of the Criminal Codex of the RSFSR, which will be followed by a number of documents collected in Aleksandr Ginzburg’s *Belaja kniga* — the charge directed against Sinjavskij (ch), the prosecutor’s speech (ps), comments made by the judge (ji) and the prosecutor (pi) during the interrogations, and finally the speeches held by the social accusers Z. Kedrina (K) and A.Vasil’ev (V).¹

Strictly speaking, art. 70 which defines anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda as a criminal offence, lay at odds with art. 125 of the Constitution of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics which guaranteed freedom of speech and publication to all its citizens, as well as freedom of demonstration, association and assembly.² The Soviet Criminal Codex made no mention of the term “political crime”. At the time of Sinjavskij’s trial, Soviet authorities denied the existence of political prisoners in their country just as vehemently as they denied the usual practice of censoring every letter that appeared in print.

However, both literary censorship and the persecution of ideological dissent (инакомыслие) are deeply rooted in Russian history, making up part of a tradition that can be traced back to long before the Revolution. During the first decennia of the Soviet period (1922-1958) the repression of political dissent took place under the banner of the fight against counterrevolutionary crimes (art. 58).³ Its successor, art. 70, which was aimed against anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, was enacted in 1958 as part of a major reform of the Soviet judicial system implemented after Stalin’s death.

As it was clearly demonstrated at the trial against Sinjavskij, it becomes seriously difficult to sentence a person for anti-Soviet intent if he disclaims any

such an intent and insists on his innocence. For that reason, in the same year (1966) a newly formulated political-ideological law was adopted, art. 190, which created the possibility to sentence a person without proof of direct anti-Soviet intent (прямой антисоветский умысел). This crime was considered as being less severe, and was accordingly less severely punished: three years of imprisonment at most.⁴

The full text of art. 70 reads:

Агитация или пропаганда, проводимая в целях подрыва или ослабления Советской власти либо совершения отдельных особо опасных государственных преступлений, распространение в тех же целях клеветнических измышлений, порочащих советский государственный и общественный строй, а равно распространение либо изготовление или хранение в тех же целях литературы такого же содержания —

наказывается лишением свободы на срок от шести месяцев до семи лет и со ссылкой на срок от двух до пяти лет или без ссылки или ссылкой на срок от двух до пяти лет.

Те же действия, совершенные лицом, ранее осужденным за особо опасные государственные преступления, а равно совершенные в военное время, —

наказывается лишением свободы на срок от трех до десяти лет и со ссылкой на срок от двух до пяти лет или без ссылки. (*Process četyrech*: 575)

Two terms may be considered as being central to art. 70-1: “agitation-propaganda”, which entails subversion on a verbal-ideological level, and “particularly dangerous crimes against the state”, which suggests at least some kind of subversion de facto. Both terms are used without further comment or clear distinction, which makes art. 70 in its entirety appear somewhat imprecise and equivocal. (In which case should a statement be labelled as propagandistic or subversive? Who is entitled to decide that and in accordance to which criteria?) As Ferdinand J.M. Feldbrugge points out, one of the most remarkable aspects of the definition of art. 70 is the degree to which the objective and subjective elements are interwoven:

It is evident from the definition that the most typical element of the objective side (the anti-Soviet activity) is a specific state of mind. (...) Both the literature on this point and the various trial reports demonstrate the

impossibility of a logical separation of the two elements (as is otherwise customary in Soviet criminal law). (60-61)

More than one Soviet dissident in the sixties and seventies has experienced that the imprecise formulation of art. 70 paves the way for various forms of interpretation at random.⁵ Moreover, it allows words to rise to the status of deeds and interpretations to the status of facts. When put into practice, its scope may be expanded at will, as it may be illustrated by Sinjavskij's case.⁶ If, moreover, judicial authorities are not supposed to act independently but in subservience to current ideological directives, a loose formulation of this sort may easily be used for political purposes. As the Russian lawyer V.V. Luneev (see note 3) pointed out in his article 'Političeskaja prestupnost'' (1994):

Следственное и судебное доказывание антисоветской или любой другой политической мотивации невозможно без оценок, критерии которых неопределенны, ситуативны и зависят не от действующего закона (он в этом случае дает лишь карт-бланш), а от действующих политиков. (107-108)

B. The facts

During the interrogation of Sinjavskij and Danièl', the judge and prosecutor more than once emphasized the claim that not words but deeds were central to this trial, not subjective interpretations but objective facts, not even literary texts but dangerous crimes against the state (ji224; 194; ch 170 ji; ps 295). However, a careful examination of the formulation of the charge shows that the dangerous crimes did in casu amount to certain opinions, i.e. exist on a verbal-ideological level only; and secondly, that the two writers were indicted for the prosecution's emotional response to their writings. In addition, the concrete actions the charge made mention of were not committed by the defendants, but by a third party.

The charge opens:

Империалистическая реакция ищет подрывных методов в области идеологии, чтобы скомпрометировать советский народ, наше государство, коммунистическую партию СССР и ее политику. (*Belaja kniga*: 170)

(an action attributed to the imperialistic reaction, which is more interpretation than fact.)

В этих целях используются антисоветские клеветнические произведения подпольных литераторов
(an action by the same third party, which action is purely verbal and in this formulation is heavily coloured by the emotional qualification “клеветнический”)

которые выдаются враждебной пропагандой за рассказывающие правду о Советском Союзе.
(the same: action by a third party; purely verbal; interpretative)

The ensuing conclusion — Sinjavskij and Daniël’ belong to the mentioned group of underground-writers — is not a fact either, but merely an assumption. The two writers themselves denied being involved in any ideological-artistic alignment.

In the ensuing passages of the charge as well as in the interrogation and speeches by the prosecutor and social accusers, Sinjavskij’s crime is described in more than fifty different ways. At times the accusations refer to one or several of his writings, at times to his complete oeuvre.⁷ The accusations can be subdivided under four headings and be ordered according to the frequency of occurrence.

1. Slander

(клеветать — рассматривать с клеветнических позиций, порочить, позорить, осквернять, дискредитировать, скомпрометировать, замарать, запачкать, мазнуть, оплевать, обливать грязью)

2. A critical review of some authorized truth

(пытаться пересмотреть, производить переоценку, выразить полнейшее неудовольство; неприятие, отрицание, ниспровержение идей)

3. Hostility

(быть направлено против, пнуть ногой; нападки на, выпады против, враждебность; явная — прямая — разнузданная злоба и ненависть)

4. Derision, mockery

(осмеивать, измываться над, глумиться; кощунственное издевательство)

These offences are said to be directed against a great number of persons, objects, institutions and concepts.

As victims of Sinjavskij's slander are mentioned:

Ленин (К 287)
светлое имя Ленина (рi 231; 237)
марксизм (рs 291)
теория марксизма (сh 170)
наши идеалы (К 113)
Партия (рs 290)
правительство (рs 290)
наш строй (jі 225; рs 295); советский строй (сh 174)
наше общество (jі 225; К113)
все стороны жизни советского общества (сh 171)
все советское (К113; рs 295)
самое святое, чистое — любовь, дружба, материнство (рs 294)
русский народ (В 285)
наши люди (jі 225)
будущее человеческого общества (сh 170)
все человеческое (К 113)
все человеческое в советском человеке: дружба, любовь, материнство, семья (К 112)

As victims of his criticism are mentioned:

наше государство (К 287)
советская система (рs 288)
советское общество (рs 288)
все лучшие достижения советской литературы (К 287)
основы социалистического реализма, в первую очередь марксизма (К 287)
положения марксизма-ленинизма (сh 170)
идеи коммунизма (рs 291)

As victims of his hostility are mentioned:

Ленин (сh 171; В 286)
партия (рs 290)
руководящая роль КПСС в советской культуре (сh 171)
мы (К 108)

правительство (ps 290)
советский строй (ps 291)
советское общество (K 112)
советские идеи (ps 291)
социалистический строй (K 108)
все советское (K 114; ps 291)
все установления, люди, быт того общества, в котором Терц-
Синявский живет (K 112)

As victims of his mockery are mentioned:

дорогое слово мать, матери (B 285)
Ильич (K 287)
положения марксизма-ленинизма (ch 170)
все прогрессивные идеи, Campanella, Fourier, Owen (ps 290)
наш народ (ps 289)
советский строй (ch 170) ⁸

As regards further accusations concerning Sinjavskij's oeuvre: it is said to sponge on the Russian literary heritage and to abound with plagiarism (K 110); to display a disdainful attitude towards classic Russian writers (ji 223); to libel the doctrine and practice of socialist realism in art (pi 222-223) and to belittle the greatness of Soviet culture and literature (ch 171; V 285; K 287). In addition it is considered as blasphemous, anti-semitic (K115) and pornographic. Kedrina speaks in this connection of порнография, рядом с которой самые рискованные пассажи Арцыбашева выглядят литературой для дошкольников (K 115) and Vasil'ev of Sinjavskij's склонность к матерной брани, порнография, какая-то патологическая (V 285; see also ji 243; pi 294)

That the meaning of the terms "agitation-propaganda" and "particularly dangerous crimes against the state" becomes blurred is partly a result of the imprecise formulation, partly of the great number of accusations. The same impreciseness can be found in the prosecutor's final speech, in which he demanded a maximum penalty:

Ленин указывал, что о реальных помыслах и чувствах нужно судить по действиям. Содержание произведений Терца и Аржака свидетельствует о враждебности к строю, партии и государству. Произведения их полны клеветы, нападок на правительство, партию, и только поэтому они при художественной худосочности печатались на западе. (ps 290)

These words fail to explain what is meant by действия: is it the произведения, or the содержание произведений, their alleged враждебность, or the offence against the government, the state and the Party that are said to be self-evident in Sinjavskij's writings? Whatever the meaning of действия may be, in the above-mentioned cases the alleged offence is strictly verbal-ideological, and in the last cases a matter of interpretation as well.

Я обвиняю Синявского и Даниэля в антигосударственной деятельности. Они написали и добились издания под видом литературных произведений грязных пасквилей, призывающих к свержению строя, распространяли клевету, облекши все это в литературной форме. То что они сделали, не случайная ошибка, а действие, равнозначное предательству. (ps 295)

The mentioned действие равнозначное предательству may be understood as the mere fact of writing, or of publishing these writings, or both. However, the first offence is again verbal-ideological, as are the following two (призывать к свержению строя, распространять клевету). Again, the latter are based more on interpretation than on fact.

The prosecutor concluded in his charge (ch 174):

Синявский (...) обвиняется в том что, занимая по ряду вопросов политики КПСС и советского правительства враждебную позицию (verbal-ideological + interpretative)

написал и переправил за границу повести *Суд идет*, *Любимов* и статью *Что такое социалистический реализм* (act)

содержащие клеветнические утверждения, порочащие советский строй (verbal-ideological + interpretative)

и используемые реакционной пропагандой против советского государства. (act by a third party + interpretation)

The fact that Sinjavskij published his writings abroad (переправил за границу, добились издания, печатались на Западе) is, as it seems, the only concrete act out of the fifty points listed in the charge. On this point indeed both writers

were heavily attacked during the trial. It should be noted, however, that in those days publishing abroad was not a punishable act in itself. It could become one merely in those cases when the tenor of the published text was branded as being criminal, which is once again a matter of opinion. Thus the question as to the concrete acts Sinjavskij was indicted for, remains open.⁹

If the difference between words and deeds, facts and interpretations is problematic to say the least, the same goes for the differences between the juridical and the literary aspects of the case. The judge L.N. Smirnov, it is true, insisted on repeated occasions that

суд исследует вопрос не о литературных достоинствах или недостатках произведений этих писателей, а об уголовно-наказуемом деянии (ch 170)

cf.: У нас не литературный диспут, а исследование состава преступления, т.е. юридической стороны (jī 224)

and to Danièl': Здесь не литературный диспут, а экскурсы в историю литературы не нужны. (jī 194)

Notwithstanding this claim, the interrogation and the speeches did lead to an extensive literary dispute on themes such as the role and nature of literary fiction and its social-political implications, the relationship between the author, narrator and protagonists and the basic rules of interpretation — as indeed it seems inevitable given the nature of this trial and the fact that the alleged crime consisted of nothing more or less than the creation of a literary text.

At this point the judge, who pretended to be interested merely in punishable acts and factual considerations, displayed a slight inconsistency when he said to Sinjavskij: Нам надо оценить и ваши поступки, и ваше отношение к ним. (jī 246) Following the Leninist doctrine, subjective views of individual persons are principally irrelevant, as these views merely reflect political and class interests. In Sinjavskij's paraphrase:

Важно не то, что человек думает о себе, а чьи позиции он объективно выражает, независимо от собственной воли. Ибо в истории действуют лишь объективные законы классовой борьбы. (1989: 115)

It goes without saying that at political trials the defendant's personal views are irrelevant as his ideological position is determined by the court. Nevertheless, the defendant's subjective motivation behind his actions and his present view of them

may be of some importance in order to assess the particular circumstances of a particular case. Under Soviet law, that so strongly emphasized the educational role in judicial proceedings,¹⁰ the court was supposed to reeducate the offender and to inculcate among all the participants the values which the legal system represented. Harold J. Berman mentions the “parental” or “educational” model that is central in both criminal and civil proceedings and that is most severely tested in the field of ideological crimes. (14 and passim) The worst thing a defendant can do is to contest the right of the court to impose its standards on him, as Sinjavskij did when he protested against the prosecution’s practice of confusing words and deeds. In his later writings he more than once set forth his view that this practice is an essential part of the Stalinist heritage:

А уж в сталинскую эпоху любое высказывание, выражающее самую легкую критику государства и Сталина, рассматривалось как такая буржуазная пропаганда. Да и высказываться было не обязательно. Достаточно было подозрения, что человек мыслит как-то не так. Достаточно было случайной оговорки или опечатки. (1989: 116)

A similar conflation of words and deeds can be traced in an instruction given in 1935 by Andrej Vyšinskij, the notorious Prosecutor General at the show trials against Stalin’s erstwhile comrades Zinov’ev, Kamenev and Bucharin. According to the instruction, utterances and performances (выступления) which express approval of terroristic activities should be considered as either anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, as organized counterrevolutionary activity (деятельность), or as an attempted act of terrorism (покушение на террористический акт.) Consequently, political and judicial authorities — the secret police NKVD, the Prosecution Counsel, the People’s Commissariat of Justice and the Supreme Court — were granted unlimited powers to brand any ill-considered utterance as being a counterrevolutionary activity, which was a capital offence in those days. (Luneev: 112)

C. The search for legal evidence

Some remarks that Sinjavskij made at the trial indicate that he realized at the moment that he was not indicted for certain punishable acts, but rather for the prosecution’s interpretations of his writings¹¹ — interpretations that were elevated to the rank of act as well as to the rank of legal evidence. The prosecutors claimed the right to decide which interpretations should be considered as facts, whilst using other interpretations at will as legal evidence. As I said earlier, it became

problematic to prove the case against Sinjavskij and Daniël' as they broke with the tradition that Šalamov called the омерзительную традицию “раскаяния” и “признаний”. Their refusal to confess to being guilty was taken as a challenge of the very validity of the norms of law and morality which the trial was supposed to make them internalize. In doing so, they removed the cornerstone from under the usual procedure of political show trials since the 1920s. Andrej Vyšinskij, the above-mentioned Prosecutor General and prominent theorist on Soviet jurisprudence, stated in his standard work *The theory of legal evidence in Soviet law* (1941) that “the defendants’ statements in state crimes are inevitably regarded as the main evidence, the most important, crucial evidence”. (Vaksberg: 161) ¹² If, however, the defendant rejects the role of dependent juvenile needing and desiring re-education, other means are applied to force him to make incriminating statements on his intentions and views. As this in Sinjavskij’s case did merely result in lengthy and fruitless discussions, the prosecution turned as a last resort to the interpretations of third parties: firstly, those of the literary censorship organ Glavlit which abounded in political-ideological bias and misreadings (see Sinjavskij’s remark at the trial, 237-38); secondly, those of Western critics and Russian emigrés, which by their mere source could only be damaging for Sinjavskij even regardless of their tenor. In order to validate these interpretations (to lay, in a manner of speaking, a foundation for a foundation) the prosecution expended considerable effort in demonstrating the writer’s general anti-Soviet attitude. These efforts found expression in a dozen of spurious arguments and insinuations belonging to the sphere of “guilt by association”. It was held against him e.g. that he did not suffer much during the Great Patriotic War (ji 246),¹³ that he had published under a pseudonym (ji 241), had accepted royalties for his publications abroad (pi 240) and that his works were edited beautifully and printed on neat paper. (ji236)

At this stage social accusers and witnesses à charge played an important role, as did the unedited writings confiscated by the police at Sinjavskij’s home. At this point, however, the judge corrected the prosecutor, reminding him that the charge against Sinjavskij and Daniël' merely applied to printed matter. (ji 238) ¹⁴

It may be clear that the term “legal evidence”, if treated in such a manner, will finally rest on an equally unstable base as the term “fact” considered earlier. The charge did not merely suggest a close interrelationship between the terms антисоветские взгляды and преступная деятельность (ch 173), at times the terms were treated as interchangeable, as if the former constituted the legal proof of the latter and vice versa. Sinjavskij’s opponents seemed to discern hardly any difference between the two — a mode of thought which sounds like an echo of Vyšinskij and brings to mind the two secret policemen from Terc’s story *Sud idët*, who while away their nightly patrols through Moscow with fantasies about a

МЫСЛЕСКОП, a piece of apparatus still to be invented for the registration of thoughts.

If language is manipulated in such a way, the boundaries between words and deeds, fiction and reality collapse. As Sinjavskij remarked in his closing speech at the trial, it made him feel as if his own stories had been brought to life, as if reality as represented by the court had become a grotesque continuation of the literary text.¹⁵ (see Chapter III 4)

D. Conclusion

Finally, the following statements seem justified:

- Though officially Sinjavskij and Daniël’ were sentenced for punishable acts, the formulation of the charge and the course of the interrogations strongly suggest that the criminal offence did in their case consist mainly of punishable utterances and thoughts.
- Though officially both writers were sentenced for creating and spreading a number of offensive texts, the charge against them consisted mainly of speculations concerning the author’s hidden intentions behind these texts. Since speculations of this kind are as hard to prove as to disprove, they were in casu presented as being self-evident. Against a similar approach hardly any defence is possible, as it is the prosecution’s word against that of the defendant. Aleksandr Ginzburg said in his closing speech at the Trial of the Four: “Я знаю, что Вы меня осудите, потому что ни один человек, обвинившийся по статье 70, еще не был оправдан”. (*Process četyrech*: 243)¹⁶

One may assume that the trial of Sinjavskij and Daniël’, as well as the ensuing Trial of the Four, have convincingly demonstrated the flaws in art. 70. Shortly afterwards, art. 190 was adopted, and in the following years political dissidents were usually charged with offences under the more concrete art. 70.b and c (“distributing, preparing, preserving”) or under quite different articles.¹⁷

In April 1989 art. 70 was reformulated as part of a series of statutory changes made during the Perestrojka. The terms “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda” were replaced by “public appeals”, “subversion” (подрыв), and “demolition” (свержение). In other words, the criminal offence became more strictly formulated and explicitly related to concrete violent actions, as e.g. terroristic assaults.¹⁸ This amendment, it is true, did not satisfy those who had pled for a complete removal of art. 70 from the Criminal Codex, as it had been done with art. 190 in that same year.¹⁹ Nevertheless, even the modestly altered art. 70 can be

considered an improvement on its predecessor, as it offered the defendant at least some protection against accusations based on supposition only. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union the formulation of the delict was further specified. Since October 1992 the law reads: “Public appeals to alter the constitutional order by force or to seize power, as well as the large-scale distribution of material with such content, shall be punished by detention for a period of three years at most or a fine of twenty monthly minimum wages at most”. (Ved.RF 1992 nr. 44, art. 2470) ²⁰

In summarizing, we may state that legal provisions such as art. 70 and 190 which have for some decades curtailed the freedom of speech and conscience as well as the freedom of artistic creation, now belong to the past.

Notes

- 1 H.J.Berman, in his article 'The Educational Role of Soviet Criminal Law and Civil Procedure' (1974), states a close relationship between the role of the social accuser and the general educational role of Soviet law: "The educational role of the Soviet court is enhanced by the wide participation of so-called social organizations in judicial proceedings (...) A social organization may initiate a criminal case, and its representatives may appear in court on one side or the other as "social accuser" or "social defender", with full rights of counsel". (5) As concerns the role of social accusers, see further *Naučno-praktičeskij komentarij k GPK RSFSR* (Moskva, 1965) eds. R.F.Kallistratova, V.K.Pučinskij: "The participation of representatives of social organizations and of collectives of working people in the trial creates the most favorable conditions for the careful investigation of the circumstances of cases and permits a more profound exposure of the causes of conflicts and facilitates the prevention of civil violation of law". (Berman: 8)
- 2 However, the guaranteed liberties were limited by their subordination to explicitly formulated objectives. Art. 125 continues "in conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system". F.J.M.Feldbrugge in his article 'Law and political dissent in the Soviet Union' (1974) points out the ambiguity of this addition, which can be understood either as a description of an in concreto existing situation or as a restrictive condition. In the last mentioned case these words are interpreted as follows: "Any use of these freedoms not in conformity with the interests of the working people or pursuing aims other than the strengthening of the socialist system is outside the scope of the constitutional guarantee". (57) (cf. Art. 50 of the Constitution of the USSR, which guaranteed freedom of speech in order to strengthen and advance the socialist system.) According to Feldbrugge, the formulated rights have chiefly psychological and propagandistic value, as they do not offer any protection where it is most needed — for the individual against the state. (59)

As a matter of fact, a similar conflation of prescription and description, of the abstract idea and the concrete situation may be called characteristic of Soviet statutory regulations. A similar ambiguity may be discerned in the official description of socialist realism as the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism, which demands from the artist a "правдивое, исторически-конкретное изображение действительности в ее революционном развитии" (*Pervyj Vsesojuznyj S'ezd Sovetskich Pisatelej 1934, stenografičeskij otčet, Moskva 1934, str.716*). Although this formulation might in principle be taken as merely descriptive, in practice it could easily be applied against authors and texts which did not conform to official standards.
- 3 In the first Criminal Codex of the USSR (1922) counterrevolutionary crimes were specified as anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda and the distribution of false rumours which may cause panic among the population, arouse suspicion against the authorities or discredit the latter. Punishments varied from several years of imprisonment to capital punishment. Even if no legal evidence could be found for counterrevolutionary intentions, the defendant was not acquitted

but sentenced to a less severe punishment. V.V. Luneev, professor in Constitutional Law at the Institut gosudarstva i prava of the Russian Academy of Sciences, states in his article 'Političeskaja prestupnost': "С введением данных норм началась организованная массовая расправа с инакомыслящими. Как бы ни менялась потом уголовная ответственность за инакомыслие, фактически все основные положения УК 1922 г. в этой части оставались в силе до сентября 1989, когда из действующего УК 1960 г. были исключены ст.70 и ст.190". (110)

- 4 Art. 190 reads: "Систематическое распространение в устной форме заведомо ложных измышлений, порочащих советский государственный и общественный строй, а равно изготовление или распространение в письменной, печатной или иной форме произведений такого содержания — наказывается лишением свободы на срок до трех лет, или исправительными работами на срок до одного года, или штрафом до ста рублей". (*Process cetyrech*: 577)

As regards the difference between direct and indirect intent, see Feldbrugge: 61. For a comparison between art. 70 and 190, see pp. 63-64. The question as to the number of Soviet citizens who in the course of the years were sentenced for political-ideological crimes remains a matter of speculation. Information released in April 1993 by the Central Archives of the Ministry of Security of the Russian Federation indicates that between 1917 and 1990 3,853,900 Soviet citizens were sentenced for counterrevolutionary crimes; among them 827,955 were sentenced to death. Following Luneev's estimations, however, the number of victims must in reality be considerably higher. (120) Statistics on the more recent period 1959-1991 (published in 1992) appear to be more reliable: they indicate that in the mentioned period 2718 persons were sentenced for offences under art. 70. Between 1959 and 1964 a few hundred persons a year were convicted, between 1964 and 1987 less than one hundred a year. The last sentences were given in 1987.

- 5 Pavel Litvinov wrote in his introduction to *Process cetyrech*: "Возможность нарушения закона уже лежит в том, что к ст. 70 УК не приложено комментария, дающего формальную оценку понятия "антисоветская агитация и пропаганда", что целиком предоставлено усмотрению следствия и суда". (6) Cf. Feldbrugge: "Soviet legal literature understandably offers almost no help in explaining what is "anti-Soviet" and what subverts or weakens the Soviet regime. About the only meaningful contribution toward a definition of "anti-Soviet" is the statement that criticism of the individual Soviet leaders or individual elements of Party or government policy does not per se constitute anti-Soviet propaganda." (62) If Soviet courts are able to answer questions as to what is "anti-state", "anti-social" or "politically wrong", Feldbrugge argues, it is only because they will uncritically follow the lead provided by the regime through a variety of channels — pre-trial statements by officials and coverage in the government and Party press, the viewpoints expressed by the state prosecution, and perhaps privately transmitted government instruction.

- 6 In this respect it is hard to disagree with Feldbrugge’s poignant statement that art. 70 might as well be replaced by a rule saying: “Any citizen who expresses ideas which the government or the Party finds sufficiently objectionable, shall be punished by ... ” (63) S.L. Arija, Vera Laškova’s attorney at the Trial of the Four, gave a somewhat flattering representation of the facts when he said in his address to the court: “Так на протяжении 50 лет советской власти резко сузилось и по умыслу, и по характеру действий понятие преступной антисоветской агитации и пропаганды. И это естественно, так как с ростом и укреплением силы и могущества советского государства посягательства в виде устного или письменного печатного слова становятся для него менее опасными”. (*Process četyrech*: 205) It must be admitted that the 1958 legislation concerning anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda was more precise in its formulation — and therefore less suitable for abuse — than its disreputable predecessor art. 58, which had so often led to extremely loose interpretations of the term “counterrevolutionary agitation”. For instance, in a comment on the Criminal Codex of these days an instruction, passed in 1934 by the presidium of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR, can be found that kolchoz-workers who discourage their fellows to take part in kolchoz-work, are guilty of counterrevolutionary agitation. Nowadays, the attorney argued, a similar instruction seems to us barbarian and preposterous. If we judge according to the spirit of the letter, art. 70 presupposes in the first place direct intent, i.e. the conscious objective to undermine or weaken the Soviet regime; in the second place, it presupposes that the distributed information is patently incorrect, i.e. indisputably slanderous; in the third place, the slander needs to be directed against the social and political structure of the Soviet Union (expressly against the structure, not against separate institutions, rules or persons). Moreover, in the period in which art. 58 had force of law, the term “indirect intent” was used as well as “direct intent” (confirmed in 1928 by the Supreme Court of the USSR in its decree “О прямом и косвенном умысле при контрреволюционном преступлении”). (*Process četyrech*: 204-205). Nevertheless, in spite of the positive trend noticed by attorney Arija, numerous dissidents were persecuted in the period 1958-1987.
- 7 Initially, the accusations were directed toward Terc’s complete oeuvre, but during the course of the trial they were focused on *Sud Idet*, *Ljubimov*, *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* and a few fragments in *Mysli vrasploch*. However, the prosecutors could easily make this concession as the four mentioned works offered enough material to support their views. It certainly did not mean that the not-incriminated stories found favour in their eyes, as can be testified by the judge’s remark: “Если даже эти вещи трактуются как антисоветские (he meant: in the Western press) то тем более те, которые вменяются”. (245) Cf. the prosecutor’s remark: “Рассказы Терца не вменяются ему в вину. Они населены шизофрениками, алкоголиками, ворами-отщепенцами. Все у нас приводит к преступлениям, алкоголизму, психическому расстройству”. (291) The two social accusers made no difference whatsoever between the incriminated and non-incriminated texts. Kedrina criticised Terc’s stories one by one, bringing forward the smallest details (110-113; 116). Vasil’ev reenforced his

arguments with quotations taken from Sinjavskij's unpublished sketch *Točka otčeta*, which had been confiscated by the police. He gave the following explanation: “Эта статья не ставится в вину, это для пояснения, откуда, из какого источника питались герои произведения”. (286)

- 8 The prosecution, as it seems, fails to notice that Terc's irony has a serious undertone and is more often than not addressed against the author's nearest and dearest — against literature, God, Russia, women, beloved persons, cherished ideas, and last but not least, against himself. It may even be called characteristic for Terc. As Mihajlo Mihajlov notes in *Abram Terc ili begstvo iz retorta* (1969): “Терц заслоняется, как перегородкой, иронией, даже тогда, когда высказывает свои наиболее глубокие откровения. Даже можно сказать, что чем Терц ироничнее, тем мысль его более серьезна”. (75)
- 9 In later years, instead of art. 70.a the more pronounced articles b and c were usually applied against political dissidents. These refer to concrete actions (распространение, изготовление, хранение) and are therefore more precise.
- 10 “Law in all societies is supposed to have an important influence on the moral and legal consciousness of those who are subject to it. Nevertheless in the Western tradition the educational role of law is conceived to be only incidental to, and only implicit in, its other functions. In the Soviet system, on the contrary, it has been made central and explicit. The most important task of the court, in the words of a former President of the USSR Supreme Court, is “the fundamental remaking of the consciousness of the people”.” (Berman: 12)
- 11 He said to the judge and the prosecutor: “Вы ориентируетесь на обвинительное заключение и на отзыв Главлита”. (*Belaja kniga*: 223)
- 12 Vyšin'skij has in mind: evidence of purpose. (N.B. The mentioned work *The theory of legal evidence in Soviet law* received the Stalin Prize of the first degree and became a leading fundamental textbook for Soviet lawyers.) Ever since, this viewpoint has gradually lost ground in Soviet legal practice. In the sixties, at least officially and theoretically, the position was taken that a mere confession from the part of the accused will not suffice to prove the latter's guilt. As D.I.Kamenskaja, Galanskov's attorney at the Trial of the Four, put it: “Понять причину самооговора всегда очень трудно. А в юридической практике нам приходится довольно часто сталкиваться с этим явлением. Мне нет надобности убеждать суд в том, что полностью доверять таким показаниям очень опасно. Эта опасность неоднократно отмечалась в инструкциях высших инстанций, где говорилось, что признание обвиняемого не является достаточным доказательством его вины. Постоянность подобных указаний наших руководящих органов говорит о том, что эта проблема достаточно актуальна”. (*Process četyrech*: 220)
- 13 Судья: “Вот Даниэль, — он воевал, был ранен, а для вас война прошла вполне благополучно”. Синявский: “Я для этого ничего не делал”.

(*Belaja kniga*: 246)

Sinjavskij was drafted into the army at the age of seventeen in 1943, and underwent a year and a half of training at the Moscow Aviation School. He served as a radio technician at an airfield outside Moscow during the last year of the war. After the demobilization he studied literature in Moscow. (Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 2)

- 14 “One of the few manifestations of anti-Soviet attitudes which remain outside the scope of art. 70 is the discovery of a diary containing anti-Soviet entries, provided it can be assumed that these entries were of a private character and in no way intended to be made public”. (Feldbrugge: 61, noot 5) Similar writings may gain some indirect importance though as contribution to the defendant’s “характеристика”. The social accuser A.Vasil’ev e.g. sought to use some of Sinjavskij’s unpublished writings as legal evidence of the latter’s evil intent and objectionable views in general (see note 7).
- 15 According to Theimer Nepomnyashchy, the malfunction and abuse of language is a central theme in Terc’s oeuvre, especially in *Spokojnoj noči*. She regards the prosecutors, despite their tendency to standardize and emasculate language, foremost as victims of this completely non-communicative language, as they have lost the ability to see from any point of view but their own. (267) My only objection against her otherwise admirable study is that she at times fails to draw a clear distinction between personal interpretation and the description of concrete events. In the last chapter she comments on Sinjavskij’s trial as a historical fact, meanwhile mingling this comment with an interpretation of Terc’s interpretation of the trial as it became fictionalized in *Spokojnoj noči*. As a result, she at times identifies Sinjavskij’s opponents in 1966 with their representation as characters in the novel. The conflation between both methods – objective description of facts and subjective interpretation of literature – becomes problematic especially at moments when Theimer Nepomnyashchy projects fashionable notions taken from postmodernistic semiotics on Sinjavskij’s opponents. She writes e.g. that Sinjavskij’s main offence in their eyes was “the exposure of the uncontrollability of the sign”, “the imposture of the sign, which is the essence of Terc’s fantastic realism”. (260) Furthermore her remark on “the underlying malfunction of language”, which is made manifest in Terc’s work, sounds as a postmodernistic interference into the early Brežnev period. In my view, Sinjavskij-Terc does not sever the bonds between the word and the extratextual reality as radically as several theorists of Western postmodernism have done in recent years. In my view, he can be called an “idealist” in more than one sense, as his absurd fantasies and grotesque alienated language are ultimately subservient to the pursuit of some inner truth (правдивость) rather than ends in themselves. (see Chapter III 4, 5)
- 16 In his closing speech Ginzburg said in full: “Итак, меня обвиняют в том, что я составил тенденциозный сборник по делу Синявского и Даниэля. Я не признаю себя виновным. Я поступил так потому, что убежден в своей правоте. Мой адвокат просил для меня оправдательного приговора. Я знаю, что Вы меня осудите, потому что ни один человек, обвинившийся по статье 70, еще не был оправдан. Я спокойно

отправлюсь отбывать свой срок. Вы можете посадить меня в тюрьму, отправить в лагерь, но я убежден, что никто из честных людей меня не осудит. Я прошу суд об одном: дать мне срок не меньший, чем Галанскову". (В зале смех, крики: Больше, больше!) (*Process četyrech*: 243)

In 1972 Ginzburg was released before the official ending of his sentence. After another sentence in 1977 he was released again under strong international pressure and expelled from the Soviet Union. He died in July 2002 in Paris at the age of 65.

- 17 Feldbrugge (see note 2) mentions among others art. 64 (high treason) which was applied against Anatolij Marčenko; art. 88 (trade in foreign currency) applied against Jurij Galanskov; and art. 206 (hooliganism). The case of Iosif Brodskij may be added, who was sentenced in 1964 for parasitism (тунеядство).
- 18 Punishable remained public appeals to damage the Soviet state and social order, public incitements to violate by force the integrity of Soviet territory and of separate Soviet republics and autonomous provinces within the Union, as well as the distribution of written or printed matter expressing such intentions.
- 19 Initially, art. 190 was only slightly altered (8 April 1989), but soon afterwards (24 June 1989) it was in passing repealed in its entirety by the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR (see *Izvestija* 25 June 1989, 'On the outlines of the USSR interior and foreign policy').
- 20 The Criminal Codex of the Russian Federation maintains a few penalty clauses which impose limitations on the freedom of speech. Until the present day it is forbidden to make war propaganda (art. 71), to incite racism (art. 74), to impart state and official secrets (art. 75, 76-1) and to produce indecent literature, pornography etc. (art. 228) At this last point the regulations are still imprecise.

CHAPTER III: SINJAVSKIJ'S APOLOGY

A. Introduction

Sinjavskij's apology may be summarized in two statements which he made in his closing speech: Слово — это не дело, а слово; художественный образ условен. (302) Both sound like an echo of literary theories developed by Soviet and Western scholars on major topics such as the fictionality and autonomy of literary texts.¹ Supporters of an autonomistic view on literature posit a direct connection between these premises and the freedom of creative imagination. At the trial Sinjavskij insisted that his opponents, and indeed any reader, measure his writings according to artistic criteria, which implies that these should be interpreted in accordance with the rules that he considered fundamental to literary art. His apology consists for the greater part in an explanation on the scope and practice of these essential features of a literary texts and the basic rules of interpretation.

Jakobson's model for literary communication can be used in describing these features and rules. In his influential article 'Linguistics and Poetics' Jakobson mentions the poetic ambiguity, i.e. the split message of the literary text:

Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focused message, briefly a corollary feature of poetry. (370-371)

Ambiguity and tension intensify the meaning of a literary work and determine the aesthetic response of the reader. As is well known, Russian Formalists and New Critics consider the ensuing semantic enrichment to be one of the essential features of poetic discourse.² Jakobson amplifies his concept of the split message as follows:

The double-sensed message finds correspondence in a split addresser, in a split addressee, and besides in a split reference, as it is cogently exposed in the preambles to fairy tales of various peoples, for instance in the usual exordium of the Majorca story-tellers: "Aixo era y no era" (It was and it was not). (371)

Robert Scholes directs his criticism against two aspects of Jakobson's diagram. In Scholes's view, it is too strongly focused on poetry, whereas its scope may easily be extended to prose and drama. Secondly, Jakobson and his followers tend to disregard the communicative aspect of literature, as their model isolates the text from its sender, receiver and context. Scholes proposes instead to regard literature

as a refinement or elaboration of the six features of the communicative act — sender, receiver, contact, message, code and context:

We sense literariness in an utterance when any one of the six features of communication loses its simplicity and becomes multiple or duplicitous. (21)

I now intend to describe the points brought forward by Sinjavskij in his own defence with the help of the model proposed by Jakobson and modified by Scholes.

B. The split message

One of van der Eng's principal ideas is that a literary text does not restrict itself to a specific "model" but will play off various conflicting aspects of life against one another, e.g. religious, philosophical and social aspects. (1988: 51) In several works he elaborates the view that an essential feature of the literary text is its orientation on the totality and complexity of human existence:

Die Auffassung der Wirklichkeit, ihre Modellierung im literarischen Werk, bildet kein geschlossenes und ausgearbeitetes System. Die Ausschnitte aus der Masse der Gegebenheiten gehen Widersprüchen, Paradoxien usw. nicht aus dem Wege und sind nicht auf eine Auseinandersetzung eingestellt, die primär psychologisch, soziologisch oder religiös usw. relevant ist. (1984: 115, see also 1982: 151)

During his interrogation at the trial Sinjavskij made several references to the polyvalent or polysemic character of literature — its split message, in Jakobson's terms — which makes any claim to lay down the "real" meaning of a text or the "real" intentions of its author in the best case an oversimplification, in the worst case a false pretence. The fact that he regarded this inherent polyvalency as an essential feature of literary art has direct bearings on his notions of the role of the author. It may be illustrated by two aphorisms in *Golos iz chora*.

Искусство — не изображение, а преобразование жизни. (212)

Художник не может и не должен ничего понимать. (...) Взамен понимания, вместо ответов — он предлагает изображение. Оно — загадочно. (25)

However, the position of his prosecutors was based on the notion that firstly, a literary work may have only one single interpretation and secondly, that they were the only persons authorized to establish that correct interpretation in an objective and juridically unequivocal way.³ In spite of their repeated claim that the subversive character of Terc's writings is so obvious that explanations are unnecessary, they nevertheless have had serious difficulties to sustain their claim as it is amply illustrated by the lengthy and fruitless discussions which followed. It was precisely the mentioned polyvalency of literary fiction which gave Sinjavskij the opportunity to parry a seemingly incriminating quotation from his writings with another, quite different quotation. According to him, *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* e.g. could not possibly be labelled as anti-Soviet, as it included passages such as коммунизм — это светлая цель (304) and против советской власти я абсолютно ничего не имею (437). Comments made by foreign reviewers he set against words of quite different impact (244; 305), meanwhile ironizing over those of his opponents who tried to enforce their argument with an appeal to such a contaminated source as was the Western press. (304-305) Meanwhile he definitely did not aspire to the role of omniscient extratextual authority, as it may be illustrated by some of the remarks he made with reference to *Ljubimov*, but which may be extended to his other writings as well:

Что касается Любимова, то трудно определить его точное логическое значение в юридическом порядке, ибо художественный образ всегда многозначен. Даже мне, автору, трудно сказать: что Это значит? а вот Это что значит? Я считаю невозможным юридическое разбирательство художественного текста. Потому что невозможно определить юридически однозначно значение художественного произведения. И все-таки мне, как автору, легче, чем другим, разобраться в логическом значении моих собственных произведений. Произведения Терца очень сложны и многослойны, и даже мне трудно было бы их исследовать. (*Belaja kniga*: 251)

His tendency to withstand attacks on his writings with references to certain qualities he considered as being crucial for literature became manifest on repeated occasions. Several times he underlined the complex, polyvalent and invented character of his writings, and rightly so: indeed, fantastic literature is even more inimical to reductionist approaches of whatever kind than mimetic literature is.⁴ However, the catch questions put forth by his opponents arise from a belief that the political- ideological convictions of an author will always find direct expression in his literary work, no matter how ardently he may try to conceal his intentions or to hide himself behind the mask of narrator and characters.⁵ In accordance with

the partiality for political bipolarization which is characteristic for the vulgarized version of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the prosecutors denied the author and his work even the smallest amount of autonomy. Instead, both were seen as indicators of the existing social and political power structure, as instruments in the hands of either friendly or hostile forces. Especially the habit of the prosecution of treating literature as a kind of agitprop met with Sinjavskij's firm resistance. More outspokenly than Daniël' ⁶ he emphasized the principal disparity of literature and politics, which in his view are two worlds apart:

Я не политический писатель. Ни у одного писателя его вещи не передают политических взглядов. Художественное произведение не выражает политических взглядов. Ни у Пушкина, ни у Гоголя нельзя спрашивать про политические взгляды. (Возмущенный гул в зале.) Мои произведения — это мое мироощущение, а не политика. (*Belaja kniga*: 224) ⁷

Sinjavskij's attorney, who did not dare to plead innocent to the charges against his client, brought forward some of the just mentioned points. Given the fact that Terc's writings are hard to understand even for philologists, when even these cannot come to an agreement about the authorial intention, he found the only reasonable conclusion to be that this oeuvre was never meant as anti-Soviet propaganda. After all, the reader cannot make head or tail of it. (297-298)

I now intend to describe in greater detail the various ways in which the split sender, receiver and context contribute to the formation of this split message.

C. The split sender

1. The device of mystification

Whereas Jakobson's concept of the split message is made up of qualities which are inherent in the literary communication, the split sender is not only an aspect of literariness but also one of Terc's most characteristic devices. Indeed, in his writings the sender undergoes such a treatment that the term "shattered sender" seems to be more appropriate. First should be mentioned the bifurcation of the author into Sinjavskij and his alter ego Abram Terc. In addition, his stories make the impression of being told by a narrator who is constantly playing games with other personages, with the reader and even with himself. He usually is a male first person who at times makes himself invisible, disappears or reappears. He easily alters the tone of his voice, his ideological point of view as well as his name and identity. However, this becomes manifest only in the course of the story. The

unstable identity of the narrating subject is fully in line with Terc's aversion for strict delineations and his striving for inner truth instead of external resemblance. It is not a coincidence, then, that metamorphoses, doubles and masquerades play a prominent role in the works of his favourite authors — 19th century romantic fantasts, early 20th century futuristic poets and modernistic novelists. According to Bachtin,⁸ the mask, the double and the parody are the instruments par excellence for the expression of carnivalesque ambiguity. Terc went even further and regarded the metamorphosis as the foundation of the artistic imagination and discourse, of mythology and religion:

Без метаморфозы, вне метаморфозы нет и не бывает — чуда, религии, искусства. Ни даже самой простой поэтической метафоры — бледной копии метаморфозы ... (1985: 109)⁹

In *Golos iz chora* he cited with approval the following passage from Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*:

“Я понял, что человек на самом деле не един, но двоичен. (...) Я беру на себя смелость предсказать, что в конце концов человек окажется всего лишь общиной, состоящей из многообразных, несхожих и независимых друг от друга сочленов”. Как все, однако, ложится в цвет. (194)¹⁰

2. Authorial versus personal

By the time of the trial, the theoretical principle that the author of literary fiction must not be confounded with narrator and characters had become generally accepted by narratologists (e.g. Stanzel, Booth). It was even endorsed by Sinjavskij's prosecutors. These had, however, more problems with the difference between the concrete author Andrej Sinjavskij and the supposed fictitious author Abram Terc, the former's self-stilization¹¹ or literary mask. In an article on Aleksej Remizov (1985) Sinjavskij gave the following characterization of such a literary mask:

Это литературная маска, связанная с лицом человека, а вместе с тем от человеческого лица отделенная и вынесенная на авансцену текста на правах самостоятельного мифического литературного персонажа. (98)

In many cases, he continued, such a literary mask may be said to embody the negative antisocial sides of a person's character. He did not mention Terc's name

in this context, yet the cited remark can easily be applied to his own literary alter ego.¹² The complex structure of his work is not merely the result of the fact that his voice and vision are hidden behind those of Terc; what is more, his stories are usually told by a personalized first person narrator who is definitely not Terc. (Andrej Kazimirovič in *Pchenc*, Savelij Kuz'mič in *Ljubimov*, the writer in *Sud idët*.)

The opponents clearly felt embarrassed by a similar profusion of mutually divergent narrators. At this point they may even have sensed a flaw in their accusations. The judge, e.g., said to Daniël':

Я, конечно, понимаю что авторская речь и речь персонажа — вещи разные. (*Belaja kniga*: 182; see also 225)

Yet this recognition did not prevent him from sentencing both writers for utterances made by personages from their stories. Kedrina's argument offers a striking example of such an undesirable identification of author and character. She did not only fail to discern between Sinjavskij and his literary mask, but bluntly ascribed to him the paranoia and schizophrenia from which some of his characters suffer. Therefore her final conclusion was:

Терц же неотделим от той мерзости, в какой пребывают его персонажи. (*Belaja kniga*: 112, see also 110)

For readers nowadays it may be hard to decide against whom the official press campaign was actually directed: against the author, narrator, characters or against all of them at the same time? (see e.g. Dmitrij Eremin's article 'Perevertyši' in the *Izvestija* of 13 January 1966)

At the trial both defendants have protested unsuccessfully against the mentioned practices. It was argued by Daniël' that in this way any Soviet writer is principally denied the right to cite a White Guardist literally. As he put it:

Важно не то, что говорят герои, а авторское отношение к этому, его позиция. (*Belaja kniga*: 185)

In his final speech Sinjavskij provided a few examples of the absurdities which can arise when this ground rule of interpreting narrative prose is neglected — that Dostoevskij is identified with his underground man, Gor'kij with Klim Samgin and Saltykov-Ščedrin with Iuduška, a sinister personage from *Gospoda Golovlëvy*.¹³

3. Abstract versus concrete author

As crucial as the distinction between author, narrator and character, is the distinction between the author in his capacity of creator of the literary text and the author as a concrete living person. (van der Eng 1988: 53) Sinjavskij may have felt supported by several Western and Soviet narratologists (Bachtin, Vinogradov) when he insisted that even an apparently authorial text may not be ascribed directly to the concrete author. It may be illustrated by the answer he gave to the following question:

Судья: Все ваши *МЫСЛИ врасплох* — это прямая авторская речь?
СИНЯВСКИЙ: Не совсем. (Смех в зале) (*Belaja kniga*: 226)

This answer may be taken firstly as an implicit reference to Abram Terc, and secondly to the notion that the concrete author has to be distinguished from the narrative instance which Wolf Schmid has termed “the abstract author”.¹⁴ This narrative instance which is not entirely real, nor entirely invented can be situated on the borderline between the concrete and the fictitious world or “Bedeutungsposition”.¹⁵ It may be said to express the intentions of the author-creator to some extent, yet it may not be identified with him. Thus Sinjavskij’s answer “не совсем” may be taken as an indication that even the seemingly completely self-revealing aphorisms in *Mysli vrasploch* in effect stem from, and shape, his literary mask or image.¹⁶

At this point Thomas Winner makes a relevant distinction between what he calls the author’s personality and the artist’s personality. The first contains nothing which cannot be expressed by an objective analysis of the work itself, the second is a bundle of dispositions, part in-born and part acquired. Therefore the artist’s personality is a broader concept than the author’s personality — indeed, not all facets of an artist’s personality are necessarily expressed in his literary work. (quoted after van der Eng 1988: 53)

It may be clear that Sinjavskij’s opponents in the courtroom and the official press aimed directly at the artist’s personality. Without regard for nuances and distinctions, they lumped together the various semantic and narrative levels that just have been described. They did not distinguish separate semantic categories (concrete — abstract — fictitious) nor separate narrative voices (author — self-stylization of the author — narrator — character.) Instead, all was scraped together and pinned on the concrete author, the defendant in the dock.

4. Vjačeslav Ivanov

At the time of the preliminary investigation, the literary scholar V.V. Ivanov (see Chapter I, note 6) was officially requested to write his commentary and verdict on Sinjavskij's stories.¹⁷ Some major points which Sinjavskij brought forward in his own defence can be found in Ivanov's report as well. Both of them emphasized the fictional status of Terc's writings; both recognized as a leading principle that the author has to be distinguished from his characters, and the real from the implied author. According to Ivanov, the figural narrative situation is typical for Terc as his stories are mostly first-person skaz-like narratives. With a reference to Bachtin¹⁸ he emphasized the difference between figural (чужое) and authorial (авторское) narration, as well as that between the concrete (настоящий) and implied (условный) author. The latter is definitely not identical with the real author as a living person. (*Belaja kniga*: 126-127)

5. Abram Terc

It may be added that the narrative structure of Terc's stories is even more complex than Ivanov suggests, as Sinjavskij introduces an additional narrative instance in the person of Abram Terc. Terc, his co-author or alter ego, does not fit in exactly with the concepts of Ivanov, Vinogradov, Schmid and Booth. He is not identical to the concrete or abstract author, but rather a paradoxically composite figure which is both imaginary and real, both a product of Sinjavskij's fantasy and a facet of his personality. Not engaged in the actions he describes and never expressing his view in clearly recognizable separate text fragments,¹⁹ Terc seems to hover over the threshold of the fictitious world. The relationship between him and his maker has never become clear and easy. The difference between the two does not correspond to the difference between fiction and non-fiction, or between literary prose and literary theory. After all, Sinjavskij has not only written narrative prose under the name of Terc, but also фантастическое литературоведение which stylistically comes close to his утрированная проза. Sinjavskij described the difference between his alter and real ego mainly as a difference in style. Theimer Nepomnyashchy and Genis speak of a difference in style and genre: a more traditionally ordered style of writing is typical for Sinjavskij, whereas Terc shows a penchant for narrative experimentation and absurd fantasy.²⁰

In the fantastic stories the two voices practically seem to merge. Here the element of mystification is implied in the narrative situation: the author never explains at which moment and in which respect he agrees or disagrees with Terc. That their views do not converge, though, Sinjavskij made clear in an indirect way during his interrogation. After being questioned about his intentions with a particular passage, he tended to formulate his answer in the third person and to

avoid the first. This consequent referring to “the author” or “Abram Terc” (especially from p. 232 onward) may be taken as a distancing device, an attempt to create a protective area around himself. Tellingly, at a given moment he mentioned “I” and “Abram Terc” in the same breath, meanwhile drawing a clear distinction between the two:

Я писал о Маяковском, Пастернаке, Хлебникове, Бабеле. Мне кажется, что некоторые из названных авторов повлияли на Абрама Терца. (*Belaja kniga*: 241)

On the other hand, he declared not to look upon Sinjavskij and Terc as two principally incompatible entities, and to find it more comfortable to live with one instead of two faces.²¹ He somewhat circumvented the question as to why he had chosen a pseudonym and why precisely this one; he just replied that any writer has the right to publish under pseudonym, which is a legitimate artistic device. The name Terc, he claimed, he had chosen simply because he liked it:

... не думаю, чтобы это можно было объяснить каким-нибудь рациональным путем. (*Belaja kniga*: 203)²²

Anyhow, he definitely disclaimed any political or ideological motivation or the wish to provoke.

Whereas the mere fact that he had concealed his real name sufficed to arouse the prosecution’s suspicion,²³ the name he had chosen in concreto made it even worse. When his writings began to appear in the West at the end of the 1950’s, his real name remained unknown for several years, but the origin of his pseudonym could soon be traced. It is derived from Абрашка Терц, the hero of a “vulgar pornographic song” as the prosecutor put it sneeringly. This song was popular in Odessa in the 1920’s. (*Belaja kniga*: 207) Apart from that, the semi-criminal outcast Terc may be regarded as an amalgam of good and evil characteristics inherited from many literary anti-heroes in the past. To name one thing, the relationship between the tough, cynical, obscene Terc and the high-brow intellectual Sinjavskij may be compared to the relationship between Stevenson’s Mr. Hyde and Dr. Jekyll.²⁴ In addition, the Jewish-sounding name Terc calls forth associations with the archetypal Other as embodied in the myth of the Wandering Jew and Kain the Brothermurderer.²⁵

Over the years Abram Terc has been characterized in many different ways. He has been called Sinjavskij’s double, shadow, vampire and evil genius, but also — more neutral and sophisticated — his главное произведение. (*Genis*: 278) Surprisingly or not, in later years when Sinjavskij was able to speak freely, he gave a predominantly positive picture of his dark hero. The mere fact that he has never

stopped to use this pseudonym may be taken as an indication that Terc is not only an appropriate camouflage but also an artistic device. Hidden behind the mask of Terc, the author acquires a kind of allegorical status and the right not to be taken literally; both conditions enable him to express his non-conformistic view on reality and to escape from his limited individual self. When considered from this angle, Terc may be taken as a metaphor for a particular way of perceiving and narrating. Inspired and encouraged by his dark hero, Sinjavskij ventures to touch upon taboo-laden themes in the form of the grotesque, and to depict the grim and chaotical side of Soviet life in the language of the street, the suburban barracks and the prison camps. In short, the phenomenon Terc has an ideological, stylistic and a psychological component. The fact that Sinjavskij speaks of a literary mask suggests that he knowingly takes upon himself the role of Terc, meanwhile making the reader a participant in this half-comical, half-serious game. Indeed, Terc is not an easy arbitrary role. His maker-inventor said in an interview in 1992:

Но эта литературная маска — не просто вымысел, она где-то срастается с моим лицом. (32)

As a consequence, he felt unable to take it off as he pleased and choose another one.

The difference between Sinjavskij and Terc which he underlined during his interrogation becomes a major theme in his later writings. In *Golos iz chora* and *Progulki s Puškinym* he dwells upon the difference between the writer as an artist and a private person; yet the difference between Sinjavskij and Terc will be fully elaborated in the metanarrative passages in *Spokojnoj noči*.²⁶ The uneasy symbiosis between them finds its dénouement here in a twofold sense. Sinjavskij and Terc leave the world of narration in which they had remained so far, and enter the narrated world as full-blown characters. The first person narrator whose name is Andrej Sinjavskij now comes for the first time face to face with his sinister double. That the confrontation leads to a crash is inevitable given the fact that the meek, honest and serious intellectual Sinjavskij is saddled with a type such as Terc, “терпкий злодей, кривляк, шут”. (18) Therefore the narrator has some ground for complaint:

И если бы нас тогда не повязали вместе — в одном лице, на горячем деле, о чем я до сей поры глубоко сожалею, — мы бы и сожительствовали мирно, никого не тревожа, работая по профессии, каждый в своей отрасли. (18)

On the other hand, during his arrest and interrogation the narrator feels buttressed by Terc, who is precisely in his element in absurd and menacing situations:

Воздам благодарность Абраму Терцу, темному моему двойнику, который, возможно, меня и доканает, но он же тогда и вызволил и вынес, меня, светлого человека, Синявского, пойманного с позором и доставленного на Любянку. (17)

Thus a second *dénouement* takes place in the form of the development of a beautiful friendship. Terc the villain and cause of all his troubles — as his maker complains in his weaker moments — finally emerges as a source of inspiration and strength.

6. Irony

In Scholes's elaboration of Jakobson's model, the term "split sender" is not only used to describe the difference between author and character, or concrete and abstract author. He applies the term moreover to all those cases in which the addresser alters his tone or assumes a role which appears to be a deviation from a preceding norm. The most outspoken example is irony. According to Scholes, irony is the most extreme semiotic violation of present context; it clearly demonstrates the duplicity of sender and message. (26)

In line with Scholes's view is Theimer Nepomnyashchy's assumption that irony, just as the metaphor, paradox and riddle, corresponds to the polyphonic potential of language. Irony shows a natural propensity for subverting clear linguistic boundaries and undermining fixed definitions. A great deal of the controversy about Terc's writings can thus be explained:

Irony is "blasphemous" because it rests on disrupting the illusion of a simple relationship between word and referent: irony is a product of the noncorrespondence between the literal meaning of an utterance and the sense it conveys, a noncorrespondence that undermines the referential use of language. (49)

That irony is indeed, as Kundera stated, a mysterious device can be illustrated by the fact that it was used both as a point in favour and as a point to the detriment of Sinjavskij and Daniël'. Irony easily arouses irritation and confusion, as it can be evidenced by the following question:

Судья: Это зачем тут у вас Че-че-че-Чехов?

Синявский: Это же явная ирония.

Возглас в зале: Это антисоветчина! (*Belaja kniga*: 223)

Kedrina unwillingly displayed a sharp feeling for the elusiveness of irony when she said:

Ирония — одно из главных средств камуфляжа у Синявского.
(*Belaja kniga*: 287)

Неистребимый, провокационный запах этого “букета” никак не снимается многослойной иронией, призванной помочь автору в любой момент установить свою “непричастность” к им же написанному. (*Belaja kniga*: 115)

This kind of response did almost certainly not surprise Sinjavskij. The narrator in *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* characterizes irony as недостойный прием (437), неизменный спутник безверия и сомнения (433), a device that counteracts the basic premises of the socialist-realist doctrine as it undermines dogmatic and schematic reasoning. The narrator of this essay displays more affinity with the sinful permissive laughter permeating the literature of the uncertain idealistic 19th century, than with the positive self-assured laughter of socialist realism, смех лишенный иронической кислоты.²⁷ He expounds the view that laughter and satire do not necessarily stem from negation and disillusion, but just as well from idealism and a craving for freedom. Analogously, the narrator in *Golos iz chora* and *V teni Gogolja* underlines the creative and vital impulse which is inherent in irony. In *Golos iz chora* he elaborates on

иронии, не дающей миру застыть с выпущенными глазами однозначной, горластой безжизненности, но вносящей колыхание в речь, наподобие модуляции голоса, который, удаляясь, без конца возвращается к своему началу, пока мы не догадаемся, что это не поток слов, не голос, но сам горизонт вращается и поворачивает вспять, даруя и черпая силы жить дальше и дальше. (64)

In *V teni Gogolja* the laughter is principally connected with the creative energy in both a literary and a philosophical-religious sense:

Смех в широком значении есть верный симптом или пульс искусства, его исходное определение. (...) В самом качании искусства на грани подобия или тождества уже содержится что-то

комичное, пародийное, шутовское. Художнику не дано быть до конца совершенно серьезным. (135)

Apparently, in his view satire is more than a nihilistic sneer of disillusionment or an expression of malicious delight. Laughter is not only demonic, but can also be divine, as it is illustrated by Gogol' and Rozanov:

Именно от Гоголя идет розановское соединение “нелепого и смешного” как особый знак благодати Божией. (1982: 310-311)

Therefore he regards irony, by virtue of its polyphonic character, as a pre-eminently artistic device and the prosecution's one-sided approach as principally anti-artistic.

D. The split addressee

Wolf Schmid makes a distinction between the abstract, concrete and fictitious reader, parallel to the distinction between the abstract, concrete and fictitious author which has been described above:

Der abstrakte Leser ist streng zu trennen von den individuellen, konkreten Personen, die das Werk rezipieren, und dem fiktiven Leser, dem mitgedichteten Adressat des fiktiven Erzählers. Analog zum Terminus “Autorbild” könnte man den abstrakten Leser das im Werk enthaltene “Leserbild” nennen. Červenka definiert dieses Leserbild als die Verkörperung der vom Werk geforderten und vorausgesetzten Rezeption. (24)

In other words, the abstract reader is an authorial projection insofar as he represents an ideal reader who perfectly understands the author's intentions. In doing so he answers perfectly to Boris Tomaševskij's prescription

читать надо наивно, заражаясь указаниями автора. (157)

As a matter of fact, the abstract reader can hardly be discerned from his counterpart the abstract author. As Schmid states:

Aus den oben gegebenen Definitionen erhellt, dass der abstrakte, vom Werk geforderte Leser der Rezipient ist, der den vom abstrakten Autor vertretenen, das ganze Werk prägenden Gesamtsinn in idealer Weise

konkretiziert und die dem Gesamtsinn folgende Wertung aktiv nachvollzieht.
(35)

In Scholes's view, the split addressee is essential for the literary communication:

If the words of an utterance seem to be aimed not directly at us but at someone else, this duplicitous situation is essentially literary. John Stuart Mill emphasized this when he said that poetry is not heard but overheard. (...) The literary competence of readers with respect to this feature of communicative acts is often a matter of imagining the person to whom the utterance is addressed or of perceiving meanings that are not intended for, or understood by, the ostensible auditor. Every communicative subtlety requires a corresponding subtlety of interpretation. (22)

However, the prosecutors passed over such subtleties, assuming that Sinjavskij wrote his fantastic stories with the intention to incite concrete readers to take part in certain concrete actions. Sinjavskij for his part maintained that he did not pursue any concrete goal whatsoever through his writings. He expressed his view on the ideal relationship between reader and writer in the following words:

Печатание за границей для меня никогда психологически не было способом завязать отношения с аудиторией. Это был способ сохранить их для немногих, для отдельных лиц, которые, может быть, когда-нибудь что-либо найдут в них для себя. Это литература для себя и для очень немногих, где бы они ни жили и когда бы они ни жили. И это подтверждается текстом моих произведений. (*Belaja kniga*: 241-242)

Apparently, a certain distance between addresser and addressee suited him fine. To him, it is of no importance who the unknown recipient is or where he lives, whether he is a contemporary or future reader; what matters is his literary competence, i.e. his willingness to accept the initial premises of reading a literary text. The interrelationship between author and reader inevitably remains a paradox: they are intimate strangers, separated by an unbridgeable physical and mental distance. To the reader, the author represents a name or a voice, and it hardly makes any difference whether he is dead or alive. In Sinjavskij's view, the capacity to overcome the limitations of time and space is an exclusive prerogative of literary art.

His reluctance to give lengthy explanations of his writings in the courtroom cannot be explained by the tricky situation alone. In later years he displayed a similar preference for a dialogical instead of an authoritarian relationship with the

reader. In his view, the extrinsic references and authorial intentions the prosecution was so desperately seeking, are actually of little importance as the author is at the very most a slightly privileged reader of his own work. The principle of literary autonomy which he defended throughout his life affects the relationship between the literary work and the real author's world, as well as the relationship between the author and the reader. It can be seen as an implicit protest against the didactical tradition prevalent in Soviet literary theory, with its strong emphasis on the social values of literary art. In an article on art and reality he wrote later:

Искусство свободнее и сильнее и жизни, и самих авторов, которые создают эти вещи. (1978: 115)

Therefore, even the most influential and controversial work of literature does not bring about direct alterations in the actual social-political constellation of its time. Readers' responses are too divergent and too unpredictable to be planned beforehand:

Конечно, мы все знаем, как влияет порой литература на поведение людей. Но мы не в состоянии учесть и регулировать это влияние. И слава Богу ... (117) ²⁸

E. The split context

Although Sinjavskij's opponents, supporters, witnesses and critics disagreed on many points, they nevertheless showed a shared interest in the extrinsic references and social significance of his writings. In a paradoxical way, opponents and supporters were in common agreement on this point — they all read Terc's writings as an overt or covert indictment against certain social-political abuses in Soviet society. Sinjavskij himself, at the trial as well as in his emigration years, emphasized the invented character of his writings and protested against the practice to assign to literature a simplistic mimetic function. Indeed, if reality itself seems to belong to the area of the fantastic — in *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* he speaks of the неправдоподобный смысл нашей эпохи (444) — artists are bound to apply corresponding means to depict such a fantastic reality. He did not specify in which respect his fantastic prose touches upon the extraliterary reality, i.e. in which manner it meets the criterium of правдивость which he formulated at the end of the just mentioned essay. Similarly, in later years he preferred to leave such issues to the reader.

In his defence of an autonomistic approach to literature ²⁹ Sinjavskij may have felt supported by a solid scholarly tradition initiated by Russian Formalism. Even if it is true that not all proponents and followers of Formalism intend to sever the link between literature and reality with the same radicality, yet they agree on the point that literary fiction should primarily be read as a text with a special status, one that presupposes a specific form of communication. Following this reasoning, a text which does not seek to denote a reality but strives to foreground the narrative medium and devices themselves, should not be measured by the standards of that same extraliterary reality. In the conflict between the supporters of a mimetic and an autonomistic view on literature, Jakobson and Scholes both follow a moderate course. Jakobson holds the view that the supremacy of the poetic function over the referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous (371); Scholes advocates a theory which depends upon an acceptance of the view that an act of communication may indeed point to the phenomenal world and even beyond it. In doing so, he realizes that he breaks a powerful tradition in semiotic studies that runs from Saussure to Barthes:

To accept this view we need not settle any questions about things in themselves, ultimate reality, ideas or essences. We have only to acknowledge that some correspondence between our thought and the world around us is at least theoretically possible. (24)

However, Scholes makes a distinction between the literary, fictional context and the real, neutral context. In doing so, he is approaching Jakobson's concept of the split reference: the neutral, phenomenal and concrete context is present to both sender and receiver of a message, whereas the literary context is absent, semiotic and abstract.³⁰

As I have said before, these kinds of considerations were lost on Sinjavskij's opponents. They appeared to be unable to recognize the fictionality of a literary text as soon as they found in it certain non-fictional data such as Lenin or Kolyma. As Sinjavskij rightly remarked during the interrogations, his writings were taken either as a direct or as a deliberately veiled imitation of reality, literary devices were pulled out of the conventional context of the text and lose their stylistic nature (условность).³¹ Making a stand against this naive simplified form of mimetism, he insisted that it is improper to view literature as a vehicle for the author's political convictions, or as a direct representation of reality.³² Even if it is true that a literary text cannot be detached entirely from the extraliterary reality — “литература питается некоей почвой” (224) — and his own writings do indeed convey some references to actual events which can fairly precisely be located in time,³³ this does not alter the fact that literary fiction merely represents

a would-be reality. *Ljubimov* e.g. is based in its entirety on fantasy; *Sud idet* is more closely linked with the realistic level, but also here he maintained

Но ряд сцен — кажущаяся действительность. Это художественное произведение, не политический документ. (Смех в зале.) (*Belaja kniga*: 225)³⁴

The errors made by his opponents all stem from a failure to recognize literary conventions, and can be subdivided into two categories. In the first case literary devices were erroneously taken literally, especially devices such as the hyperbola (304), footnote (232), irony (236), absurdism-alogism (230-231), idealism (304), fantasy (304) and montage (233). The opponents discussed described personages as if they were living persons and described events as if they have really taken place. The judge said e.g. about dr. Rabinovič, a personage from *Sud idet*:

Аборт-то реальный! Он его зачем произвел?
Синявский: Это сказано, но не показано. В художественной литературе есть понятие условности.
(*Belaja kniga*: 226)³⁵

In the second case the reverse situation is presented: concrete realistic data were taken for literary devices, to the effect that reality seemed to be transformed into a literary text. This became manifest when the judge and prosecutor identified Sinjavskij with Terc or with some personage taken from his writings, but also when the prosecutor asked at whom the following кровоточащая гипербола in *Ljubimov* is aimed:

У них есть аэропланы, а у нас ничего, кроме оголенного воображения.

Sinjavskij replied that the mentioned fragment does not convey any hyperbola, as it describes an actual situation — the arrival of aeroplanes in *Ljubimov*. (234) For all these reasons, he said in his closing speech, he felt as if the boundaries between fantasy and reality had collapsed, and the distinction between the fiction of the text and the reality of the trial was erased:

Тут, действительно, очень страшно и неожиданно художественный образ теряет условность, воспринимается буквально, так что судебная процедура подключается к тексту, как естественное его продолжение. (*Belaja kniga*: 301)

Danièl' fell in with Sinjavskij's opinion on this matter. According to him, an utterance that does not claim to convey the truth or to refer to the real context cannot be considered as an attack on persons or phenomena which belong to that context. Only a credible utterance can be labelled as slanderous:

Даниэль: Я считаю, что клевета это то, в чем — хотя бы теоретически — можно уверить других. (Смех в зале)

Судья: Я хочу объяснить. (Читает Кодекс). Клевета это распространение заведомо ложных и позорящих сведений. Это юридический аспект.

Даниэль: Как же тогда быть с фантастикой? (*Belaja kniga*: 186)³⁶

Although the mentioned points certainly make sense, the case Sinjavskij-Danièl' illustrates that these points solve only part of a writer's problems. Whatever view one wishes to support — whether one chooses to read a literary text as a direct imitation of reality or as the author's free fantasy — both views can occasionally be used against the author. In the first case the alleged imitation may be dismissed as false and therefore slanderous. In the second case one subscribes to Wolfgang Kayser's viewpoint that a literary text is a creation (*Schöpfung*), not a representation (*Wiedergabe*),³⁷ yet in doing so one merely aggravates the guilt of the author-creator. In the last resort, the fate of a writer in the dock depends on the courtesy of the judge, or more precisely, on the degree of freedom the latter is willing to grant the author of literary fiction. In the case of Sinjavskij and Danièl' the judge was formally entitled to dismiss all the mentioned considerations as irrelevant, and this exactly is what he did.

F. Summary

In his closing speech to the court Sinjavskij summarized his basic views on literature. It may be derived from this speech that he, much in the spirit of early Russian Formalism, regarded literary prose as a special mode of language whose distinctive features can best be defined in terms of their opposition to the common language of political ideology, science and law. The aspects which have been discussed in this chapter — the split message, sender, receiver and context — can all be traced in this closing speech and are eloquently recapitulated in its final words:

В глубине души я считаю, что к художественной литературе нельзя подходить с юридическими формулировками. Ведь правда³⁸ художественного образа сложна, часто сам автор не может ее

объяснить. (...) Вот вы, юристы, имеете дело с терминами, которые чем уже, тем точнее. В отличие от термина значение художественного образа — он тем точнее, чем шире. (*Belaja kniga*: 306)

In the end it is hard to avoid the impression that Sinjavskij's poetica as it was defined in the dock is tantamount to a system of negations. Arguably, his writings do not refer to reality and do not express the author's views, they are not directed at any concrete reader or group of readers, do not pursue any particular aim, do not lend themselves to straightforward interpretation and cannot easily be summarized. Apparently, these are the words of a person who has to defend himself and who is anxious to conceal his real intentions as much as possible. Yet it is my intention to show in the following chapters that behind this veil of seemingly evasive and negatory answers hides a positive personal view on the relationship between fantasy and reality in life and art.

This relationship remains a major theme in his later years as well. In 1978 he stated in his favourite form of the paradox that literary art, though being autonomous, still has the capacity to tell us more about real life than the latter knows about itself (Terc 1978: 115). This is not just an abstract notion concerning objective knowledge or truth in its conventional sense:

Самый вкус, и смысл, и идеал писательства состоит вовсе не в том, чтобы “правду сказать” — (поди, если хочешь, и говори — в трамвае) (...) Литературный язык — это язык откровенностей, от которых становится стыдно и страшно, язык прямых объяснений с действительностью по окончательному счету, когда ей (действительности) говоришь: “пойдем со мной! не то зарежу!” (Terc 1974: 151-152)

This daring statement which clearly betrays the hand of co-author Abram Terc, may be linked to similar statements he made in earlier writings — e.g. at the end of *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* he assigns to art the serious and worthy task to shape the величественный и неправдоподобный смысл нашей эпохи. To him, the ideologically charged term правда which has been used for all kind of political-ideological purposes is too strongly coloured by Stalinist absolutism:

На вопрос писателей — что такое социалистический реализм? — Сталин отвечал: “Пишите правду”. Этой репликой он прикрепил писателей к действительности, как прикрепляли крестьян к помещикам. (1989: 113)

In *Golos iz chora* he elaborates the view that the empirical or vital truth (жизненная правда) does no more than to provide the artist with his material (137-138). The fact that the work of art itself is shaped from narrative devices puts notions such as truth and realism in their proper perspective. At the very utmost an artist may reach an effect of правдивость — which is indeed the term Sinjavskij prefers to use as it is a broader concept than правда. It is not connected to a particular doctrine, period or genre, it is more subjective, closer to the notion of “authenticity” and strictly confined to the aesthetic context.³⁹

Notes

- 1 Both statements can be taken as a protest against an outdated and discredited way of reading. Kindred ideas have been formulated by Käte Hamburger, who states in *Die Logik der Dichtung* (1968) that the events in an epic narrative “existieren nur kraft dessen, dass sie erzählt sind. Das Erzählen ist das Geschehen, das Geschehen ist das Erzählen. Und das gilt ebensowohl für das Erzählen äusserer wie innerer Vorgänge”. (140) According to Hamburger, literary fiction is principally unable to make any statement on extratextual reality, since the real “Ich-Origo” of both author and reader is suspended on behalf of the fictitious “Ich-Origo” of the characters. (24-28; 53-54) Cf. Roman Ingarden in *Das literarische Kunstwerk*: as the novel creates its own universe, it can make only quasi-statements, the “Gegenständlichkeiten” one finds in it are purely intentional. (169-183; 321-325)

Even if Sinjavskij’s vision of the interrelationship between text and reality at certain points seems to dovetail with some basic premises of Western structuralistic and poststructuralistic criticism, it should be noted that his realm of thought is rooted in a fundamentally different intellectual and artistic tradition (as Theimer Nepomnyashchy rightly remarks (38) in a slightly different context.)

- 2 Victor Erlich argues in *Russian Formalism. History-doctrine* (1955) that the mentioned semantic enrichment is a hallmark of poetic discourse: “The oscillation between semantic planes, typical of the poetic context, loosens up the bond between the sign and the object. The denotative precision arrived at by “practical” language gives way to connotative density and wealth of associations. In other words the hallmark of poetry as a unique mode of discourse lies not in the absence of meaning but in the multiplicity of meanings. This was indeed the view expressed in mature Formalist statements. “The aim of poetry”, wrote Ejchenbaum, “is to make perceptible the texture of the word in all its aspects”.” (Erlich: 158) Cleanth Brooks and other New Critics tend to use terms such as “irony”, “paradox”, “ambiguity”, “tension” as hallmarks of poetical or literary discourse. (C. Brooks: *The Well Wrought Urn*, 1947) Jakobson, however, regards the mentioned multiplicity of meanings not so much as a hallmark but rather as the result from the presence of the poetic function.
- 3 According to Theimer Nepomnyashchy, a similar approach stems from a belief in the authority of language to define fixed categories. (59) Such an authoritarian belief finds its expression in a striving to control language, to transform human beings into empty signs. (275) In my view, the following remark which she made in connection with the polyvalency of *Kroška Cores*, may be extended to Terc’s whole oeuvre: “A work so concerned with misunderstanding, conflicting interpretations and riddles of identity should challenge the reader with images that are particularly open to multiple meanings precisely because they defy reduction to any single one”. (249)
- 4 According to H el ene Cixous, especially fantastic literature with its versatile unstable subject resists homogenizing, reductive, unifying reason: “These texts

baffle every attempt at summarization of meaning and limiting, repressive interpretation. The subject flounders here in the exploded multiplicity of its states, shattering the homogeneity of the ego of unawareness, spreading out in every possible direction, into every possible contradiction, transegoistically". ("The Character of "Character"': 388)

5 Perhaps unnecessarily, I would like to remind that the practice of harassing writers for ideologically controversial opinions is by no means the monopoly of Soviet censorship. Since in the 1970s "political correctness" became a current notion in Western intellectual circles, a fairly prominent school within literary criticism proposes to regard narrative texts as ideologies cloaked in rhetoric devices. Supporters of this view set themselves the task of tracing the implicit racist, sexist, heterocentric or reactionary opinions which the author, willingly or not, is hiding behind rhetoric. Such an approach rests on a similar neglect of the inherent polyvalency, the narrative stratification and the imaginative character of literary fiction. It should be admitted, though, that there are some crucial differences between Western and Soviet political correctness. Western critics usually attack authors who belong to the past, they do not damage the living ones personally; in addition, they usually give account of their basic assumptions, which is a rare phenomenon among their Soviet counterparts. What unites them, though, is their reluctance to distinguish fiction from reality, the abstract from the concrete author, as well as a general attitude which has been described by Wendy Steiner as "the hysteria of literality". In her study *The Scandal of Pleasure: Art in an Age of Fundamentalism* (1996) she demonstrates how in the Western world the imposed political correctness has led to a number of literary scandals.

6 On the one hand, Daniël' said about his story *Ruki*: "Я не ставил политических целей, когда писал этот рассказ" (196), on the other he declared about his whole oeuvre: "Я не стараюсь уйти от политического содержания моих произведений". (324)

7 Cf. other statements made by Sinjavskij: "Политическая квалификация художественного произведения — дело тонкое, раз одно и то же произведение то оказывается антисоветским, то не оказывается". (243) "Особенности моего литературного творчества достаточно отличаются от того, что у нас принято и что у нас пропускают. Отличаются не политикой, а художественным мироощущением". (240)

Cf. the following question asked by the prosecutor: "В этих трех произведениях, которые Вам инкриминировали, изложены Ваши политические взгляды и убеждения?" Синявский: "В них изложена моя позиция писателя ... Я не очень понимаю. И в статье Что такое соц. реализм ... Это опыт, эссе ... Там в вольной манере изложена моя художественная позиция". (221) Moreover, he claimed to have had no political intentions when he sent his writings abroad: "Я руководствовался только своими литературными интересами и творческими потребностями". That literature may serve as a refuge against political suppression and manipulation is a major theme in *Spokojnoj noč'*.

- 8 Terc's early writings suggest the influence of some of Bachtin's central concepts such as carnivalization, dialogism and ambivalence; in addition, Terc lavishly employs carnivalesque devices such as the grotesque body, the culture of laughter and the world presented topsy-turvy. As Sinjavskij always had a keen interest in both official and non-official literature, it is more than likely that he was acquainted with Bachtin's — at the moment still unpublished — studies on Dostoevskij and Rabelais. Bachtin's dissertation *Fransua Rable v istorii realizma* (accepted in 1951) lay from 1940 to 1965 unpublished in the archives of the Gor'kij Institute of World Literature where Sinjavskij worked until his arrest. However, the relationship between Bachtin and Terc is a separate topic, worthy of further study.
- 9 In the article from which this quotation has been derived, Sinjavskij describes the various masks Remizov makes use of, varying from “бедный человек” to “всемогущий колдун”, with as in-betweens “сказочный дурак”, “сказочный вор” and “сказочный шут-скоморох”. (106) He further stresses Remizov's non-conformism, innocence and cheerfulness, qualities which he shares with the traditional holy fool. (see IV)
- 10 In his study on Rozanov, Sinjavskij expresses his admiration for the many ways in which Rozanov manages to change his авторский я: “Розанов меняет свои облики по ходу повествования”. (176-177) The thematic and stylistic resemblances in the works of Rozanov and Terc have been noticed by many scholars. (Lourie: 102, Dalton: 129, Field: 33, Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 150-155) The split subject is also a current theme in the work of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Gogol', Stevenson, Babel', Chlebnikov, Remizov, Majakovskij, Zoščenko and the Serapion Brothers. Majakovskij elaborates on the existence of several I's both in prose (*Raznye Majakovskie*, 1915) and in poetry (*Pro èto*, 1923). This poem includes a dispute between a former I, embodied in the bohémien artist he once was, and the present I, who has become a settled bourgeois. It shows some resemblance to the dispute between Sinjavskij and Terc in the first chapter of *Spokojnoj noči*. Terc uses the fantastic device of the split subject also in works and authors who usually are not directly associated with the fantastic genre. In *Progulki s Puškinym* e.g. he distinguishes the man from the poet Puškin (136-150), who together make up две стороны одной идеи. The relationship between them is an ominous one, since “он (поэт) все так организовал и подстроил, что человек стал всеобщим знакомым”. (164-165) In addition, Terc mentions Puškin's three different faces or co-authors. Firstly his Moorish ancestor, who does not express himself explicitly in separate, clearly recognizable sections of the text, but who is exerting his secret influence on Puškin's thoughts and actions throughout. (This imaginary but very active force, I would like to add, may be compared to the influence which Terc exerts on Sinjavskij, or Samson on Savelij and Lenja in *Ljubimov*.) The other faces are those of the false pretender in *Boris Godunov* and the tsar in *Mednyj vsadnik*. (129; 168) Moreover, Terc declares that he always hears in Puškin's poetry the voice of the Muse herself, who occasionally appears in the person of Tat'jana. Therefore the Muse may also be considered to be a co-author. Thus in Terc's own perception the authorial voice falls apart into various undertones which do not necessarily always harmonize.

- 11 In *Slovo v romane* Bachtin points out that the structure of Puškin's *Povesti Belkina* provides an example of a similar multileveled narration. (He does not use the term автостилизация.) One finds in these stories an ironic stylization of an outmoded narrative form, as the sober-minded Belkin adds his non-poetical vision to the events he describes. “В этом непонимании поэтической патетики прозаическая продуктивность точки зрения Белкина”. (126) However, I would like to add that the distance between Sinjavskij and Terc is greater than the distance between Puškin and Belkin, as Terc is rather his maker's antagonist than soulmate. Another statement made in *Slovo v romane* appears pertinent here. According to Bachtin, the introduction of a fictitious author-narrator does not merely create some distance to the real author and his real direct speech (действительное прямое слово), but also to the conventionally accepted narrative form, vocabulary and world view. (126) Abram Terc clearly functions as such a distancing device, whereas his louche appearance provides a convincing motivation for it.
- 12 Jackson remarks on the literary motif of the double in the 19th century: “There develops a recognizable literature of the double, dualism being one of the literary ‘myths’ produced by a desire for ‘otherness’ in this period”. (108) Thereupon she discusses a few novels in which the central theme is the inner struggle of a subject against his dark side — William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. In these works, as in Terc's *Ty i ja* and *Spokojnoj noči*, a love-hate relationship is described between the two antagonistic parts of the hero's character. These heroes do their utmost to release themselves from the symbiotic stranglehold in which their doubles hold them; yet they fail tragically and the history usually ends not with the reintegration of competing inner forces, but with the downfall of the subject. (*Ty i ja*) The relationship between Sinjavskij and Terc most resembles Caleb Williams's relationship with Falkland. Williams feels both admiration and fear for Falkland who is a criminal. Throughout his life he will make fruitless efforts to free himself from his sinister alter ego, and the novel ends tragically. However, the end of *Frankenstein* and *The strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* leaves open the possibility of a solution in some form. *Spokojnoj noči* ends by suggesting a solution as well through a reconciliation between Sinjavskij and Terc.
- 13 In *Opavšie list'ja V.V. Rozanova* he claims that the author as a person (авторский “я” писателя) can definitely not be identified with the author as a character in the text (его автобиографический герой) (276), not even in those cases when they bear the same name and have much in common. This statement fits in well with Wolf Schmid's narrative model: the first mentioned narrative instance belongs to the concrete, the last to the fictitious world.
- 14 Schmid's “abstract author” roughly corresponds with Wayne Booth's “implied author” (70-77; 86), V.V. Vinogradov's “образ автора” (132-133; 136; 149) and V.V. Ivanov's “условный автор” (see C4). Though these descriptions accentuate different aspects, they are all based on the assumption that there is a principal difference between the abstract (implied, условный) and the

concrete (real, действительный) author. Vinogradov's notion of the "образ автора" is the broadest and most general. In *O jazyke chudožestvennoj literatury* he analyses the authorial image in its literary-historical, artistic-psychological and verbal-stylistic aspects. He relates the term in its broadest sense to the ever changing views which readers and writers hold on the writer's real or ideal position in literature and society; in its narrower sense the term refers to the position the writer occupies within his own work. In the last mentioned case the authorial image is the "организационным центром или стержнем композиции художественного произведения" (142) and as such closely linked with the author's ideological-expressive position. Any literary text inevitably shapes its own authorial image, no matter how ardently an author may strive to keep a low profile. (131-154)

Booth describes the implied author as the other's second self (71) or as his general ideological-expressive position: "The implied author chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read; we infer him as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man: he is the sum of his own choices". (74-75) "Our sense of the implied author includes not only the extractable meanings but also the moral and emotional content of each bit of action and suffering of all of the characters. It includes, in short, the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole; the chief value to which this implied author is committed, regardless of what party his creator belongs to in real life, is that which is expressed by the total form". (73-74) In great works of literature especially one finds a marked difference between the implied and real author: "The weaker the novel, on the whole, the more likely we are to be able to make simple and accurate inferences about the real author's problems based on our experience of the implied author". (86)

- 15 The concrete author and reader belong to the extraliterary world, whereas the narrator, characters and fictitious reader make up part of the literary text. Schmid describes the concrete author and reader as follows: "Sie sind seinsautonom und existieren auch dann, wenn es das Werk nicht gäbe". (23) The abstract author and reader, however, are characterized as the "im Werk enthaltene, aber nicht dargestellte Autorsgestalt", "Träger der das Werk im ganzen bestimmenden Intentionen", "Personifikation der Gesamtstruktur des Werks" (23), "das Prinzip der dynamischen Vereinigung aller einzelnen Bedeutungskomponenten". (34) For these reasons Schmid regards the abstract author more than the concrete as "Vertreter des umfassenden Sinnes, der letztgültigen "Wahrheit" eines Werks". (34)
- 16 In his study on Rozanov, Sinjavskij argues that even the first person narrator in *Opavšie list'ja* who strongly resembles the concrete author Rozanov and who pretends to be completely open towards the reader, in effect is a character or the author's image: "Перед нами выступает характер или образ героя, который не следует путать с авторским 'я' писателя, хотя, конечно, происхождение этого образа имеет истоком авторское 'я', которое себя перевело в герои своего произведения". (147; see also 173) Sinjavskij disagrees with Rozanov as he underlines the difference between the concrete and fictitious author, whereas Rozanov, in his longing for a symbiotic unity between the two, strives to obliterate the difference. In *Spokojnoj noči* there is a

comparable difference between the narrator and author Sinjavskij. Following Schmid's model, it may be stated that the former belongs to the fictitious, the latter to the concrete world or semantic position. (Bedeutungsposition)

- 17 Ivanov informed me in Amsterdam, 1990, that he had deliberately restricted himself in his report to the formal-literary aspects of the case in order to circumvent awkward questions about the purported anti-Soviet tenor of Terc's writings. For one thing, he found it hard to negate any and all politically controversial implications in a work as *Sud idet*; what is more, he considered it as dishonest (нечестно) to maintain so as he was holding anti-Soviet views himself, as did many other Soviet intellectuals in those days.
- 18 In *Slovo v romane* Bachtin expounds the view that the условный автор и рассказчик are primarily distancing devices: "Речь таких рассказчиков всегда — чужая речь (в отношении к действительному или возможному прямому авторскому слову) на чужом языке (в отношении к той разновидности литературного языка, которой противопоставляется язык рассказчика.) И в этом случае перед нами 'не-прямое говорение' — не на языке, а через язык, через чужую языковую среду, а следовательно, и преломление авторских интенций". As regards the role of the author in this narrative situation he maintains: "За рассказом рассказчика мы читаем второй рассказ — рассказ автора о том же, о чем рассказывает рассказчик, и, кроме того, о самом рассказчике. Каждый момент рассказа мы отчетливо ощущаем в двух планах: в плане рассказчика, в его предметно-смысловом и экспрессивном кругозоре, и в плане автора, преломленно говорящего этим рассказом и через этот рассказ". (127)
- 19 Margaret Dalton, however, ascribes certain passages in *Ljubimov* directly to Terc. (see Chapter V)
- 20 In her bibliography Theimer Nepomnyashchy separates the works written by Sinjavskij from those written by Terc. (360-367) Equally interesting is note 34, pp. 327-328: In deciding to which persona to attribute an émigré work, Sinjavskij has sometimes been influenced by the concern that he might be accused of hiding behind the mask of Terc. Genis ascribes separate fragments in *Spokojnoj noči* either to Sinjavskij or to Terc, as Dalton did in *Ljubimov* (see note 19). In realistic autobiographic and serious metanarrative passages he sees the hand of Sinjavskij, in passages coloured by a surrealist undertone the hand of Terc. In his opinion, the complex interrelationship between the two narrative personae Sinjavskij and Terc is the main theme of the novel.
- 21 "Как критик Андрей Синявский, публикующийся в нашей печати, и как писатель Абрам Терц, публикующийся за границей, я, естественно, улавливал разницу между этими двумя людьми. Но я никогда не считал, что эти различия имеют принципиальный характер, что это раздвоение личности. Поэтому я не считал и не считаю себя двурушником и лицемером". (241) (cf. 251; 303) Also in later years Sinjavskij has declared to be inseparable from his narrating alter ego, in

spite of the differences between them. (1992: 32)

22 In *Belaja kniga* (probably by mistake): национальным; cf. in *Sinjavskij i Daniël' na skam'e podsudimych*: рациональным. (64)

23 Although the prosecutor claimed to have no principal objections to the literary pseudonym, he regarded the pseudonym which Sinjavskij had chosen as a symptom of a pathological mental state: “Автор вправе писать под псевдонимом и даже анонимно, но под этими псевдонимами они публиковали то, что не имело ничего общего с их советскими публикациями, с тем, что они делали здесь”. (Pr 288)

24 According to Jackson, interpretations of similar Victorian parables of inner dualism display a gradual shift from a supernatural to a psychological explanation. As seen from a psychological perspective, these novels describe how the hidden side of a person returns to act out latent libidinal drives concealed by his social ego. (108 and further)

25 Cf. Terc's remarks on the image of the Jew as the ultimate Other (чужой): “Короче говоря, еврей в народном понимании это — бес. Это — черт, проникший нелегальным путем в праведное тело России и сделавший все не так, как надо. Еврей — это объективированный первородный грех России, от которого она все время хочет и не может очиститься”. (1974: 185) “Во-первых, всякий русский писатель (русского происхождения), не желающий в настоящее время писать по указке — это еврей. Это — выводок и враг народа. Я думаю, если теперь (наконец-то) станут резать евреев в России, то первым делом вырежут — писателей, интеллигентов не еврейского происхождения, чем-то не подпадающих под рубрику ‘свой человек’.” (1974: 188)

26 Here he expounds the view that during the creative process the author's real, casual personality is narrowed into a mere voice or vision. In the act of writing another “I” comes into being whom Sinjavskij has personified in the image of Terc. This authorial image with its metaphorical status naturally finds its limitations within the text, or as Terc puts it metaphorically, its death: “В тех прекрасных словах, что произносит писатель, он просто умирает. Неужто вы не слышите, как писатель агонизирует в своих словах?” (1974: 153). This statement may also be understood in relationship with the fate of the oppressed writer in the Soviet Union.

27 “Ирония — это смех лишнего человека над самим собой и надо всем, что есть в мире святого”. He also mentions the “разрушительный смех, который был хронической болезнью культуры Пушкина-Блока” and cites from Blok's essay *Ironija* the statement that irony finds its expression in “приступы изнурительного смеха, который начинается с дьявольски-издевательской, провокаторской улыбки, кончается — буйством и кощунством”. (433)

28 The uncontrollability of the literary sign is one of Sinjavskij-Terc's major themes: “Like *Tenants and Icy Weather*, *Ljubimov* enacts the uncontrollability

of metaphor in the absence of mutuality and locates the origin of metaphor in the multiplicity of the self". (Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 130)

- 29 The autonomistic approach is generally considered to be a reaction against the classical mimetic school, which prescribed to the arts the primary task to reflect and shape reality. The mimetic tradition which since Plato and Aristoteles has dominated Western culture was challenged during the age of Romanticism but regained its influence with the rise of artistic movements such as realism and naturalism. In the 20th century this school has found supporters in the person of Georg Lukács and Soviet socialist realists, who share the same strongly normative-prescriptive approach.
- 30 As concerns Scholes's binary opposition phenomenal versus semiotic: the former is related to the referents, the latter to the signs which refer to them. "Any recoding of the phenomenal will contain some measure of literariness". (26)
- 31 According to Sinjavskij's wife Maria Rozanova, the described attitude is quite common among Russian and Soviet readers. After the scandal over *Progulki s Puškinym* both in émigré and Soviet intellectual circles she remarked: "За семьдесят лет реализма — социалистического или не социалистического — многие стали читать по складам и только буквально". (160)
- 32 According to the narrator in *Spokojnoj noči*, the extraliterary "real" context can only indirectly be approached: "Когда пишешь, то волей-неволей включаешься в иную, пишущуюся уже действительность, идущую параллельно, либо под углом, по касательной, от жизненного потока. Не то чтобы обман или выдумка. Храни Бог от эстетизма. Художник не может, не должен быть снобом. Вечный труженик, паук. Просто законы другие. Ты действуешь в ином измерении. И все, что с тобой происходит, и сон, и явь, и борьба не на жизнь, а на смерть, остаются, сколько ни прыгай, на уровне страницы". (372-373)
- 33 *Sud idet* e.g. may be situated shortly before March 1953, at the time between the Doctors' Plot and Stalin's death. (*Belaja kniga*: 225)
- 34 Cf. his comment on the final scene set in Kolyma: "Это не реальность, а то, что мерещится сочинителю в его страхах. Это не изображение исторической действительности 1956 года. (Смех в зале) Это литературный прием — допущение нереальной обстановки". (*Belaja kniga*: 226)
- 35 Cf. the judge's question: "Вот сожительство с трупом у вас — это гнусно; если бы это было в реальности — на этот счет есть соответствующие статьи". Синявский: Это воспоминание о прошлой жизни, о XIV веке". (*Belaja kniga*: 243) Cf. the interrogation of Daniël'. Prosecutor: "Кого же вы ненавидите? Кого вы хотите уничтожить?" Даниэль: "К кому вы обращаетесь? Ко мне, к герою или к кому-нибудь еще?" (*Belaja kniga*: 184)

- 36 Danièl' further specified the example of slander provided by the judge. Danièl': "Я пользуюсь вашим примером. Если Ивановна пишет, что Сидорова летает на помеле или превращается в животное в буквальном смысле, то это литературный прием, а не клевета. Я взял заведомо фантастическую ситуацию". (185; see also 191)
- 37 "Mit dem ersten Wort, das der Romanschreiber setzt, schafft er eine Welt und schafft sie durch ihn. Die exaktesten Beschreibungen technischer Vorgänge, sozialer Zustände oder innerer Regungen sind niemals Wiedergabe, sondern immer Schöpfung". (Kayser: 101)
- 38 In *Sinjavskij i Danièl' na skam'e podsudimych* one finds природа instead of правда. (115)
- 39 When addressing the vast subject of truth in the arts, Sinjavskij recognizes as many literary scholars have done a difference between a literary truth and an empirical (inferential, cognitive) truth. In the official definition of socialist realism ("правдивое, исторически-конкретное изображение действительности в ее революционном развитии") the term "правдивость" is employed in the secondary (empirical) sense. Hans Meyerhoff describes the difference as follows: "Truth, in its primary, aesthetic sense (...) is quite different from what we ordinarily mean by the term. First, its meaning and criteria of verification belong primarily to the literary work itself; second, it recognizes a meaning of truth as an attribute of aspects of reality — true feelings, true choices, genuine values, authentic responses; and third, it involves an ineluctable and, at times, radical element of subjectivity". (127) Meyerhoff continues his argument with the recognition that great art holds up a mirror to human nature, thus making an invaluable contribution to human knowledge. The primary meaning of truth in literature in this way gives rise to the secondary: "Thus when we praise literature as a source of knowledge and a great teacher, we may mean that the literary statement, though confined to a unique case of fiction, is a clue, key or model — almost in the nature of a hypothesis — which, in conjunction with other observations and other sources of information, may be used as the basis for formulating abstract concepts and drawing general inferences." (131)

CHAPTER IV: SUSPENSE IN *PCHENC*

A. Introduction

In the preceding chapters I have occasionally mentioned the name of the social accuser Zoja Kedrina. She took offence not merely at some controversial themes and motifs in Terc's work, but even more at the profusion of narrative eccentricities in it. As she said during the trial:

Даже если отвлечься от всего того, что в этих книгах возмущает вас как советского человека, читать их неприятно и скучно. В иных случаях из-за примитивной прямолинейности, художественного худосочия, в других — из-за нарочитой запутанности изложения, такого нагромождения всевозможных иносказаний, что иной раз начинает казаться, будто перед вами бессвязное бормотание. (*Belaja kniga*: 108) ¹

These disparaging remarks almost certainly refer to Terc's free associative style full of loose links and rapid transitions in time and place. It may be added that narrative discontinuities of this sort pertain firstly to his skaz-like narration with its установка на устную речь (Ejchenbaum) ² and secondly to the interior monologue ³ which at times passes into a stream of consciousness. These devices combine to suggest a form of immediate uncontrolled narration, coming from a first person narrator who feels subjected to various kinds of pressure. As regards the complaint about the нагромождение всевозможных иносказаний it should be admitted that Terc's writings indeed abound in double entendres. These may occur as intertextual allusions or changes in point of view, or take the shape of baroque metaphors or subtle authorial irony. The result can be either the occurrence of the mentioned lacunas or a profusion of possible meanings, which at times result in deliberate mystifications. Omissions and anachronies ⁴ contribute crucially to the creation of suspense. As van der Eng stated:

L'emploi de fragments arrachés à une partie qui doit encore être racontée et l'inclusion de ceux-ci dans un contexte qui, au point de vue logique, ne constitue pas, pour ainsi dire, leur milieu "naturel", n'est pas le seul moyen de créer l'effet de suspense. Il est possible de l'atteindre également par l'omission de motifs au beau milieu ou à la fin d'une même partie du récit. (...) Quoi qu'il en soit, le suspense se base sur un vide dans l'information. Cette information, qui reste par conséquent fragmentaire, peut se rapporter au passé, à l'avenir ou au présent d'un personnage. (...) Le mode de

présentation des données fragmentaires dépend de l'intermédiaire narratif. Celui-ci se manifeste sous plusieurs formes selon le degré de connaissance qu'il prétend avoir. (1973: 73) ⁵

The most obvious omission in *Pchenc* concerns the identity of the narrator. Like many of Terc's fantastic stories, *Pchenc* is told by and viewed from the perspective of a first person narrator who is also the protagonist of the actions he describes. It is written in the form of an interior monologue alternated with dialogues, and ostensibly lacks any deliberate shaping as a work of literature on the part of the narrator. At moments it sounds rather like an unmediated confession in front of an anonymous and uncomprehending audience, made by a narrator who only sporadically seems to realize that he is more thinking aloud than narrating. At the end he declares that his intermittent diary, which was never intended for the eyes of a stranger, has also lost its meaning for himself and that he therefore intends to burn it.

The chosen narrative perspective contributes crucially to the creation of suspense, and may even be considered its precondition. As the narrator takes no account of any reader or listener, he feels no obligation to supply any information about his origin and identity. As the story progresses the reader, who has to find this out for himself indirectly, will become more and more intrigued by the apparent lacunas in the information and by the various allusions to the identity and origin of this enigmatic "I".

Hints concerning his identity occur frequently in combination with grotesque and "alienated" themes and motifs, which create an effect of de-familiarization of the familiar. An ample use is made of devices such as bizarre comparisons, caricature, hyperbole and the de-romanticizing of established "romantic" conventions, e.g. sentimental love. Taken together, these elements comprise a dispersive, i.e. non-causally-temporally-spatially ordered series of motifs which runs through the first two chapters up to the partial revelation in Chapter 2 and the complete revelation in Chapter 3. This dispersive series appears in the context of four integrational series. Van der Eng describes the terms as follows:

An integrational chain embraces (integrates) causally, spatially and temporally interlinked motifs of the action, the characterization and the social setting. One of the thematic levels dominates the others. The motifs of the subordinated levels are significant only in so far as they show features that are relevant to the motifs of the prevailing level. A dispersive chain consists of motifs of one thematic level, that are scattered throughout the text without any direct causal, temporal or situational relationship. (1978: 51)

These series are moreover distinguished by a further refining and intensification of semantic features:

These chains are based upon semantic features, common to all their segments. The common features are seldom explicitly stated: they pertain to the underlying structure and are suggested by the interrelationship of the segments of the chain. The suggestive effect increases: I have used the word “gradation” in this connection. (1983: 227)

In *Pchenc* we initially have an integrational chain of parallelisms at the dominant action level. These series coincide roughly, though not completely, with the division into chapters. The first and second chapter are centred around exterior, the third and fourth around interior action.

1. Veronika’s advances to the narrator; rejection of these advances by the latter — Chapter 1, 2.
2. Advances of the narrator to the hunchback, rejection by the latter — Chapter 1, 2.
3. Crisis. The narrator’s inner dilemma becomes manifest: should he continue to conceal his real identity, or should he disclose it? — Chapter 3.
4. The narrator decides to leave human society — Chapter 4.

The first chapter is set partly in the launderette (175-176) and partly at home (176-178). The interior monologue which opens the story sounds as though it came from a slightly agitated but lucid person, whose suspicion verges on paranoia.

Он сделал вид что не замечает меня

he remarks about the hunchback, and a little later:

Быть может, он желал соблюсти какой-то секрет.

He seems to have his suspicions about this secret but prudently keeps them to himself and ends the first section with the words:

Я не последовал за ним, чтобы не привлекать чужое внимание

His paranoia contributes greatly to the creation of suspense, just as an enigmatic remark he makes while watching the hunchback handing over his laundry:

Сперва шли простыни, которыми здесь пользуются по соображениям гигиены.

What is the meaning of *здесь*? Does the narrator come from a country where no sheets are used? Anyhow, it is clear that he observes everyday reality with a sense of astonishment and succeeds in transmitting the same feeling to the reader, especially at moments when he adds his own far-fetched comment.⁶ When the hunchback quickly hands over his dirty washing e.g. the narrator is puzzled whether he is hiding a secret or feels ashamed of things directly connected with the lower parts of the body, “like all humans”. Follows a peculiar turn of thought that starts with the small but significant conjunction “but”:

Но мне показалось подозрительным то обстоятельство ...

In short, the narrator suspects that the hunchback is in reality not a hunchback. The word “but” which suggests a discrepancy with the preceding passage, follows upon the phrase

А может, как все люди ...

Its implication will become clear later: the narrator suspects that the hunchback is not a human being but an alien, just like himself. His remark

Человек не должен касаться губами зараженного места

also acquires another dimension then.

Thus within the range of one single page the scene in the launderette contains the entire entanglement (*завязка*) of the story. It raises the following interlinked questions: Why has the narrator for some time been following the movements of the hunchback? If the latter actually is not a hunchback, who or what in fact is he? Why does the narrator believe or hope this? Who is this “I” with his peculiar range of thought? What is he afraid of?

The second chapter is set in the communal dwelling of the narrator. The interior monologue continues, but plenty of space is assigned as well to the dialogue between the “I” and Veronika, the girl next door. In the first sentence she calls him by his name, so we learn that the narrator is called Andrej Kazimirovič. In this passage we find what at first sight seems to be an ordinary description of ordinary

tiffs and wrangles in a Soviet коммуналка full of realistic details taken from daily life. Yet the slightly paranoid intonation of the narrator is present here as well, and makes the tone in this second part as subjective as it was in the first.

Already at the beginning the narrator informs the reader that Veronika plays a double game. His remark

Жаль, что ее сочувствие зиждется на сексуальной основе

serves as an introduction to the integrational series of approaches by Veronika and resistance by Andrej Kazimirovič. Initially, the latter succeeds in ignoring her advances which occur in stages and make him increasingly nervous. At dinner, in a state of silent panic, he lists for himself the possible ways to fend Veronika off: should he pretend to be an alcoholic, a criminal, a madman or a homosexual? But he rejects these escape routes one by one, as these would only draw more attention to himself. However, Veronika's advances can no longer be ignored when she goes openly into attack:

К моей руке притронулись ее горячие пальцы. Я дернулся, как от ожога. (178)

This reaction and expression seem quite overdone, even if ожог is taken metaphorically. However, Veronika's question

Вы замерзли, Вы больны?

suggests that his words should be taken literally. The scene ends with his indignant comment on the tyranny of love:

Как бы мне хотелось, чтобы меня никто не любил!

All these hints at his non-human nature will get their full explanation later; at this stage they serve mainly to indicate that the narrator, for reasons of his own, is equally afraid of his sympathizers as of his opponents. Even his sarcasm is permeated by fear, e.g. in the sentences

Эта смиренная девушка говорила со мной тоном главного бухгалтера. Она призналась в любви и требовала воздаяния. (178)

From the very beginning the description of Veronika's behaviour, sayings and outward appearance is permeated by fear and aversion, so she finally stands out as

a representative of everything the narrator abhors. From his point of view, even her presumably well-intended exhortation

Да вы кушайте, Андрей Казимирович

sounds like an invitation to join her in a crime, the more so as it is preceded by his tirade against the sadism of cooking.

But amidst all these expressions of aversion and phobia, the narrator displays a heart-felt sympathy for vegetables and plants, especially for cactuses, his “hunchbacked little children”. After having fed them (я кормил их) he sneaks off for his own dinner to the bathroom, apparently the only place where supper is possible. (Очень это трудно кушать один раз в сутки.)

Later these peculiarities can be understood as suspensive hints at the vegetative sexless nature of this narrator, who doesn't know “natural” desires for food, warmth and lust, and therefore holds entirely different views on human needs and passions. This walking, talking and reasoning vegetable gets his nourishment by taking a shower, which is a bone of contention for his malicious old neighbour. In addition, he has a relatively low body temperature, which explains Veronika's astonishment at dinner.⁷ Later his alarmed reaction on her coquettish joke

просто мне нравятся кактусы, а вы похожи на кактус

becomes comprehensible as well — at all costs he wants to keep his real identity a secret.

However, in the first chapter the suspensive hints are still so ambiguous and veiled, that the reader will be inclined to opt for a more simple explanation. The narrator's vague but ever-present fear of being followed and spied on might be associated with the experiences of a citizen in a police state; the tirade about the sadism of cooking may be read as the indictment of a fanatical vegetarian; his declaration of love for cactuses as a mild form of self-mockery. His aversion towards Veronika could suggest excessive timidity with women or latent homosexuality, which in its turn can be related to the beginning of the story in which he is spying on a man. In short, already in this first chapter several references can be found to the narrator's extraterrestrial origin, but these are still elusive, ambiguous and open to alternative interpretation. In the second chapter his origin and identity are gradually revealed, as well as the dilemma he is faced with.

Both chains of actions which started in the first chapter are continued and brought to a climax in the second. In the beginning Andrej Kazimirovič had his eyes on the hunchback and a still unformulated plan with him, whereas Veronika had an all

too obvious plan with Andrej Kazimirovič. In the second chapter the suspense increases, as in both situations a vigorous attempt is made to force a breakthrough. After the climax both integrational series come to an end, whereas the role of the dispersive series — the gradual revealing of the narrator's identity — has become more important.

In a short introduction the narrator gives a summary of the tactics Veronika meanwhile has resorted to. The interaction between them resembles more and more a pitched battle. The action proper begins with the words:

Вчера утром я постучался к ней в комнату ... (179)

Veronika resorts to direct aggressive action and shows the narrator her naked body. Follows a detached description of the female anatomy alternated with bizarre associations and similes. The laborious tone and air of blank astonishment create an effect of alienation that is even stronger than in the previous tirade about the sadism of cooking. Aversion and incomprehension manifest themselves also in the puzzling and meaningful pronoun “their”:

Меня издавна волновала проблема пола, играющая
первостепенную роль в их умственной и нравственной жизни.

Kayser mentions a reversal of roles as one of the characteristics of the grotesque: the natural is presented as unnatural and vice versa, the difference between the human, animal and vegetable world is cancelled. The terms “reification” (Verdinglichung) and “animation” (Belebung) seem pertinent here.⁸ The description of Veronika's body may serve as an example of both devices: on the one hand, it resembles a dry enumeration of the constituent parts of an object,⁹ on the other it consists of a series of animated metaphors (a hungry leering man, secondary arms, a fish taken from the water).

All these observations and comments contribute in an already less disguised way to the gradual revelation of the narrator. The latter may perhaps succeed in passing his own bewilderment on to the reader, yet at the same time the reader begins to observe this narrator with growing amazement. His behaviour becomes increasingly strange. After he has succeeded in shaking Veronika off, he goes out into the street to enjoy a delicious drenching in the rain. In the ensuing monologue the by now familiar motifs of misanthropy and paranoia recur: to him, humans are not merely cruel and dirty, but repellently ugly as well — except the hunchbacks. From this same passage we learn that he apparently comes from a land where no people live and no clothes are worn. His avoidance of the pronoun “we” and his usage of the third person to indicate human beings come increasingly to the fore. At this point the hunchback from the first chapter makes a renewed

appearance in the story. The cactus motif recurs as a telling detail: the narrator has seen the hunchback three times in a launderette and once in a flower shop buying a cactus. Later it will turn out that this was for the narrator one more clue that the hunchback actually was an extraterrestrial cactus-like creature like himself. Next follows the partial revelation of his identity in the passage that opens with the words

Наступило время поставить точки над і. (182)

After eight lines the interior monologue turns into a stream of consciousness which for the moment is not easy to follow. As it seems, several years ago a space journey has taken place followed by an accident which the narrator is the only one to have survived. He apparently believes that someone has been sent to find him and that the hunchback is a fellow-sufferer in disguise.

The following scene is set in the hunchback's apartment. A good part of it consists of dialogue — first between the narrator and the hunchback's landlady, and subsequently between the narrator and the hunchback, whose name appears to be Leopold Sergeevič. It is an exciting scene. Right from the beginning a variety of grotesque details describing the surroundings make for an uncanny atmosphere. The narrator appears to possess superhuman powers of hearing, as he can understand at a great distance the frightened whispers of the other inhabitants. The dialogue with Leopold Sergeevič may be called a reversal of the scene with Veronika. Now it is Andrej Kazimirovič who takes increasingly drastic measures to extract a confession from his interlocutor, while in the meantime he exposes himself more and more. It becomes clear by now that his unexpressed suspicion, whatever it may be, is unfounded and that Leopold Sergeevič is not the person he expects him to be. Finally he has no choice but to believe in his comrade's sincerity (он слишком вошел в роль, одичал, очеловечился) and feels it his duty to keep the latter from what he calls treason and bestiality (a reference to Leopold Sergeevič's relationship with an inferior creature, the bitchy landlady.) However, as he grabs hold of Leopold's shoulder he feels the latter's warm body temperature and realizes his mistake:

Это был человек, самый нормальный человек, хоть и горбатый.
(186)

(cf. Veronika's amazement on the narrator's chilliness). Thus the chapter ends with an anticlimax for the narrator, but with a climax for the reader who now knows for sure that the "I" is not a human being. What kind of being he is in fact, will become clear in the next chapter.

Both integrational series of motifs that continue throughout the first two chapters are now complete. As the most important the dispersive series remains. The information provided in these chapters about his resistance to Veronika's advances and his efforts to force the hunchback to make a confession can now be seen in their entirety in the perspective of his physical and psychic constitution.

Van der Eng emphasizes the fact that in the course of a story a shift in thematic dominance can occur. In this case, information about the sequence of amorous action — in so far as the defensiveness of the "I" is concerned — becomes of primary significance for his identity. The action as dominant thematic level is replaced by characterization. (1978: 54)

The third chapter marks the beginning of a new integrational series, that is now comprised in the interior, not in the exterior action. In the first two chapters suspense was aroused by the enigma of the narrator's identity; in the third the reader knows whom the narrator believes himself to be and is invited to participate in his fears, longings and moral dilemmas. The first sentence sets the tone for the whole of this chapter:

С КАЖДЫМ ДНЕМ МНЕ СТАНОВИТСЯ ХУЖЕ.

Winter has begun and the narrator has fallen ill. He feels unable to go to his work, but doesn't dare to visit a doctor either — хлопотно и опасно. Upon this introduction follows the passage that will lead to the narrator's full confession. It is presented in the form of a series of questions and counter-questions, an "interior dialogue", that vividly depicts his dilemma. Significantly, his self-revelation (сами видите — существо из другого мира) is addressed to the police in the course of an imaginary interrogation, not to any real or potential reader. Not even for a moment is this intermittent diary intended to make contact with a human audience, which makes the reader before anything feel an eavesdropper.¹⁰ As this revelation still doesn't reckon with an eventual reader or listener, it occurs in accordance with the by now familiar associative style of the narrator.

The name he has invented for himself — Sušinskij — (cf. sušit') is suitable indeed for a vegetative being that wholly lives on water, is often thirsty and always afraid of drying out.¹¹ He turns out to be endowed with reason, a moral conscience and a sense of beauty; he also shares with us the gift of language, though he clearly has serious communicative problems (e.g. his well intended joke evokes alarmed reactions, 183). As is natural for someone who continually realizes the inadequacy of human speech, he has a low opinion of the imaginative and expressive capacities of human beings:

Все верчусь вокруг да около и метафорами пробавляюсь, а как
дойдет дело до главного — смолкаю. (189)

Metaphors and hyperboles, however, are poor substitutes for the truth. Addressing himself to his imaginary police interrogators, he says about his place of origin:

У вас даже названий таких нет, да и я сам — разложите передо мной
все имеющиеся в наличии звездные карты и планы — не найду,
честное слово не найду, куда же задевалась та великолепная точка,
из которой я родом. (187)

The whole story is thematically constructed around this hypertrophic representation of space,¹² as Andrej Kazimirovič's sense of alienation and loss — though universal emotions in themselves — here finds an expression that may be called exuberant in its scope and indefiniteness. (И в каком направлении мне надо грустить, тоже неизвестно, 187)

Even if Andrej Kazimirovič's self-revelation seems incredible for the moment, yet it fills in the existing lacunas and explains his previous conduct. His paranoia is also accounted for and even seems reasonable now. Clearly and precisely he depicts the dilemma he is faced with: should he continue to live as a pseudo-human, in constant fear of being caught, or should he admit his identity openly and accept the frightening consequences?

However, his confession makes the story more rather than less ambiguous. At this stage of the story the reader might be inclined to believe that the narrator is not just deformed but psychotic as well, yet the latter has still another, so far carefully hidden surprise in store. Secretly and with the utmost caution he carries a bucket of water from the bathroom to his private room. The security measures he takes before he gets undressed are described in detail and intensify the suspense. Now the verbal disclosure of his identity is followed by an actual disclosure: he takes off his clothes, wig and stuck-on ears and unbuckles his straps.

Мое тело раскрылось точно пальма, принесенная в свернутом виде
из магазина.

The following description of his fantastic body is so full of realistic details that it is almost impossible to interpret it only in a metaphorical or symbolic sense, or to dismiss it as mere delusion of a madman.

So far a picture has been given of a creature that is so different from us that it can hardly be described, but that at the points where it can be compared with us,

is far superior. Its language is richer and it is endowed with more and better senses. It possesses a stronger sense of objectivity, loyalty and compassion, and is free from jealousy and earthly desires. This completely non-offensive creature doesn't leave any traces of dirt behind, does harm to nobody and is not parasitic, because it does not feed itself with plants or animals. Even the tragi-comic passage in which it sings its own praise (все равно, я красив! пропорционален! изящен!, 191) does not sound so much like narcissistic self-adoration, but resembles rather the agonized cry of a person who clings to his body as to the last representation of his lost homeland. One can understand by now why it describes humans as deviant, almost fantastic creatures that are in all respects inferior to its own sort.

The last scene of the chapter confirms the narrator's vegetable nature as well as Veronika's complete misjudgment of the situation. It makes the dialogue on pp. 192-193 a comedy of errors from beginning to end. At the narrative level the deformation of the word человек is motivated by the agony that the narrator is experiencing at that moment; its tragi-comic effect is even stronger now that the reader knows the reason for his aversion to the human species. The suggestive deformation чекелов contains both чека and ловить, which makes it sound extra sinister. In this dialogue the tension between the human and non-human frame of reference is dramatized to the utmost.

In the last chapter which is the shortest and most vivid in tone, a new and final integrational series begins which consists of present observations and plans for the future. Spring has come and the narrator feels fine again. Tellingly, these two facts are not interconnected — he describes spring in the customary de-romanticizing terms (Беготня и суматоха в природе. Все в неврозе; cf. qualifications as отрывисто, визгливы, истеричны.) At the moment of writing, i.e. at discourse time, he is making arrangements to depart for a distant place where he can quietly withdraw from life. Significantly, he intends to wipe out every trace of himself and rejoices at the prospect of fading in autumn — in these respects too he is clearly not human. The incompatibility of the human perspective with his own is most striking in the conclusion: this final chord resembles a bizarre medley of exclamations in various existing and non-existing languages.

According to some critics (e.g. Cheauré: 93; 111) Andrej Kazimirovič turns his back on the world because he can no longer bear his isolation. Strictly speaking, however, this self-declared alien does not take flight from solitude but rather from unwelcome human company. To him, the situation becomes really critical from the moment he begins to notice in himself some minor adaptations to human society (влияние чужеродной среды). This elicits his alarmed reaction:

Господи! Господи! Я, кажется, становлюсь человеком! (194)

In my view, the real reason for his departure is a desire to avert the danger of losing his true identity.

The hero of *Pchenc*, like many of Terc's protagonists, is searching for an escape from an existential impasse; with it, he is one out of few who succeed — at least in a certain sense and in his own perception. It makes *Pchenc* a story with a relatively happy, albeit somewhat grotesque, ending. Indeed it would be more tragic if this colourful figure finally were to be reduced to the type of the average grey petty bourgeois.

I have mentioned earlier the shift of thematic dominance that takes place in the course of this story when the physical and psychic qualities of the narrator become increasingly important for its semantic structure. These qualities have their validity independently of the causal-temporal sequence of motifs in the action sequences (advances-retreats, attempts at unmasking.) In the last two chapters, the aspect of action does not lose its value as an element of the story, yet it becomes of secondary importance in the hierarchy of the series of motifs that constitute its thematics, and is subordinated to the dispersive series. Van der Eng remarked about this aspect of *Pchenc*:

Such a hierarchically superior chain runs through all the other chains, supplements their deficient information, actualizes their potential semantic features, sets forth new implications, and thus it ultimately reveals the essential thematic issues and determines the dominant thematic level.

In Sinjavskij's story we find an example of such a chain, which shows itself in its full force at the end of the story, when the mysteries have been solved. At that moment it begins to pervade the story in a regressive way: cf. the information about the psychological and physical identity of the "I", his aesthetic tenets, etc., all of which "explains" many of his preceding actions and pronouncements. (1978: 58)

A special word has to be added on the spatial-temporal relationships in this story, in particular on the increasing role of narrative anachronies. While the narrator's allusions to his past gradually lose their ambiguity, they also acquire more space within the text. In the first chapter he makes only brief allusions to his past. These are further developed in the second chapter, in which nearly half a page (182) is filled with recollections of the space accident he has survived and the suspicions he harbours. The revelation of his identity which fills a great deal of the third chapter is presented in the form of an "analepse mixte complète" (Genette: 101-102): here previously missing elements are in their entirety re-introduced into the text, filling in the existing lacunas. This retrospection is followed by fearful premonitions for the future. The fourth chapter includes another elaborate analepsis that is now internal: the narrator tells about his recent recovery and the

decision he has made. The tone is set by an optimistic external prolepsis consisting of sweet expectations of a peaceful retreat. Paradoxically, the last two chapters — though based on the suggestion of narrative synchronicity — are more determined by anachronies than the first two chapters which are narrated in the past tense. The temporal orders of discourse and story time almost seem to coincide, as is typical of the interior monologue and even more so of the stream of consciousness. The narrator's strained attention is focused on his own present state, as he has a definite end in view — to find a companion. In the last two chapters he uses the past, present and future tenses. The loss of his illusions prompts him to reconsider his past and future; his decision to break the present impasse and embrace the future implies in this case a return to the past.

The same temporal expansion can be traced in between the chapters, which are divided by ellipses which increase in length as the story progresses. In the ensuing chapter the ellipsis is filled in by means of an internal analepsis with consequently increasing range.¹³ The narrator avoids a mechanical employment of ellipses by filling in the lacunas at differing moments: in chapter 2 at the beginning, in chapter 3 at the beginning and the end and in chapter 4 halfway.

Range and distance of the described actions expand in accordance with those of the anachronies. In the first chapter the action's range is twelve hours at most; it might be even less, as Veronika invites Andrej Kazimirovič as soon as he comes home. The distance between discourse and story time cannot be more than one day, as the chapter opens with the word "today"; these annotations, it is implied, were written down at the end of the day.

Between the first and the second chapter there is an ellipsis of fourteen days which in the first two paragraphs is immediately filled in. The action proper (the narrator's confrontation with Veronika and Leopold Sergeevič) takes place one day before discourse time and has a range of several hours. Within an external analepsis can be found that covers a range of thirty two years. In effect, it is hard to imagine that this stream of consciousness with its effect of direct spontaneous record was written down a day later exactly in this form. To a less extent the same goes for the whole chapter, in which actions, reflections and record almost seem to coincide. Reflections are written down in both the order and the form in which they occur in the narrator's head, without any retrospective evaluation. They are evoked by passing objects and events, and disappear as soon as his attention is caught by something else.¹⁴ His fixated thoughts that never cease to whirl and never leave the reader at rest bring about the effect of a highly strung perpetuum mobile.

The second and third chapter are separated by an ellipsis of a few months. The third chapter begins, as did the second, with a short survey of what has happened in the interim. Winter has come, Veronika has married and the narrator has fallen ill. Two major analepses set the tone of this chapter. The first is the lengthy

passage in which the narrator recounts his past. Its range and distance cover 32 years, as it continues up until the moment of narration. It conforms to Genette's description of an "analepse mixte complète" — it fills in the earlier omissions, explains what until that moment was merely suggested, and effects the outcome of the story. An even more appropriate term might be Eberhard Lämmert's "Rückblick", which underlines the summarizing nature of this particular form of retrospection:

Hier wird am entscheidenden Punkt der Erzählung mit einem Blick die Summe eines vergangenen Lebens gezogen, und die Summe ist die Gegenwart. (129) ¹⁵

Andrej Kazimirovič's story indeed comprises an element of a final evaluation with far reaching consequences for the present. It is followed by a fearful anticipation which cannot be located in time. The scene with Veronika is written in the form of an analepsis as well, following upon the ellipsis Так прошло полторы недели, и НИКТО КО МНЕ НЕ ВХОДИЛ. (191) In this internal analepsis the narrator records the few minutes he is talking with Veronika. Its distance to discourse time is not specified, its range converges with the duration of the dialogue.

Between the third and fourth chapter an ellipsis of several weeks or months can be found, which the narrator immediately fills in with a short description of his recovery and present plans. Thus the story ends with a hopeful anticipation of summer and autumn, that Lämmert would term an unspecified anticipation (ungewisse Vorausdeutung) and Genette an external prolepsis, with a range and distance of roughly half a year.

The spatial relationships are in line with the described temporal development and action sequence. As the narrator increasingly withdraws from the world, his voice becomes to sound more monomaniacal. Only in the first two chapters he leaves the confines of his apartment to seek contact with people, in chapter 3 he locks himself in and in chapter 4 he definitively turns his back to the world.

The action and the narrative structure parallel this line of development. Dialogues occupy a great part of the first two chapters, but as his isolation is growing the interior monologue becomes more prominent and is less often interrupted by dialogues and realistic observations. Tellingly, the narrator definitively breaks off all contact with human society by way of a nonsensical series of exclamations which is incomprehensible for us and seems to be directed only towards himself.

In summarizing, the development of suspense in *Pchenc* can be schematized as follows. In the first two chapters, elements of alienation and the grotesque help to provide a structure of suspense by revealing the narrator's identity in a veiled form. The narrative situation contributes to this effect, as the first person interior

monologue is never interrupted or corrected by any other voice. Initially the narrator cherishes a certain hopeful expectation and stimulates the same in the reader. In the second chapter this expectation is at first increasing both for narrator and reader. It ends with an anticlimax for the narrator who now has lost his illusions, but in a still greater feeling of tension for the reader, who now knows part of the enigma of the narrator's identity. The third chapter is a nadir for the narrator (sickness and depression), but a climax for the reader, who gets to know the full facts of the situation. In the fourth chapter the narrator once again speaks in a hopeful tone; what he is joyfully looking forward to represents, however, a nadir in the reader's view.

Van der Eng distinguishes different types of oppositions, depending upon the prevalence of either similarities or dissimilarities: analogies, parallellisms, antitheses and variations. (1978: 45) It should be added that the semantic structure of a narrative may also be dominated by the device of dissonance: in *Pchenc* the disharmony of earthly reality compared with the narrator's place of origin is given foreground prominence. Throughout the story the human and non-human vision are juxtaposed and played off against one another. The consistent inversion of what is generally considered normal or abnormal, tragic or comic, desirable or undesirable, is a continual source of suspense.

After a careful examination of Terc's work, one can only thoroughly disagree with Kedrina's complaints on its allegedly primitive straightforwardness, disorder and vagueness. On the contrary, his prose may be called as condense and terse as poetry; moreover, it is equally rich in imagery. It impresses by its great inner coherence which endows even the smallest details with meaning. The sophistication of the semantic structure of *Pchenc* clearly manifests itself in the structure of suspense. I have tried to describe in what a meticulous, subtle and effective way some originally obscured facts are gradually filled in, thus creating a continually increasing tension on the level of narrative and theme.

B. Interpretations

The literary-philosophical essay *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* to which I have occasionally referred, is more than a critical analysis of the state of Russian literature at that moment; it also sets out the narrator's personal views on literary history and suggests a way out of the actual crisis. In its final section the question inscribed in the title finds an equivocal answer as the narrator argues that socialist realism, as it has developed since Majakovskij, could more appropriately be named socialist classicism:

Мы изображаем жизнь такой, какой нам хочется ее видеть и какой она обязана стать, повинувшись логике марксизма. Поэтому социалистический реализм, пожалуй, имело бы смысл назвать социалистическим классицизмом. (434)

However, this statement is not intended as an accusation or indictment per se. Even if it is true that classicism falls more easily than other movements in art into cliché's, formal conservatism and a pedantic copying of fixed prescriptions, it is not here that the narrator locates the origin of the present crisis. Art does not fear dictatorship, severity, repression, not even conservatism and cliché's:

Искусство достаточно текуче, чтобы увлечься в любое прокрустово ложе, которое ему предлагает история. Оно не терпит одного — эклектики. Наша беда в том, что мы недостаточно убежденные соц. реалисты и, подчинившись его жестоким законам, боимся идти до конца по проложенному нами самими пути. (...) Вместо того, чтобы идти путем условных форм, чистого вымысла, фантазии, которыми всегда шли великие религиозные культуры, они (i.e. socialist realist authors since Majakovskij, M.A.) стремятся к компромиссу, лгут, изворачиваются, пытаются соединить несоединимое: положительный герой, закономерно тяготеющий к схеме, к аллегории — и психологическая разработка характера; высокий слог, декламация — и прозаическое бытописание; возвышенный идеал — и жизненное правдоподобие. Это приводит к самой безобразной мешанине. (...) Это не классицизм и не реализм. Это полуклассицистическое полуискусство не слишком социалистического совсем не реализма. (442-443)

If socialist realists seriously intend to create great art and match the 19th century classics, there is only one solution:

покончить с “реализмом”, отказаться от жалких и все равно бесплодных попыток создать социалистическую “Анну Каренину” и социалистический “Вишневый сад”. Когда он потеряет несущественное для него правдоподобие, он сумеет передать величественный и неправдоподобный смысл нашей эпохи. (444)

The narrator who clearly revels in his play with contrasts and paradoxes and frequently switches his intonation and ideological point of view, nevertheless ends his essay with a straight and serious appeal that Sinjavskij called his “literary credo” at the trial:

В данном случае я возлагаю надежду на искусство фантазмагорическое с гипотезами вместо цели и гротеском взамен бытописания. Оно наиболее полно отвечает духу современности. Пусть утрированные образы Гофмана, Достоевского, Гойи и Шагала и самого социалистического Маяковского и многих других реалистов и не реалистов научат нас, как быть правдивыми с помощью нелепой фантазии. (446)

It is interesting to compare *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* with *Bez skidok*, Sinjavskij's article on contemporary science fiction literature, which was written at approximately the same time and published under his real name in the journal of the Soviet Writers' Union (Jan. 1960). Here the tone is less polemical than in *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*, the style less vivid and capricious, yet in both writings can be found some common denominators.

Bez skidok, as *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*, begins with a diagnosis of the crisis in contemporary Soviet literature, which is followed by a critical question: Why has so little science fiction of artistic stature and literary fame been written since the 1930's, i.e. since the time when socialist realism was elevated to the status of literary norm? Contemporary authors seem reluctant to give their fantasy a free rein and adhere to what is commonly regarded as realistic. Science fiction has become a boring and trivial pseudo-art as a result of their efforts to channel the imagination into the framework of moderation and good manners. Nowadays, the narrator adds not without irony, fantastic literature turns out to be less fantastic than our reality is. (19) ¹⁶

His diagnosis — a fear of accepting the consequences of the chosen form — is consonant with his earlier cited verdict *Мы боимся идти до конца по проложенному нами самими пути*. He notices the same attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable, attempts which are inevitably doomed to failure and merely result in the same eclecticism, the same lack of logic and inner cohesion that he identified earlier in socialist realism. Consequently, science fiction has become an incomplete literary genre which is expressed in the language of kitsch and is devoid of psychological depth or convincing plot. Some of the prominent ideas in *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* can also be found here. Firstly, the notion that realism and fantasy are not principally opposed; secondly, in a less articulated manner, that realism in its conventional sense does not amount to more than a standardized prescription of what reality is or ought to be, and how it should be conveyed in fiction. The term “classicism” is applicable in particular to this fossilized and normative variant of realism. Thus, in Sinjavskij's view the term realism is as overworked and misused as the earlier mentioned term truth (see Chapter III) and therefore an inadequate expression of the ideal a genuine artist strives for. In order to achieve the desired effect of verisimilitude the described

events don't have to occur in reality. Realism in science fiction is sometimes understood erroneously as the curtailment of fantasy: the less fantastic a novel, the more realistic it is. However, he continues, here obviously different relationships apply, and the degree and amount of fantasy do not mean much by themselves. (1971: 23) If a science fiction writer wishes to be convincing, he should certainly not be afraid to distance himself from reality. Credibility is essential here, and in this respect science fiction differs from fairy tales. In science fiction a natural course of events is described, set in a fantastic context. The author should provide a logical explanation for the fantastic phenomena he describes, and the plot should be true to life — in other words, it has to make sense as regards the spatial-temporal setting, inner logic and consistency of characters. Inner coherence and corresponding criteria do not essentially weaken the fantastic element. On the contrary, they strengthen and confirm it, because they warrant the text's authenticity and allow singular events to appear realistic. (24 ff) A lack of fantasy and repression of the imagination rather detract from realism, if realism is understood as authenticity, credibility. (27-28) As it seems with a certain ironic pleasure Sinjavskij provides examples of the inconsistencies and distortions that occur when authors, instead of using their fantasy to depict the fantastic, proceed to dilute it by introducing details drawn from life: inhabitants of Mars who are the spitting image of our neighbours in Soviet communal dwellings, or representatives from another planet who look exactly like some Party delegation, and are welcomed in just the same way. (24 ff) Like *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm, Bez skidok* ends with a plea for the free unrestrained fantasy, which is followed by an appeal to create a new kind of literature that will be both fantastic and true to life.

Over the course of the years Sinjavskij has held on to his conviction that the fantastic and realistic are not essentially in opposition to each other. As he remarked in an interview with *Russkaja mysl'* in 1975:

Для меня фантазия и фантастика — это способ открывания в первую очередь именно этого мира; фантастика — это путь к метафизическим основам бытия, не обязательно в потустороннем смысле, но даже в нашем повседневном существовании это поиски каких-то глубинных корней этого бытия. Фантастика — окольная дорожка к той же метафизике. Это не какая-то отдельная область по сравнению с реальностью. Это путь к реальности. (7)

Again he displayed some scepticism towards strict delineations in his reluctance to restrict the fantastic to some specific literary genre, mode or period, though he had to admit that it most prominently comes to the fore in his favourite утрированная проза. Yet such an element may be discerned in any description of an extreme situation which evokes ultimate questions, in any прорыв куда-то

“туда”. The examples he provides are Tolstoj’s later prose and Čechov’s story *Černyj monach*:

И Чехов, который всю жизнь писал, в общем, вроде изображая то, что происходит вокруг, в какой-то момент, с постановкой крайних вопросов, приблизился к пределу и вошел в область, собственно говоря — фантастики. (1976: 7)

The basic thoughts and terminology that can be found in this interview — метафизические основы бытия, прорыв куда-то туда — sound as resonances of fin de siècle idealistic religious philosophy with which Sinjavskij indeed had great affinity. Even in the courtroom he did not conceal this affinity when he declared about *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*:

Эта статья написана не с марксистских позиций и не с позиций нашей теории социалистического реализма. Может быть, это позиция ... я затрудняюсь ее определить, в общих словах — она идеалистическая. (*Belaja kniga*: 221)

To what degree Sinjavskij’s view on the fantastic dovetails with that of Vladimir Solov’ev may be illustrated by the following statement made by Solov’ev:

Существенный интерес и значение фантастического в поэзии держится на уверенности, что все происходящее в мире, и особенно в жизни человеческой, зависит, кроме своих наличных и очевидных причин, еще от какой-то другой причинности, более глубокой и многообъемлющей, но зато менее ясной. Если бы жизненная связь всего существующего была проста и прозрачна как дважды два четыре, то этим исключалось бы все фантастическое. (609)

In short, Sinjavskij-Terc emerges as a subtle observer with a keen eye for the real in the fantastic and the fantastic in the real, as an artist who considers irrational and seemingly supernatural phenomena to be some of the various aspects which constitute reality. He relates the term фантастика both to a specific set of literary themes (extreme situations, ultimate questions) as to a specific style of writing (the free associative style and composition of the утрированная проза.) Moreover, at the trial he used the term in a broader extratextual sense when he mentioned the наэлектризованная фантастическая атмосфера in the courtroom (*Belaja kniga*: 306) and declared to admire in the Russian mentality the inner urge towards spiritual freedom and fantasy (фантастичность):

Она в высоком плане проявляется, давая миру Достоевского, живопись, песни, и в низком, бытовом. (*Belaja kniga*: 227-228)

I will attempt to demonstrate in the readings that follow that Terc's vision on the fantastic in art and life is broader than Todorov's strictly intratextual genre description. In Todorov's view, the uncanny stories about irrational "unnatural" phenomena to which Terc refers do strictly speaking not pertain to the fantastic but to "l'étrange social". (138) Meanwhile Todorov makes no difference between fantastic and realistic themes as both literary modes dispose basically of the same unlimited reservoir of literary themes and motifs. There is at most a difference in intensity: "le fantastique représente une expérience des limites". (99)

In *Bez skidok*, one inconsistency that quite frequently occurs in science fiction Sinjavskij treats in greater detail: usually, extraterrestrial beings strongly resemble humans and are described wholly according to human criteria. (28-32) This assertion makes sense especially in connection with *Pchenc*, the short story that is seen by many as Terc's best contribution to science fiction. The theme of space travel and interplanetary communication that is quite common in science fiction (18) can also be found in *Pchenc*, yet it gets a highly original treatment. After having argued that the descriptions of aliens in Soviet science fiction are too anthropomorphic, Sinjavskij quotes with approval the astronomer К.Е. Циолковский (1857-1935), one of the founders of Russian space research:

Жизнь разлита во вселенной. Жизнь эта бесконечно разнообразна. Если разнообразна жизнь на Земле, при обстоятельствах сравнительно однообразных, то как бесконечно разнообразна должна быть жизнь во Вселенной, где всякие условия возможны! (56)

Unfortunately, Sinjavskij continues, this notion never seems to have occurred to modern science fiction writers. They describe extraterrestrials either as ugly in human eyes, or as beautiful in human eyes, or as neither beautiful nor ugly — once again in human eyes. Naturally, it is not the novelist's task to curtail this or that scientific view, as he has other concerns:

Нас, естественно, прежде всего волнует чисто литературная сторона вопроса — образное, сюжетное, стилевое разнообразие в решении космических и всяких иных проблем. (56)

At the time, Sinjavskij was among the very few who noticed this inconsistency and tried to fill this blank space on the map of contemporary science fiction.¹⁷ *Pchenc*

may be called a rare and successful attempt to break with the commonplace anthropocentric descriptions of non-human beings which he found so annoying. It was written in 1957, i.e. at approximately the same time he was working on *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm* and *Bez skidok*. As we have seen, its first person narrator and central character is an alien endowed with his own specific physical and mental qualities. These qualities cannot easily be verbalized, as our human expressive and imaginative faculties are unsuited to the task. The information he provides about his origin and identity would mainly consist of vague hints if the story did not go one step further, thus conveying an interesting double message. What the narrator tells about himself corresponds to Christine Brooke-Rose's category of the unreal as real, which in her view is one of the two main devices employed by writers in the fantastic genre.¹⁸ Fantastic elements are described here with the help of predominantly traditional "realistic" narrative methods. (51) In *Pchenc*, an image is presented of an alien in easily recognizable surroundings. The second device that Brooke-Rose mentions is a presentation of the real as unreal, which is in fact an elaborate form of *остранение*. In *Pchenc* this device is lavishly employed and with great originality. The fantastic element is comprised in the alienated vision on human values and behaviour, which are described from a perspective that is non-anthropocentric to the highest possible degree.

In this respect Terc goes further than other writers who have introduced unusual first person narrators (animals, children, Neanderthal men);¹⁹ further e.g. than Lev Tolstoj in *Cholstomer* (1886) and Vasilij Levšin in *Novejšee putešestvie* (1784), two stories which are narrated by a gelding and a moon-dweller respectively. It is true that *Cholstomer* from his animal perspective sees the human brutality and self-centredness just as clearly as the alien in *Pchenc*, yet his perspective is obviously human in so far as he depicts human behaviour as a deviation from a generally accepted humanistic norm. The same goes for Levšin's moon-dweller Kvalboko who, after a visit to the planet earth, exposes the numerous vices and defects of human society to his fellow "lunatists", and finally draws the fierce conclusion: "I escaped from hell".²⁰ (Linsen: 68) Terc, however, differs from traditional moralists insofar as he does not merely expose "classic" human vices such as greed, jealousy and cruelty; what is more, the alien in *Pchenc* exposes man as a creature that seems to be almost fantastic in its absurdity. In this respect the story offers a striking illustration to Todorov's characterization of the general attitude in 20th century literature and philosophy:

L'homme "normal" est précisément l'être fantastique; le fantastique devient la règle, non l'exception. (182)

In *Pchenc* this description is all the more convincing as it remains true to the inner logic of the story, in which the human is consistently presented as unnatural and

the non-human as natural as seen from the point of view of this particular narrator. Accordingly, the basic requirements that Sinjavskij himself sets for science fiction are firmly complied with: firstly, inner coherence and corresponding criteria which facilitate the creation of a dynamic plot that is rich in action, situations and ideas; and secondly, characters that are described in some detail and thus become individualized and well recognizable. (33)

Todorov proposes a theory of fantastic literature as a separate literary genre, which is based mainly on the reader's uncertainty as regards the state of affairs described in the text:

L'ambiguïté se maintient jusqu'à la fin de l'aventure: réalité ou rêve? vérité ou illusion? (29)

Le fantastique occupe le temps de cette incertitude; dès qu'on choisit l'une ou l'autre réponse, on quitte le fantastique pour entrer dans un genre voisin, l'étrange ou le merveilleux. (29)

J'en vins presque à croire — voilà la formule qui résume l'esprit du fantastique. (35)

In accordance with Todorov's model a fantastic as well as a realistic interpretation can be made of *Pchenc*. If we assume that the narrator definitely IS a being from another planet who unwillingly presents to the reader a satirical picture of humans, we read the story as belonging to the genre that Todorov calls "fantastique-merveilleux" or "surnaturel accepté". Here the reader is invited to accept even the most astonishing fantasy:

Le fantastique nous met devant un dilemme: croire ou pas? Le merveilleux réalise cette union impossible, proposant au lecteur de croire sans croire vraiment. (88)

If we opt for this interpretation, however, we slightly weaken the satirical element by the overemphatic unreal quality that is inherent in this genre of fairy tales and science fiction. For that reason Jackson, in commenting on Todorov's theory, calls the genre of the marvellous predominantly escapist and conservative,²¹ in contrast to the fantastic genre in its pure form which she characterizes as a literature of subversion. (1-10)

If one opts for a realistic interpretation, the story can be read as belonging to the genre that Todorov calls "fantastique-étrange" or "surnaturel expliqué". Here the supernatural element — in *Pchenc* it is the narrator's fantastic identity — eventually finds a realistic explanation (e.g. dream, illusion, madness). The hero,

then, is not an alien but merely a deformed psychotic, tormented by strange fantasies about himself, his past and the world around him. Even the detailed description of what his body looks like and how it functions could be explained, admittedly with some difficulty, in terms of the distorted perception of reality of a sick mind.

This is e.g. the interpretation of A. Field, who consequently refers to the narrator as “the hunchback” and “the madman”. He places the story in the same lineage as another celebrated confession of a madman in Russian literature:

One thinks also — because Tertz’s narrator is not only (or perhaps not at all) a visitor from another world, but also a madman — of Gogol’s classic psychotic fantasy, *Notes of a Madman*, in which the protagonist retreats not to another planet, but to a delusional kingship in Spain. (1966: 17)

In this same article he interprets Andrej Kazimirovič’s longing for a friend and revulsion against the female body as proof of his latent homosexuality, his narcissism and castration complex. The flaw of a similar “realistic” interpretation is its all too serious, completely anthropomorphic perspective including the connected stereotypes. The realistic interpretation does not only weaken the fantastic, but the satirical element as well. How seriously, after all, should one take the point of view of a madman? Already in 1899 the flaw in a similar interpretation was recognized by Solov’ev:

В подлинно фантастическом всегда оставляется внешняя, формальная возможность простого объяснения из обыкновенной всегдашней связи явлений, причем, однако, это объяснение окончательно лишается внутренней вероятности. (610)

Nevertheless, the fantastic as well as the realistic approach are possible until and even after the end, as the story does not provide any definitive answer about the facts of the matter. On a second reading, when the reader knows the narrator’s identity beforehand, the grotesque and alienating motifs scattered throughout the text combine to intensify what Todorov calls “l’effet fantastique” (28-45): they seem to validate a disclosure that initially sounds incredible, without entirely removing our doubts. It allows *Pchenc* to fit to a considerable degree into Todorov’s theoretic model of a fantastic story.

However, it remains open to question whether the fantastic and realistic elements can be as sharply separated as Todorov attempts to do in the examples with which he illustrates his thesis. Sinjavskij’s earlier quoted statement seems pertinent here: “Фантастика — это не какая-то отдельная область по сравнению с реальностью”. Todorov appears to be aware of this problem as he

states emphatically that his theory of the fantastic genre is just applicable over a relatively short period that has come to a close: from Cazotte (end of the 18th century) up to Maupassant. Meanwhile, in 20th century literature the fantastic has rather become the norm than a deviation from the norm. Todorov therefore speaks of “fantastique généralisé”: “le monde entier du livre et le lecteur lui-même y sont inclus”. (182) Now the reader’s hesitation has become unnecessary and is replaced by the reader’s adaptation. Thus, contemporary fantastic realism makes an impossible alliance, combining the horror of the uncanny with the full acceptability of the marvellous.

Todorov is not the only theoretician of the fantastic who has taken Franz Kafka’s *Die Verwandlung* as an example. In Kafka’s fantastic-realistic universe the fantastic events seem fully acceptable, for which reason Günther mentions this story as an example of how fantasy and reality become increasingly entwined:

Im Grotesken wechseln die Darstellungsebenen des Realistischen und Phantastischen nicht nur miteinander ab, sondern werden ineinander geschoben, und zwar so, dass das Phantastische auf die Ebene der Realität projiziert, für Realität ausgegeben wird, wie das z.B. in Gogol’s *Nase* oder in Kafka’s *Verwandlung* der Fall ist. (30) ²²

In line with Sinjavskij’s more integrated view is the position taken by Kathryn Hume, who explicitly engages in a polemic with Todorov. In her view, the theoretical concept of the fantastic genre proposed by Todorov and even the much broader notions of other theoreticians are still too rigid and limited; she deliberately opts for a description that is as broad and flexible as possible.²³ According to her, the fantastic is often mistakenly treated as a marginal phenomenon that can best be described in isolation and defined in negative terms, i.e. as a deviation from the dominant realistic or mimetic impulse. In fact, however, fantasy and mimesis cannot be viewed separately, as both impulses are involved in the creation of most literature, and as such constantly present. (XII 20-22)

The various neo-Freudian critics seem to share this view. They point out that the so-called creative imagination does not, strictly speaking, discover or invent anything; instead of creating a new world it rather rearranges and recombines elements taken from real existence, with the result that something strange and apparently completely “new” comes into being. As Jackson puts it briefly: “Fantasy recombines and inverts the real, but it does not escape it”. (20) This remark is in accordance with Sinjavskij’s statement in *Bez skidok*:

Давно известно, что фантазия черпает материал в действительности, что самый удивительный вымысел конструируется всегда из элементов нашего мира. (54)

Apart from the mentioned fantastic and realistic readings that conform to Todorov's model, a third reading is possible that might be called satirical or symbolic. Here both the fantastic and realistic elements are recognized as such and respected for what they are, but in addition the fantastic is understood in a figurative sense and linked to extratextual reality. In doing so, we situate the text somewhere in between the marvellous and the allegory, at the same location where Todorov — with reservation — situated *Nos*.²⁴ A similar approach seems most pertinent to the case, as it enables one to follow Terc closely on his путь к реальности. In *Pchenc*, the emphasis on the fundamental alienation of the narrator in the human situation into which fate has cast him can have a symbolic value for the situation of the individual outsider who has to live in a hostile and philistine society. More precisely, the story may be read as a symbolic expression of the plight of the Soviet intellectual who feels tormented by the dilemma of an official and a private identity. It depicts, then, the shadowy existence of the interior emigration, as well as a mental atmosphere in which the Other is equated with a monster. Tellingly, Sinjavskij referred specifically to this hero during his closing speech at the trial:

Вот у меня в неопубликованном рассказе “Пхенц” есть фраза, которую я считаю автобиографической: “Подумаешь, если я просто другой, так уж сразу ругаться ...” Так вот: я другой. Но я не отношу себя к врагам, я советский человек, и мои произведения — не вражеские произведения. (306)

His prosecutors thought differently and appeared to be touchy especially about this symbolic dimension of his writings. As we have seen in Chapter II, they considered them as libellous attacks on public morality, good taste, common sense, the literary canon, womanhood and mankind. There is no denying the fact that one finds in *Pchenc* several allusions to the Russian classics, often with a satirical undertone. It prompted Kedrina to accuse the author of plagiarism (“все из чужих книг”, 113) and to fulminate against his foreign admirers who had drawn parallels with Dostoevskij. In her turn she compared Sinjavskij with one of Dostoevskij's most odious personages, Smerdjakov. (111-112) The response of the judge and prosecutor demonstrates as well how hard satirical references to the literary classics are taken in a society in which the prevailing habit is to speak about them in a reverent, almost bombastic tone.²⁵

To name one thing, the concluding passages of *Pchenc* show great resemblance to Vsevolod Garšin's *Krasnyj cvetok*. At the end of both stories the protagonist, a social outcast who is allegedly insane, turns to the stars in the nocturnal sky anticipating his own death:

Я иду к вам, — прошептал он, глядя на небо (Garšin: 260)

cf. И в летнем небе — много звезд. (...) Какая-нибудь да моя. О родина! Пхенц! (...) Я иду к тебе. (Terc: 195)

Moreover, Andrej Kazimirovič's vegetable nature may be seen as a reference to Rozanov, whose favourite metaphor for poetry and the poet was the tree-trunk. (Sinjavskij: *Opavšie list'ja V.V. Rozanova*: 7) If viewed in this context, Andrej Kazimirovič's lyrical exclamation неописуемо прекрасное Пхенц осеняет мой ствол (189) is more than just a grotesque image.²⁶

A. Field posits a relationship between *Pchenc* and a poem of Fedor Sologub, in which a first person narrator sings of his longing for a distant planet that is much more beautiful than the earth. (1966: 17) A possible reference to Levšin's *Novejšee putešestvie* I have mentioned already.

Some of these references touch upon social-cultural stereotypes and taboos. For instance, the description of Veronika's naked body may be called plainly pornographic when judged in the light of the standards of that time. Moreover, the failed love scene between Andrej Kazimirovič and Veronika can be read in its entirety as a caricature of romantic literary conventions, possibly even as a grotesque distortion of Puškin's *Evgenij Onegin* (passionate, generous young girl offers her love in vain to a hesitating defensive man). Greedy and lascivious Veronika is typical for Terc's female characters, the majority of whom resemble modern versions of Gogolesque witches (Cheauré).²⁷ Another romantic cliché that is treated with a parodistic undertone is the yearning for one's lost youth and distant motherland, which both represent an idealized state of purity and happiness. Last but not least the story can be understood as a satire on the lip service that is paid by Soviet ideology to humanism. It sets a question mark over the obligatory extolling of humanity, of human values and capacities, and points out the hypocrisy of this lip service in contemporary Soviet society, which had only recently begun to recover from a lengthy period of unprecedented terror in the name of these same humanistic ideals. In a way that may appear provocative indeed, Abram Terc makes a mockery of the current way of reasoning in which terms such as "human" and "humanistic" stand by definition for the highest possible praise. Thus he proposes, inspired by the generic possibilities of science fiction, a non-human point of view as being reasonable and legitimate in its own right.

Veronika's monologue in which the word человек undergoes a parodistic deformation will remind a Russian reader of the all too familiar passage from Maksim Gor'kij's *Na dne*:

Все в человеке, все для человека! Существует только человек, все же остальное — дело его рук и его мозга! Чело-век! Это — великолепно! Это звучит ... гордо! Че-ло-век! Надо уважать человека! (177) ²⁸

In his study on Rozanov Sinjavskij referred with full approval to this beloved author who, too, disliked the inflated self-image of the human race:

При всей своей доброте к человеку (именно к отдельному человеку, а не к человечеству вообще), Розанов никогда бы не мог так сказать: “Человек — это звучит гордо”. Он бы скорее сказал: человек — это звучит мелко и ничтожно. Или — гадко. Но именно поэтому нужно его пожалеть и запечатлеть его как бедную и в то же время драгоценную мелочь. (237)

The following aphorism from *Mysli vrasploch* also appears to be an echo of Rozanov both in letter and spirit. It has serious implications in spite of its lightness:

Довольно твердить о человеке. Пора подумать о Боге. (87)

The fierce reaction of Sinjavskij's opponents may be taken as an indication that to them these social-cultural prescriptions and prohibitions had a distinctly political-ideological dimension. The fact that they accused him of анти-гуманность cannot, however, be explained by ideological bias only. As Jackson points out, traditionally the fantastic has been associated with the non-human and barbaric, for which reason it was exiled to the edges of literary culture. (172) Against these accusations Sinjavskij put forward the artist's right to create and describe from his personal viewpoint. In *Golos iz chora* Terc wrote admiringly about Jonathan Swift, who in *Gulliver's Travels* submitted man to a merciless vivisection. He concluded that

На свете нет не интересных предметов, доколе существует художник, во все вперяющий взор с непониманием тупицы. (25)

One aspect has so far remained unnoticed by critics. *Pchenc* may as well be placed in a mythological-historical context, as its hero shows some resemblance to the

traditional Russian image of the юродивый. Of old, the holy fool is represented as repulsive in outward appearance and uncompromising in his notion of virtue and truth. It makes him a typical outcast, persecuted, mocked and dismissed as crazy, while he in his turn mocks everything that is commonly regarded as respectable, reasonable and important. Another conventional device in Russian hagiographical writings starting with the 16th century legend of Prokopij Ustjužskij is that the holy fool is a stranger coming from far who has lost his homeland forever. Georgij Fedotov writes on the above mentioned Prokopij:

... идет по градам и весям, непроходимым лесам и болотам, взыскуя древнего погибшего отечества. (202)

cf. Отвержение родины есть аскетический подвиг, особенно связанный с юродством. (205)²⁹

One cannot help comparing Andrej Kazimirovič's distant homeland with the image of a kingdom of heaven, which represents both place of origin and ardently longed-for destination to a believing mind. The fact that Terc's version of the holy fool is trapped in the limitations of modern industrial society can be seen as a hidden protest against the disreputable disenchantment of the world and the loss of traditional spiritual values in life and art — both themes that Terc touches on in several of his works. (cf. the mermaids (русалки) in *Kvartiranty* perish in the municipal water-supply system, the narrator of this story is a домовый). However, there is a marked difference as well. In the past — particularly in the 16th century which Fedotov characterizes as the golden age of юродство — the holy fool was a public personality who openly protested against the cruelty of secular rulers and the decline of moral and spiritual values. However, this precisely is what Terc's hero does not venture to do. He is condemned to the shadowy existence of a holy fool in disguise, i.e. is trapped in a romantic-modern state of aporia.

Finally it should be noted that if we opt for this allegoric-symbolic reading, we ascribe a broader significance to the term “allegory” than Todorov does. According to the latter, allegory exists parallel to, but definitely separate from, the fantastic genre and its kindred genres, “l'étrange” and “le merveilleux”:

L'allégorie implique l'existence d'au moins deux sens pour les mêmes mots; ce double sens est indiqué dans l'oeuvre de manière explicite. (68)

Il faut insister sur le fait qu'on ne peut parler d'allégorie à moins d'en trouver des indications explicites à l'intérieur du texte. Sinon, on passe à la simple interprétation du lecteur; et dès lors il n'existerait pas de texte littéraire qui

ne soit allégorique, car c'est le propre de la littérature d'être interprétée par ses lecteurs, sans fin. (79)

However, in his craving for terminological clarity Todorov creates a new problem that is caused by the impreciseness of the terms “explicit indications”. How explicit an indication needs to be in order to justify in Todorov’s view an allegoric reading? *Pchenc* e.g. has been called an allegory by more than one critic,³⁰ though hardly any explicit indication will be found in it. Angus Fletcher proposes a definition of allegory that is more flexible as it puts more emphasis on the role of the reader. He sees allegory as a fundamental process of encoding, that is based on a parallel between two levels of being that correspond to each other, one supposed by the reader, the other literally presented in the tale. So the participation of an alert perceptive reader is crucial in Fletcher’s definition, which forms an interesting link to the context of Russian fantastic literature. Since in Russia freedom of expression has traditionally been limited, literature — whether fantastic or mimetic — became the main platform where social-political questions could be discussed in a more or less veiled form. As a result, the 19th and 20th century Russian reader became an expert in perceiving double-entendres and reading between the lines. He does not need Todorov’s explicit indications to understand a literary text in a figurative sense. It is not a coincidence then, that in Russian fantastic literature the satirical element used to be stronger than in its European counterpart,³¹ and that Russian readers and critics have traditionally emphasized its supposed implicit political message. It also explains why in the Soviet period especially this genre suffered most from censorship and persecution, with the result that it had almost ceased to exist by the time that Sinjavskij-Terc started to write.

Notes

- 1 Kedrina's speech was published as an article in the *Literaturnaja Gazeta* no. 10, 22 Jan. 1966, entitled 'Nasledniki Smerdjakova'.
- 2 B.M. Ejchenbaum's description of skaz is centred upon the установка на устную речь. (see B.A. Uspenskij, *Poetika kompozicii*: 30, note 2.) However, Uspenskij himself — more in line with M.M. Bachtin and V.V. Vinogradov — regards the установка на чужую речь as the essential feature of skaz.
- 3 Though both terms indicate a fragmentary, semicoherent, impressionistic representation of speech, there is a gradual difference between them. The interior monologue is seriated in terms of language, logic and chronology, and is therefore comprehensible on a first reading; the stream of consciousness is not seriated in these respects, or only to a much lesser extent, and is therefore not completely comprehensible on a first reading. See e.g. *Pchenc*, p. 182, where both techniques appear in alternation. In both cases there is no question of authorial intervention.
- 4 I derive some terms from Gérard Genette's influential study *Figures III* (1972) in which anachronies are described as "les différentes formes de discordance entre l'ordre de l'histoire et celui du récit". (79) (cf. German "erzählte Zeit", "Erzählzeit".) Anachronies can be divided into prolepses and analepses. The former comprises "toute manoeuvre narrative consistant à raconter ou évoquer d'avance un événement ultérieur", the latter "toute évocation après coup d'un événement antérieur au point de l'histoire où l'on se trouve". (82)
- 5 In my view, the omissions van der Eng aims at, concur with Genette's term "paralipse", being "l'omission d'un des éléments constitutifs de la situation, dans une période en principe couverte par le récit". The paralipse, the thematic omission, has to be distinguished from the ellipse, the temporal omission. (92-93)
- 6 These reflections on a possible divine hierarchy of the parts of the human body (p. 175, lines 5-16) are somewhat reminiscent of Rozanov. In *Opavšie list'ja V.V. Rozanova* Sinjavskij paraphrases Rozanov's ideas as follows: "А придатки лица, как бы наши недоразвившиеся лица — это наши руки, точнее сказать, ладони, и ступни ног. (...) Значит, окончания наших рук и — в меньшей степени ног — это зачаточные лица. Человек подобен растению. И у него, по крайней мере, пять цветков. Ступни, руки и, наконец, самое главное — лицо. Итак, лицо это и Бог, и пол, и наше 'Я'." (34)
- 7 He, in his turn, was upset by her hot fingers (Я дернулся, как от ожога). Indeed, all mammals have a high and constant body temperature, whereas the vegetable temperature adapts itself to its environment.
- 8 Hans Günther in *Das Groteske bei N.V.Gogol'* (1968) joins Kayser in his statement that these "Verdinglichung" und "Belebung" constitute, with the

alogisms, the main characteristics of the grotesque style. (42-65) Kayser does not make a clear distinction between the grotesque and the fantastic. In his view, the grotesque is an attempt to exorcize the demonic aspects of life, which attempt stems from a sense of alienation and loss, an awareness of the absurdity of existence. However, the same could be said of the fantastic; see for an illuminating survey of this terminological problem Neil Cornwell 1988: 3-5. Unless stated otherwise, I will use the terms “fantasy, fantastic” in the sense that Sinjavskij-Terc ascribes to them. I will use the term “alienating” in the sense of “showing in an unusual light, presenting an unfamiliar picture that creates a distance between the text and the author/reader”. I will use the term “grotesque” in the sense of “extravagant, creating a distorted, at times ridiculous impression by means of strange associations”. For instance, the pronoun их (their) in the sentence меня издавна волновала проблема пола, играющая первостепенную роль в их умственной и нравственной жизни (180) creates an effect of alienation, but is not grotesque. The metaphors applied to describe Veronika’s naked body, however, may freely be called grotesque.

- 9 A similar effect of reification (Verdinglichung) is obtained by phrases as стоит ли (...) возбуждать к себе повышенный интерес не нашедшей применения девушки? (177); Вероника обиделась на меня после того инцидента, когда она предложила самое лучшее, с человеческой точки зрения, что у нее в запасе имелось, а я вместо этого пошел гулять. (189)
- 10 In the next chapter the narrator suggests that his notes are at most intended for another non-human creature like himself; once he has given up all hope to find any of them, he decides to destroy these notes. With the pronoun “you” in Я красивее вас и нормальнее (189) he addresses imaginary visitors to the museum. Terc’s *Gololedica* also consists of interior monologue, yet here the narrator is addressing future readers, which makes the narrative situation unlike that in *Pchenc*.
- 11 Comment made by Hans Driessen in his graduation thesis (unpublished).
- 12 Comparably, *Gololedica* is constructed around a hypertrophic image of time.
- 13 “Une anachronie peut se porter, dans le passé ou dans l’avenir, plus ou moins loin du moment ‘présent’, c’est-à-dire du moment de l’histoire où le récit s’est interrompu pour lui faire place: nous appellerons portée de l’anachronie cette distance temporelle. Elle peut aussi couvrir elle-même une durée d’histoire plus ou moins longue: c’est ce que nous appellerons son amplitude”. (Genette: 89)
- 14 Pp. 181-182 may serve as an example. After having escaped from Veronika’s clutches, Andrej Kazimirovič walks through the streets pondering over the ugliness of human beings. His musings are directed elsewhere when he reaches Herzen street where Leopold Sergeevič lives. Now his thoughts turn to the latter, to his own suspicions and dependency. These musings are interrupted at their turn when he reaches Leopold’s house.

- 15 In *Bauformen des Erzählens* (1950), the term “Rückwendung” is used as general designation for retrospection/analepsis. Apart from the mentioned “Rückblick” Lämmert singles out the “Rückgriff” (“Rückwendung in den fortschreitenden Handlungsfluss selbst”) and the “Rückschritt”, which describes the events that have taken place before the beginning of the action proper. (122) The terms “Rückgriff” and “Rückschritt” roughly correspond with Genette’s internal resp. external analepsis. The “auflösende” and “aufbauende Rückwendung” cf. the Russian развязка and завязка.
- 16 Sinjavskij’s critical observation sounds like an echo of Dostoevskij’s assertion made hundred years earlier: “Совершенно другие я понятия имею о действительности и реализме, чем наши реалисты и критики ... (...) Ихним реализмом — сотой доли реальных, действительно случившихся фактов не объяснишь”. (Letter to A.N. Majkov, 11 Dec. 1868) Dostoevskij meant by “fantastic” such real phenomena as the misery of St. Petersburg slums or the political terrorism of his time. At the same time he underlined that much reality lay hidden in his fantasies. As van der Eng wrote in *Dostoevskij romancier. Rapports entre sa vision du monde et ses procédés littéraires* (1957): “Nous savons avec quel génie Dostoevskij a su faire vivre dans ses grands romans les faits et événements ‘fantastiques’ de son temps, des événements qui étaient pourtant d’une indéniable réalité. (...) Certes, quelques faits étaient encore exceptionnels, mais pouvaient d’un jour à l’autre devenir des réalités accablantes. Aussi attaquait-il la critique qui ne voyait dans ses romans que des phantasmagories complètement étrangères à la réalité russe”. (56)
- 17 In an essay written at about the same time (the late sixties) the Dutch writer Rudy Kousbroek expressed the view that in modern science fiction one rarely finds descriptions of a futuristic fictitious state of mind, i.e. of creatures who think and react quite differently than we do at this place and moment. Though in principle such a description is well conceivable, the existing science fiction cinema and literature he found surprisingly poor in this respect. (*Het avondrood der magiërs*: 139)
- 18 Though Brooke-Rose’s categories show some resemblance to Kayser’s statement that in fantastic literature the natural is presented as unnatural and vice versa (see IV a) she does not mention Kayser.
- 19 In *Fantasy and mimesis* Kathryn Hume mentions in this connection Jack London, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and William Golding (135-136).
- 20 See Manu Linsen’s interesting article ‘De allerlaatste reis van Vasili Ljovsjin. Een achttiende-eeuws maçonniek reisverhaal’, in: *Ex oriente utopia. Utopisch denken in de Russische literatuur*.
- 21 “Fantasies moving towards the realm of the ‘marvellous’ are the ones which have been tolerated and widely disseminated socially”. (173) In her view, much “high fantasy” and romance (Tolkien) are merely conservative vehicles for social and instinctual repression. (155)

- 22 Günther paraphrases and concurs with G. Mensching's theory, as elaborated in his dissertation *Das Grotteske im modernen Drama* (Diss.Bonn, 1961). A serious objection he raises to Todorov's theory concerns its inability to predict hypothetically possible developments, as it is only relevant for the short period mentioned. Works such as Gogol's *Nos* and Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* cannot satisfactorily be placed into Todorov's model. (see also Brooke-Rose: 62-68 and Cornwell's response 28-30)
- 23 It should be stressed, however, that Todorov and Hume use the term "fantastic literature" differently. Whereas Todorov understands it as a dated formal genre, Hume calls it a general "impulse", specific to a wide range of literature belonging to different genres, styles and periods. (see also Cornwell: 19-23)
- 24 The mentioned reservation is that Todorov actually regards *Nos* as a pseudo-allegory (*allégorie illusoire*), because Gogol' endows his story with a deliberately nonsensical ending and thus makes it "l'incarnation pure de l'absurde". (77-78)
- 25 In later years Terc's personal satirical approach to literature would provoke similar indignation in émigré circles, notably after the publication of *Progulki s Puškinym* in 1975. (see Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 22-34)
- 26 Terc elaborates on this metaphor in his opening aphorism in *Golos iz chora*: "Книга, имеющая множество сюжетов при одном стволе, которая растет, как дерево, обнимая пространство целостной массой листвы и воздуха, — как легкие изображают собой перевернутую форму дерева — способная дышать, раздаваясь вширь почти до бесконечности и тут же сжимаясь до точки, смысл которой непостижим, как душа в ее последнем зерне". (7)
- 27 Cheauré's feminist interpretation so abounds in sympathy for Veronika that it almost seems as if it was written by Veronika herself: "Veronika's Gefühle gegenüber Andrej sind echt und ehrlich, auch wenn sie — wie sich später herausstellt — Liebe und Mitleid verwechselt". (48) Here Cheauré seems to disregard the intentionally comic effect brought on by the consistent discrepancy between the view of narrator and character.
- 28 Cf. Veronika's words: "Полюбила ... человека ... человеческим ... человечность ... как человек человеку ..." "Вероника Григорьевна", — перебил я ее, не в силах терпеть более. — "Прошу вас. Поскорее. Воды". — "Человек ... векочел ... кеволеч ... человек ..." "Воды! Воды!" (192-193)
Sinjavskij knew Gor'kij's oeuvre very well. In 1952 he completed his dissertation on Gor'kij's novel *Žizn' Klīma Samgina*.
- 29 "Необычное обилие 'Христа ради юродивых', или 'блаженных' в святцах русской церкви и высокое народное почитание юродства до последнего времени, действительно, придает этой форме христианского подвижничества национальный русский характер. Юродивый так же необходим для русской церкви, как

секуляризованное его отражение, Иван-дурак, — для русской сказки”. (Fedotov: 200) See also Sinjavskij’s *Ivan-durak. Očer’k russkoj narodnoj very* (1991).

- 30 “*Pchenc* is not only one of Sinjavskij’s best contributions to science fiction, but also one of his best allegories”; “In *Pchenc* Sinjavskij continues an age-old allegorical tradition”. (W.F. Kolonosky: 325, 334, see also 335 note 1.)
- 31 “Die Unterordnung des Grotesken unter die Satire ist in der sowjetischen Literaturwissenschaft die Regel, soweit man der Kategorie des Grotesken überhaupt Beachtung schenkt”. (Günther: 13, see also 40) In Günther’s study the terms “grotesque” and “fantastic” seem to be interchangeable.

CHAPTER V: SUSPENSE IN *LJUBIMOV*

A. Introduction

Ljubimov, the chronicle of an abortive attempt made by the young bicycle mechanic Lenja Tichomirov to realize a utopia in his home town, served as a major corpus delicti during the trial.¹ This complex story that evoked such extreme and contradictory reactions is a mosaic of surrealistic narration and metaliterary contemplation, full of unexpected turns in the plot and shifts in point of view. Ambiguities can be found on every narrative level, much remains vague and suggestive until the very end. The mystifications are not only related to the course of events, but also to the identity of the narrator(s) and to the narrative situation as a whole. The following questions arise: What did happen? Who is the addresser, who the addressee? What implications do these points have for the relationship between text and context? The text itself does not give any answer. On the plot level it displays a series of unmotivated actions combined with plain improbabilities that at times almost imperceptibly pass into the realm of the fantastic. At the end the reader is left with the question what to make of Lenja Tichomirov's ill-fated experiment, of the unstable central narrator and the narrative situation as a whole. The point here is not a more or less traditional question as to the degree of reliability and knowledge of some particular narrator, but the intentionally fragmentary nature of the majority of Terc's characters. They seem to be unsettled and versatile, imprecise and elusive; some of them suffer from a reality- as well as an identity crisis, whereas others remain two-dimensional and puppet-like. As a result they are hard to define psychologically — they are lacking in definite traits and essential characteristics just like the characters of Zamjatin and Pil'njak. It stands to reason that their profile has direct bearing on the reach and content of what they are saying.

I think that the narrator-chronicler Savelij plays a central role. The formulated questions which are crucial for the story's suspense — “what did actually happen” and “who is the narrator” — are prompted by his report and comment. Given his relatively strong position as “intermédiaire narratif” (van der Eng) I consider him as being a more complex and influential person than it has generally been supposed. Even if it is true that he often feels controlled by the second narrator Samson, and that at times he is relegated to the footnotes by the latter, he nevertheless is the agent who determines which information will reach the reader, he initiates and closes the chronicle and occupies in the meantime almost every imaginable narrative position for a longer or shorter period.

I intend to describe these positions, i.e. the ways in which the shifts in tone, shape and points of view acquire relief in the context of the interplay of narrative

voices. Apart from van der Eng's earlier mentioned model (see Chapter IV), I will use Boris Uspenskij's sophisticated model for the analysis of narrative texts. It is based on the distinction of differing points of view — on the level of ideology, phraseology, spatial-temporal relationships and psychology — and was of great help in recognizing and discerning the voices of Savelij and Samson. In his introduction Uspenskij explains his basic premise and method as follows:

Предполагается, что структуру художественного текста можно описать, если исследовать различные точки зрения, то есть авторские позиции, с которых ведется повествование (описание), и исследовать отношение между ними (определить их совместимость или несовместимость, возможные переходы от одной точки зрения к другой, что в свою очередь связано с рассмотрением функций использования той или иной точки зрения в тексте.) (10-11)

I intend to follow Uspenskij's model with only one reservation. During his interrogation at the trial Sinjavskij made two statements that in my view cannot be misunderstood or ignored:

В Любимове нет авторской речи (231)

and

Вся повесть написана от лица персонажей (233).

Therefore I decided to take these words seriously and to keep the author outside the scope of this analysis. I will concentrate instead upon the interaction of narrative voices within the text, i.e. upon the voices of the two — according to some interpreters three — narrators, the interaction between them and the relationships they engage into with other characters. The role of the concrete respectively abstract author will be the subject of the second part of this chapter.

I will discuss existing interpretations only in so far as they touch on the narratological issues in question: that of Deming Brown (1970), Margaret Dalton (1973), Alexander Woronzoff (1983), Vladimir Alexandrov (1984) and Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy (1995).

Preface

This Preface begins with a descriptive introduction which is followed by a predominantly narrative and a metanarrative section. The opening page (279) offers a global description of the provincial town Ljubimov and its environs; in the

following pages (280-282) it is narrated how two interesting guests — Serafima and the old professor of archeology — visit the town; at the final pages (282-285) the narrator is musing on abstract issues such as the relationship between literature and reality, the role of author and reader and the risks and joys of the profession of letters. The tone of this chapter is set by skaz-narration in the style of Zoščenko, alternated with artificial quasi-literary speech, official Soviet jargon and archaic-mythological vocabulary.² As a result of its loose hybrid form the Preface resembles a collection of spontaneous utterances rather than an objective well-considered chronicle, especially towards its end. Just like *Pchenc*, the style of *Ljubimov* brings to mind Aleksandr Genis's witty observation

Синявский пишет не роман, а черновик романа. (281)

Anachronies and omissions call forth the two central questions which will create suspense throughout the story: What actually happened? and Who is the narrator? The anachronies consist of anticipations of the primary action sequence — the rise and fall of Lenja Tichomirov's utopian experiment in *Ljubimov*. The most striking omissions can be found in the characterization of the leading personages, especially in that of the anonymous first person narrator who does not care to introduce himself to the reader.

A few words should be added about the spatial and temporal relationships in this Preface. The first page offers a global sketch of the town, its inhabitants and environs; here the narrator's ambivalence towards his place of origin can be read between the lines. His conversation with Serafima takes place in the municipal library, whereas he meets the professor near the ruins of the local monastery. In the last four pages he appears to be sitting behind his writing desk at home.

The arrival of the two influential guests which marks the beginning of the story time is described without regard for the logical-chronological order: first the arrival of Serafima one or two years ago, subsequently the visit of the professor thirty-four years ago. At least a year has passed between Serafima's first visit and the moment the narrator starts to write his chronicle, as it may be derived from the indication в позапрошлый сезон — еще до событий. (279) It may be concluded that Serafima arrived at the end of 1957, that Lenja's experiment took place in the middle of 1958 (see note 1, p. 285) and that the narrator's present (discourse time) has to be situated near the end of the summer of 1959.

The mystification of the plot

The Preface contains several anticipations of the primary action sequence, which by their incompleteness produce a strong effect of suspense. These anticipations may refer to "normal" events (здесь (...) все и началось ... но помолчим! 283)

as well as to the possible intrusion of magical forces upon the course of events (МОЖЕТ, КАК И ВЕСЬ ЭТОТ МИЛЫЙ ЗАКОЛДОВАННЫЙ ГОРОД ... 284).

Initially, the action proper can hardly be called fantastic. It develops along two parallel, though not synchronous, lines: Serafima and the professor visit Ljubimov and astonish the inhabitants, the narrator most of all. He indicates in advance that the two visitors will set events in motion — the professor stimulates the narrator to write his memoirs, Serafima will later (Chapter 2) inspire Lenja to realize his grandiose project. On the first page it is the language rather than the plot which introduces a fantastic element in the form of fanciful associations with bisons, tapirs and giraffes (279), vague rumours about a pterodactyl (279)³ and allusions to strange events and coincidences, such as the excavation of the skeleton of a tusked monk (281) or the accidents which took place after the chapel had been blown up. Although the narrator firmly dismisses such irrational links as sheer fantasy, he cannot obliterate the suggestion that some mysterious and uncontrollable forces are at work here. This somewhat uncanny suggestion will gradually become stronger and finally affect the reader as well.

In the last pages (282-285) the action proper comprises a fantastic element. The narrator starts writing his chronicle, but he suddenly feels impeded by some external force. At this early stage, however, these strange interferences can still be rationally explained — this is an unexperienced writer, who is struggling with the proper form to start his chronicle. Following this line of thought, his sense of being guided by the same invisible hand which directs the events he intends to describe, may be taken as resulting from his inner uncertainty. Meanwhile the ensuing complaints about his deranged mind and the fear of losing control make him an unreliable narrator from the very beginning. Both chains of actions — the narrator is writing his chronicle, Lenja is manipulating the course of events — can be traced throughout the story, at times interwoven, at times apart.

The mystification of the narrator

The information which the narrator supplies about himself makes up a dispersive series consisting of direct and indirect data. It may be derived from them that he is a man (viz. the past tenses of the verbs), more precisely a widower with a married daughter. He works as a librarian in the local library and likes to read. He appears to be a womanizer whose hobbies are playing the guitar and riding a bicycle. About his outward appearance the reader only learns that he is balding. His comment on the inhabitants, visitors and social setting of Ljubimov may be regarded as indicative for his ideological and psychological point of view. An indirect self-characterization can be traced in his metanarrative reflections and style of narrating.

He characterizes Ljubimov as a provincial backwater which by sheer accident did not become a major regional centre (279). The comments following upon his conversation with Serafima suggest a strong desire to be proud of his native town. The same ambivalence lurks beneath the description of his fellow-citizens. This animated skaz-narrator appears to suspect rather inferior inclinations in others, such as greed, self-indulgence and the will to dominate. At this stage it is still unclear whether he has valid reasons for his suspicions or that he is a Gogolian пошляк himself, a person who projects his own weaknesses on his fellow townsmen. His somewhat plaintive as well as blustering introduction evokes the image of a frustrated provincial who tries to conceal his inner uncertainty. Even if this conventional Soviet citizen gives himself out as a full-blown rationalist, atheist and optimist, at times there seems to be a flaw in his ideological certainties. He evokes God's help in moments of distress (284) and gives explanations for supernatural phenomena which lack any credibility whatsoever. (282). Thus it is suggested that this narrator is just as superstitious as the other inhabitants from whom he wants to distinguish himself emphatically. How reliable can a person be who so easily adapts his views to the given situation, in accordance with his mood of the moment and the pressure he feels subjected to? What is he afraid of, and why does he associate even an apparently unoffensive activity as is writing a chronicle with imminent danger? (284)

At the trial Sinjavskij gave a fairly critical comment on this narrator:

В речи некоторых персонажей есть штампы, они усилены изложением Савелия Кузьмича, старца начитанного, который старается говорить научно, витиевато, книжно. Смех возникает над говорящим, а не над тем, о чем он говорит. (*Belaja kniga*: 233)

From the very beginning this anonymus stands out as a slightly ridiculous person whose pedantry becomes manifest even in his style. This narrator who freely imitates various literary styles harbours too many aspirations at the same time — he wants to inform, impress, convince and amuse his readers in one sweeping gesture. Meanwhile he is amusing mostly in spite of himself, e.g. in a casual remark about the chapel which was blown up as part of the struggle against illiteracy. (281) His speech is determined by the appellative respectively expressive function which at this stage dominate over the strictly referential function of the historical chronicle. Gradually the referential function will become of minor importance as the skaz-narration is adopting features of the interior monologue. Finally his apodictic statements on literature betray a rather old-fashioned narrow outlook: allegedly, a literary work is bound to speak the truth and should avoid imagining, the reader as a willing pupil should open his mind to its content and benefit from it. (283) However, hereupon follows a grotesque image of the reader

as a vampire, which sets the tone for the subsequent passage in which the act of writing is described as a potentially dangerous activity. Not only is the writer unable to control the reader's response, it is more than questionable whether he may exert control over his own pen. The sensation of his writing hand being directed by some outer force imparts to him a dazzling feeling of irresponsibility, yet at the same time it evokes a fear of losing control. Reading is a pleasure, writing an ordeal. His vague premonitions become reality the moment the second voice begins to interfere. The narrator who already felt unnerved after the first intrusion (279) now loses his head completely. His desperate cry *Лети прочь, гадина!* indicates that he experiences these intrusions as physical reality — in such a manner one does not correct a clerical error but rather chases away a monster. The abrupt staccato in the following brief phrases

Итак, преступим. Ох и страшно, голова кругом идет (285)

expresses his fear of this mysterious force which is manipulating his speech and begins to act independently in the footnotes.

The narrator's pathetic exclamations are in contrast with the self-assured and slightly ironic intonation of the intruder who shows a penchant for archaisms. Is he some external force, as the narrator believes he is, or rather the product of his own overstrained imagination? If that is the case, the battle between the text proper and the footnotes can be seen as a graphical manifestation of the conflict between two competing voices within the narrator's mind. Two antagonistic ideological-normative systems are summarized and expressed in the brief phrases which mark the beginning and the end of the Preface: in the first line the comrades are addressed, in the last footnote God's assistance is implored. However, the appearance of these two voices can hardly be considered a free exchange of views between equals. It rather resembles a struggle between two uneven parties, one intruding, the other resisting, whereas both claim the exclusive right to speak and act.

As regards the spatial point of view, it should be noted that the narrator figures both as external chronicler and participating witness. His recounting of his conversation with Serafima and the professor is passed off as a first hand testimony. The third, metanarrative, section includes a verbatim account of his first confrontation with the second narrator.

The temporal point of view of the first narrator I have addressed already in passing. As discourse time has to be situated at the end of the summer of 1959, it follows that a drastic change in temporal point of view is effected between the second and third part of the preface. With the words

начал я немного задумываться (282)

the narrator leaves the story time to enter discourse time, thus silently stepping over a period of at least a year.

1. On the scientific turnover accomplished by Lenja Tichomirov on the first of May

The story's first chapter is devoted to Lenja Tichomirov's miraculous seizure of power, which is described in the title as a scientific turnover. The title and the action proper are equally puzzling.

Metanarrative digressions are rare in this chapter. The attention is focused on the hero and the role he plays in the events with which opens the primary action sequence. Just as in the preface, the hybrid narrative form is striking both in narrator and character text. Several characters are cited literally who indeed — as Sinjavskij rightly remarked at the trial — speak their own language. Party Leader Tiščenko expresses himself in bureaucratic jargon coloured by Soviet ideology, the people use a form of colloquial Russian coloured by dialect, Lenja also speaks dialect in his conversation with his mother, but when he addresses the crowd or dictates an official telegram his language becomes rigidly authoritarian. His intonation, however, remains that of the popular idol and is quite unlike Tiščenko's empty officialese.

The narrative questions raised in the Preface — how reliable is the first narrator, what role plays the second, what is the function of the footnotes — become even more urgent in the first chapter. Moreover questions concerning the story's content arise as well: why is Lenja's putsch labelled as scientific? Can the described fantastic events be explained rationally? Has Lenja found indeed some method to manipulate the actions, thoughts and sayings of his fellow townsmen? And if he has, what is this method based on?

As this chapter is largely devoted to one major event, it displays a considerable unity of time and place. In the first section Lenja is about to leave his house. The following scene is set at the central square where his miraculous putsch takes place. It is followed by a triumphal procession all over the city.

The ceremony takes place by day and lasts a few hours at most. Its exact date — the first of May 1958 — had been given already in the first note of the preface. There are no marked anachronies in this first chapter.

The mystification of the plot

At the first page of this chapter it is described how Lenja leaves home under the spell of a still unknown idea. The town has been made ready for the May Day celebration. The action takes a fantastic turn the moment Party Leader Tiščenko

publicly abdicates his power and privileges in favour of the completely unknown bicycle mechanic Lenja. During his abdication speech he feels as if his words and gestures are manipulated by some external force — this passage brings to mind the narrator's aforementioned sense of being controlled and directed during his writing. The reaction of the crowd is perhaps not purely fantastic, but can certainly be called irrational: after a moment of hesitation it starts to cheer on the new leader and to jeer at the old.⁴ A purely fantastic detail can be pointed out though: at a certain moment a baby exclaims that Lenja Tichomirov should become tsar. Similarly, the description of the fight between the raven and the falcon combines features of an ancient folkloric tale with those of a running commentary of a sporting event — miraculous metamorphoses are rendered here in breathless *skaz*.⁵

Although a similar compilation of absurdities and improbabilities makes the question as to what actually happened a more than justified one, a convincing answer is not given. The narrator's initial version can hardly be considered an accurate assessment of what happened, and besides he is full of doubts himself. For one thing, his rather impressionistic account of the fight between the raven and the falcon initially shows great resemblance to an eyewitness report, yet a minute later he maintains a half-hearted distance by adding modifications such as *такова легенда* (291) and *на самом деле*. (292) After having corrected himself in this manner, he regains his previous neutral intonation and renders another, apparently more realistic, version of the same events: now Party Leader Tiščenko tries to suppress the rebellion in any possible way. Meanwhile it is left to the imagination of the leader to locate the underlying implications of this unexpected review: is the narrator a politically correct hypocrite, an irresponsible fantast or a serious striver after the truth? Or is the question itself inappropriate, as he is merely an instrument in the hands of the second narrator, who does not tolerate any form of mythologization of Lenja as we will see later? If that is the case, the abrupt transition to a form of staccato (292) may be taken as an indication that the second narrator at that moment starts to interfere and correct with all his strength.

Lenja's successful seizure of power ends with some improbabilities verging on the fantastic: the militia takes no notice of Tiščenko and delivers the weapons to Lenja. The narrator, who has by now become a participating witness, feels a sudden electric shock the moment he receives the package from Lenja. The mere fact that he still clearly remembers this detail, in spite of the considerable temporal and ideological distance existing between discourse and story time, seems to validate this memory to a certain degree. At discourse time Lenja has definitively lost his power over the narrator's mind, which implies that the narrator is entirely *compos mentis* in this respect.

At this stage the described events can still be explained rationally, albeit with some difficulty. For one thing, it could be maintained that Lenja has somehow learnt the art of hypnotizing or magnetizing; secondly, that the old Party Leader suddenly falls victim to an attack of hysterical paralysis and aphasia; and thirdly, that the highly susceptible masses fall into hysteria as well. Pursuing this line of thought, it may be argued that the fight between the raven and the falcon is a mere product of the popular imagination, enhanced and elaborated by a notoriously unreliable narrator. However, in that case the electric shock still remains unexplained.

The mystification of the narrator

In the first chapter we are faced again with the two nameless narrative instances from the Preface. These can be recognized by their individually coloured ideological and phraseological point of view. The first narrator alternates skaz with the neutral tone of the historical chronicle, whereas in moments of stress his discourse runs into a staccato-like stream of consciousness. The second narrator's discourse resembles rather that of a 19th century literary hero. He uses well-turned lyrical phrases full of baroque metaphors, whereas his vocabulary is slightly archaic, at times solemn, at times ironic. He is speaking through the first five footnotes and possibly intrudes into the body of the text as well. However, the sixth and seventh footnote certainly originate from the first narrator with his markedly unstable ideological point of view. Though he reports enthusiastically on Lenja's coup d'état, yet at moments he maintains a striking distance. Though he emphatically plays the role of convinced atheist-rationalist, yet he suggests a possible influence of supernatural forces on Tiščenko's fall (288, 292) and evokes the Holy Cross in moments of distress. (292)

The two narrative voices can be distinguished by phraseological characteristics as well. At this point two readings are possible. It may be argued that the voice of the intruding narrator is merely one of the voices of the primary narrator-chronicler who, being a lettered person, is capable of imitating various tones, styles and genres. On the other hand, it may be assumed that the second narrator is interfering again. Whereas in the Preface he intruded only once into the body of the text (the pterodactyl, 284) and three times into the footnotes, now he has expanded his influence. With it his interferences become more integrated in the text and do no longer throw the narrator into panic. I take this last assumption as my point of departure, hereby taking into account a casual but significant remark made later by the second narrator himself: viz. that he had to adjust Savelij's writing pen more than once in the preceding. (308) In other words, there is some textual evidence to assume that the second narrator is more than superficially involved in the narration.

Usually the narrator-chronicler passes almost imperceptibly from one register into another, yet at times he suddenly changes his style. Especially at those moments when he is indulging in admiration for Lenja, an invisible hand seems to cut short this form of mythologization. A similar abrupt transition from a descriptive to a didactic, from an enthusiastic to a more severe intonation can be traced in the following passages:

... как бы в золотом ореоле. Но стоило присмотреться внимательнее ... (286)

... затрещат под мотоциклом велосипедные хрящики ... однако мы не будем продолжать эту погоню, потому что она, как сказано выше, не подкреплялась фактами. (292) ⁶

A stylistic contrast of a different nature may point to the hand of the second narrator as well. The beginning of the chapter contrasts sharply with the end of the Preface in which the first narrator-chronicler had promised himself to abstain from first person narration and not to lose himself in details. (285) He managed to keep the first promise partly, yet the second he did not keep at all.

An abrupt transition may be traced in the footnotes as well. The first five footnotes which provide some additional casual information can be attributed to the second narrator, who up to that moment has made himself known as a slightly pedantic and faultfinding person. Meanwhile it is open to doubt whether the third note which touches upon the struggle against superstition is meant ironically or seriously. In the latter case one may assume some influence from the part of the first narrator who in the Preface had made similar remarks about the struggle against illiteracy and the role of Mar'jamov. (281-282) The two narrative voices have exchanged their position then at the foot of the page. The role reversal becomes most apparent in the sixth footnote, which thematically and stylistically is most in keeping with the text proper. It also finds expression in the personal pronouns. In the body of the text the first narrator refers directly to himself — which is rather unusual — in the sentence

Подманив меня пальцем, Леня Тихомиров передоверил груз.

Directly hereupon follows the sixth footnote

Я стоял в толпе, шагах в двадцати от Лени ... (293)

The second narrator, however, tends to avoid first person narration as well as diminutives as “Lenja”.⁷

The spatial point of view in this chapter is like that in the Preface: in both chapters the first narrator acts as a distant chronicler and a participating witness. In the first scene he is observing Lenja from nearby through a gap in the fence. He describes the putsch and ensuing chase from the position of an attendant witness at close distance. The position from which he reports Lenja's telegraphic message to the world is not entirely clear: he might be a direct witness or an external chronicler.

As regards the temporal setting, I had stated in passing that this chapter does not convey any marked disruption of the time sequence. However, some tension between discourse and story time can be traced at those moments when the narrator corrects some previously made observation. An example can be found on p. 292: here the narrating "I" distances himself explicitly from the experiencing "I".

Finally a few words should be added about the narrator's psychological point of view. Although he describes Lenja's outward appearance and behaviour in some detail and cites his words literally, he does not say a word about the leading motives, thoughts and emotions of his hero. As a result of this consequent description from the outside Lenja remains a somewhat flat character. The enigmatic second narrator, for reasons of his own, maintains an even greater distance toward Lenja.

2. Explaining the causes of the first chapter.

As it is indicated in the title, in this chapter some explanations are provided respectively suggested. The two narrators make themselves known to one another and Lenja's motives become clear, yet as a result the story as a whole becomes even more enigmatic.

This chapter is rich in dialogues. The narrator-chronicler enters into a dialogue with various personages and with the second narrator; moreover dialogues between personages are included as well. Features of different genres are juxtaposed — skaz, poetical rêverie, neutral report, didactical conversation and fantastic satire. Narrative fragments follow upon more contemplative ones. The interconnection between them may be rather loose and consist of no more than a vague association. The global sketch of Lenja's youth and background is followed by a bizarre fantasy about the future of humanity; ⁸ Lenja's discussions with Serafima and the second narrator are followed by the first narrator's personal memories about a Jewish girlfriend and a rêverie about certain episodes from Jewish history; these are followed by a rather extensive narrative fragment in which the narrator becomes subject of Lenja's first experimentation with his newly

acquired magic power. The chapter ends with a dialogue between the two narrators, which includes some literary-philosophical reflections as well.

The most conspicuous omission is now filled in: in passing Lenja calls the anonymous first person narrator by his name — Savelij Kuz'mič Proferansov. (299-300) At pp. 307-309 the second narrator presents himself to Savelij as his namesake Samson Samsonovič Proferansov, the professor in archeology who had visited Ljubimov some decades before. Lenja's aspirations are now revealed as well: he hopes to win Serafima's heart by establishing an ideal state with the help of magic-magnetistic influence. New questions arise: what kind of person is he, a liberator, evil spirit or charlatan? What to think of his objectives and the means by which he plans to achieve them? Couldn't it be possible that the muddle-headed fantast Savelij at times speaks the truth, in particular in seemingly fantastic passages? Who is the second narrator Samson? Does he really exist and if he does, is he more reliable than Savelij? What kind of relationship do the narrators have with each other and with their hero Lenja? The last question is the only one that is partially answered in this chapter.

As regards the spatial-temporal relationships it should be mentioned that the described events take place at various locations and span a period of approximately twenty years. The first two pages describe Lenja's early years in Ljubimov. His conversation with Dr. Linde takes place at an unspecified location in Ljubimov, that with Serafima and Savelij in the public library. There he launches himself into studying and performs his first experiment. The dialogue between Samson and Savelij takes place in Savelij's study at home. From behind his writing desk he also engages in imaginary travels all over the planet earth and the cosmos.

The described events range from the moment Lenja is born until the moment of narration. The logical-chronological order is not really disturbed. Although the exact date of Lenja's conversation with Serafima remains unspecified it may be assumed that it was shortly before he seized power, given his dynamic nature and Serafima's meteoric rise as the local vamp. Finally, when Savelij starts to describe his conversation with Samson he almost imperceptibly performs a leap in time of at least one year.

The mystification of the plot

According to Savelij, nothing extraordinary happens as the described events all allow for a strictly scientific explanation. (294) Immediately hereupon he suggests a not completely rational causal connection between Lenja's biography and that of his ancestors, which nevertheless has a certain logic. Lenja, the greatgrandson of a magician, has indeed some features of the sorcerer's apprentice, just as the fact that the magician was married to a country girl might explain that Lenja and his

father both follow a purely practical technical profession. Moreover, father and son share the same destiny insofar as they both fall victim of tragical historical circumstances.

Hereupon follows an extensive narrative fragment which starts in a realistic vein: Serafima rejects Lenja's advances and lays down her conditions, Lenja accepts the challenge and launches himself into studying on Savelij's advice. On p. 303 the fantastic events begin, which Savelij describes in his capacity of participating witness in a rather clinical and punctual manner. At first he feels a brief electric shock when he touches upon Lenja's conjuring book, subsequently Lenja makes him walk on his hands. Savelij notices that these supernatural phenomena appeared at that moment entirely natural to him, just as Lenja's words sounded wholly credible in his ears. Yet he did not surrender completely to Lenja's spell, as he still could make some reservation:

Но, видно, во мне оставалось какое-то сомнение, или его внушающий аппарат был еще не вполне разработан. (305)

A moment later he reverts to his entrenched habit when he warns Lenja against idealism and sorcery, which are both contrary to the laws of natural science. Finally Lenja ends his experiment by putting Savelij back on his feet and wiping out his memory. Only two months later, Savelij maintains, his memory returned in parts, but he still has some doubt:

Да и то, может быть, еще не все во мне восстановилось как сейчас узнаешь, проверишь? (306)

At other moments, however, he sounds completely self-confident, e.g. when he states:

Я не спал и не грезил, а находился в твердой памяти и в ясном уме. (304)

Especially certain realistic details such as falling keys and aching soiled hands make his words sound wholly convincing. In addition, the fact that at the moment of narration Lenja's spell has been broken and Savelij's memory restored may be taken as an argument confirming the accuracy of these memories. Metaphorically speaking, at this point there is a short circuit between previous observation and present-day interpretation ("so it was, even if it cannot be"). Again, this declared positivist-materialist appears to be as susceptible to the miraculous and fantastic as his fellow townsmen are; again he implicitly affirms what he explicitly rejects. His inner uncertainty is hardly surprising if we estimate that in the period

between story and discourse time he has undergone Samson's influence as well. Even if it is true that at the moment of narration he has released himself from the power of both dictators-manipulators, yet at moments it seems as if some remnants of it can still be found in his mind. Thus Savelij's world view and general frame of mind may be seen as modern manifestations of the ancient Russian *двоеверие*.

The last part of the chapter abounds in fantasy as well. Samson presents himself to Savelij as being simultaneously the compiler of Lenja's conjuring book, the professor of archeology who encouraged Savelij to write his chronicle and the common ancestor of both Savelij and Lenja.⁹ That he is merely a voice, a spirit or energetic force sounds too fantastic to be true, so Savelij is rightly wondering whether he is not simply talking to himself. (308) Yet even at this stage it is hard to consider Samson as simply a delusion of Savelij. The latter feels even stronger than before that he is writing under control; what is more, the dictated passages are clearly written from a different ideological-phraseological point of view. As it seems, Samson is acting increasingly as an independent authority who knows how to manipulate people. Who prefers to regard him as a mere delusion of Savelij's overstrained fantasy has to admit anyway that this mysterious force exerts a considerable influence over the other personages and the course of events.

The mystification of the narrator

In this chapter the question as to what actually happened is determined greatly by the question as to who happens to be the narrator. On the battlefield of the page the two narrators engage in a struggle over the pen, which is at the same time a struggle over the right to decide what actually constitutes "reality" and "truth". That the interaction between the two narrators is developing and intensifying becomes manifest foremost in the relationship between text and footnotes. We have seen that Samson's first intrusions in the Preface called forth bewilderment on the part of Savelij, but as yet no actual response. It is true that he did react indeed upon the pterodactyl, yet the fact that he did not know where the intrusion came from made his protest rather unspecified. In the first chapter Savelij either ignored Samson's interferences (in the first five footnotes) or incorporated them without comment into the body of the text. Yet in the second chapter this one-way communication develops into a fully fledged dialogue between the two narrators.

In the opening section Savelij doubtlessly is the narrator in the text as well as in the footnotes. He has become easily recognizable by now by his individual ideological and phraseological point of view. He still poses as the capricious, pedantic conformist-bon vivant, and is regularly corrected by Samson when he goes too far with revering Lenja. (297) With the third note an overt struggle begins between Savelij who is reigning over the text and Samson who is reigning over the

footnotes. The fourth note elicits an irritated reaction from Savelij in the body of the text, which is replied in its turn by an equally irritated reaction from Samson in the fifth footnote. Note 6 — пишите дальше, я нажимаю кнопку! — conveys a threat as well as an allusion to the power which Samson indeed appears to have, as Savelij will soon find out. In note 7 and 8 the tone of Samson's voice alters from slightly ironic into definitely wry. In note 9 — а может быть с потолка — he drops a hint at his own conjuring book *The Psychic Magnet* which fell on Lenja's head from the ceiling. The tenth note may be called highly original: the dotted line suggests that Samson's voice is fading away as Samson leaves the footnotes and is about to enter the text. The phrase which begins with Я говорю ... may be taken then as indication that he has arrived.

The remainder of the chapter consists of a dialogue between Savelij and Samson. The latter appears to be in much better spirits now he has revealed himself before Savelij and has secured for himself a respectable position within the text. Even at those moments when he makes his power felt — e.g. when he relegates Savelij to the footnotes in note 11 — he does so without emphasis or malicious delight but rather as a gentle teacher. However, their ideological points of view strongly diverge as regards their opinion on Lenja's role and personality. Understandably Samson, who is sceptical anyway about the concept of human perfectibility, displays more than scepticism alone about what he calls the risky experiment of that Tichomirov. Meanwhile Lenja is arising from Savelij's description as an optimistic young man full of confidence in himself and in human abilities. Both support a form of rationalism which accepts only rational explanations for supernatural phenomena; yet Lenja's ideological point of view is more consistent than that of Savelij which rather resembles a medley of outmoded prejudices, contradictive notions and bizarre impulses. Every time his tongue began to run away with him Samson felt prompted to interfere, so it is hardly surprising that the latter's offering to help means in concreto that Savelij is placed under some form of legal restraint. He maintains the right to write, but under strict guidance and control of Samson who has ordered

МЫ С ВАМИ ПИШЕМ СОВМЕСТНО СЛОЯМИ. (308) ¹⁰

Samson's customary intonation of superior distance may be explained now as well. However, Savelij is only little by little waking up to the fact that Samson is not merely superior in age, knowledge and experience, but that he is an all but omnipotent *властитель дум* who directly rules the narration as well as the course of events. The moment he tries to protest Samson makes him feel his power by disordering his speech. (308-309) Now that Samson has strengthened his position within the text by fixing Savelij good and proper, he breaks off the

conversation as well as the chapter with a brief laughter which might express anything.

As regards the spatial point of view it should be noted firstly that in this chapter the narrator-chronicler plays an active role in the described events. On the first two pages he points out that he has been a participating witness of Lenja's experiments and that he has overheard the latter's conversation with Dr.Linde (В этих беседах я занимал промежуточное положение, 296). Similarly he claims to have been the unnoticed witness of Lenja's conversation with Serafima in the library, which also is the location where the first magic-magnetistic experiments take place. During his dialogue with Samson it becomes clear that Savelij is also in his capacity of chronicler entirely at the mercy of supernatural forces.

In the last mentioned dialogue the narrator's temporal point of view is transferred to the moment of narration, which leads to a logical-chronological inconsistency. As we have seen, initially a distance of at least a year can be traced between story and discourse time — Lenja seized power on the First of May 1958 and Savelij started to write his chronicle in the second half of 1959. Nevertheless at the moment of narration Savelij appears to be completely astonished at Samson's intrusions. Did he never notice these before? Is Samson, who has been the silent ruler for more than a year already, really a complete stranger for him? It sounds rather unlikely, the more so as in the fifth chapter Savelij appears to know all sort of details from Samson's biography whereas the moment he tells Lenja his story is 1958. However, a similar inconsistency should not necessarily be seen as a textual imperfection; it can also be a further indication of Savelij's unreliability and Samson's omnipotence. To Samson, who is able of manipulating whole cities and populations, it must be no more than a bagatelle to alter or disorder the causal-temporal structure of his own narrative.

Finally I would like to point out that the whole chapter, Samson's intrusions included, is rendered from the psychological point of view of the surprised, at moments even astonished, narrator Savelij.

3. Victory Day

The title refers to two victories: Lenja marries Serafima and manages to foil Captain Almazov's attempt to invade Ljubimov. Both successes are a test of the effectivity of his magical powers, a test he passes with flying colours. Although he is now at the pinnacle of his glory, some events take place which foreshadow his doom.

This chapter consists of four separate parts. In the first part Ljubimov's awakening is described in the form of a hymn to the night. The second part is a

report of the special meeting of the military top, during which it is decided to suppress the rebellion in Ljubimov by cunning, not by force. The third part describes the wedding feast of Lenja and Serafima. The fourth part is devoted to Captain Almazov's punitive expedition; in some respects it is a continuation of the second, as the plans earlier made are now carried out.

Whereas the first part is a poetical *rêverie* in baroque metaphors and lyrical images, the remainder of the chapter rather resembles an accurate report made by an attentive observer who likes to leap into the fantastic at some unexpected moments. Metanarration is rare in this chapter; yet several philosophical-moralizing passages can be traced which come close to interior monologue-narration. On the whole the attention is focused on the events of that particular day and the friction between the two narrators. They avoid the dialogue now; the dialogues included in this chapter are between other personages. As in the preceding chapters, they use primary speech and can be recognized by their individual style. The members of the military top express themselves in a vulgar colloquial Russian which is affected by Soviet ideology and a bizarre sense of humour. The soldiers and the attendants at the wedding festivities speak dialect. Lenja's discourse sounds solemn or condescending when he speaks in public, yet his private musings are rendered in neutral literary Russian. The same goes for Captain Almazov who, being a former aristocrat, also colours his tacit reflections with French words and exclamations.

This chapter has a key position within the story as it marks a turning point in Lenja's development from revolutionary leader to enlightened despot. Some hints suggest that he will finally become a real despot, an overstrained enemy of freedom and despiser of his people. However, at this stage he still believes in his megalomaniac project and is able to instil this belief in his subjects too. Nevertheless some events take place that clearly demonstrate his personal weaknesses and the inherent flaw in his aspirations. Firstly he has to recognize that his psycho-magnetism does not have any effect on streetdogs and bright old women (322-323). Secondly, he comes to realize that his psycho-magnetic powers — though based on sheer suggestion — have disturbingly real consequences. It is clearly illustrated in the fragment of the liberated prisoner, who prefers death to a free existence full of efforts and troubles. His subsequent confession that there is something he did not take into account remains unexplained, yet it will soon be clear that his new insight marks the beginning of a change in his self-image and world-view. He has yet to recognize another paradoxical truth, one that touches him personally. From the moment Serafima has become his wife he finds her as unnerving and tiresome as any other member of his suite, for which reason he is unable to consume their marriage. From this moment onwards he feels less certain of his abilities to reshape man and society, and his humanistic ideals are increasingly exposed as being mostly of an abstract theoretical nature.

The described events take place at different locations. In the first lines of the chapter the narrator approaches Ljubimov from the outside and subsequently makes his round through the sleeping city. The meeting of the military top takes place in the military headquarter of the city N; the wedding feast of Lenja and Serafima in the central street of Ljubimov and at the hills overlooking the environs. The fourth section describes how Captain Almazov's brigade leaves the city N. and tries to reach Ljubimov.

This chapter, which is rich in events and abounds in changes of perspective, might risk disintegrating if the unity of time were not acting as a linking factor. The described actions take place during one single day, на вторые сутки после переворота, i.e. on the third of May 1958.¹¹ Marked anachronies do not figure in this chapter. The suspense is raised by the various fantastic or seemingly fantastic turns in the plot and the characterization, by the unexpected shifts in points of view and by the subtle or conspicuous lacunas in the information which result in mystifications on various levels.

The mystification of the plot

In the first two parts several fantastic elements can be traced in the speech of both narrator and character (metaphors, associations, dream visions), yet the action proper may be roughly called mimetic. The really fantastic events take place in the third and fourth part, when Lenja's psycho-magnetic powers appear to work.

During his wedding feast he manages to suggest that mineral water has been changed into pure alcohol, a suggestion that is eagerly accepted by the attendants. Even Dr. Linde surrenders to Lenja's spell, as is illustrated by the fact that he joyfully confirms the authenticity of the counterfeit alcohol. However, Savelij who narrates this episode exposes the fraud immediately with the words *то есть на самом деле ...* (321) It remains open to question whether Savelij's comment is just an afterthought, a reconstruction of the truth made later at discourse time, or that he grasped the fraud the moment it took place, i.e. at story time. His words could also be influenced by Samson, who manipulates both the narration (Savelij is writing his chronicle under his guidance) and the narrated events (already at the wedding feast Samson played the role of invisible prompter). In any case, the unmasking of Lenja's following trick — unappetizing food is allegedly transformed into a delicious meal — does not come from Savelij, but from the streetdogs who refuse to eat it. In the remainder of the chapter it becomes increasingly difficult to determine what has "really" happened. No matter what Savelij believes or may have believed, he describes a number of purely fantastic events as if they have really taken place (323-324). At such moments it seems as if his dormant belief in Lenja flares up again, or that it has never been extinguished in the deeper strata of his mind. He describes e.g. the *властелин города* in almost ecstatic,

mythological terms and mainly from the ideological-psychological point of view of the manipulated, credulous population. (ОДНОГО МОЛНИЕНОСНОГО ВЗГЛЯДА, ПОСЛАННОГО ТУДА ... 323) The result is a number of incompatibilities and alogisms that nevertheless possess a strong suggestive force, as can be derived from comments made by various critics. As could be expected, Savelij's idolatry provokes Samson's irritation, to say the least. Samson's reaction pops into the narrative almost молниеносно at the moment when he takes over Savelij's position as primary narrator-chronicler in the middle of a sentence (да я, Леонид Иванович ... 324). The next miracle or would-be miracle — river water is transformed into champagne — is announced by Lenja in the form of primary character text which is embedded in primary narrator text from Samson. It may be assumed that both Lenja and Samson know the real state of affairs, but that they for reasons of their own prefer to leave everyone in the air, the citizens of Ljubimov as well as the readers of the story.

The episode of the former prisoner may be called the most enigmatic section of *Ljubimov*. It is also the part which evoked most critical response. Strictly speaking, it does not entail anything fantastic. A dead man is found whose identity can easily be determined. According to the doctor, the man has drunk himself to death. However, on closer inspection Lenja finds that the man does not smell of alcohol at all, which means that the doctor's diagnosis must have been coloured by Lenja's psycho-magnetism. (The same had happened during the first alcohol test at p. 321). The real cause of death therefore remains unclear.

Equally puzzling is Lenja's subsequent confession that there is something he did not take into account. At this point the narrator, Samson, makes a significant break. Its location in the text makes the omission even more conspicuous: Lenja's monologue is interrupted by Serafima and the arrival of the young scouts. So far Samson had manifested himself as a typical nineteenth-century omniscient narrator who likes to comment and explain and who can read the thoughts and feelings of his characters like a book; yet we learn by now that at some decisive moments he likes to close the book abruptly. The same thing happens a few lines later, this time with the slightly ironical touch which may be called his personal hallmark:

Что он мог бы сделать — осталось неизвестным. (329)

As did the third, the fourth part suggests as much as it narrates. Captain Almazov's brigade goes astray in the swamp while approaching Ljubimov. His soldiers manage to escape, but the captain himself falls into a kind of delirium in which he believes to hear strange voices and to see fantastic monsters. In a way he enjoys this state of lethargy, as he feels liberated from the тягостная свобода живого существования. These words sound like a resonance of Lenja's musing

over the corpse of the former prisoner and thus strongly suggest that Lenja at that moment is manipulating Almazov's thoughts and is raising an invisible protective wall around Ljubimov. Nevertheless, a more sceptical reader might insist that the captain is merely overwhelmed by the heat or the marsh gases, or that the twice-mentioned sleeping powder (335-336) is producing its wholesome effect. Initially, Captain Almazov himself is such a sceptic — he hates superstition and firmly rejects the existence of magical forces. Nevertheless, in this part of the chapter the suggestion of a bewitchment in an enchanted wood is very strong, especially in the final passages. Significantly, the narrator of this last episode is the fantastic creature Samson.

The mystification of the narrator

In this chapter the experimentation with narrative voices that Abram Terc reveals in, is gaining full momentum. We have already seen that the question as to what has happened can only be answered in connection with the question of the narrator's identity. However, a problem arises precisely here. Even if it is possible to ascribe a particular fragment with a reasonable amount of certainty to one of the two narrators, the reliability of that particular narrator is still open to doubt. More concretely: can we be sure that Samson is more objective than Savelij? The conflict between them reaches its culmination point in this chapter. A temporary solution follows hereupon which has consequences both for the narrative situation and for the development of the plot.

The first part, which describes Ljubimov's awakening, is told by an anonymous first-person narrator who describes the night as the time for сказки, сладкие грезы и состязания. (311) The opening sentence

Я прихожу в этот город на ранней, ранней заре

may be associatively linked with the professor of archeology in the first chapter, who introduced himself as Samson Proferansov in the second. This person without a name or physical substance (is he a person after all, not rather a spirit or revenant?) makes his round among the houses of the sleeping inhabitants of Ljubimov, as did Samson's wandering spirit along the gallery of his country house. (360) Characteristic is his lyrical, at times Messianistic tone. He addresses himself to the awakening city with the promise:

День твоей славы настал! (...) Я дам тебе полководца, наделенного
нечувствительной властью.

The mentioned полководец could be Lenja, just as the young man who bides Ljubimov good morning. However, no names are mentioned.

Some critics have called this enigmatic narrator, who also appears in other sections of the novel, “the unidentified I” or “the third voice” which does not belong to Savelij nor to Samson. Deming Brown and Margaret Dalton ascribe this voice to Abram Terc himself. What is more, Dalton attributes the literary-philosophical and surrealistic fragments which are scattered throughout the story to Abram Terc, even in those cases when they are embedded in narrator text from Savelij, Samson or the “I”.¹² However, both suggestions seem to me somewhat far-fetched. As I said before, I do not consider Terc a separate narrative persona but rather the author’s self-stylization which is neither entirely real nor entirely invented, as it occupies a position in between the concrete author and the characters in the text. (In *Spokojnoj noči* Terc is introduced for the first time as a full-blown character.) As regards the notion of a third voice, I hold the view that a slight alteration of the narrative situation cannot be sufficient reason to introduce a completely new narrative persona out of the blue. I therefore propose to hold on to the data the text has offered so far, and to view this so-called third voice as a composite figure, a triad composed of the voices of Savelij, Samson and Lenja.

This means concretely that:

- a. Savelij is the narrator-author, since Samson had ordered: Писать-то, конечно, будете вы. (308) Savelij is maintaining throughout his individual version of Gogolesque skaz combined with “bookish” mannerism and the neutral form of the historical chronicle. Moreover he can be recognized by his favourite themes and personal preoccupations which he tends to project on others.
- b. Samson is directing Savelij’s pen and controlling the story, which means that he impinges both upon the narrative and the plot. He decides at his own discretion to whom he will offer the right to speak and takes it back at random. His somewhat archaic-solemn, at times lyrical, at times abstract and moralizing style has become well recognizable by now.
- c. If we take him to be the sleeping young man, the dream visions can be ascribed to Lenja’s sphere of influence. Some external characteristics make this assumption plausible: in the воспаленные жилы, прорезавшие испитой чохоточный лоб (312)¹³ a resonance may be heard of previous fragments such as его длинное узкогрудое тело and на лбу вздулись две жилы. (286) Thematic parallels can be traced at the plot level as well. The vaguely expansive dream fantasies about universal happiness and absolute power might

refer to Lenja's utopian experiment, the erotic fantasies to his marriage with Serafima that will take place that same day. Tellingly, the governor's daughter who appears in these fantasies is, just like Serafima, a socially higher-placed partner which makes her even more desirable. This passage also refers to the biography of Samson, who in his young years had been betrothed to the governor's daughter. (357) Although these links are, admittedly, fairly loose, they strongly suggest that Savelij, Samson and Lenja are connected somehow by mysterious links.

In the second part the narrative situation is different. The narrator, whoever he may be, avoids first person narration and only uses the third person. This part opens with two striking characterizations which can be called indicative of his ideological, phraseological and psychological point of view:

Весть о катастрофе достигла города И-ска (312)

and

из города, зараженного безумием (313)

From whom are these severe wordings? Savelij did not use such terms before. It might be Samson, who is possibly influenced by the ideological point of view of the alarmed Mar'jamov and the military top. These wordings are in any case well in accordance with Samson's sceptical attitude towards Lenja, a scepticism he has never tried to conceal. Although the two narrators Savelij and Samson had agreed to write together in layers — *совместно слоями* — the voice of Samson seems to be dominating this part of the chronicle. He avoids the *skaz*- and first person narration which are characteristic of Savelij, but gives an accurate and vivid report of the meeting as seen from the ideological, spatial and psychological point of view of Captain Almazov in the third person. The narrator appears to know Almazov's secret thoughts and fears as well. This closeness, that could encompass an element of identification from the part of Samson with Almazov, can also be viewed in the context of their common aristocratic background — they are both “из бывших”.

There are four footnotes in this part of the text. The first provides some neutral information about the city N. The second, third and fourth can be seen as expressions of Almazov's dissenting views and suppressed impulses. Here the margin of the page may be said to serve as a refuge for the unconscious, as a secret repository for thoughts unaware.¹⁴

At the beginning of the third part the narrator is doubtlessly Savelij. In his familiar style of *skaz* he dwells on his favourite themes such as drinking, feasting and women, but in a less egocentric way than he used to do. If he makes use of

first-person narration it is the plural form; e.g. he writes about “our drinking habits” when he refers to his Russian compatriots. Though he still admires Lenja, he is not blind to his weaknesses — his bluntness towards women, his cynical deception of the credulous populace and his first signs of fatigue. At such moments Samson’s demythologizing influence is possibly asserting itself, or the time that has passed between story and discourse time has had a sobering effect on Savelij. The fifth footnote is an example of the converging of two ideological points of view: Samson and Savelij would both subscribe to this paternalistic statement.

However, from the middle of page 324 onwards their viewpoints start to diverge rapidly. The conflict between them that so far had been centred around the footnotes is now settled by Samson in the body of the text. Quite typically, Samson takes action without explanation in advance, almost in passing, but at a well-considered moment: the moment he can no longer endure how Savelij sings Lenja’s praise. That the narrative situation has changed becomes apparent at the moment when Lenja suddenly addresses himself to Savelij with the words:

А ты куда, Савелий Кузьмич? (324)

Savelij’s answer is followed by the words отвечал Савелий Кузьмич. This unexpected turn may serve as an indication that firstly, Savelij is no longer the narrator but has become a character in his own chronicle; and secondly, that Samson, after having relegated Savelij to the footnotes, has both literally and metaphorically taken over the latter’s central position in the narrative.

However, this new division of roles is not consistently enforced from the very beginning. In the sentence

... летели под облака оранжевые брызги шампанского (324)

Samson’s spatial-ideological point of view is coloured by Savelij’s: orange is the colour Savelij believed to see under Lenja’s and Samson’s influence. We may suppose that Samson himself, or Savelij at a later moment, can see through the delusion.

From the very moment the two narrators have changed places, the narrative consistently refers to Savelij in the third person, to the latter’s great dismay. From now on he is entitled to first-person narration only in the footnotes or — when he appears in the body of the text — in cited primary speech only. Apparently, Samson finds Savelij’s zealotry easier to bear as long as the latter is merely a character. He does not prevent him from reciting the improvised ode Вот оно — Царство Небесное (326) but considers him unworthy of the honourable function of narrator-chronicler. However, Savelij’s phased degradation has not yet

reached its lowest point. Lenja soon joins Samson in his distaste for Savelij's twaddling, which suggests that Samson's strong will and all-seeing eye knows how to find Lenja as well. Soon hereafter Lenja sends the garrulous clerk out of sight, disposes him of his privileged position in the shadow of the throne and gives him the humble job of errand boy-factotum. From this moment until the end of the fourth chapter Savelij appears only in the role of character at distance. His protests, naturally, remain fruitless; the only thing he can do is vent his frustration in the footnotes in the form of a casual sneer or suggestive remark. (note 6, 8)

As I said before, the fact that Samson has become the narrator-chronicler leads to several changes in ideological, phraseological and psychological point of view. On the ideological level we notice a profusion of biblical imagery with a parodistic undertone that is far from flattering for the pseudo-Messiah Lenja. At such moments Samson's scepticism towards Lenja's experiment acquires additional relief.

The same happens at the level of phraseology. While Savelij repeatedly uses the first-person plural form, Samson, for whom first-person narration is unusual anyway, only once uses the first-person singular (повторяю, 326). Since he has been reduced to the role of character within the story, Savelij is called by his Christian name and patronymic and is referred to in the third person. Lenja is approached differently as well. So far, Savelij repeatedly used the polite naming "Leonid Ivanovič" (fourteen times on pp. 309-324). Samson occasionally does the same (324; 327), yet he prefers the more detached "Tichomirov" (325; 326; 327) as he used to do in the preceding chapters. However, in the passage referring to the dead ex-prisoner the tone alters. Now Samson names Lenja confidentially by his name ("Lenja") and describes his doubts and questions from within. However, Lenja's confession that there is something he did not take into account is followed again by Samson's customary and formal naming "Tichomirov" in the subsequent phrase ТИХОМИРОВ ВСКОЧИЛ. (329) In short, Samson seems to be alternately approaching and withdrawing.

His newly acquired narrative position offers Samson another possibility that he exploits to the full: the change of psychological point of view enables him to sketch a critical and detached portrait of Savelij. This portrait does not merely encompass the latter's sayings — Savelij has already said quite a lot — but now for the first time his doings as well. Savelij appears to be a person who bows and scrapes to the highly placed as long as he fears them (330), but who meanwhile displays a rudeness verging on cruelty towards the weak and defenceless. (Стрелять таких надо, вешать! 328) In like fashion he will approach Lenja in the following chapter as soon as the latter's psycho-magnetic powers begin to wane. Thanks to this change of perspective certain suspicions that the reader might already have are confirmed. In sum, the description from the outside turns out to be disenchanting for Savelij, whereas the description from within is an enrichment for Lenja's image, as it endows him with more human qualities.

The fourth part depicting Almazov's ill-fated expedition is a continuation of the two preceding parts, albeit with some subtle alterations. In the second part Savelij was still the narrator, although Samson made his influence unmistakably felt. In the third Savelij's mind seemed to serve as a battlefield for the animosity between his two idols Lenja and Samson. The fact that this conflict is settled in the fourth has certain consequences which may hardly be noticeable on a cursory reading, as the action is continued without disruption of the logical-chronological order (the earlier planned strategy to recapture Ljubimov is carried out) and the psychological point of view is still that of Captain Almazov. However, at some decisive moments the ideological and phraseological points of view are clearly those of Samson. The tirade about the working of evil forces, about ancestral wisdom and the truth behind myths and fairy tales (332-333) must doubtlessly be ascribed to him. That he also colours the phraseology becomes apparent in Gogolesque phrases such as нет, судари мои! дай Вам Бог не угодить в трясины (333), по врожденной дворянской порядочности. (334)

The spatial point of view in this chapter is dynamic and versatile. Initially the anonymous first-person narrator describes the sleeping inhabitants of Ljubimov both at close distance (посмотрите, 310), as if he is looking through the windows, and from high altitude, as if he is observing from a bird's eye view (в низине, под ногами, 311).¹⁵ In the last passages the young man is described from nearby and his words are rendered literally, which suggests that the narrator is now within eye- and earshot. In the second part the anonymous narrator who could be Samson describes the meeting of the military top and the departure of the brigade as an attentive, though not participating, witness who can hear and observe even the smallest details. At the beginning of the third part Savelij is narrator, witness as well as reporter in Lenja's proximity, but he fulfils these functions with such a zeal that he is soon dismissed. From p. 324 up to the end of the chapter Samson, that omnipresent and omniscient spirit, functions as a quite unusual narrator-chronicler.

As regards the temporal point of view it should be noticed that the fact that the two narrators have rearranged their roles and positions leads to friction between the two temporal orders of discourse and story time. The conflict between the narrators is enacted during discourse time (1959), whereas the events described in the chronicle belong to the story time (1958). It implies that from page 324 onwards Samson is directing events which actually have taken place a year before. However, this inconsistency can hardly be called disturbing, as the primary action sequence — the rise and fall of Lenja's utopian experiment — is continued without apparent disruption of the causal-temporal order. In the following chapter we will see how this implicit tension is neutralized.

4. The reception of the visitors

The title of this chapter which is devoted to Lenja's exposure and fall refers to the reception he gives in his headquarters. The visitors are respectively Serafima, the old country woman, Harry Jackson and Lenja's own mother. Apart from them, two uninvited and invisible visitors make their appearance: Vitalij Kočetov is spying from behind the curtains and hiding in the footnotes, whereas Samson makes himself known to Lenja and tries to start a conversation with him. This chapter, which is rich in dialogues, finally ends with a conversation between Lenja and Savelij.

The characters speak their own language as they used to do. Samson, who so far has been quite poised in what he says, at a given moment gives up his customary ironic or lyrical intonation and gives free range to his thoughts and feelings. At that point his peculiar conversation with Lenja converts into a stream of consciousness consisting of cryptical questions and vague allusions to a possible retirement. (354) Initially Lenja's intonation is as authoritarian and condescending as it was before, yet it gradually becomes more friendly and simple as his magical powers begin to wane. Savelij's and Serafima's discourse is marked by a sentimentality verging on servility when they address Lenja. The discourse of the other visitors also betrays Lenja's influence. Suddenly the country woman's usual slang is affected by propagandistic slogans, Jackson's contaminated Americanized Russian turns into rigid Soviet jargon and the melodious old-time dialect in which Lenja's mother has always expressed herself degenerates into a clammering of modern rallying cries. Vitalij's letter (note 4) is also full of Soviet jargon, yet its tone is set by a naive kind of zealousness which is definitely his own.

In this chapter a crisis situation is described which is followed by a dénouement. Initially Lenja indulges in megalomaniac fantasies and definitely misuses his power until the critical moment comes when Samson withdraws his support. (This passage shows some resemblance to the scene in Chapter II in which Samson makes himself known to Savelij.) Several anticipations to this fatal moment can be traced before. First Lenja had to accept the limitations of the human will as well as his own weaknesses; now he feels completely lost in the paradoxes and caprices with which reality confronts him. His words and deeds go separate ways, his claims are exposed as being empty. He has to recognize that he cannot cope with the role he is playing and that this role does not even give him pleasure. At this stage of the story Lenja, just like the sorcerer's apprentice in the fairy tale, is puzzled both by his own destination and by his master's intentions concerning the town. Indeed, in spite of the fact that Samson has divulged the secret of his identity, he still remains an enigmatic creature whose mere existence brings forth a strong effect of suspense.

The chapter is characterized by a considerable unity of space and time. The action proper takes place in Lenja's headquarters during one single day and evening. The third and fourth chapter are separated by an ellipsis of at least ten days, which may be derived from the following remark about Kočetov and Sofronov:

На десятую ночь после разгрома Алмазовской экспедиции втерлись они в Любимов. (340, note 3)

This casual remark made several pages later indicates that the chapter's first paragraph bridges a time span of at least ten days and that the described reception takes place in the middle of May 1958 or shortly afterwards.

The mystification of the plot

This chapter is the most fantastic part of the story. In the preceding chapters some magical events could be traced as well, but now both the narration and the plot are fully directed by the omnipresent omniscient Samson who appears to be a reincarnated ancestor of Savelij and Samson, a spirit without age or substance yet endowed with human ratio and extraordinary powers. It stands to reason that this fantastic creature does not question the existence of a fantastic reality in which he himself takes part. By the same token the reader is invited to accept his seemingly fantastic account of what has happened.

A similar approach is facilitated by two factors. Firstly, in the greater part of the chapter Samson is acting in the capacity of first person narrator who is never interrupted, corrected or contradicted. From this privileged position he is guiding the reader's vision in the direction he chooses. Secondly, though starting from a fantastic premise, his account is a strictly logical and coherent description of persons and events that may readily be called realistic. Not surprisingly, this narrator pretends to be the only person entitled to guarantee the correctness of the chronicle. His sharp criticism of Savelij is not completely unfounded, as the latter is a less consistent narrator indeed. At this stage of the story Samson's suggestion of a "fantastic truth" becomes so compelling that a "natural" or rational explanation of the strange events sounds most unlikely now. (e.g. if one accepts a sudden snow- or landslide as being the cause of Ljubimov's complete disappearance, 336). Since traces of such a belief in a fantastic truth can be found throughout Terc's oeuvre, Samson may be called a typical Terc-personage and a neat embodiment of his literary credo "быть правдивыми с помощью нелепой фантазии". (*Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*: 446)

If we follow Samson's suggestion and remember that he is definitely not an admirer of Lenja and will not credit the latter with a capacity he does not really

have, then we have to admit that at the beginning of this chapter Lenja has unmistakably found his form. He manipulates the thoughts, words and actions of his guests without the least effort, until Samson breaks him off. From that moment onward Lenja's approach of others changes abruptly and he is approached differently as well. He becomes more attentive and modest, whereas Savelij loses his good manners and becomes rather impudent. Apparently, Samson has direct bearing on what people say and do. His stream of consciousness at p. 354 is followed by a more realistic fragment. Who or whatever the spirits may have been,¹⁶ they have now been dispelled and Savelij does his best to tranquillize Lenja's "размагниченные нервы".

As before, the question as to what actually happened remains open, yet at the same time it is losing some of its relevance. Of course Samson claims to speak nothing but the truth; Savelij, who apparently has lost nothing of his self-conceit during his temporary degradation, does the same. Both narrators thus become direct opponents in Terc's magic theatre, in which fantasy and reality alternately clash and converge. As in the preceding chapters, the question concerning the plot cannot be handled in isolation from the question concerning the narrator.

The mystification of the narrator

In this chapter the roles of the three protagonists have more or less taken shape. Samson embodies the prototype of the omniscient narrator, Savelij that of the unreliable narrator, whereas Lenja figures as a picaresque hero. Roughly speaking, Samson has some characteristic features of the positive hero, Savelij of the negative and Lenja of both.

At the beginning of the chapter the narrative situation is a continuation of the preceding. The narrator still is Samson, both in the body of the text and in the footnotes. At times he uses the first person singular — otherwise a rare thing for him to do — or plural (in the form of a pluralis majestatis or as generalization concerning all Russians.) After the cryptical passage which alludes to a possible withdrawal, Savelij is restored to his former position of first person narrator, which means that he regains some freedom of speech. His rehabilitation is not complete, however, as he is not restored to the function of chronicler. For the time being, he is restricted to the role of narrating personage with the full right to drivel. The fact that his twaddle about Samson is no longer interrupted can be taken as a further indication that Samson has indeed washed his hands of the town and the chronicle. The result is a narrative void on the last two pages (354-356): if we assume that Samson has retreated and Savelij is just a character within the text, who then is the narrator of this fragment?

The ideological point of view in this chapter is clearly determined by Samson. Again he elaborates on his favourite themes such as concern for the dependability

of the chronicle, the limitations of the human ratio and the importance of a respectful attitude towards the tradition. At the same time this narrator figures as an aery yet strong-willed character who can freely manipulate other persons. He is now at the height of his powers, which has led some critics to regard him as a symbolic representation of God or Marx. As a typical 19th century omniscient narrator he freely throws his comments over the heads of his personages, comments that often are so critical and ironic that the predicate “lecturing narrator” seems to suit him better. Especially Lenja, Savelij and Vitalij are his victims.¹⁷ A clear example of his omniscience is provided by the contrapuntal alternation of text and footnotes on pp. 351-353: in this fragment which abounds in dramatic irony he is the only person who overlooks the whole situation, who knows the facts of the matter and the limitations of his personages. At such moments he clearly revels in his omniscience which is a form of omnipotence. He hardly tries to conceal a certain malicious delight and makes the reader, with a knowing wink, a participant in this orchestrated drama. (e.g. in note 3 a hilaric contrast comes into being between Lenja’s firm belief in a completely fictitious menace at distance and the occurrence of a real menace at hand which he does not even notice.)

In spite of Samson’s prominent position, his omniscience is limited and selective though. Compared with Savelij, he is a more restrained narrator who at decisive moments suspends his own judgment. This happens e.g. when he takes over the ideological, spatial and psychological point of view of a personage, or when he colours his speech with his or her phraseology. At some moment Lenja is called *своего повелителя* (338) (Serafima’s perspective), at other moments *командир* (350), *главнокомандующий* (355), *начальник* (355) (Savelij’s perspective) or *косоглазый владелец* (353, note 8) (Vitalij’s perspective).¹⁸ However, the mere fact that Samson easily adopts the point of view of his personages should not be seen as proof of sympathy or agreement. Lenja’s mother e.g. is depicted as a mentally retarded remnant of the past, which clearly points to the ideological, phraseological and psychological perspective of her son. As we have seen, Samson is most respectful to the old, for which reason he was even willing to take direct action and to encroach upon the plot. Analogously, Serafima and the country woman are depicted as bothersome pathetic creatures in desperate need of improvement. This decidedly is Lenja’s, not Samson’s, point of view.

The most complex narrative situation in this chapter is the passage in which Lenja is dictating Jackson. (344) Here the voice of the narrator, Samson, splits up into four subvoices — cf. the triad in the preceding chapter — yet the newly added layer does not noticeably disrupt the given narrative structure. The new situation is as follows. According to Samson, Lenja is silently dictating Jackson (*негласно диктовалось*) (344), Jackson repeats Lenja’s thoughts aloud, while Savelij listens

and writes them down. Thus in the first two paragraphs of pp. 344-345 we find Savelij's written report of Jackson's spoken account of Lenja's unspoken thoughts, whereas the final supervision belongs, as always, to Samson. Meanwhile it remains unclear what the latter's contribution precisely is. Should the fragment in question be read as Savelij's straight report of what he heard, or rather as Samson's paraphrase of what Savelij wrote down? Anyhow, in the sentence which begins with В-третьих! уже вслух подсказывал Леонид Иванович Samson is the narrator again and Savelij a personage. This is underlined by note 5, which in its ideological, phraseological and psychological aspects is a continuation of preceding notes, as well as by the end of the passage (добавил на прощание Леня Тихомиров и велел Савелию Кузьмичу ... 346).

As regards the spatial point of view it should be noticed that the first paragraph describes, comparable to an upbeat in musical notation, the environs of Ljubimov as seen from the spatial point of view of the astonished outsiders. It seems to them as if the town has been wiped off the face of the earth, just like the town of Kitež in ancient Russian legends which was invisible to the unbelieving. Samson, advocate of free indirect discourse, frequently identifies himself with the spatial point of view of some of his characters. The scene in which he makes himself known to Lenja may serve as an example. Here the same event is described twice: first from the perspective of Vitalij who is hiding behind the window and in the footnotes, thereafter from the perspective of Lenja who finds himself in the living room and in the body of the text. (Сгинь! сгинь! пропади!) (353) In other words, Samson first describes what Vitalij hears what it is Lenja is doing (panicking), next what Lenja hears what it is Vitalij is doing (sliding down the drainpipe).

As regards the temporal point of view, I have described already how the growing tension between discourse and story time reached its climax when Samson started to direct both the narration and the plot. In this fourth chapter the difference between discourse and story time is wiped out and the two temporal orders seem to converge entirely. It means that the temporal perspective from which the first chapters were written has in fact been given up.¹⁹

5. The worldly and otherworldly life of S.S. Proferansov

This unusual title does not really come as a surprise as it confirms the earlier suggestion that Samson is a revenant and Savelij a fantast. This chapter is a unified whole and bears more resemblance to a stenographic report of a conversation than to a chapter from a historical chronicle.

Savelij is talking most of the time — sometimes his monologue is interrupted by Lenja, sometimes he quotes a personage literally. His skaz-narration is a most appropriate form now, as the entire chapter rests indeed upon vocal

communication. Savelij's story also takes a special position within the chronicle for yet another reason: initially he figured as narrator-chronicler under Samson's guidance, now he is a narrating personage who can speak his mind freely as he is no longer directed either by Lenja or Samson. It is a unique tale within a tale, or more precisely a biography embedded in a dialogue which in its turn is embedded in a chronicle. For this reason the fifth chapter may be regarded in its entirety as a "mise en abyme" ²⁰ — Samson's life is a major theme both in the story Savelij tells and in the chronicle he writes.

The location and timing of the action are a direct continuation of the preceding chapter. Savelij is telling his story in Lenja's headquarters sitting on the edge of his bed during that same night. The narrated events take place at various locations and span a period of at least a century. Samson spent the greatest part of his life at his family's estate near Ljubimov; he left his estate only for an occasional visit to the tsar in St. Petersburg and for a long period of study in India. After his death his spirit kept wandering on his estate. It remained there even after his descendants had left the Soviet Union; ever since it gradually expanded the range of its activities. The last episode, which is only loosely linked with the preceding one, is situated at Lenin's cottage in Gorki.

All in all this fantastic sketch of Samson's life ranges over a period of 150 years: from the French Revolution (Lavoisier) via the Decembrists, Puškin, Tolstoj, the Russian Revolution and the NEP-period until the moment when Savelij tells his story. (1958)

The mystification of the plot

Strictly speaking, this chapter comprises merely one action — Savelij tells Lenja a story. In that story the boundaries between fantasy and reality have finally collapsed. This fantastic biography is clearly not an accurate assessment of what happened but a phantasmagoria created by the freewheeling Savelij. It juxtaposes various data taken from the political and cultural history of Russia and Europe (including Sinjavskij's own biography) ²¹ with themes and motifs from literary prose fiction. Meanwhile a few non-fictitious data — existing geographical locations, historical personalities and real events — can serve as clues to trace an element of truth behind Savelij's confabulations. The mentioned data are indeed snowed under by a series of alogisms, anachronisms and oxymorons which combine to create a particular area of the fantastic.²² Nevertheless Savelij claims to speak nothing but the truth and his claim cannot be declined entirely. However incredible his story may sound in its entirety, he definitely has some moments of clear insight. Samson's warning "он вам наплетет обо мне лабиринт небылиц и в этих рассказах важна не фактическая канва" (352) suggests that an element of truth can be hidden behind the facade of factual inaccuracies.

In like fashion one may understand the following encouragement which Lenja directs to Savelij: “ври что хочешь, я должен знать правду”. (356) Moreover, some separate hints suggest that Savelij’s sense of reality is returning by degrees, in other words that the utopian spell has been broken. His disillusioned grumbling “все это одна чара и более ничего” (363) can be taken as a hint. As soon as Lenja is unable to hear him Savelij dares to vent his anxious foreboding about the town, the chronicle and his own fate, thus displaying a keen insight into the present situation.

The mystification of the narrator

As Savelij has become a narrating character and his story part of a dialogue, the formal question arises to what narrating instance this dialogue should be ascribed. Still to Savelij, who in that case is figuring both as narrator and as character? Or to Samson, who no longer directs the events but is possibly still guiding the narration from his place of retirement?

The characterization of Samson which makes up a dispersive chain running throughout the story is nearing its completion now. In order to get some grip on this elusive creature one should begin by distinguishing his self-image from the impression he makes on others. To name one thing, he presented himself to Lenja as твой добрый гений, whereas Lenja himself was terrified. Which of them is right? When judged by his actions, Samson does not seem to be an evil spirit at all; he is rather a very principled person with a keen sense of responsibility. As such he is described by Savelij, who approaches him most respectfully and even pretends to share his views. Meanwhile the honesty of his lamentations on the loss of family values in our vulgar age remains questionable. (360) Is he just adopting the ideological point of view of the mentioned родня or is this calculating person playing up to Samson in whose power he still finds himself? Anyhow, his biographical sketch of Samson develops into a fully fledged self-portrait which remains open and unstable. Again he exposes himself as a chameleonic person who apparently does not realize that he is making a number of ideological U-turns which contaminate his language with poorly digested notions from antagonistic world views. Another distinguishing feature is his keen sense of authority. The way in which he approaches Samson and Lenja may serve as an illustration to the adage “he who pays the piper calls the tune”. At first he extolls Lenja to the sky (святой человек, выдающийся полководец, 363) and addresses him only in the plural form “Вы”, yet as soon as his idol falls asleep he alters his tone. He starts to use coarse language and ends with the condescending, slightly irritated, phrase “я тебе и сторож, и советчик, и нянька”. Although his relationship with Lenja has become more or less clear by now, that with Samson is still an enigma. Should they be regarded as two independent narrative personae, or is

Samson the personification of Savelij's troubled conscience, deploring the loss of authentic moral and spiritual values?

As regards the spatial point of view in this chapter, the function of the narrator appears to be a marked paradox. He describes events and parts of conversations as if he has been a direct witness; yet his position remains somewhat indefinite. A large part of his story consists of second hand information — he has heard from an old Chekist the strange episode about Samson escaping through the fan and Lenin howling to the moon. Similarly, other events are too unlikely to be true or they have taken place more than a lifetime ago. As a result, this fifth chapter does not in the least resemble an eyewitness report or a chapter from a chronicle, it rather has the characteristics of a cock and bull story.

Naturally, this state of affairs also affects the narrator's temporal point of view. Initially the logical-chronological order remains undisturbed, yet fairly soon the story of Samson's incredibly long life comes to abound in anachronisms. His njanja Arina Rodionovna — namesake of Puškin's celebrated njanja — is introduced as *милая русская няня* (357), yet some hundred years later she waits for him when he returns from India and during his absence, it is suggested, she has given birth to his son. (360) From this accumulation of absurdities it may be derived that she is an ageless creature just like Samson himself. Comparably Lavoisier, the 18th century natural scientist who fell victim to the revolutionary terror, must have possessed eternal life. (357; 360; 362)

A marked disruption of the chronological order is found in the passage which is initiated by the temporal clause *прошло сколько-то лет*. (361) The preceding fragment had been devoted to Samson's life in tsarist Russia: it was described how he had not taken active part in the Revolution but soon left for India and returned to Russia after four years. A month later he died from malaria, i.e. in the 1920s. However, the mentioned temporal clause turns the clock back and makes the story — at least partly — recommence. Again things are told about the life of Samson's descendants in tsarist Russia, about the Revolution and their emigration to France. As can be done with the first, this second temporal line can be traced well into the twenties, i.e. the period of the NEP.

6. At daggers drawn

The title *По лезвию ножа* refers to the critical final stage of Lenja's experiment and, possibly, to Serafima who now makes her last appearance and notably in a treacherous role (cf. at her first appearance she was described dancing, *нож в зубы, прямо за лезвие*, 280).

The chapter is divided into three separate parts. In the first part Lenja manages to withstand two attacks, a fancied one by a carrier pigeon and a real one by a

hostile bomber. In the second part the forces of nature as well as his human entourage become increasingly hostile towards him. In the third his waning psycho-magnetic powers come back for a moment with unprecedented strength before they disappear forever. Immediately hereupon Ljubimov is invaded by foreign tanks.

A large part of this chapter consists of narrator's speech from Savelij, but it also comprises dialogues between narrator and characters and between characters among themselves. It is rich in actions but it also comprises a number of reflective passages in which Savelij engages into a dialogue with himself or, fully in the style of Terc, with some fictitious opponent. Characteristically, the most subjective and expressive passages, full of question- and exclamation marks, are devoted to metaliterary issues, such as the role of the author (364), the potency of the imagination and the literary metaphor (367-8) or human destiny if conceived as a mysterious book (371). Meanwhile some hints suggest that Samson is still exerting his influence, especially from p. 384 onward.

As in the preceding chapters, everyone is speaking his own language. Savelij opens all registers and speaks alternately with the voice of the poet, the clown, the county clerk, the tippler, the Party official, the bigot, the rationalist, the petty bourgeois and the libertine. He invokes God's mercy as well as the power of human ratio and science, he alternates skaz narration with despairing cries, vulgar speech with official slogans. As usual, Lenja adapts his speech to the situation and addressee of the given moment. He is spiteful towards the caught pigeon and the caught Serafima, familiar towards his subordinate and pathetic in his call for help. Serafima, who is now disembarrassed from Lenja's influence, reverts to her previous tone of villainous conceit. Vitja's speech exposes him as the yokel and the prig he always was; in addition, he lapses into an agitated stream of consciousness when he is cornered by Serafima. The former Party Leader Tiščenko has adapted his speech to his newly acquired social status and now speaks the same local dialect as the peasants who figure in this chapter.

This chapter is crucial for the suspense structure of the story, as the primary action sequence reaches its final stage and hitherto suspended answers are suggested. Now various aspects of the action and characterization complete the dispersive chain of Lenja's gradual loss of control over his ambitious project and its definite collapse.

The scene is set in the town of Ljubimov and its direct environs. The first part of the chapter describes the flight of the pigeon, which is followed by two dramatic scenes in Lenja's headquarters and at the market place. In the second part the action takes place at many different locations. It begins with the description of some ominous natural phenomena in the vicinity of the town. Hereupon the action is transferred to the centre. Lenja receives the peasants at the courtyard of his house and makes his usual tour of the city. The following scenes are set in his

private apartments, in Vitja's workshop in the cellar and in his study. Finally, Savelij leaves the town and meets Tiščenko at the bank of the river. The chapter's third and last section begins with Lenja's final walk through the city. In the main street to the centre he undergoes his last outburst of psycho-magnetic powers, after which he runs home to arrange his escape. The last scene describes how hostile tanks approach the town from three directions. Vitja is the only one to offer some fruitless resistance from an impossible position — the little frontyard of a house.

This chapter is quite explicit about the range of the described events, not about the distance between them. The events take place during the summer of 1958, which makes their range broader than it used to be in the preceding chapters. The distance between the fifth and the sixth chapter has not been specified, yet it may be assumed that it is short. The flight of the pigeon, the attack of the bomber and the visit of Vitja all take place on one and the same day. The second part begins with the statement that after the bombing the swamps kept smouldering for two weeks, which implies that the story time must now be the end of May or the beginning of June 1958. On the same page (370) it is remarked that since June it kept raining steadily. It may be assumed that Savelij's visit to Tiščenko took place at the end of the summer. The last outburst of Lenja's magical powers is followed immediately by the invasion of hostile forces, yet the precise date and moment are not given. Savelij's doubts whether Lenja's utopia will hold until Autumn may serve as a further confirmation that the primary action sequence indeed ranges from the Spring till the Autumn of 1958.

The mystification of the plot

Although the entire chapter is clothed in a layer of fantasy, it is rather at the level of speech than at the level of the strongly stylized and mythologized plot. It is true that Lenja still manages to withstand two attacks with the help of psycho-magnetism, but nevertheless luck is no longer always on his side. He kills the pigeon by mistake and has to invoke naked imagination to protect him against the hostile bomber.²³ In these fantastic passages the mystification of the plot does not merely result from the narrator's unreliability — he has been unreliable from the very beginning — but rather from his clear delight in experimentation with realized metaphors. The description of the air attack e.g. is introduced by a realized metaphor with a parodistic-ironic undertone: Lenja calls for an unknown friend, yet he is surprised by an unknown enemy in the shape of a damned swarm of bombers. Hereupon follows a fairly traditional metaphor in which the aggressor is compared to a beast of prey, and an original hyperbolic representation of Lenja's face, *растянутое по булыжнику, во всю ширину базарной площади*. This lyrical-allegorical image of human suffering — somewhat in the

style of futurist poetry — is followed by a metanarrative digression on the character and function of the literary metaphor, which is perceived as a form of peaceful resistance and last resort where all else fails. After having finished his ode to the metaphor, the narrator decides to describe the scene at the battlefield again, now в ее натуральном виде. The irony resides in the word “natural” which in this context can only refer to the graphic-visual designing of this fragment, as the new description itself offers an even more exuberant play with metaphors than the old one did. In addition, it is striking by its original use of footnotes, which now no longer pertain to a secondary interfering narrator, but appear to be a visual representation of the physical struggle respectively the distribution of power between the aggressor in the air and the victim on the ground. (Theimer: 144-146) This elaborated represented metaphor provides room for still another metaphor, in which human eyes are compared with the trunks of giant larches. The ensuing dialogue between Lenja and Vitja is both parodistic and realistic — hilarious though it may be, it is not in itself impossible.

The second part of the chapter begins with brushfires, storms and strange phenomena which the peasants take as bad omens. They beg Lenja to use his psycho-magnetic powers on their behalf, but their request is turned down in the name of progressive science. (Lenja does not tell them that he has no more power over life, death and nature than any other human being has.) With some efforts he manages to suppress the безидейные выступления of the peasants, meanwhile sensing a leak in the magnetic field around the town which so far had been impermeable for unwelcome thoughts. From this moment onward, the hints that he is losing control over the minds of his subjects follow each other in rapid succession — the war invalid complains that the vodka is a forgery, the tsar a sorcerer and the tsarina a Jewess. During the ensuing confrontation with his wife Lenja finds out that the invalid was better informed than he had been himself, but that he still can rely on his psycho-magnetic powers. His juggling with Serafima is also a play with metaphors, as she is compared with various sorts of animals (“пособачьи преданным взглядом”, “молодую скакунью”, “как животное ползла”). Meanwhile he does not fail to notice that she is increasingly withdrawing from the prescribed programme, as if surrendering to the will of someone else. (377)

The further course of events demonstrates that Lenja’s influence is weakening by the hour, not by the day. Serafima wants to leave her husband and hopes to engage Vitja in her plan. Similarly, Savelij wants to leave his boss and hopes to engage Tiščenko. Vitja is the only one who remains faithful to his master, even when the latter has lost his psycho-magnetic powers entirely and has to get along with logical persuasion, plain examples and pure enthusiasm. (376; 381) As the results are rather disappointing, he decides to consult Samson’s conjuring book once again, but he finds out that it has disappeared miraculously. He firmly rejects

Savelij's explanation — Samson gave, Samson hath taken away — although there is some logic in it. This second part is concluded by a scene which is parodistic rather than fantastic, as Savelij's pathetic farewell to Lenja and his no less pathetic proposal to Tiščenko are hilarious, but not impossible.

The third part starts with the most fantastic episode in this chapter. A final explosion of psycho-magnetic powers takes Lenja by surprise and leads to a carnivalesque scene compounded of realized metaphors. This episode which ends with the complete extinction of Lenja's magical powers abounds in realistic details and is told in a laconic tone which rather strengthens than weakens the fantastic premise.

In the final scene it is rather the discourse than the plot that creates the fantastic effect. The remote controlled tanks are described by means of realized metaphors and absurd paradoxes. They are called “танки-амфибии, ископаемые бронтозавры” and supposed to think, hesitate and decide; in addition, it is said that they “шли бронированными стадами (...) вытаптывая и вырубая проходы для будущего”. (391)

The mystification of the narrator

Even though it has never been easy to distinguish the two narrators Savelij and Samson, in this chapter it becomes almost impossible. To mention two things, it is hard to decide whether Samson is playing any role at all or whether Savelij is the narrator of the high-flown opening passage in which an idealistic belief is expressed in the inspiration, in eternity, in the Author-master and in mastership. Stylistically this fragment points more to the ideological-phraseological point of view of Samson, yet it also encompasses some leaps in the absurd which are more in the style of Savelij. Anyhow, Savelij's well recognizable skaz sets the tone again from p. 366 onward. Now he is no longer the story teller at Lenja's side, but appears to be restored in his previous role of narrator-chronicler. As a consequence, he no longer addresses Lenja, but some present or future reader. That he is the narrator indeed is finally confirmed on p. 381 when Lenja directly calls him by his name; until that moment only hints in that direction had been given. To begin with, a composite style is characteristic for Savelij, whereas Samson holds on to a more stable and consistent mode of writing. Secondly, Savelij likes to talk about himself, about women and drinking,²⁴ whereas Samson definitely does not. The various passages scattered over the text which address abstract literary-historical issues show some difference as well: when the author is Samson, such passages often end up in paternal warnings and advices, when the author is Savelij they function rather as incentive to narrative experimentation.²⁵ Again, Savelij shows himself to be a more capricious narrator than Samson, both in content and in design of the story.

However, the fact that Savelij is the narrator again does not exclude the possibility that Samson is still directing him in some way. As a rule, Samson grants the characters of his story more freedom of speech than Savelij does, with a more frequent use of dialogues and free indirect speech as a result. Savelij's slightly monomaniacal skaz-narration set the tone in the first three chapters, whereas from the third chapter onwards the narrative perspective is rather determined by the characters. The air attack e.g. is told alternately from the ideological, phraseological and spatial point of view of Lenja and from that of the pilots; the scene describing Serafima's advances is told from the point of view of Vitja. By the same token Samson might be using Savelij as a medium at those moments when his comments seem to be pervaded by an air of omniscient superiority:

... все еще не догадываясь, что начавшаяся эпидемия всецело зависит от его скачущих мыслей. Да, на исходе власти, на закате славы, — былая сила внушения вернулась к нему сторицей. (387-388)

The specification “на варварском диалекте” (384) could also be a silent hint at Samson's aristocratic taste and habits. So far Savelij did not use this type of specification; he freely scattered his skaz over the pages of the chronicle without adding explicating or valuating remarks. At other moments, however, Samson is markedly absent. He has certainly not authorized the following sentence, as he knew perfectly well that the arrested thief was sober:

После печального эпизода с упившимся арестантом — ввели строгий лимит. (372)

It should be admitted, though, that many of these hints are imprecise and derivative to the highest possible degree. As if to complicate the situation even more, the ideological points of view of the two narrators are steadily converging. Since Savelij has stopped idolizing Lenja, he has readily taken over Samson's ironic and slightly pitying attitude toward his former idol, that failed manipulator of history who cannot even control his own thoughts. In short, although the voices of the two narrators do not melt into one single voice “unisono”, they do manifest a growing harmony.

The opening phrase “Расставшись с Леонидом Ивановичем ...” (384) may be considered as a turning point. As Savelij is no longer the first person narrator but figures, again, as a character in the text, the question arises who is narrating this fragment. Could it be Samson, who does not like to talk about himself? Or is Terc simply performing one of his ornamentalistic tricks ²⁶ and a mere change of

pronouns does not justify the assumption that another narrator is at work here? In order to answer these questions, one should first try to find out whether this part of the text harbours other traces of Samson. Indeed from p. 384 onward some subtle alterations can be traced in the ideological and phraseological point of view. Form and style display greater unity, the skaz narration disappears, the slightly archaic, moralizing and lyrical intonation reappears. The first person narration (singular or plural) which was characteristic for Savelij has also disappeared. However, a close examination of the various moments Lenja is called by his name leads to a somewhat diffuse picture; on the other hand a parallel development of the plot again suggests the influence of Samson.²⁷ In the course of the chronicle Savelij is twice exposed in a treacherous role: the first time when he comments on the dead prisoner (Chapter III), the second time when he offers his services to Tiščenko. (Chapter VI) In both cases we are faced with an objective description “from the outside”, as indeed Savelij is not the proper person to criticize or expose himself. Characteristically, the narrator who in the first case certainly and in the second case almost certainly is Samson, keeps his distance and leaves it to the reader to locate the underlying explanation of both episodes. At other moments, however, Samson makes his presence clearly felt without hiding his emotions. Stylistically, the exhortation “Бойтесь рассеянных мыслей!” (380) demonstrates some affinity with the previous premonition “Матерей не смейте трогать!” (351) A more sceptical, relativizing voice is resounding in the rhetorical question “разве дан человеку контроль над своей душой?” (388) This question can be related to Samson’s previous reflections on the limitations of the human mind and the enigma of human destiny. (“Как же после этого дерзает слепой человек нарушать необдуманном шумом гармонию бытия?” 351)

In summarizing, if we accept the version that Samson still makes his influence felt, it follows that the narrative situation is now as it was in the first chapters. Samson is directing Savelij’s writing hand, but he does not intrude into the action. The carnivalesque scene (387), however, represents a drastic change: for the last time Samson is manipulating his unfortunate pupil mercilessly, or perhaps he wants to make him understand right and proper that the possession of magical powers is a mixed blessing. Savelij’s final complaints that Samson has stopped answering and directing him (395) can be regarded as an additional hint in the same direction, as it implies that until that moment Samson was doing so. The last sign he leaves can indeed be the ископаемые бронтозавры (391) – indeed, in this fragment there is a reference to his first intrusion in the story, the pterodactyl in the Preface. (284)

The spatial point of view is consistent throughout this chapter: the all-seeing narrator acts as a witness who follows his personages in all they do. In the introducing lines of the first part he follows the pigeon on his flight from Ljubimov

and back, at Lenja's headquarters he can read Vitja's letter word for word as if he were looking over Lenja's shoulder, at the battlefield he renders the pilot's vision from above as well as Lenja's vision from the ground, and in the last scene he is watching Vitja at such a short distance as if he were looking over Lenja's shoulder again. At the beginning of the second part the narrator appears to know what is happening for miles around. Then he follows Lenja touring the city and attends his séances with Serafima. Directly hereupon he acts as a witness of various conversations: between Vitja and Serafima, Savelij and Lenja and finally between Savelij and Tiščenko. In the third part he follows Lenja on his last tour through the city and becomes a close witness of his last explosion of magical powers. Finally, he watches closely when the tanks invade the town and Vitja is killed in action.

As regards the temporal point of view it is worth mentioning that discourse and story time no longer converge, which implies that the interrelationship between these two temporal orders has been "normalized". They are now separated again by a distance of at least a year, as was the case in the first chapters before Samson began to intrude blatantly into the plot at the end of Chapter III and the beginning of Chapter IV.

7. Final chords

This title which evokes associations with music and lyrical poetry can be seen as an implicit reference to pope Ignat's prayer service which is described in the first part of the chapter. The second part describes Lenja's flight, the third Savelij's plight as well as his last pleas to Samson. The first part is composed of three segments: a dialogue between Lenja's mother and pope Ignat, a lengthy description of the prayers and recitatives during the service and the narrator's comments which are scattered over this fragment. The second and third part consist of monologues by Savelij, which near the end become increasingly chaotic and pathetic.

The latter opens various registers, as he did before. In the first part the tone is set by two contrasting voices which represent two facets of Terc's artistry. The first is the lyrical-archaic voice which earlier narrated the fight between the raven and the falcon (Chapter I) but now appears to be orientated on Russian Orthodox Liturgy instead of Russian folklore. The narrator adopts the ideological, phraseological and psychological point of view of pope Ignat and Lenja's mother, which elevates this part of the text to a homage to their simple wisdom and dignified task in life. This lyrical spiritual voice which makes an appeal to repentance and reconciliation is in sharp contrast with the second, rather earthly and cynical voice which runs through this fragment and which is more in line with

Terc's personality. Two passages which appeared to be a bone of contention at the trial can be ascribed to this second voice: twice the worshipping old mothers are compared with half-mouldered mushrooms. (392; 394) This metaphor which was considered most offending pops up without any preparation and evokes a final question much in the spirit of Dostoevskij:

Зачем они и кому они еще нужны? (394)

Here the narrator does not refer to his earlier made observation which might imply an answer:

... замаливать грехи отцов и сыновей (392)

This interpretation was given by Sinjavskij himself during the trial, yet the narrator in the text leaves it to the reader to recombine these dispersive data. The second part is told in seemingly lighthearted skaz, which makes it sound quite differently. It includes another bizarre digression, now a hymn to the trouser pocket, which forms part of an advice given to Lenja in the second person. The ideological and phraseological point of view in this second part is determined by Lenja, in the third part by the increasingly despairing Savelij. He is alternately imploring, flattering and threatening Samson, he plays the fool, wails pitifully and makes impossible promises. Meanwhile his intonation is alternately subservient and familiar (at first *vy*, later *ty*). Yet his efforts remain fruitless — Samson gives no response.²⁸

The chapter as a whole is an epilogue to the primary action as it describes the aftereffects of the breakdown of Lenja's utopia. The prophecy Savelij made at Lenja's bedside during that fatal night is now fulfilled:

Вот спутешествует твоя матушка к попу Игнату и, Бог даст, поправится, испарится твое безумие. (363)

The chapter, and therefore the story, ends with an open question and not entirely in a minor key. Savelij's greatest fears and worst expectations are not fulfilled: the chronicle still exists and Ljubimov has survived its unnamed ordeals and is even called "богоспасаемый град" (393) by pope Ignat.

In the first part the scene is set in the pope's little church "на краю света" (392), in the second part near the railway station from which Lenja leaves for an unknown destination, in the third in the ravaged town of Ljubimov.

In the first part the action takes place at the end of the summer of 1958. The exact moment of Lenja's escape is not mentioned, yet it may be assumed that it was shortly after the foreign invasion, i.e. at the end of the summer. The second

and third part are separated by a distance of almost a year, which makes this passage a genuine postscriptum. What kind of ordeals Ljubimov has gone through during that year remains unspecified.

The mystification of the plot?

Whatever may be the reason, it seems as if pope Ignat's prayers have been heard — Lenja manages to escape, Samson's errant soul at long last finds repose. This clear dénouement may be called idealistic in a philosophical sense rather than fantastic in a literary sense. In effect, to a believing mind there is nothing fantastic in the presumption that a prayer is answered, a heresy unmasked and a soul redeemed. Seen from an idealistic point of view, these are some of the facets which constitute reality. Unquestionable merely is that Savelij, the self-confessed rationalist-materialist, remains behind in a state of utter confusion, fearing for his life and for the fate of his writings.

The mystification of the narrator?

In this final chapter the question arises if it still makes sense to speak of a mystification of the narrator. Since Samson has found eternal rest, there is no one left to direct or correct Savelij, who for that reason can act as the undisputed narrator now. His freedom, however, does not give him more strength.

As regards the spatial point of view it is worth mentioning that Savelij is acting both as a participating and attending witness and as a chronicler at distance. He gives a detailed description of the prayer service without missing a word and watches the other participants very carefully. In a metaphorical sense he follows the pope closely on his spiritual wanderings all over the planet earth and through the ages. In the second part he is the attending narrator-witness who follows Lenja from such a short distance that he metaphorically puts himself in the latter's trouser pocket. In the third part he is sitting at his writing desk again, just as he did in the first chapters.

In connection with the temporal point of view I have already noted that the first two parts of this chapter mark the final stage of the story's primary action sequence, in other words, the story time — 1958 — now comes to an end. In the third part story and discourse time converge. This part of the text is greatly determined by the hopeless situation in which the narrator finds himself at the time of his narrating, which is the end of the summer of 1959.

In concluding, the development of the spatial-temporal point of view in this story may be said to follow a circular course. Its ending resembles its beginning, yet the external circumstances as well as the narrator's state of mind are quite different.

Conclusion

At the end of the story the two central questions respectively concerning the plot and the narrator sound with their former urgency. The text does not provide any definite answer and the answers it suggests bring forth only new questions and strengthen the effect of suspense.

As regards the question as to what actually happened it should be noted that the story describes a number of unmotivated actions in combination with “normal” improbabilities which gradually pass into the area of the fantastic. With it, these fantastic events are narrated so convincingly that there seems to be more truth in them than in many mimetic-realistic passages. But then at other times the narrator is evidently sharing the reader’s hesitation, which thus becomes represented and thematized within the text. Savelij, who initially maintained a pose of certainty, becomes increasingly doubtful about the correctness of his own observations and completely loses his grip on the narration in the third chapter. For obvious reasons Samson feels more self-confident, yet in his capacity of fantastic personage and magic властитель дум he acts mainly as a complicating factor and distancing device. Both questions, which become increasingly interdependent, exclude any definite answer beforehand.

The interaction between Savelij and Samson whose voices clash and amalgamate is not only an essential element in the story’s narrative structure, it also stands out as a major theme. Given the situation that the text plays constantly at juxtaposing differing narrative perspectives and that the difference between the narrators is sometimes blurred, sometimes cancelled altogether, it is not surprising that Sinjavskij’s prosecutors have had serious troubles in deciding who is who. Sinjavskij for his part insisted that the difference between the two is as crucial as the difference between author and personage or Sinjavskij and Terc.²⁹ Seen from this point of view, the question as to the narrative structure in *Ljubimov* has more than a strictly academic significance. Moreover it becomes increasingly puzzling in the course of the story. Savelij, who in this context occupies a central position, cloaks himself in riddles from the very beginning. He begins by using first person narration without presenting himself to the reader. The information he provides about himself remains fragmentary and is scattered throughout the first chapters. When the reader has learned his name on p. 300 the second narrator uncovers his identity, in other words, the already existing doubling of narrative voice is followed by a fragmentation of character. From that moment on Savelij realizes that he is writing his chronicle under the guidance of an enigmatic yet powerful usurpator. In the third chapter he is relegated to the footnotes, in the fourth he regains his place in the body of the text but now his position is different: he is no longer the narrator-chronicler, but merely a narrating and acting character. The fifth chapter consists of a story which he tells

Lenja. In the sixth and seventh chapter he plays various roles and seems to be alternately absent and present. Only near the end does Samson definitely stop to direct his writing pen. In concluding it may be stated that Savelij performs practically every imaginable narrative function in the course of the story. All in all a picture emerges of a writer who is directed, controlled, dictated, corrected, sometimes dismissed, sometimes rehabilitated again – in short, of a bullied writer who is living under constant pressure.

The rise and fall of Lenja's utopia which made up the integrational series of the primary action sequence is of importance throughout the story, yet it gradually loses part of its significance and becomes subordinated to the dispersive series of the narrator's split identity. Therefore in the course of this story a gradual shift in thematic dominance occurs which is in line with a similar development in *Pchenc*.

B. Interpretations

Terc's supporters and opponents in past and present agree solely on one point: that *Ljubimov* is a story with a complex narrative structure that lends itself to a wide variety of interpretations. Apart from that, the differences in critical-normative valuation are striking. As could be expected, at the time of the trial the comments in the official Soviet press were devastating for both the story and its author. As I have described, it was labelled a political satire aimed against Soviet order, its leaders, institutions and ideology. Though the majority of Western critics appreciated the ambiguity of this multi-layered narrative with its many philosophical implications, they too emphasized the satirical element, which led to the paradoxical situation that the verdict on Sinjavskij was partly based on interpretations of *Ljubimov* made by his Western admirers. Both the benevolent and disapproving interpreters tended to disregard the genre, function and narrative perspective of this story that was never intended as a cryptogram or a pamphlet, but rather as an artist's jest to amuse friends and confuse enemies. It juxtaposes stylistic features of various genres: it combines elements of the historical chronicle, private confession, literary-philosophical treaty, picaresque novel, surrealist parody, oral tall story and lyrical rêverie. Moreover, it comprises allusions to some specific literary works, which led to the additional accusation of plagiarism and parasitism on the national cultural heritage. (see Chapter II) References of this sort, which can be overt or covert, usually occur via the narrative discontinuities that constitute a marked feature in Terc's oeuvre. The metatexts they refer to can serve as models for interpretation, in which respect Terc can be said to join in with the mainstream of European modernism. Some critics have compared *Ljubimov* with other dystopian novels such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. (Field: 13,

Dalton: 109, Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 137) Moreover, many of them have discerned possible echoes of great and minor works of Russian literature, e.g. *Slovo o polku Igoreve* (Field: 14), *Povest' o Gore- Zločastii* (Lourie: 161), Michail Saltykov-Ščedrin's *Istorija odnogo goroda* (Dalton: 108), Maksim Gor'kij's *Na dne* (Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 137), the ornamental prose of Andrej Belyj (Alexandrov: 171-179), Aleksej Remizov and Fedor Sologub (Brown: 672-674), Evgenij Zamjatin's *My* (Field: 13) and Anatolij Sofronov's socialist-realistic drama *V odnom gorode*. At the trial, Sinjavskij dismissed or modified some of these suggestions, whereas some other intertextual links he indeed found hard to deny.³⁰ (*Belaja kniga*: 229, 247) References towards non-fiction (official declarations, orations, party programs etc.) are usually quite obvious and have a marked parodistic undertone. Although in the years following upon Sinjavskij's sentence some individual critics (e.g. Matthewson in 1975) still regarded *Ljubimov* foremost as an implicit warning against the totalitarian danger, yet the general attention gradually shifted towards underlying philosophical questions and narratological aspects. Brown in 1970 characterized it as a novel about novel writing or as the expression of a charitable acceptance of human imperfectibility; Dalton argued in 1973 that the story enacts the eternal dilemma of ends and means, freedom and bondage, rationality and faith; Woronzoff in 1983 underlined the multiplication of reference points which dislocate the reader's sense of reality; and Theimer Nepomnyashchy in 1995 elaborated on deeper issues of language, control, fantasy and the self.

When we try to impose Todorov's model on *Ljubimov*, we first have to acknowledge that this story is even more fantastic than *Pchenc*. Not surprisingly, during his interrogation Sinjavskij emphasized its fantastic and thoroughly subjective character. According to him, it is extensively concerned with narrative issues and wholly based on invention:

Любимов — это последняя вещь. Я наделил это захоlustье моими любимыми чертами чудесного, фантастического. По городу ходят призраки, люди превращаются. Это вымысел. Там во многом ³¹ мотив кажимости, невидимости. Это нереальный город моей души. Это лирическое произведение, а не политическое. (229)

In his own view, the most fantastic part of the story is the fifth chapter which is completely double Dutch and therefore comes close to the grotesque. Arguing that his story does not seek to denote any extratextual reality, he deliberately circumvented questions on possible extrinsic references. Though he had to admit that one of his personages, Party Leader Tiščenko, certainly has some resemblance with Chruščev, he insisted that this passage was never intended as an overall picture of his personality and describes just a few separate traits. (234)

Ivanov may be said to support a similar fantastic interpretation. His report emphasizes the fantastic scope of Terc's stories which he characterized as "талантливо написанных в сказовой гротесковой форме и заведомо не связанных с политическими проблемами". On *Ljubimov* he maintained:

В этой повести весь сюжет строится на совершенно фантастических предпосылках, никак прямо не связанных с фактами реальной действительности. (*Belaja kniga*: 128)

If we opt for a realistic instead of a fantastic interpretation we dismiss any possible interference of supernatural forces and seek for a rational explanation of seemingly irrational phenomena. *Ljubimov*, then, is read as a report on a failed utopian experiment in a provincial backwater, or more precisely, as a political roman à clef about Soviet modern history full of recognizable real personages and actual public events. Seemingly fantastic events are dismissed as illusionary or understood metaphorically. Following this line of thought, the fantastic personage Samson is taken as a mere delusion of either Savelij, Lenja or both, and the whole story becomes a *historia morbi* which describes how a collective delusion takes possession of a whole populace. Finally this delusion has to be exorcized at great pains. Although it was based on deception, its results are devastatingly real.

At the time of the trial a similar mimetic-realistic approach was supported by some Western critics (Filippov, Field) just as by Sinjavskij's opponents in the courtroom. All of them approached the story as a hardly concealed description of contemporary Soviet reality, yet their conclusions appeared to be diametrically opposed. Especially Filippov was quoted by the prosecutor, judge and social accusers in order to support their view:

Суд: А вот Борис Филиппов считает, что Любимов и СССР — одно и то же: "В Любимове, как в капле воды, отразился Советский Союз". Это интерпретация Филиппова. Вы с ним согласны?
Синявский: Нет. Есть и другие оценки, например, Фильд. (*Belaja kniga*: 229)

However, at this point Field did not really disagree with Filippov, as it can be illustrated by an article which he wrote shortly before Sinjavskij's arrest:

The history of *Ljubimov* is no less than the history of the Soviet Union from the beginning to the present day. (1965: 14)

In his opinion, Samson is the prototype of the 19th century progressive intellectual who shares some outer characteristics with Marx, but Lenja is an amalgam of

Lenin and Stalin, an embodiment of 20th century despotism. Analogously, Samson is assumed to represent the spirit of the Westernized enlightened nobility before the revolution, whereas Lenja is the modern prototype of the mentally unstable superficial rebel who easily falls victim to the forces he has unleashed himself. In short, Field regarded *Ljubimov* just like *Pchenc* as a story about individual and collective psychological aberrations. He further linked both stories to the tradition of state control, manipulation and indoctrination in the Soviet Union, so at this point his realistic interpretation may be said to move towards the allegory and satire.

Sinjavskij himself rejected a similar interpretation during his interrogation. There is no reason, he maintained, to assume that *Ljubimov* stands for the Soviet Union, Samson for Marx or Lenja for Lenin. Samson he let pass, but he sharply criticized Lenja and Savelij as being two slightly ridiculous and very incapable persons. (233)

The prosecutor O. Temuškin who did not only compare, but equated Sinjavskij's writings with a terroristic assault, read *Ljubimov* as a realistic report on daily life in the Soviet Union. In his final speech he characterized the story as a воинствующее антисоветское произведение (291), because Soviet society is shown up as a madhouse and the Soviet people as a numbed crowd that goes so far as to swallow the food that the streetdogs find disgusting. He concluded:

Здесь изображен изголодавшийся народ. Говорится про город Любимов, а читай — про коммунизм. (...) Россия представлена как нищее, голодное захолустье на задворках. Народ — забитый, надорвавшийся на тяжелой работе. (290)

The women, he went on, are exposed as “либо уродки, либо самки. А мужчины растленны”. To make things even worse, the story renders a malicious distortion of Lenin's New Economic Policy (о передышке, о роли денег — комната с сторублевками, 290) and a disenchanting portrayal of the last years of his life. He concludes not entirely without reason:

Именно так и воспринят Любимов на западе. Наши враги получили то, что хотели. (291)

Although the social accuser Z. Kedrina was, in her capacity of literary scholar, more attentive than the prosecutor to the formal-stylistic aspects of prose fiction, she shared his view that the extreme confusion of form in Terc's writings served only as a variegated camouflage for ordinary anti-Soviet propaganda. Yet she added, as if in order to correct herself, that an overall appeal to formal issues tends towards bourgeois estheticism, which in itself is a hostile ideological

position. Like the critics I have mentioned before, she regarded *Ljubimov* first and foremost as an attack on the Soviet state, its people and the entire communist world.

Представление народа в виде ведьм, воров, графоманов, пьяниц — это активное неприятие нашего государства.

She seemed not to notice the fantastic elements in Terc's stories when she referred to the

фантастические повести Абрама Терца, посвященные повседневному быту советских людей. (110) (cf. 113-114)

In those cases in which she could impossibly neglect the profusion of fantastic devices in Terc's work, she regarded them as an indication of the author's mental illness and of his partiality for decadent idealists such as Arcybašev and Remizov. In referring to the final passages of *Ljubimov* she concluded:

Творения Терца и Аржака — безусловно “добро” старого мира. (116)

This last remark sounds as an echo of a diatribe against Terc which four years earlier had been published in the Soviet journal *Inostrannaja literatura* under the title ‘Socialističeskij realizm i ego nisprovergateli’. Its author, B. Rjurikov, argued that Terc's writings breathe a spirit of reactionary decadence which brings to mind the notorious anthology *Vechi*. (*Belaja kniga*: 23)

The first publication on the case of Sinjavskij and Daniël' which appeared in the official Soviet press (*Izvestija*, 13 January 1966) was written in the same key. Dmitrij Eremin, the author of an article entitled ‘Perevertyši’, sought and found in Terc's writings the traces of a hostile decadent ideology seeking to disorient the reading public. In his view, *Ljubimov* was a pamphlet aimed at exposing the theory and practice of communism as being built on quicksand. That he, too, believed to discern the prototypes of Soviet reality behind Terc's feverish phantasmagorics can be derived from the following indignant comment:

... с каким смаком описывает Синявский-Терц крах коммунистического “эксперимента” и возвращение “Любимовцев” к старым порядкам жизни! (91)

Cf. his final conclusion:

Это безудержное издевательство над законами истории, над теми, кто отдал жизнь в борьбе за наши великие цели, издевательство над страной и народом. (91)

Пасквилянты (...) брызжут ядом на все передовое человечество, на его идеалы, на его священную борьбу за социальный прогресс, за демократию, за мир. (93)

In that same month V.I. Levin responded to Eremin's article in an open, though unpublished, letter to the *Izvestija*. (*Belaja kniga*: 95-100) His defence of Sinjavskij and Daniël' is by the same token a principal defence of the literary satire. He maintained that

... в сатире допустимо и даже необходимо преувеличение.

Furthermore, Levin explained that psychopathology and eroticism — the dark sides of human existence which Eremin had in mind — are major themes that have engaged literature throughout the ages, including Soviet literature. (Gor'kij, Šolochov) He further noticed an inconsistency in Eremin's argument: in effect, *Ljubimov* does not describe the crash of the communist experiment. On the contrary, at the end of the story the former status quo is restored, which is our contemporary Soviet society. Therefore:

Это описание краха попыток волей одной личности построить идеальное общество, т.е. критика волюнтаризма.

This criticism, Levin went on, can hardly be considered as politically controversial, "voluntarism" being the ideological motivation in name of which Chruščev had been removed from power recently. Levin's comments are in line with those of Sinjavskij himself, who explained during his interrogation that Lenja's actions have so completely lost any connection with reality that these may be labelled as a form of voluntarism. (233)

The mentioned realistic interpretations, except that of Levin, display the same limitations that I have mentioned in connection with *Pchenc*. They are equally determined by political-ideological preoccupations and a schematic form of reasoning, they pull citations out of context, judge by dissected parts and neglect the given narrative situation. To name one thing, they pass over the vision of the three protagonists themselves who accept fantastic phenomena as being aspects of reality, even if it should be admitted that Savelij and Lenja do so after long hesitation. Moreover, the stylistic differences between Savelij's and Samson's discourse can be described objectively. These differences manifest themselves at

different narrative levels and create such a sophisticated pattern that one feels reluctant to ascribe the text in its entirety to the confused mind of an unreliable narrator as is Savelij.

Given the situation that *Ljubimov*, like *Pchenc*, lends itself in principle to a fantastic as well as a realistic interpretation, it may be said to conform up to a considerable degree to Todorov's theoretical model of a truly fantastic story. Several reviewers consider a principal ambiguity as well as an ironic understanding of his own uncertainty and confusion as being outstanding characteristics of Terc's artistic method. (Brown: 665) ³² In the preceding pages I have described how in *Ljubimov* the two central questions concerning the action and the narrator become increasingly interconnected and do not find a definite answer in the end. Should we believe that Lenja really possessed magical powers for some time, or was his so-called psychomagnetism based on pure suggestion, and therefore a fraud? Should we believe that Savelij was really possessed by a fantastic phantom for some time, or is Samson merely the product of his overstrained fantasy? Brown referred to this ambiguity when he noticed that Sinjavskij, like Belyj and Sologub, sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish between patently supernatural phenomena and purely psychological ones, between demonic happenings on the one hand and dreams, delusions and hallucinations on the other. (667) Analogously, Alexandrov found it hard to decide whether Lenja could really effect concrete changes in the outer world or was merely manipulating the thoughts of his subordinates. Did he really transform himself into a motorcycle, did he really transform river water into champagne or did he only cause the inhabitants to think he had? (177) According to Alexandrov, Lenja's thoughts first acquire an ontological status during the spectacular realization of metaphors at the end of Chapter 6. (388-390) However, in so arguing Alexandrov seems to overlook the reaction of the streetdogs in Chapter 3 and the invalid in Chapter 6 who hate to eat and drink Lenja's counterfeits. During his questioning Sinjavskij himself gave another clue to the understanding of these passages with his remark that Lenja is unable to effect even a minor change in real life. (233) Moreover, the ontological state Alexandrov makes mention of is a questionable point in itself, as the scene described on pp. 388-390 is determined by the psychological point of view of Lenja, in other words, it depicts what Lenja thinks, feels and believes to observe.

Unlike *Pchenc*, *Ljubimov* does not thematize the hesitation within the text, that is to say, it is shared by reader, narrator and characters alike. Particularly Savelij expresses his uncertainty several times, which makes him to a considerable extent conform to Todorov's description of a typical narrator within the fantastic genre. Such a narrator generally uses first person narration which is the most subjective narrative form as well as the most appropriate form to increase the tension between fabula and plot. In addition, he is most often an astonished "homme

moyen” with whom the reader identifies himself easily. He makes frequent use of the interior monologue and the diary form and lavishly employs question- and exclamatory marks. With it, in *Ljubimov* the hesitation on the part of the reader which Todorov considers to be the primary condition of the fantastic genre (36) is enhanced by distancing devices such as a frequent change of the narrator’s point of view. Usually, Savelij is not better informed than the personages of his story are (Todorov’s “vision avec”), whereas Samson is supervising and commenting everything and everyone (“vision par derrière”). The hesitation of the reader Todorov relates first to the nature of the described events. However, Terc’s stories may serve to demonstrate that a fantastic effect may be achieved by various means. In *Pchenc* and *Ljubimov* the mystification of the plot has direct bearings on the mystification of the narrator’s identity, the interaction between the narrators and the general significance of the story.

Kathryn Hume, who unlike Todorov does not identify fantasy as a separate genre or mode but as a wide-ranging impulse as significant as the mimetic impulse (see Chapter IV) distinguishes three types of orientation: fantasy of action, character and idea.³³ According to her, it is hard to draw a sharp distinction between the three as an action-based fantasy and an idea-fantasy blend readily, and an idea-fantasy can shift to a character-fantasy. (159-162) *Ljubimov*, a story which combines elements of the picaresque novel, the psychological grotesque and the socio-political satire displays qualities belonging to each of the three types. Firstly it may be called a fantasy of action as it is set in a fantastic environment which affects respectively creates the action. Secondly, it may be called a fantasy of character, as it enacts the fantastic splitting of the narrating subject. Thirdly, it comes close to an idea-fantasy, as it is shaped and pervaded by some specific leading and informing idea — it describes the beginning and gradual extinction of a collective delusion, thus underlining the ephemerality of false utopias. Strictly speaking, at the action level little goes on after Lenja’s miraculous coup d’état in the first chapter and his fantastic performance at his wedding feast in the third. The following chapters describe the gradual waning of his magic-magnetistic powers, a development which manifests itself in various ways. Whereas *Pchenc* can definitely be called a character-fantasy, the third type of orientation appears to be more pertinent for *Ljubimov*. Both stories lend themselves to a symbolic-satirical interpretation, notwithstanding the author’s distinct disclaim of such an approach in the courtroom. As we have seen in our review of the comments made by Filippov, Field and Kedrina, a realistic interpretation sometimes verges on a symbolic one, and both approaches appeared to be equally controversial as both touch upon current social-political conditions, actual events and concrete public personalities. For the defendant there was no denying the fact that some of his characters, though being fictitious, nevertheless show great resemblance to real persons in past and present,

especially in those cases when they are called by their real names (e.g. the officially acclaimed socialist-realistic authors Kočetov and Sofronov are exposed as a ridiculous and opportunistic duo.)

As to the Soviet political leaders Sinjavskij appeared to be very careful, both in his writings and in his utterances before the court. He went no further than admitting that comrade O., who completely loses his self-control during his public speeches, does show some outer resemblance to Chruščev, yet he did not mention that this entire fragment awakens reminiscences of the plot hatched by Chruščev against Berija with the help of a few like-minded officers in July 1953.³⁴ Similarly he circumvented the question whether Lenja has some of Chruščev's characteristic traits, although he did suggest such a link with his remark on voluntarism. In effect, the link itself is not far-fetched. In both cases a simple Russian country cousin comes to power by a strange concurrence of circumstances, and loses his head completely: he fancies himself to be the saviour of his people, the moving spirit behind human progress and the centre of the universe. Significantly, Lenja's paternal-imperial order

буду вашим слугой по воле народа, а пожалуйста — никаких последствий культа личности (290)

could refer to Chruščev's destalinization policy. During his questioning Sinjavskij rejected the suggestion made by Field that Lenja is a parodical representation of Lenin and Stalin, the two would-be creators of a renewed humanity whose power rests exclusively on false suggestion. However, Sinjavskij's claim does not necessarily obliterate Field's. Lenja's image indeed shows some resemblance with that of Lenin as he is represented in *Čto takoe socialističeskij realizm*: both are characterized by a rigid rationalism, a scholarly tone and appearance and an ascetic lifestyle. As we have seen in Chapter II, all explicit and implicit references to Lenin strongly counted against Sinjavskij, in spite of the fact that these references, when taken together, comprise a small number of apparently inoffensive passages. Three of them can be found in the fourth and fifth chapter of *Ljubimov*. The prosecutors believed to discern in the following passage

Китайские богдыханы, наострив шустрые мордочки ... (353, note 8)

a secret hint at Lenin's somewhat mongoloid countenance on Soviet paper currency. Secondly, the passage which opens with the words

Кабы нам годик мирной передышки ... (336)

was taken to convey an indecorous hint at Lenin's New Economic Policy.

However, the real bone of contention was found in the fifth chapter which describes Lenin in a bizarre situation:

ВЫЛ на луну ЛЕНИН вдумчиво и мелодично, ВЫЛ Ильич перед смертью. (363)

Evidently, the prosecution did not take into account the fact that these three fragments consist of highly subjective character speech and that they describe a rather extreme situation. In the first, Samson describes what a terrified Kočetov believes to observe, in the second a megalomaniac Lenja is talking gibberish, in the third an unrestrained Savelij is doing the same. The last fragment moreover is a story at third hand: the narrator describes a scene in which Savelij tells a story which he heard from the old Chekist. The only excuse Sinjavskij made during the trial was related precisely to this fragment. It was tactless, he admitted, to mention Lenin's name in this connection, the more so as he personally held nothing against Lenin. For that same reason he disagreed with the American translator of *Ljubimov* who associated the names of Lenin and Lenja with quite negative notions such as *леший* and *лень*.³⁵ It may be assumed that Sinjavskij's excuses have not simply been enforced by the circumstances. In his later writings one finds a comparable, predominantly positive image of Lenin, in spite of the fact that he did acknowledge that Lenin paved the way for Stalin's despotism. (2001: 110-115)

The image of Stalin is treated quite differently. He is depicted as an irrational, theatrical, demonic person who surrounds himself by a mysterious aura of divine omnipotence. Similarly Lenja for some time possesses the gift to mesmerize the masses, he too evokes strong passions which vary from blind veneration to deadly terror. In this respect he may be said to represent the type of dictator that reoccurs in several of Terc's writings: the orchestrator-regisseur, the magician, who for a protracted period manages to infuse history with the force and aspect of the fabulous fantastic, of a mad, nightmarish farce. (2001: 147)³⁶ As did Stalin, Lenja isolates his land and people completely from the outer world, a situation which may be seen as a parodistic reference to Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country. The general paranoid atmosphere in which every message from the outside world is interpreted by the authorities as a potential danger may also be related to the Stalinist era, just as their ambition to exert absolute control over the actions, words and thoughts of all their subjects. Finally, Lenja appears to support and practise yet another Stalinist axiom: miracles and spectacles are just as effective methods for manipulating the masses as repression is. (130)

In addition, Lenja has some characteristics of pre-revolutionary rulers over Russia. He and Serafima are popularly called the tsar and tsarina, whereas prominent citizens complain of the ruling tsarism (385). At times Serafima indeed

behaves as imperiously as an empress, even when she is addressing her husband. (“Чьи тут владения? Кто здесь царица?” 377) Not surprisingly, this haughty woman with her Western taste and habits arouses general suspicion, the more so as she increasingly plays the role of evil genius behind her rather passive husband. In this aspect the couple Lenja-Serafima displays the characteristics of two historical imperial couples, the first False Pretender Dmitrij and his Polish wife Marina Mniszek during the Time of Troubles and the last Romanov tsar Nikolaj II and his German born wife tsarina Aleksandra Fedorovna. Lenja can also be related to some fictitious literary and mythological personages. Even if he may have been a kind person in the past, as Sinjavskij said during the trial (*Belaja kniga*: 229), from the third chapter onwards he decidedly begins to develop some traits of Dostoevskij’s Great Inquisitor and Solov’ev’s anti-Christ. He, too, aspires to the role of Messiah, he too promises the crowds all imaginable earthly blessings, meanwhile depriving them of the most elementary form of freedom. Just like Dostoevskij’s famous personage, he complains about the psychological pressure that earthly rulers have to endure and elaborates on the perniciousness of freedom for the feeble human mind. Many literary scholars have noticed the profusion of biblical imagery in the third chapter (e.g. Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 133-135; Dalton: 111). The wedding of Lenja and Serafima awakes reminiscences of the marriage in Cana during which Jesus Christ turned water into wine (John 2: 1-11), whereas the panorama unfolding before Lenja’s eyes (Вот Царство Небесное ..., 326) evokes the biblical scene in which the devil shows Christ all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. (Matthew 4: 8-10) Unlike Christ and entirely in the spirit of the Great Inquisitor, Lenja immediately yields to the temptation and starts to bribe his people with bread and illusions. It was precisely this passage which prompted Kedrina to accuse Sinjavskij of antisemitism and blasphemy. (“и божественное евангелие не оставил без внимания расторопный автор”, 114)

Such official responses demonstrate that in those days a mere hint or name-dropping sufficed to fire controversies. In *Ljubimov* some non-persons and non-events are overtly called by their name, as e.g. the officially expunged and “forgotten” Lev Trockij (362) and the officially silenced terror and deceit which accompanied the collectivization (339-340). Moreover, Trockij and Lavoisier share a common fate as they both became victim of the revolutionary terror of their days, a fact which endows them with the questionable status of enemies of the people and historical progress.

According to prevailing notions, Terc’s writings did not merely offend Soviet leaders and ideology, but also the Russian people, womanhood and the modern worldview.

The role of the people in *Ljubimov* is indeed as ambivalent as it is in Saltykov-Ščedrin’s *Istorija odnogo goroda*. During his questioning Sinjavskij claimed to

have emphasized its positive qualities, such as an innate vitality and a deeply rooted spirituality. However, his claim met with cries of derision. Apparently, prosecution and public supported the view that Terc exposes the Soviet people as an infantile, pleasure-seeking and lazy crowd that readily surrenders to any authority or doctrine, as long as it gets it guaranteed supply of wodka. The extent to which these people have remained untouched by modern civilization and historical progress can be illustrated by the fact that they still beg the tsar for help for even the smallest thing – and that their leader cynically accepts this situation and takes advantage of it. (330) Blinded by indignation the opponents failed to notice, however, that these seemingly retarded people also have a keen eye for the facts of life and finally appear to be better informed than their leader is. (“Царь наш колдун, а царица жидовка” 373)

In effect, Terc describes the rulers of these people less benevolently. Indeed the story can be read as a satire on the way Russia has been ruled from times immemorial – by force and manipulation – and how changes of power take place – by fraud and intrigues. In Chapter 4 the gap between Lenja’s aspirations and his actual achievements becomes even more apparent and leads to bizarre behaviour and equally bizarre statements. A sentence such as

Кабы нам годик этой мирной передышки и мы бы по всем статьям государственного бюджета перещеголяли Бельгию и обогнали Голландию (336-337)

is clearly parodying the Soviet foreign policy of the 1920s and the newly introduced planned economy. In addition, the second part of Chapter 3 gives a hilarious description of the paranoia within the ruling military elite which leads to absurd situations and an absurd type of discourse. A satirical element can be traced within one single sentence, such as the following reference to the prevalent bureaucratic paranoia:

У нас каждый винтик должен быть на учете, тем более в обстановке международного окружения. (340)

And last but not least, the final collapse of Lenja’s utopia has offended those readers who regarded the story as symbolizing the really existing communist system. It was held against the author that he had described its breaking down as a positive development, parallel to the healing process after a malicious infection. The sting is in the tail: when the foreign invaders have delivered the final blow, everyone draws a breath of relief, the leader-instigator most of all.

Another grievance that cannot be called entirely unfounded is the negative image of women in *Ljubimov*. As a female personage Serafima surely is a typical

Terc-woman. Daring, ambitious, calculating and lustful, she combines the features of a Gogolian witch and a fin-de-siècle femme fatale. Lenja's tragical paradox is that he finds her attractive only in that negative appearance. Lenja's mother represents the other, positive side of the spectre and may be called a typical Terc-woman too. Several critics (e.g. Cheauré, Field) have made the observation that old grandmothers and very young girls are the only female characters which Terc describes with sympathy. Solid and sensible, Lenja's mother appears to be untouched by modern slogans and is completely unimpressed by her son's dazzling successes of the moment.

Similarly, Kedrina's sneering comments on Terc's writings as representing the heritage of the old world cannot be completely dismissed. Indeed, the whole story plays with the opposition between two antagonistic ideological and psychological points of view, that of the idealistically inspired intelligentsia before the Revolution and that of the cynical disoriented intelligentsia in the modern age — "в наш сволочной век". (360) Following this line of thought, Lenja and Savelij represent the present, whereas Samson, Lenja's mother, pope Ignat and the peasants stand for the Russian version of an ageless universal spirituality. The clash between their differing world views and types of discourse is illustrated beautifully by the dialogue between Lenja and the peasants in Chapter 6. For Lenja, the ideological and moral position of these backward people rests on empty-headed superstition (безидейное выступление), whereas the peasants in their turn regard Lenja's progressive scientific views as black sorcery (чернокнижие) which needs to be exorcized.

I propose therefore to locate *Ljubimov*, like *Pchenc*, in between Todorov's "fantastique merveilleux" and the traditional allegory. By virtue of its allusions to extratextual reality it has even more allegorical features than *Pchenc*. However, in my opinion all those readers who have treated the story as a political roman à clef have missed the point. To me it is first and foremost a modern version of the ancient tale about the sorcerer's apprentice, with an additional element of social-cultural criticism. Samson's mildly ironic sentence

Вот к чему приводит людская самонадеянность (309)

may then be seen as the motto of the entire chronicle. It is much in the spirit of the authors of the mentioned *Vechi*, who advocated a form of self-knowledge which leads to modesty and a mild view on the human condition. It is not granted to man to become his own creator-saviour, nor should he have implicit trust in the words of temporary idols. Samson, the original inspirator of Lenja's project, lent his support as long as it remained an intellectual exercise, but withdrew it after having realized the gulf between human pretensions and human abilities. This critical moment followed immediately after Lenja's brutal attempt to manipulate

his mother. Lenja can be seen as representing a parodic image of a certain type of ideological leader (властитель дум), of the demigod who appears to be a charlatan. His scientific magnetism comprises elements both of Western rationalism and oriental mysticism, which makes it an awkward attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. A similar attempt Terc discerned and criticized in the doctrine and practice of socialist realism.

As it seems to me, the central scene in Chapter 3 (the finding of the liberated thief) offers a clue to the understanding of the whole story. Lenja's somewhat cryptic and unexplained musings over the dead body may indicate that at that moment it begins to dawn on him that his utopia was built on quicksand. He had not taken into account the paradoxical human mind, the paradoxical development of human history and the complex nature of the concept of freedom. Freedom — although a positive value in itself — inevitably offers man the possibility to opt for the negative, destructive side of life. Lenja, the self-declared liberator of the human race, had underestimated the irrational impulse in the human mind as well as the unpredictable results of his own actions.³⁷ The thief is not the only one who cannot cope with the newly acquired freedom, the complete populace and finally even Lenja himself reject such apparently positive values as individual responsibility and a respectable laborious life. The thief overtly prefers the whirl of excitement and even death, which to him represent some paradoxical form of freedom — свобода от собственной жизни, от своего ума и губительной человеческой плоти. (329) In a certain sense this dead man who resembles a victim of crucifixion may be called a martyr for the sake of his personal conception of freedom. Thus this passage clearly demonstrates the inherent flaw of a secular religion such as Lenja's utopia — it strives to ban any sacral element from life and surrounds an utterly profane phenomenon such as labour with an aura of totalitarian sanctity.

In the preceding I have described how the mystification of plot and narrator was combined to create a fantastic effect. Indeed, the narrative situation in Terc's writings is greatly determined by the bifurcation of the narrating subject and the patterned reoccurrence of antitheses. *Pchenc* is roughly determined by the antithesis individual narrator versus society, *Ljubimov* primarily is about the friction between the three protagonists. In my view, the bifurcation of the subject is more than a fantastic device — it comprises an implicit vision of the continuities and parallels in Russian history. (cf. Samson's previous remark "Фокусы русской истории требуют гибкости многослойного письма", 308). Samson, Savelij and Lenja Proferansov do not only share one and the same family name, they pertain to the same intellectual tradition inspired by the radical Enlightenment. They firmly believe in human reason, whereas Samson flavours his belief with a touch of fin-de-siècle occultism. Significantly, Samson disavows any family connection with Lenja (352) from the moment he begins to distance

himself from the whole risky enterprise. His two protégés stay behind in a state of bewilderment. This process of differentiation results in a constellation in which Savelij stands out as a scholarly person who reasons by human standards, Lenja as a man of action who reasons by superhuman standards, whereas Samson represents the moving spirit behind the whole experiment.

Samson's role is most ambivalent by virtue of the unexpected turn he makes in Chapter 4. If one chooses to consider him as a mere product of Savelij's fantasy, he can be seen as representing Savelij's uncertainty about Lenja or as the voice of his uneasy consciousness. His name may be associated with the last Judge of Israel as he is described in the Old Testament Book of Judges 13-16. Both Samsons can then be regarded as prototypes of the hero who failed.

Lenja's role is no less ambivalent: this self-declared reformer of humanity only produces slogans and illusions and finally causes considerable damage. His name may entail a hint at the radical author Lev Tichomirov (1852-1929) who made a similar political U-turn during his life.³⁸

Savelij may be called ambivalent as he is more than just a ridiculous type. In this double-hearted, double-talking and double-dealing person, Terc may well have presented a devastating portrait of the contemporary Soviet intellectual who always trims his sails according to the wind. This would-be Marxist, positivist and materialist combines a faith in human progress with doom-mongering, he believes in scientific rationalism as well as in black magic, he calls himself an atheist but evokes God and the devil whenever it suits him. The passage which describes his last meeting with Tiščenko serves as a final illustration. Immediately after he has wheeled some favours out of Lenja, he offers his service to Tiščenko with the following lie:

Я тоже пострадавший, меня за мои убеждения Тихомиров со службы уволил. (385)

The general aversion he arouses in others thus becomes comprehensible up to a certain point. In my view, this extremely opportunistic person without self-reflection and historical roots stands out as a neat embodiment of the classical "trahison des clercs". Moreover, as a literary personage he seems to echo Bulgakov's Pontij Pilat as he is described in *Master i Margarita*. Both hide in their study in order to escape from the complex questions imposed on them by their unsettled times, both swim with the tide and wash their hands pretending to be innocent.

Notes

- 1 Sinjavskij declared at the trial that *Ljubimov* had been written in 1961-1962. (*Belaja kniga*: 204) In 1963 he handed a copy to his French acquaintance H el ene Pelletier (205) who realized its first publication in Washington in 1964, with an introduction by Boris Filippov. In the same year a Dutch translation by Marko Fondse appeared in Amsterdam. An English translation entitled *The Makepeace Experiment* by Manya Harari appeared in 1965 in New York. For a critical review of this translation see Field 1965: 10-11.
- 2 *Ljubimov* opens in the style of an ancient Russian chronicle, e.g. *Il'ja Muromec i Sokol'nik*: "Так я вам расскажу теперь рассказом". Il'ja Muromec is explicitly referred to in connection with the struggle between man and nature
- 3 According to Erica Haber, the seemingly accidental mention of a pterodactyl represents the first sign of reference from the second narrator. At the end of the third chapter the pterodactyl suddenly appears as a living creature, i.e. as a reality in the text. (Theimer Nepomnyashchy: 346, note 26) Much in the same vein, Alexandrov describes the pterodactyl as a word that the narrator could never have written himself. He regards the pterodactyl and the Australian swans as early examples of Samson's intrusions. (175) In my view, a more plausible explanation is that the swans can be associatively linked with the series "гуськом — утки — гуси — лебеди". (284) At this stage of the story both the pterodactyl and the professor can be seen as the type of prolepsis that Genette has named "amorces" and which he describes as "simples pierres d'attente sans anticipation, m eme allusive, qui ne trouveront leur signification que plus tard et qui rel event de l'art tout classique de la "pr eparation". (112) In this case, the casual hints that acquire their full significance later also have a semantic interrelationship: both refer to the deeper strata of the human mind, of human history and of the Earth.
- 4 Many readers and critics have noticed the striking parallels between *Ljubimov* and Saltykov- chedrin's parody *Istorija odnogo goroda*. To name one thing, in both chronicles the reaction of the crowd to the umpteenth change of power within the leading elite alternates between rebellion and submissiveness, between profound distrust and naive faith. How ever completely unpredictable its behaviour is, is amply illustrated by the many unmotivated outbursts of enthusiasm respectively rage which manifest themselves at the most unexpected moments. During his interrogation Sinjavskij did not openly question the existence of such parallels, yet he emphasized the differences between the two works. (229)
- 5 This parody on the way in which Russian leaders fall from power and new leaders seize it, carries folkloristic connotations. Metamorphoses of every sort and kind such as human beings transformed into animals can be found in many ancient Russian fables, legends and epic poems. Connected to this Richard Lourie mentions the 17th century epic *Povest' o Gore-Zlo castie*.

- 6 The second footnote on p. 286 can almost certainly be ascribed to the second voice. Otherwise, the foregrounding of some external characteristics and the introduction of bizarre similes are distancing devices which Terc employs frequently. As regards the fragment on p. 292 some doubt remains. In effect, the unexpected turns which can be found in these two fragments can also be regarded as mere indicators of the unreliable and capricious nature of the first narrator. The Roman numeral V that is mentioned at p. 286 reappears at p. 294 and unmistakably comes from Savelij then.
- 7 “Lenja Tichomirov” is the stylistically neutral designation employed by everyone. The crowd’s reaction which modulates from a suspicious silence to shouts of joy can be told even from the phraseology. It begins with a detached and respectful ‘Tichomirov’ which is followed by a more affectionate “Lenja Tichomirov” and ends up with word combinations denoting identification and enthusiastic support, such as “our Lenja” and “our poor Lenja”. The fact that Savelij alternately approaches and distances himself from Lenja, as Sinjavskij said, directly affects the phraseology which modulates from “our Lenja” to “our falcon”. As the case may be, Tiščenko addresses Lenja either with a condescending “Lenja”, a threatening “Гражданин Тихомиров” or in official jargon with “товарищ Тихомиров Леонид Иванович”.
- 8 This passage may be read as a parody on false utopias, on the questionable blessings of modern progress and the paradoxical human nature. It betrays some influence from Michail Bulgakov’s at the time highly controversial novel *Master i Margarita*. In the following exclamation noted by Savelij “Темноты хочу! Тени жажду!” a resonance may be heard of Voland’s rhetorical yet probing question “Как бы выглядела земля, если бы с нее исчезли тени?” (716) However, the structural and thematic parallels in both works are worthy of separate study. For Terc’s personal comments on Bulgakov’s famous novel, see ‘Literaturnyj process v Rossii’: 158-160.
- 9 However, such a family link is rather suggested than stated. At a later stage (352) Samson will firmly deny such a link. His denial may also be understood symbolically, in the sense that he wishes to distance himself completely from Lenja and all he stands for.
- 10 Samson’s cryptic wording “совместно слоями” could imply that the voices of Samson and Savelij form a symbiotic relationship and sound together in a great part of the story. Symbiotic relationships occur frequently in Terc’s oeuvre. Some critics have undertaken the arduous task of trying to distinguish and separate both narrative voices; yet it seems to make more sense to determine whose voice is dominating at what particular moment.
- 11 It begins with the awakening of Ljubimov and the young man. The military top meets that same morning. Captain Almazov’s brigade parts a few hours later and founders before sunset. In the morning the marriage of Lenja and Serafima is officially registered, the festivities take the whole day, and in the evening — it is suggested — Lenja succeeds in mesmerizing Captain Almazov.

- 12 Brown: “But there is yet a third voice, for occasionally the author becomes his own narrator, in passages of sharp and witty commentary”. (672) Dalton: “Even more, a third voice, an anonymous ‘I’ makes itself heard with some philosophical asides and literary metaphors, reflecting once more the author himself”. (124) My objection, however, is that Abram Terc in his capacity of the author’s self-stylization is implicitly present throughout the story, which means that he not only makes his presence felt in a few separate fragments. Woronzoff suggests that the third narrator could be Samson: “The unidentified ‘I’ discusses philosophical and literary questions and, in a moment of self-parody, warns the reader and himself, as well as the other narrators, against dispersed thoughts”. (143) Although Theimer Nepomnyashchy makes allusions to a third narrator, she seems to circumvent the problem by using the term “narrative” as if the text were a narrative agent. It leads to phrasings such as “the narrative ironically locates ...”, “the narrative asks (...) and immediately answers ...” (145-146) For some general remarks on the interplay between Savelij and Samson see also Mathewson 346-347. Even if Mathewson’s view is somewhat coloured by Cold War rhetoric, he states correctly that the heart of *Ljubimov*’s meaning is to be found in its complex narrative structure.
- 13 However, a metaphorical interpretation of the *воспаленные жилы* is also possible, which would undermine my previous proposal to identify the young man as being Lenja. The same goes for *испитой чахоточный лоб* and the phrase in which the sleeping inhabitants are compared with the dead.
- 14 By their location and function these footnotes evoke reminiscences of the appendages “bas de page” in medieval manuscripts, a genre with which the erudite bibliophile Sinjavskij was certainly familiar. Traditionally, these “bas de page” are the realm of the free imagination. They are inhabited by monsters, mock figures and nonsensical jokes and make up a sharp contrast with the officially canonized text proper. The edge of the page opens up to profanity, to subversion, to what Jackson has called the unsaid and unseen of culture. Although Alexandrov and Theimer Nepomnyashchy mention several functions which the footnotes in *Ljubimov* fulfil, yet they do not mention this one. According to Alexandrov, the footnotes primarily serve as references to the transcendent and sacral; besides he mentions the function of parodying, correcting and informing. (175-179) Theimer Nepomnyashchy does not neglect the “official” scientific function of the footnotes, yet she also calls them a graphic orchestration of the interplay of voices in the text and a means of mimicking the spatial disposition of the actors of the plot. (143-148)
- 15 A similar description of a bird’s-eye view can be found at the beginning of Chapter 6. As Uspenskij points out, the device of *точка зрения птичьего полета* is often used at the beginning or the end of a scene or narrative, and usually in the form of a mute scene. This also is the case in *Ljubimov*.
- 16 That Samson considers himself a good genius can be derived from the following question: “Или я, твой добрый гений, брошу это гиблое место и уйду от греха подальше”. (354) It remains unclear whom he is addressing here — is it Lenja, *Ljubimov*, the Russian mind, or the three together? According to Savelij,

Samson's house-mate referred to him likewise as "наше доброе привидение" (361), "почитая его за доброго вестника и хранителя семейных традиций, в наш сволочной век невозвратно утраченных". (360) In these last words Savelij seems to voice his own point of view; cf. his description of Samson as "хороший русский барин, который и вреда никому не сделал". (363)

17 Samson characterizes Lenja as "тощий, косоглазый сопляк" (353), Savelij as "хилый старичок" (343, note 4), Vitja Коцетов as "знаменитый сыщик-универсал" (340, note 3). It should be added that Vitja also presents himself to Lenja as "сыщик универсал"; Samson's irony is additionally expressed in the general outlines of this scene.

18 As in the preceding chapters, Samson refers to Lenja as "Leonid Ivanovič", "Tichomirov" or "Lenja", in the last case often with an undertone of irony and condescension: "регулировал Леня" (340), "Леня в изнеможении падал в кресло". (337) This whole situation is decisive. As a 19th century aristocrat, Samson naturally maintains decorum when he addresses a person directly ("государь", "милостивый государь" (352) to Lenja), meanwhile venting his real feelings in his private notes ("тощий, косоглазый сопляк" etc., 353)

19 Another inconsistency concerns a mere detail. It is written at p. 350 that "летний день уходил не спеша". However, the story time in that part of the text is the middle of May.

20 A "mise en abyme" is a miniature replica of a text embedded within that text, a textual part reduplicating, reflecting or mirroring one or more than one aspect of the textual whole. In *The Counterfeiters*, Edouard's writing of a novel entitled *The Counterfeiters* constitutes a mise en abyme. (Prince: 53)

21 Like Lenja and Savelij, Savelij was a descendant of aristocrats on his father's side and peasants on his mother's side. The description of Lenja's mother strongly resembles that of the narrator's mother in *Spokoјnoj ноќ*. Moreover, in this part of the text references can be found towards Sergej Esenin's famous verse "Ты жива еще, моя старушка?" and the biographies of Tolstoj, Turgenjev and Belinskij.

22 Jackson considers the oxymoron — the sharp, seemingly preposterous antithesis — as being the basic trope of fantastic literature. (21) In *Ljubimov* e.g. the Indian heat is juxtaposed with the Russian cold (359) and Lenin with Samson (363). Even if Savelij does not recognize any relationship between these persons, such a relationship is nevertheless suggested. Both Lenin and Samson can associatively be linked to the mythological figure of the lunatic-sorcerer; in addition, they are both 19th century progressive intellectuals who became the inspirator of a failed utopia that is still haunting them beyond the grave.

23 This is Sinjavskij's own interpretation which he made during his questioning: "Леня Тихомиров отводит опасность с помощью воображения". (*Belaja kniga*: 234)

- 24 In this chapter Savelij uses the first person pronoun for the first time when he begs Lenja to give him the time and rest to write “про твои, Леня, подвиги”. (381) The whole chapter demonstrated the earlier stated discrepancy between Savelij’s thoughts, wordings and actions. His self-image is as inconsistent as is his world view: after having confessed his own morbid and spiteful nature he compares himself with a pure virgin. Samson uses the first person pronoun when he uncovers his identity before Savelij in Chapter 2 and before Lenja in Chapter 4. First person narration can also be found in the first section of Chapter 3 which was partly written by Samson; yet on the whole he is sparing on information about himself. Savelij’s favourite themes reappear in phrases such as “отмени вино в России, — революция вспыхнет” (372), “какая женщина, тем более живущая в самой гуще прогресса (...) не сумеет сколотить приличную группировку?” (375)
- 25 The fragment describing the bomber (367-368) simultaneously enacts the search for the proper form to describe an unequal battle and a horror scene. The narrator is thinking aloud, makes a first attempt, remains unsatisfied and tries again. The rare cases in which Savelij tries his hand at teaching and warning lead only to hilarious results: “выключи будильник и закрой календарь” (364), “попробуй, отмени вино в России ...” (372)
- 26 Comparably, *V cirke* is narrated alternately in the first and third person, and the characters are called by various names.
- 27 After Savelij has been relegated to the footnotes in Chapter 3, Lenja is more frequently referred to as Leonid Ivanovič and Tichomirov. Something similar happens in Chapter 6. Before the turning point on p. 384 Lenja has 20 times been referred to as Lenja, 15 times as Leonid Ivanovič and 8 times as Tichomirov. After the turn the three names occur with about the same frequency, i.e. 6, 7 and 6 times respectively. A possibly ironic designation such as “командир”, “Главкомандующий”, “начальник” can be found both before and after the turn at p. 384. (respectively 1, 2 and 1 times in both parts of the chapter.) A detail that may have some significance should be mentioned here: the ironically sounding word “режиссер” occurs only after the turn, viz. in the phrase “у самого режиссера не выдержали нервы”. (389) This could be taken as an additional trace of Samson’s directing hand.
- 28 An explanation for Samson’s abrupt silence could be that Savelij’s request, unlike that of pope Ignat and Lenja’s mother, is mainly self-interested. Apart from that, Samson naturally is not God. It can hardly be a coincidence that Savelij’s only unselfish request — that his chronicle will not be lost — is answered.
- 29 Судья: Вот вы писали о страхе Проферансова: “Если призовут меня грозные судьи ...” Эти мысли Самсона Самсоновича — не ваши ли страхи и опасения?
Синявский: Это не Самсон Самсонович говорит, а Савелий Кузьмич, и это не мои мысли. (*Belaja kniga*: 243)

- 30 Sofronov's drama *V odnom gorode* appeared in 1947 and was awarded the Stalin Prize in that same year. Moreover, Sofronov figures as a minor character under his full name in *Ljubimov*, where he forms a both comical and sinister duo with his comrade Vitalij Kočetov. (Field 1965: 14) As Sinjavskij used their real names the link between fiction and reality was quite obvious in this case. (*Belaja kniga*: 247) After Sinjavskij's trial and sentence Kočetov wrote a libel against him and Daniel' in the journal *Oktjabr'* which ends with the conclusion: "Они совершали литературные убийства во имя продления на земле владычества денежных мешков". (*Belaja kniga*: 373-375)
- 31 Cf. the same fragment as it is rendered in *Sinjavskij i Daniël' na skam'e podsudimych*: "Там во всем мотив кажимости, невидимости". (80)
- 32 *Spokojnoj noč'* describes how the narrator's father leaves jail under the delusion that his brains have been manipulated in such a way that his prosecutors can overhear his sayings and direct his thoughts. On the one hand, the narrator is inclined to reject this terrifying *idée fixe* as sheer nonsense, on the other he cannot possibly brand his father as mentally ill since he shares many of his fears and uncertainties. Therefore his final conclusion is: "Что с ним было в действительности, так и остается для меня загадкой. Подобно ему, я допускаю оба варианта". (259-260)
- 33 "One of these three components supplies the means by which fantasy enters the plot. Usually, if not necessarily, a narrative that has an action-orientation will also have an action-based fantasy and a character-based fantasy naturally appears in a character-oriented plot". (159) In an action-orientated fantasy the departure from reality generates the action. In *Alice in Wonderland* e.g. the fantastic environment creates adventures and actions which offer new insights. In a fantasy based on character, which is relatively rare and exceedingly difficult to sustain, the reader enters the mind of a non-human or otherwise extraordinary narrator. Zamjatin's *My* e.g. describes the breaking of an individual's mind from within. Hume presents this work as an example of a political idea-fantasy which shifts to a character-fantasy. In an idea-fantasy the leading idea determines the action or makes the action practically nonexistent (e.g. Borges' ficciones). Hume provides Gogol's *Nos* as an example, as this story describes the social insecurities following on the disappearance of the nose and besides suggests possible phallic overtones.
- 34 In reality, the general who took part in the conspiracy sent a few subordinates to the meeting of the Politburo in the Kremlin with the encoded order "to take along cigars". In the Kremlin it was forbidden to carry guns, so the militia men hid their "smoking materials" in briefcases and waited in a side room for a sign from Chruščev. When the latter got up to accuse Berija of high treason, the militia came rushing into the room and arrested Berija. The latter was executed in 1953.
- 35 One significant detail should be mentioned here: Lenja is occasionally described as "косоглазый", an epitheton that is usually reserved for, and associated with, the bogeyman or ogre. (353 note 8; 387) However, for Lenin

the epitheton ornans “зеленоглазый” (363) is employed.

Apparently, even at the high point of the Perestrojka the passage devoted to Lenin was still considered as being too controversial. While reviewing his story for its first official publication in the Soviet Union (in *Cena metaforj*, 1989) Sinjavskij adapted this fragment as follows:

1962-1963	1989
на даче Ленина в Горках	на даче Валина в Норках
Владимир Ильич	Иван Петрович
попишет Владимир Ильич	попишет Иван Сергеевич
выл на луну Ленин	выл на луну Галин
выл Ильич перед смертью	выл Николай перед смертью
Ленинская лампада	таллинская лампада
у Ленина, у Владимира Ильича	у Тялина, у Петра Кузьмича
Ленин	Нелин
(362-363)	(399)

All in all, in *Cena metaforj* the name Vladimir Il'ic is mentioned only once, to be precise in the last paragraph. Perhaps Sinjavskij wished to spare the feelings of certain groups of readers out of respect for Lenin as a historical personage.

³⁶ Sinjavskij made this comparison in connection with Bulgakov's *Master i Margarita*. For a comparison between Lenin and Stalin, see also *Spokojnoj nočj*: 281-282. In the last mentioned novel the general atmosphere in Stalin's Russia is described as follows: “И люди уподоблялись орудиям колдовства, летающим веникам, вертячим столам и тарелкам, бормочущим не свои, а чьи-то, внушаемые свыше, затверженные речи, лишь для виду, ради общедоступности, переведенные толмачами на самый примитивный язык”. (326) Significantly, Sinjavskij-Terc's personal comments on Lenin and Stalin are devoid of emotional aversion. Apparently, both leaders served to him first and foremost as objects for study and reflection.

³⁷ Theimer Nepomnyashchy's interpretation of this fragment strikes me as being too far-fetched on the one hand and too simple on the other: “What he has not taken into account is precisely the urge to be free of the limitations of the body — to assert oneself as other than the physical self — and the inevitability of death, which his psychic meddling can bring about but not reverse or annul”. (136)

³⁸In order to circumvent official censorship Tichomirov rendered his revolutionary message in the form of folkloric tales which he gave quasi-naive titles. His friend the well-known anarchist Petr Kropotkin corrected these writings, the bulk of which was confiscated and destroyed during his life. (Kropotkin: 322) After his arrest and exile Tichomirov publicly rejected the revolutionary cause and attached his name to the conservative press.

CONCLUSION

As starting point for this study I have taken van der Eng's initial premise that the semantic scope of a literary text is not limited to a complex of intraliterary connections, as it can also be related to other texts and to extraliterary reality. If applied to the early writings of Abram Terc, it follows that these can be understood and appreciated independently from their actual social-political context, yet in doing so we lose sight of some of their crucial aspects. In view of the specific status of Terc's fantastic-realistic prose which intrinsically borders upon the satire, a strictly autonomistic approach puts up a barrier on the road to reality which Sinjavskij declared to be seeking. In this context another statement made by van der Eng which ensues from the first is pertinent: literary fiction comprises an all-embracing vision on the totality of human existence, a vision that is polyvalent, paradoxical, fragmented and concrete. Any individual reader is entitled to recombine these heterogeneous elements into a meaningful whole in accordance with his personal views. (1984: 111-129)

The controversy surrounding Andrej Sinjavskij illustrates the extraordinary complexity and polyvalency of his work as well as the rigidity of the value systems prevalent in his country in those days. Unlike the literary texts themselves, the mentioned controversy can only be properly understood in its actual context — it demonstrates that the borders of power, truth and morality were firmly established in the Soviet Union. In the common view, a transgression of these borders was tantamount to a lack of respect for artistic and social conventions. A person who dared to do so was branded a subversive element and serious threat to the ruling social-political order. Fantastic literature, which since late Antiquity has been associated with the chaotic, uncontrollable, non-human and barbarian, was more suspect than other literary genres. What is more, in Russia it was associatively linked with political satire and ideological dissent ever since the times of Gogol' and Saltykov-Ščedrin. Not without reason Sinjavskij and Daniël' considered the attack launched against them as an attack on the basic premises of fantastic literature, eventually even of all narrative prose fiction.

In reviewing the official assaults on Sinjavskij after a period of almost four decades, one feels prompted to dismiss the accusation of anti-Soviet activities as patently unfounded if one keeps the letter of the law which mentions “деятельность, направленная на подрыв основ советского государственного и социалистического экономического строя — основ записанных в Конституции”. In many cases the prosecutors based their interpretation on fatal misreadings, yet they had a point in their claim that Abram Terc denigrates what should be venerated and says out loud what should be silenced. Many of their observations are not entirely without foundation — Terc's

writings indeed display a striking lack of respect for officially imposed limits — it is rather their conclusions that will astonish modern readers. The narrative devices which Terc employed made things only worse. Evidently, the social accuser Z. Kedrina did not merely umbrage over taboo-laden themes such as sex and religion, but even more over the narrative eccentricities in his work which manifest themselves on the level of characterization and plot. In the heat of her argument aesthetic and moral criteria got intertwined, whereas the distinction between fiction and reality disappeared entirely. Following her reasoning, an author who does not make a stand against his morally inferior personages simply becomes one of them.

In a recent study (2003) Willem Weststeijn has noticed that since the rise of narratology at the end of the fifties of the 20th century comparatively little attention has been paid to the study of literary character. (415) Analogously, Hume notices that fantasy based on character is relatively rare and exceedingly difficult to sustain. (161) Abram Terc, I would like to remark, may be credited with the mastery of the rare category of the character fantasy. Van der Eng has mentioned the gradual shift in thematic dominance from the action to the character level that takes place in *Pchenc*; I described a similar development in *Ljubimov*. In both stories an anonymous first person narrator manages to conceal his real identity for quite some time, in both a bifurcation of the narrating subject takes place in the course of the story which only increases the suspense. Both stories conform to a considerable degree to Todorov's definition of a truly fantastic story, although it should be added that Todorov links its first condition — the hesitation on the part of the reader — primarily to the action level.

I have tried to demonstrate that the various mystifications in *Pchenc* and *Ljubimov* affect the narrator as much as the action. In both stories literary devices such as anachronies, omissions and changes of perspective bring forth a strong effect of suspense that intensifies to the highest degree the contact with the reader. Both stories can serve to illustrate van der Eng's statement that suspense is not primarily a technical device, but should be seen as the point of interaction between the levels of phraseology, thematics and composition. It therefore is an important aspect of a text's semantic structure and has a markedly phatic function. This function may be granted a greater scope than Malinovskij and Jakobson did when they defined it as the exchange of ritualized formulas that keep the contact going independent of its meaning. (Jakobson: 355) On the contrary, it may be seen as a form of discourse that is incisive and ad rem, one that directs the reader's attention to possible implicit ulterior meanings. (van der Eng 1984: 125-126)

I would like to end this study with Roland Barthes's pregnant remark that the emotional aspect which is so prominent in suspense does certainly not obliterate its intellectual pleasure. Suspense, being a pre-eminently ambivalent device, is highly sophisticated and highly pathetic at the same time. (48)

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SAMENVATTING

Deze studie is gewijd aan het vroege proza van Andrej Sinjavskij, dat wil zeggen aan de fantastische verhalen die hij in het Westen liet publiceren voor zijn arrestatie in 1965. Het boek heeft zowel een documentair als een narratologisch aspect. De hoofdstukken I-III vormen het documentaire gedeelte en bestaan uit een beschrijving van het proces dat in februari 1966 in Moskou werd aangespannen tegen Sinjavskij en zijn collega-schrijver Julij Daniël'. Zij werden toen veroordeeld tot 7 resp. 5 jaar strafkamp met verzaamd regime wegens het vervaardigen van anti-Sovjet propaganda (Art. 70 van het Wetboek van Strafrecht van de RSFSR). De vermeende propaganda bestond in dit geval uit 12 fantastische verhalen, een literair-filosofisch essay en een bundel aforismen en rêveries die waren verschenen onder de schuilnamen Abram Terc resp. Nikolaj Aržak. De hoofdstukken IV en V belichten het narratologische aspect en bevatten een semantische analyse van speciaal die geschriften die tijdens het proces tot de belangrijkste corpora delicti werden gerekend. Ik behandel deze geschriften als een samenhangend polyinterpretabel corpus van teksten binnen een bepaalde sociaal-historische context. In mijn analyse gaat mijn aandacht vooral uit naar die literaire procédés die verklaren waarom Terc's werk tot zoveel commotie heeft geleid en waarom het zo verschillend is geïnterpreteerd dat men van 'a clash of interpretations' zou willen spreken. Dat er thema's in worden aangeroerd waarop destijds een politiek of sociaal taboe rustte, kan slechts een deel van de verklaring zijn. Ik verdedig de stelling dat Terc zich in zijn vroege proza niet zozeer schuldig heeft gemaakt aan politiek-ideologische als wel aan formeel-literaire subversie. Zijn verhalen zijn geconstrueerd rondom mystificaties op verschillende vertelniveaus die een sterk fantastisch effect teweegbrengen en die een bron zijn van suspense. Blijkbaar heeft deze georganiseerde chaos vol vrolijke en lugubere nonsens destijds niet alleen bevreemding gewekt bij bepaalde groepen lezers, maar ook verontwaardiging en argwaan. De merkwaardige receptiegeschiedenis van dit oeuvre biedt zo aan de tegenwoordige lezers de mogelijkheid om zich een beeld te vormen van de interpretatienormen die destijds gangbaar waren in de Sovjetunie, en om na te gaan in welke opzichten Terc van deze normen afweek.

In hoofdstuk I wordt het proces allereerst in de context geplaatst van andere schrijversprocessen en literaire schandalen in heden en verleden. Het verwijt aan alle schrijvers op het beklagdenbankje kwam in grote lijnen steeds op hetzelfde neer: zij zouden in hun geschriften bepaalde grenzen hebben overschreden die waren opgelegd door kerk, staat of conventie. Het was echter zijn merkwaardige hybride vorm die het proces tegen Sinjavskij en Daniël' maakte tot een geval apart en een juridisch cause célèbre: het combineerde elementen van een proces in een rechtsstaat met die van een Stalinistisch showproces, waarbij een literair oeuvre

werd opgevoerd als *corpus delicti*. Aansluitend schets ik de gevolgen die dit proces op de korte en lange termijn heeft gehad. In de Sovjetunie leidde het aanvankelijk tot verharding van de standpunten en tot verscherping van de censuur. De gevolgen op langere termijn waren door de Sovjetautoriteiten vermoedelijk niet voorzien en zeker niet gewenst. Het feit dat beide schrijvers geweigerd hebben om een schuldbekentenis af te leggen heeft grote indruk gemaakt op hun landgenoten en gaf een krachtige impuls aan de ontluikende samizdat en dissidentenbeweging. Hun veroordeling leidde bovendien tot een golf van negatieve publiciteit in de buitenlandse pers en tot kritiek van politieke en maatschappelijke organisaties in vele landen. Tenslotte ga ik in op de vraag naar de intrinsiek literaire betekenis en actuele relevantie van deze eens zo omstreden verhalen wanneer zij los worden gezien van hun ontstaans- en receptiegeschiedenis.

Hoofdstuk II is gewijd aan de aanklacht tegen Sinjavskij. Deze concentreerde zich op vier punten: hij zou zich in zijn werk schuldig maken aan laster, kritiek, vijandigheid en spot. In de onderbouwing van deze beschuldigingen raken subjectieve en objectieve criteria met elkaar verweven: waarden worden behandeld als feiten, woorden als daden, meningen als bewijs. Strikt genomen is Sinjavskij veroordeeld op grond van de interpretaties die zijn aanklagers van zijn werk hadden gemaakt en op grond van hun speculaties omtrent de auteursintentie. Deze interpretaties worden beschreven en binnen een bepaalde literatuuropvatting en receptietraditie geplaatst.

Hoofdstuk III belicht de argumenten waarmee Sinjavskij zichzelf in de rechtszaal heeft verdedigd. Deze argumenten beschrijf ik aan de hand van het theoretische model voor de literaire communicatie dat is ontworpen door Jakobson en enigszins bewerkt door Scholes. In lijn met de uitgangspunten van het vroege Russische Formalisme beriep Sinjavskij zich op een aantal kenmerken die hij essentieel achtte voor literaire fictie: polyvalentie, narratieve stratificatie, afstand lezer-schrijver en fictionaliteit (in Jakobson's termen de gespleten boodschap, zender, ontvanger en context van de literaire tekst). Wellicht lijkt deze apologie op het eerste gezicht op een losse verzameling ontwijkende en ontkennende antwoorden - zijn werken zouden geen eenduidige strekking hebben en zijn niet eenvoudig samen te vatten, zij dienen geen concreet doel, verwoorden niet het standpunt van de auteur, zijn tot niemand in het bijzonder gericht en weerspiegelen geen extratextuele werkelijkheid. Uit deze uitspraken kan echter wel degelijk een persoonlijk omlinjende auteursvisie worden afgeleid omtrent de relatie tussen fantasie en werkelijkheid in literaire fictie.

In de hoofdstukken IV en V worden de compositie en spanningsbogen beschreven in *Pchenc* (1957) en *Ljubimov* (1962-63), waarop een beknopt receptieonderzoek volgt van beide verhalen. Mijn analyse is gebaseerd op van der Eng's stelling dat omissies, anachronieën en perspectiefwisselingen op verschillende niveaus een effect van suspense in verhalende teksten tot stand

brenge. In *Pchenc* en *Ljubimov* resulteren de genoemde procédés in een geleidelijke verschuiving van thematische dominantie van het niveau van de handeling naar dat van de karakterisering. Bij de beschrijving van de interpretaties die van beide verhalen zijn gemaakt maak ik gebruik van Todorov's theoretische omschrijving van fantastische literatuur als apart genre, waarbij uiteraard de vraag aan de orde komt in hoeverre Todorov's model van toepassing is op Terc.

Pchenc begint als het relaas van een anonieme ik-verteller die pas gaandeweg onthult wie hij is of meent te zijn: een plantaardig buitenaards wezen dat per ongeluk op aarde is beland. Hij beschrijft de menselijke samenleving met bevreemding en afschuw. De lange tijd verholde identiteit van deze verteller bepaalt de voornaamste suspense-lijn, en wanneer hij zich tenslotte bekendmaakt wordt het verhaal slechts raadselachtiger en principieel ambivalent. Er zijn twee lezingen volgens het model van Todorov mogelijk: men kan het lezen hetzij als een sprookje of science fiction story, hetzij als een typisch Russisch 'dagboek van een gek', met andere woorden een *historia morbi*. Beide lezingen hadden en hebben hun aanhangers. Gezien het aesopische karakter van Terc's verhalen leent *Pchenc* zich echter ook voor een symbolische of satirische interpretatie. Het beeldt dan de vervreemding uit van de moderne mens in een onverschillige of vijandige samenleving, of meer specifiek het bedreigde bestaan van de interne emigrant in de Sovjetunie die zich verscheurd voelt tussen een opgelegde publieke en een verborgen privé-identiteit. Een dergelijke controversiële uitleg is zowel door opponenten als sympathisanten aan het verhaal gegeven. Een andere steen des aanstoots tijdens het proces was het uiterst negatieve beeld van de mens, de vrouw, de Sovjetburger en het leven in de Sovjetunie dat uit het verhaal naar voren zou komen. De gekozen vertelvorm met zijn grillige associaties, ordinaire *skaz* en parodiërende verwijzingen naar de literaire canon maakte het nog erger.

Hoofdstuk V begint met een beschrijving van de compositie en suspense-opbouw in *Ljubimov*, het verhaal over de jonge fietsenmaker Lenja Tichomirov die een mislukte poging doet om een heilstaat te stichten in zijn geboorteplaats door middel van psychomagnetisme. Het verhaal heeft de vorm van een historische kroniek. Het wordt verteld door een aanvankelijk anonieme ik-verteller die zich pas na enige tijd bekendmaakt en zich vervolgens opsplitst in twee contrasterende narratieve stemmen. De interactie tussen deze stemmen beschrijf ik met behulp van Uspenski's fijnmazige model voor de analyse van verhalende teksten aan de hand van verschillende vertelperspectieven. De eerste verteller, de kroniekschrijver Savelij, wordt of voelt zich bezocht door de geest van zijn voorvader Samson die niet alleen zijn schrijvende hand stuurt maar ook het verloop van de gebeurtenissen bepaalt. Ook dit verhaal past tot op zekere hoogte binnen Todorov's genre-omschrijving. Kiest men voor een fantastische interpretatie, dan leest men het verhaal als een toversprookje met Samson in de

rol van tovenaarsleerling en Lenja in die van tovenaarsleerling. Verkiest men een realistische interpretatie, dan leest men het als *historia morbi*. Het beschrijft dan de ontwikkeling van een collectieve waan in de vorm van een fantasmagorie ontsprongen aan Savelij's zieke geest. De meest controversiële en mijns inziens meest interessante interpretatie is echter de symbolische-satirische, die recht doet aan de vele verwijzingen naar de Russische geschiedenis die erin voorkomen. Ook dit verhaal was een steen des aanstoots tijdens het proces. Het werd uitermate kwetsend gevonden voor het Russische volk, zijn leiders en zijn geschiedenis en als een belediging gezien voor de goede zeden en de goede smaak. Ook de vele narratieve excentriciteiten wekten grote weerstand: procédés zoals parodistische verwijzingen naar de literaire canon, ongemotiveerde handelingen, raadselachtige gebeurtenissen, spelletjes met metaforen en perspectiefwisselingen maken bij elkaar genomen *Ljubimov* tot een nog fantastischer geheel dan *Pchenc*.

Mijn conclusie luidt tenslotte dat Terc's vroege proza heel goed kan worden begrepen en gewaardeerd onafhankelijk van de maatschappelijke context waarin het is ontstaan, maar dat de controversie eromheen slechts naar de tijdsomstandigheden kan worden beoordeeld en begrepen. Deze controversie laat zien hoe gecompliceerd en ambivalent Terc's verhalen zijn en hoe origineel zij waren voor die tijd, en tevens hoe rigide de ideologische richtlijnen waren die toen het cultureel-maatschappelijke leven beheersten. De weerstand die Terc's vroege proza heeft gewekt valt deels rationeel te verklaren: inderdaad legt het een opvallend gebrek aan respect aan de dag voor sociale en artistieke conventies en een uitgesproken voorliefde voor experimentele vertelvormen. Wellicht wekken de extreme conclusies die zijn toenmalige opponenten trokken achteraf bevreemding, maar deze tonen wel aan hoe scherp de grenzen van macht, waarheid en moraal destijds waren gemarkeerd in de Sovjetunie. Aan Terc's vroege verhalen kan worden afgelezen wat er toen niet kon worden gezegd, en in welke vorm het niet kon worden gezegd.

