

Novel Histories: Repudiation of Soviet Historiography in the Works of Iurii Trifonov,
Vladimir Makanin, and Liudmila
Ulitskaia

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ABSTRACT

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(Under the direction of Madeline Levine and Beth Holmgren)

Aspects of Stalinist historiography have influenced the style of late-Soviet and post-Soviet Russian prose fiction. Through a simplified linear plot, archetypically heroic and villainous characterizations, and catechismal rhetoric, the Soviet leadership manipulated Russian history to justify their own power. Soviet historiographical methods of emplotment and characterization as well as narrative and rhetorical devices form a stratum of meaning in the fiction of Iurii Trifonov, Vladimir Makanin, and Liudmila Ulitskaia. These three writers polemicize with the style and substance of Soviet historiography, but they do not participate in a postmodern rejection of the artist's potential role as historian.

These three author's fictional plots counteract the teleological plot of official Soviet history. The prose fiction of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia disavows the linear progress plot through fragmentation. The actors in the dramas of Soviet historiography are typically collectives: peasants, workers, and the Party. The characters in the works I will present by Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia reverse this choice of character. Their characters tend to be anything but heroic; they are

failures, underdogs, and underachievers. They are foremost individuals, however, alienated from the collective and acting, or refusing to act, according to expectations or rational laws. This prose also abounds in metaphors and symbols for the passage and effects of time. Natural images such as fire and flood, evocative emblematic emotions, such as Makanin's feeling of being "left behind," and dream imagery all serve to personalize history. Finally, official Soviet histories were narrated by a single, authoritative voice. A consistent feature of the novels and longer works of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia is the presence of multiple narrators within single, unified works. The presence of voices in first and third person in each of these works forces the reader to accept not only multiple viewpoints, but also multiple ways of telling the stories of the past.

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INTRODUCTION:
Russian History as Literature / Russian Literature as History

Iurii Valentinovich Trifonov (1925-1981), Vladimir Semenovich Makanin (b. 1937), and Liudmila Evgen'evna Ulitskaia (b. 1943) – three writers with diverse careers and divergent critical receptions – share an important preoccupation with the Soviet past. What links these writers and separates them from many of their peers is an obsession not only with representing the past through fiction, but also with interrogating the forms in which history is written. Soviet history figures as a perpetual background and theme of their prose – as it has done and does still for many Russian writers in the post-Stalin era. Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia stand out from other fictionalizers of the recent past because of the discernable presence of Soviet *historiography* in their prose fiction: these three writers engage in a persistent polemic with the methods of emplotment, characterization, and narration as well as the exploitation of conventional imagery typical of the Soviet writing of history.

The entire framework for examining Soviet history changed a decade after Trifonov's death in 1981. Makanin and Ulitskaia came to prominence in a post-Soviet Russian literary marketplace that bore little resemblance to the Soviet command system Trifonov struggled with. Bringing two post-Soviet writers

together with a Soviet writer in a single study of novelizations of the Soviet era is an unconventional choice; nearly all contemporary Russian critics represent the Soviet and post-Soviet eras as inimical to one another. For some, the contemporary scene embodies freedom, experimentation, and discovery; for others, contemporary literature manifests loss and travesty.¹

Well-known novelist and literary critic, Viktor Erofeev, in a 1997 preface to his anthology of contemporary Russian writing, proclaimed Soviet literature – both official and unofficial – dead:

В конце 80-х годов история советской литературы оборвалась. Причина ее смерти насильственна, внелитературна. Советская литература была оранжерейным цветком социалистической государственности. Как только в оранжерее перестали топить, цветок заявил, потом засох. Симметричный ей цветок литературы сопротивления также захирел; они были связаны единой корневой системой. (11)

Erofeev embraces and promotes apolitical, anti-ideological literature that could not have existed within the binary system of official and dissident literature that prevailed throughout the Soviet era. I take issue with Erofeev on two counts. First, the black-and-white distinction between official Soviet literature and dissident literature is belied by the very careers of writers such as Iurii Trifonov, who published within the system without completely compromising with it. Second, the fall of the Soviet Union did not necessarily produce a sharp break in literary tradition, as the careers of Vladimir Makanin and Liudmila Ulitskaia will

¹ Evgeniia Shcheglova blames the worst of Soviet literature for the public's taste in mass market fiction ("Nynche vse naoborot" 42-43). For other critics who disparage the contemporary literary scene, see Dubin and Adamovich. For critics who defend the quality and gravity of contemporary literature see Natalia Ivanova's essays collected in the volume *Skrytyi siuzhet* as well as "Bandersha i sutener," Remizova, and Slavnikova. For objective studies on the changes in reading habits, see Levina and Gudkov.

illustrate. Makanin and Ulitskaia continue many of the artistic methods pioneered by Trifonov, even in the absence of the conditions of repression and censorship that gave rise to them. Although I cannot make the argument that Trifonov directly influenced Makanin or Ulitskaia, I can demonstrate that they share a remarkably similar set of historical fictional techniques and by analyzing the efficacy of these techniques in polemicizing with Soviet narratives of the past, I can demonstrate an important line of continuity between late Soviet and post-Soviet Russian prose fiction.

In the same essay, Erofeev writes that post-Soviet Russian literature no longer follows the tradition of humanism: that literature no longer has a high moral status. He rejects Russian literature's traditional function as philosophy, religion, political tract, and – most important for this project – historical text (29-30). While this is in many ways true – the writer may no longer be a prophet or moral guide – it is not completely accurate. I argue that Russian writers still play the role of historian and continue to voice the necessity for an ethical treatment of the past. Both Makanin and Ulitskaia continue in the tradition of Trifonov as undisputedly serious writers who disregard the demands of censorship or the market. Trifonov demonstrated that the writer could be a historian and an ethical one even within the Soviet system; Makanin and Ulitskaia maintain that role of the writer despite market pressures and ever-changing public taste.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The practice of blending history and literature and reading literature as history (and history as literature) is not a uniquely Russian phenomenon, although the high status accorded literature in extra-literary fields in Russia is unusual. The work of Hayden White launched the practice of applying literary theory to historiographical writing. White asserts that history follows a process of “emplotment” and is narrated in the same way as literary prose.² History and literature have similar goals, according to White. White sums up the implications of his work in a recent essay entitled “Historical Discourse and Literary Writing”:

. . . in general, literature – in the modern period – has regarded history not so much as its other as, rather, its complement in the work of identifying and mapping a shared object of interest, a real world which presents itself to reflection under so many different aspects that all of the resources of language – rhetorical, poetical, and symbolic – must be utilized to do it justice. . . . The great modernists (from Flaubert, Baudelaire, Dickens and Shelley down through Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Pound, Eliot, Stein, and so on) were as interested in representing a real instead of a fictional world quite as much as any modern historian. But unlike their historian counterparts they realized that language itself is a part of the real world and must be included among the elements of that world rather than treated as a transparent instrument for representing it. (25-26)

White reveals how historians employ rhetorical devices to recreate the past through prose and to convince their audiences of the validity of their versions. Writers of fiction employ literary devices to recreate artistically a world that in many aspects corresponds to the past evoked by historians. White’s assertions about the literary nature of history and the referential nature of much fiction allow

² White’s *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973) is generally considered to contain his most important formulation of the varied means by which history is “emplotted.” His essays “Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth in Historical Representation” (1992) and “Literary Theory and Historical Writing” (1999) further elaborate the application of literary theory to historiographical texts.

for a wider application of literary theory central to my analysis of the work of Soviet historians and its transformation in the fiction of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia. Like the modernists evoked by White, Trifonov, Makanin and Ulitskaia strive to represent a “real instead of a fictional world.”

Their task is made all the more daunting by the history of the writing of history in the Soviet Union. Official histories presented falsified or highly selective versions of events, leading to an even more acute awareness of the centrality of language in narrating the past: the manipulation of language and culture in the Stalin era justified the murder and imprisonment of hundreds of thousands if not millions of people. The Stalinist narrative of the past attempted to vindicate the elimination of entire populations. Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia resurrect and assert their versions of the past in novels and short stories that provide a stark contrast to the false past evoked by Soviet historians. Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia use language in ways that call to mind the Soviet writing history in order to call attention to the narrativity of history, to discredit the Soviet narration of history, and to offer a new, more transparently constructed version.

Literary scholar Dorrit Cohn, contrary to White, insists on the complete autonomy of fiction and historiography, proposing several “signposts of fictionality” generally disregarded in the Russian literary tradition I am examining here. A brief overview of Cohn’s distinctions reveals how Russian writers stand out owing to their acceptance of the extraliterary role of historian. One of Cohn’s distinctions involves narrative style: a responsible historian cannot enter the minds of his actors or subjects and conjecture on thoughts and motivations as a

literary narrator can (117). A literary narrator is also free from identification with his or her author. In a historiographical, nonfictional work, on the other hand, “. . . [the] narrator is identical to a real person: the author named on its title page” (124). These two distinctions hold true for the work of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia and indeed mark their narratives as fictional. The most interesting signpost proposed by Cohn involves the formalist distinction between *fabula* and *siuzhet* as two analytical categories of story events, *fabula* denoting the chronological, cause-and-effect relationships among events and *siuzhet* indicating the arrangement of events (emplotment) in a work of fiction. Historiographical prose, she argues, involves a third category – “the more or less reliably documented evidence of past events out of which the historian fashions his story” (112).

I agree that in many cases the reference to an actual lived past does distinguish historiographical work from fictional work; however, there are some cases in which all three levels – *fabula*, *siuzhet*, and documented past event – are crucial for interpretation of fictional works. The prose works of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia serve as examples. An analysis of the works of these writers actually depends on the three levels of event listed above and an additional fourth level: a falsified version of the past – often a past experienced by writer and reader alike – propagated by Stalinist historiography. These writers’ active engagement with all four levels distinguishes them from their postmodern contemporaries.

Most other contemporary Russian writers engaging with the Soviet past do so in a manner that questions the existence of historical truth. Mark Lipovetsky identifies these writers as postmodern, adapting Linda Hutcheon's concept of "historiographic metafiction" to the Russian case. According to Lipovetsky, four features define this trend: a relativist rejection of various notions of historical truth; a destruction of traditional distinctions between history and fiction; a gravitation toward aesthetic strategies that encourage open-endedness; and "postmodern intertextuality and irony" that serve to reduce the role of the writing subject (*Russian Postmodernist Fiction* 154-155). The second and third characteristics of postmodern writers of historical fiction do apply to the works of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia, but the first and fourth do not. The writers I have chosen to bring together in this study do blur the lines between history and fiction and they do employ open-ended narrative strategies, which I will analyze in depth throughout the following chapters. However, they emphatically do not reject historical truth nor do they engage in playful intertextuality. In fact, I argue that they resurrect the importance of the writing subject as a public authority.

Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia maintain a serious engagement with social and political matters in fiction through their interrogation of the form and language of Soviet historiography. They repudiate the Soviet version of history and the language used to present it by overturning the idea of an authoritative, unitary truth, offering instead a fragmented multiplicity of individual truths. These writers do not espouse relativism, however, but rather a philosophy of history in which identification of personal experience with that of another's experience

confirms a true version of the past. These writers embrace literary texts as a forum for and model of a genuine identification between individually lived lives and narratives of the past.

I've chosen to conduct a comparative analysis of the works of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia because each of these writers tears down the official Soviet version of the past without negating the possibility of a true version. These writers resurrect the novelist's imperative to tell the truth, yet they do so subtly and without making grand claims. They bring the level of truth down to the level of their humdrum protagonists' lives, and they use narrative techniques to reinforce the idea that many voices can proclaim many truths – as many as there are voices – without being contradictory or relativist. They accomplish what Erofeev thought impossible: they preserve Russian literature's special status as a vehicle for truth-telling while at the same time rejecting the totalizing narrative of Soviet Socialist literature and historiography.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE TRADITION OF AUTHOR-HISTORIANS

To appreciate just what function Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia are preserving and how they are transforming it in a seemingly postmodern post-Soviet culture, we need to review their famous predecessors in Russian literature and how they handled a perceived literature-as-history mandate. Gary Saul Morson designates Russian literature an “anomaly” because:

Literature and authors have traditionally enjoyed far greater prestige in Russia than in most Western countries. It is by now a truism that literature occupied the center of Russian intellectual life in the nineteenth century,

and that it performed many of the functions elsewhere served by philosophy, social analysis, and political commentary. (15)

The position of writers in nineteenth-century Russian society led to certain obligations; as Donald Fanger explains, “Russian writers have always worked with relation to a larger imperative – cognitive, social, and ethical” (113). Both critics cite the prestigious career of Vissarion Belinsky, who advocated an active social role for literature, and the novels and publicistic works of the radical Nikolai Chernyshevsky as evidence of this longstanding tradition. Influential nineteenth-century critics – Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, and Strakhov among others – ensured that literature would not be read outside of a political, religious, or philosophical context. Each of these critics demanded that writers respond to the social issues of the day through works of fiction and poetry.

The careers of prominent nineteenth-century critics partially explains the growth of literature’s extraliterary functions, but how does the role of the writer as historian fit into this tradition? Jurij Striedter also locates the nexus of this fiction/history relationship in a study of genre. Striedter’s in-depth study of Pushkin’s evolution as a historical writer leads him to conclude that different literary genres embody different philosophies of history.³ *Boris Godunov*, for example, embodies Pushkin’s early mode of historical thinking:

If a poet approaches history in this way, as a series of prescribed events and conflicts of historical characters whose motives unfold in fictitious dialogues, drama will be the most suitable genre for him to work in, since it presents, in dialogue, well-defined characters in well-defined situations and conflicts. Therefore, it can hardly be a coincidence that Pushkin chose this genre for his first historical poem. (297)

³Although Striedter does not mention Hayden White, this concept is not alien to White’s notion of emplotment in *Metahistory*.

Thus, Pushkin's shift to historical prose fiction and historical prose, according to Striedter, reflects his evolving understanding of the nature of history. Prose fiction was appropriate to a newer understanding of the ability of the writer to "present historical events and personalities in a historically suitable manner, but also to lay stress on their general human qualities, which could be best achieved by showing them within the framework of everyday life and with their families" (304). Consequently, "what . . . determines structure and perspective in this sort of historical novel is that, by the presence of the 'middle' hero in the 'middle' genre of the novel, all the figures and events, including the grand historic ones, are portrayed from a corresponding, 'refracted' viewpoint" (305).⁴ The hero stands between the large-scale events of his time and the everyday life of his family, and his narration can only portray that which he experiences and understands. According to Striedter, authors who choose to novelize history do so in order to recreate the past through the eyes of a hero/narrator with whom the reader can identify and correspondingly commingle the history of everyday life with the history of cataclysmic events. These same motivations, I will argue, lie behind Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia's choices of genre and hero: the works of the writers under consideration here preserve certain critically posited Russian literary traditions.

Andrew Wachtel similarly formulates a model of "intergeneric discourse" to explain the relationship between the writing of history and literature in Russia and the Soviet Union. Wachtel acknowledges the rich tradition in European and other

⁴Striedter also acknowledges Pushkin's debt to Walter Scott and the kinship between Pushkin's work and Tolstoy's.

literatures of locating plot material in well-known stories from history. He contends:

What makes Russia unique is that major Russian authors tend to produce their own transpositions of historical themes. That is, Russian writers traditionally write multiple monologic narratives on the same historical material. In most cases, one of the texts is fictional (in the pre-postmodernist understanding of the term) and the other is nonfictional. The dialogue is not only intertextual and intergeneric but its existence defies the conventional split between the expected professional segregation of the historian and the writer of fiction. (11)

Wachtel provides as examples Karamzin's *History of the Russian State* and his historical tales, Pushkin's *History of Pugachev* and *Captain's Daughter*, and the second epilogue of *War and Peace* as well as Solzhenitsyn's *Red Wheel*. Although Trifonov does engage in precisely this kind of intergeneric dialogue through his works on the Russian Civil War – the documentary work *Otbleisk kostra* and the novel *Starik* (examples which are not mentioned by Wachtel) – this kind of dialogue is not what interests me in this study. Wachtel's book does reaffirm, however, the special relationship between literature and history in Russia and the Soviet Union and the tradition in which writers of fiction are respected when they choose to give voice to topics conventionally treated by historians. Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia are not breaking with tradition when they pen fictional versions of the past that claim the status of historical truth; in this case, they are conforming to tradition, providing continuity in a very specific way with nineteenth-century writers.

Thus Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia are not necessarily innovators in this area. Tolstoy entered the minds of his historical characters (Napoleon, Kutuzov) in the historiographical components of *War and Peace*, a practice

continued in the twentieth century by Solzhenitsyn. Tolstoy also claimed to write fiction as himself, most notably in his late story "Hadji Murad." Gogol mixes genres in a different way through the lyrical digressions on the fate of Russia that appear throughout his *Dead Souls*, a practice brought into the twentieth century by Tertz. Russian literature defies the kind of generic or discipline-specific codification set down by critics like Cohn. In doing so, they establish a tradition of writer-historians whose voices have been traditionally respected.

Even when they write history that is open-ended yet strives for truth, the writers under consideration here do not depart from tradition. Morson applies the concept of "sideshadowing," when events are related as contingent rather than certain, to the prose of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky to explain their polemics with prevailing ideas of their times:

In the determinism these writers opposed, events are either actual or were impossible from the outset; our sense that unactualized possibilities could have happened is nothing more than a measure of our ignorance of causes, facts, and laws. By contrast, sideshadowing admits, in addition to actualities and impossibilities, a middle realm of real possibilities that could have happened even if they did not. . . . It [sideshadowing] has profound implications for our understanding of history and of our own lives while affecting the ways in which we judge our present situation. It also encourages skepticism about our ability to know the future and the wisdom of projecting straight lines from current trends or values. (6)

Morson claims that "indeterminacy" is the central theme of *War and Peace* (156-157). Tolstoy rejects the idea of laws of history and the science of battle, just as Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia do, by narrating possibility rather than certainty and by embedding narrative strategies that reinforce open-endedness into his accounts of past events. Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia thus recontextualize

certain key tactics of nineteenth-century historical fiction in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras.

THE SOVIET ERA

The special, exalted status of Russian literature has not manifested itself in a consistent way, however, from the nineteenth-century to the post-Soviet period. At times, the Russian writer has fulfilled expectations far greater than that of philosopher or historian: he or she has been perceived as a prophet. This prophetic aspect of the writer's perceived mission in the Russian tradition is important for understanding how Soviet manipulation of the literature as history mandate affected later writers. Pamela Davidson has discerningly described the status of the writer as prophet in two recent articles. She outlines the genesis of this identification in Russia in the civic poetry of Lomonosov and traces its development and entrenchment through Pushkin, Belinsky, Gogol, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy to Solov'ev and finally to the Soviet era ("Moral Dimension" 490-491). This role allowed the writers to pronounce their own often-idiosyncratic versions of the "Russian idea" and to propagate their intentions for Russia's future to a wide and eager audience ("Validation" 508). Davidson does not hesitate to connect this tradition to the Revolution and Soviet era:

In tracing the roots of this attitude, we should remind ourselves that the Slavophile, messianic ideals that determined the course of Russian history were first articulated in a secular context, not by politicians, but by literary writers, who modeled themselves on the Hebrew prophets. The distortion of the concept of the prophet that first established itself through responses to Pushkin therefore had a broad impact beyond literature. The authority conferred upon the writer by the title of prophet, together with the blurring of the crucial moral dimension that constitutes the very source of this

authority, was a potent and hazardous combination, which became greatly magnified when transferred onto a national scale. ("Moral Dimension" 518)

The established relationship between writers and the readers who heed them as prophets allowed the Soviets to use literature as propaganda and to make writers complicit in the Soviet project of rewriting the past to serve the Communist future under the rubric of Socialist Realism. In Soviet culture, the writer's eminence was co-opted and the writer became more bureaucrat-commissar than prophet. The writer as bureaucrat produced novels according to plan; the writer as commissar educated the masses according to socialist doctrine.⁵

Katerina Clark provides an assessment of the Socialist Realist novel based on the "models" its writers were instructed to follow and the "masterplot" to which all novels conform. Adherence to this plot became ritualized, in the sense that, "rituals personalize abstract cultural meanings and turn them into comprehensible narrative" (9). The ritual is intimately bound up with the Marxist-Leninist ideology of history. The masterplot recreates on a narrative level the progression through the stages of history outlined by Marx, ending with reaching the goal of communism. The hero's coming to awareness replicates society's achievement (Clark 9-10). This is another way in which historiography and prose fiction are interrelated. Many writers parody this relationship between hero and history⁶, but Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia take on Soviet historiography in a different way. They carefully interrogate the fundamental elements of the Soviet

⁵For an intriguing account of one Soviet writer's experience with Soviet literary bureaucracy see Thomas Lahusen *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin's Russia*.

⁶See Clark's afterward.

writing of history, those elements that did not fluctuate with fluctuations in policy and politics, and they use fictional strategies to undermine the philosophy of history underlying the basic elements of the Soviet story. The specific aspects of Soviet historiography under consideration here will be enumerated fully in the following chapter.

The messianic status of literature was indeed morally tarnished by participation in the Soviet project and literature was demoted in the eyes of many because of the way the Soviets co-opted this imperative and coerced writers to serve the state. In response, many writers fell silent or published in alternative ways and kept the sanctity of literature alive. The Russian literary imperative to address a wide realm of social and philosophical truths did not die out in either dissident or official prose. Isaac Deutscher comments in a 1957 essay:

Whatever currents and cross-currents there are in post-Stalinist literature, whatever idols are smashed, and whatever old aesthetic truths are rediscovered, the notion that the writer is of necessity *engagé* continues to be taken for granted. It is too deeply embedded in the Russian tradition to be affected by the present ideological flux. ("Steps to a New Russian Literature" 240)

This special status accorded literature survived throughout the Soviet era to the extent that Solzhenitsyn famously dubbed literature a "second government."⁷ The writer's imperative thus took two forms in the Soviet era: Communist and dissident. While Trifonov never openly participated in dissident politics, his novels rigorously question the fundamental premises of Communist ideology, especially its use of history. Trifonov demurred from the writer's exalted status as prophet,

⁷The line is given to Volodin in *V krughe pervom* (1968) to illuminate the relationship between power and art and the responsibility of the writer.

but he maintained the writer's role as historian throughout the Brezhnev era, and Makanin and Ulitskaia, I argue, maintain it to this day.

CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

Rosalind Marsh observed in the mid-nineties a growing belief that literature had "served its purpose": in the absence of political freedom, literature had by necessity stood in for political debate and "literary factions had to some extent been a substitute for political parties" (197). After 1991, according to Marsh's theory, *engagé* literature was no longer necessary and the writer no longer needed to prophesy Russia's true path; politicians took over. She also argues that the "writer as prophet" status used by the Soviets tarnished the writer's position (199). I believe that this is true to a certain extent, but tradition does not disappear so easily and the writer in Russia will continue to occupy an exceptional role.

The second aspect of the Russian writer's special role, that of historian, for instance, is still very much in evidence. Russian literature's "obsession with history" was never more acute than in the years following Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*, as studies by Marsh and Ivanova show. The literary politics of *glasnost'* demonstrate the extent to which the Russian reading public turned to literary texts for reliable versions of the past, and that role persists to the present day. Ivanova develops this idea at length:

Стало уже общим местом, если не банальностью, умозаключение о том, что литература в России, а затем и в СССР, была «нашим всем», добровольно аккумулируя не свойственные ей, но необходимые обществу функции: социологии, философии,

политологии, психологии и так далее. Забытой в перечне обязанностей оказалась еще одна, и важнейшая, область духовной деятельности: литература осуществляла и трудную работу историка, расширяя в силу своих возможностей (и невозможностей) исторические знания. (*Skrytyi siuzhet* 189)

She shows how throughout the 1980s the publication of historical documents and historical analyses fell behind the publication of previously banned or unpublishable literature; thus the public's knowledge of previously unknown history came from their reading of *literary* texts. Her study of letters to the editor of *Ogonek* demonstrates that readers approached literary texts as revelations of historical truth (190-191). Although the "boom" in publications on previously banned historical topics has passed, the effects of this tradition are still felt in contemporary prose. Marsh concurs, concluding her 1995 study of *glasnost'* era historical fiction optimistically with the observation that the best works of contemporary literature continue to engage the past creatively (though she does not believe they are widely read). Similarly, Lipovetsky notes the change in status of the writer and a concurrent upsurge in published examples of realist literature searching for truth, exhibiting "faith in the existence of . . . meaning" ("Literature on the Margins" 143). Writers continue to search for ways to express the truth of the past and reclaim for themselves the distinguished status that was marred through Soviet manipulation of both literary writers and historians. I argue that Makanin and Ulitskaia are at the forefront of this movement.

The genre of the memoir enjoys ever-growing popularity in Russia and the fact that Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia in many senses write fictional memoirs

may explain their relative critical and/or popular success. Critics and practitioners have defined the genre of the memoir variously. Beth Holmgren identifies a consensus in the following definition: “In the memoir, [critics] tentatively agree, the author narrates real events and contacts he or she has experienced or witnessed, usually foregrounding a subjective perspective and evaluation” (xxix). The novels and short stories of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia emulate this form: they narrate real events experienced by fictional heroes and antiheroes who are intimately bound up in a representation of the fate of an individual in a particular historical era. Holmgren brings the theoretical work of Lidiia Ginzburg and Mikhail Bakhtin to bear on the question (xxx). Ginzburg’s concept of “documentary genres” and their “orientation toward authenticity” sheds light on the historical novels of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia. While in one sense wholly imaginative, these novels at the same time convey a common, authentic experience that differs from official accounts. Bakhtin sees the value of autobiography and biography (and implicitly, the memoir) in their role in the development of the novel and as a source for fiction, leading precisely to the kind of narratives under consideration here (Holmgren, xxx). Marina Balina explains the particular popularity of the memoir in Soviet literature after the death of Stalin. She reveals the ways in which this genre enabled a partial rewriting of the narrative of Soviet history, a partial rehabilitation of individuals and individual experience.⁸ While many memoirists emulated the fixed forms of official exemplars of the genre, others, such as Valentin Kataev, experimented with the

⁸Balina studies Trifonov’s semi-autobiographical story cycle *Oprokinutyi dom* in this context. While I do not analyze that specific work, my analysis is indebted to her practice of locating official Soviet discourse as a level of meaning in alternative Soviet and post-Soviet prose.

form, foregoing the linear narrative of individual progress for more fragmentary forms.

Irina Paperno's study entitled "Personal Accounts of the Soviet Experience" outlines the ways in which Soviet history has been transformed in the post-Soviet era by individuals and how individualization has been taken up by the market: ". . . in telling their life stories, concrete people present the Soviet past, or history, as personal experience" (577). This experience is marketed in multiple ways: memoirs in book form; book series ["My 20th Century" or "The Family Archive of the 20th Century"]; special sections of nearly all thick journals; published diaries; the People's Archive and the Solzhenitsyn archive, to which anyone can contribute their written experiences.

These personal accounts of the past are often "writings of people whose life span coincides with the Soviet epoch; they tend to focus on Stalin's time, presenting it as the defining Soviet experience" (581). Now, in the era of free-market literature, "[p]ublishers clearly identify their editions by pointing to personal, individual and private perspectives on the historical epoch They make a claim to the personalization, or privatization, of history" (584). Appeals to the private and individual sell books. Paperno explains that this may be a reaction against Soviet accounts of the past: "Hegelian historicism was reinforced by the Marxist scenario, which assigned to history a strict course with a rapidly approaching end – the boundless utopian realm of the communist regime. To man it gave a strictly defined role, denying any extra-historical dimension to individual experience" (589). Paperno's article is largely concerned with non-

fiction, but the trend she identifies and its motivations are present in the fiction of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia, especially in the tendency to coalesce individual lives and historical epochs.

The popularity of the memoir genre at the time Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia write may explain the success of their works with both readers and critics. Prepared for the interaction of historiographically oriented information with fictional plots and characters both by the Russian literary tradition and by the accepted intermediary genre of the memoir, readers perceived in the prose of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia a profoundly genuine account of the recent past through fiction.

The “privatization of the past,” mentioned by Paperno, is a concept that has gained moderate currency in historical circles in the last decade. The term “privatizatsiia proshlogo” or “privatizatsiia istorii” has appeared in at least four sources to describe a shift in historiography of the Soviet Union.⁹ Ivanova observes that a shift in the relationship to the word “history” has occurred, “от общего (история народа, общества, страны, государства) – к частному («Мой двадцатый век» -- серия современных мемуаров, выпускаемых издательством «Вагриус»), а затем и к совсем личному, интимному...” (189). Further, listing the achievements of writers such as Trifonov, Shalamov, Grossman, Bek, Solzhenitsyn and others, she comments, “Каждый из писательей, упомянутых мною выше, претендуя на историческую *истину*,

⁹In addition to Paperno's and Ivanova's use, the term has also been used in journalism to describe the taking over (or demolition) of historic buildings by private groups (Grigor'ev 2005) or limited access to documents in private libraries and collections (Ol'gin 2005).

создавал свою версию, приватизируя историю. Приватизация в области истории опередила приватизацию по Чубайсу" (SS, 192). The ideas behind this term, however, relate to a larger historiographical discussion.

An overview of one of the primary theorists of historical privatization demonstrates that Makanin and Ulitskaia are involved in a historiographical trend larger than post-Soviet discussions about the Soviet past and that Trifonov was truly ahead of his time in his conceptualization of the writing of history. Though he does not address the Russian case specifically, F. R. Ankersmit in *Historical Representation* develops the idea that the postmodern de-disciplinization of history has led to a privatization of history. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he claims, history developed as a discipline with a community of professional historians cooperating to build "the cathedral of our knowledge of the past" (151). These historians believed in ostensibly the same verifiable historical reality. This belief was based on the assumption that the past was governed by supraindividual and impersonal social, economic, scientific and technological forces (150). The breakdown of certainty about these forces has led to resurgence in the personality of the historian, but not in the Romantic sense that preceded the nineteenth century. Rather, "[o]ur relationship to the past has become 'privatized' in the sense that it primarily is an attribute of the individual historian and no longer of a collective disciplinary historical subject (153)." Ankersmit relates this development to the ascendancy of memory as a category of study in the field of history, "... making the word 'memory' mean what was formerly meant by the word 'history' is a sure sign of a personalization or

privatization of our relationship to the past” (154). Both historians and writers recast history in terms of personalized relationships with the past.

Although Ankersmit does not address the issue of literature and fictionalizations of the past in his chapter on privatization, his particular treatment of memory brings this discussion close to the kind of literature I am discussing. Character memory is key to the structures of these fictions. Ankersmit provides a provocative theory of contemporary historiography and the concept of privatization, but I will follow Irina Paperno’s lead in not analyzing literature in the terms of memory, trauma and testimony that, in her words, “put historians into the position of psychoanalysts” (ff. 1 p. 578). At the same time, Ankersmit’s work puts the historical aspect of the novels of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia in a wider, international context by illuminating the relationship between memory – be it historical individual or fictional character – and the current trends in the writing of history. Narrative strategies that privilege character memory will be a productive instrument in the polemic against the Soviet writing of history.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE POLEMIC

The authors I have chosen to group together and analyze engage in a dialogue with the literary aspects of Soviet historiography. I identify their dialogue between the genres of history and prose fiction, building on the work of Wachtel, Striedter, Paperno, and others. Soviet historiography was grounded in Marxist-Leninist theory but founded on Leninist and Stalinist principles, the most salient of which was a teleological need to justify the present regime. Trifonov, Makanin,

and Ulitskaia reveal the teleological fallacy as they assert the truth of fictional reality. These three authors identify the same commonalities in the structure of literary and historiographical discourse that White does: emplotment, character, narrative voice, and imagery. The plot, characterization, voice, and imagery of Soviet historiography play important roles in the structure and meaning of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia's prose fiction.

The relationship between Soviet historiographical narratives of the past and the fictional works of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia takes many forms. The most important stylistic feature uniting these three authors is the way in which the plots of their fictional works counteract the plots of official Soviet histories through fragmentation. Soviet history was outlined according to a Marxist philosophy of linear progress (the only potential deviations coming in the form of traitorous betrayals). Narrating history according to this philosophy necessarily leads to omissions. The prose fiction of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia rejects the linear progress plot, the overcoming of serial betrayals, and the omissions characteristic of official Soviet versions of the past.

The actors in the dramas of Soviet historiography are typically collectives – peasants, workers, the Party. Alternatively, they are figures of great importance, either heroic (Lenin) or demonic (Trotsky). The characters in the works I will present by Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia reverse this choice of character. Their characters tend to be anything but heroic; they are failures, underdogs, and underachievers. They are foremost individuals, however,

alienated from the collective and acting, or refusing to act, according to expectations or rational laws.

Official Soviet histories were narrated by a single, authoritative voice. A consistent feature of novels and longer works of Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia is the presence of multiple narrators – both first and third person – within single, unified works. Although this approach to novelistic construction is not necessarily innovative, as the modernist works of writers such as Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner famously illustrate, these authors use the device in distinctive ways particular to their historical moment. Including different voices with different relationships to the stories told makes the reader aware of the narrativity of history and underscores the relationship between narrativity and truth and the falsification of truth characteristic of much of Soviet historiography, especially in the Stalin era.

This prose – especially in the cases of Trifonov and Makanin – abounds in metaphors and symbols for the passage of and effects of time. Natural images such as fire and flood, evocative emblematic emotions – such as Makanin's feeling of being "left behind", dream imagery and the appearance of ghosts all figure in this prose to complicate the dividing lines between past and present and between eras of the past. This imagery obfuscates truth without erasing it as it mitigates against the kind of history represented by the Soviets. These metaphors and symbolic images also play a role in subverting the Soviet view of the past because of their intensely personal nature and because rather than

subordinating narrative of history to a rational scheme of progress, they imagine history as subordinate only to the artist's powers.

These authors lay bare the literary devices of Soviet historiography with the stories they write and the manner in which they write them. At the same time, not one of these authors abandons a belief in fiction's ability to faithfully represent the past; they merely reveal the distortions of Soviet historical discourse. While repudiating one kind of language, they resist the temptation to question the value of all linguistic representation.

CONCLUSION

Following a chapter analyzing in literary terms the aspects of Soviet historiography that may be considered to be consistent throughout the Stalin and post-Stalin eras, each subsequent chapter will focus on selected works by each of the authors under consideration. First I will analyze Trifonov's works from the Moscow novels to the last novel published in his lifetime – *Vremia i mesto*. Then I will analyze three short story collections and two novels by Ulitskaia. Finally, I will analyze two novels and several *povesti* and short stories by Mukanin. These works were chosen based on their explicit interrogation and repudiation of the literary devices of Soviet historiography.

The prose fiction of Trifonov, Mukanin, and Ulitskaia is inextricably tied up with the history of censorship and the special status of literature in Russia and the Soviet Union. Because so much could not be written (and published), writers of fiction found ways to fictionalize the truths that could be written and to

structure their fictions so that the gaps left by unpublishable truths were felt.¹⁰ This practice is variously called Aesopian language or compromise with the regime. The set of stylistic features described above – fragmentation of plot, multiplicity of voices, metaphors for time that obliterate the epochal approach to history – most likely arose together in the time and place they did as a means to evade censorship, specifically in the works of Iurii Trifonov. Yet prose characterized by this set of features continues to be written by Ulitskaia and Makanin. Trifonov blazed the trail. Makanin and Ulitskaia's continuation of his techniques can be explained in two ways. First, this is an effective and productive style for the representation of history. Second, although Communism and *glavlit* are gone, the Stalinist past remains to be fully exposed and analyzed. Furthermore, as long as the conditions of the field of history remain tainted by Soviet historiography, writers will rise to the occasion with innovative representations of past eras. Fictional representations of the Soviet past provide such innovation. While they are far from the only works of late-Soviet and post-Soviet prose that fictionalize the Soviet past, Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia's works present the most sustained polemics with the style and substance of Soviet historiography.

¹⁰See Ermolaev and Loseff. The continued presence of stylistic features related to Aesopian language provides evidence against Loseff's contention that Aesopian language does not create anything new but merely finds a way to communicate what is already known. Contemporary writers are creating fundamentally new versions of Soviet history in their fictions.

CHAPTER ONE: Poetics of Soviet Historiography

In order to analyze the fictional quests for historical truth produced by Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia and to argue that each of these writers polemicizes with the Soviet-sanctioned stories, I must more narrowly determine the aspects of Soviet historical writing that intersect with their writing of fiction. Although each writer references elements of popular culture and popular history throughout his or her works, I will limit my study to the ways in which these writers engage official historiography. My more narrow focus on intersections between fiction and historiography allows me to demonstrate the ways in which I believe these authors distinguish themselves from their contemporaries.

These writers are distinct from their contemporaries in their polemic with official Soviet historiography, rather than official Soviet literature written in the style of Socialist Realism. Numerous studies reveal the roles played by Socialist Realist literature in contemporary writing.¹ Literature that intertextually engages Socialist Realism is usually deconstructive and postmodern, as Lipovetsky's previously cited analysis reveals. I argue that Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia are essentially *constructing* alternate models for representing the past. This is

¹One important early example is Clark's epilogue to *The Soviet Novel. Socialist Realism without Shores*, edited by Thomas Lahusen and E. A. Dobrenko, explores the issue from an international perspective. Additional examples include Lipovetsky's article "Post-Sots: Transformation of Socialist Realism in Popular Culture of the Recent Period" on the postmodern deconstruction of Socialist Realism and Anat Ben-Amos Vernitski's article "Mother's Spoiled Son: From Soviet (Panova's *Vremena goda*) to Post-Soviet (Tokareva's 'la est', ty est', on est') Literature."

why I see engaging Soviet historiography rather than Soviet literature as a productive line of inquiry; I want to explore a different possible source for dialogue between Soviet and post-Soviet rhetoric that is founded more on rebuilding than merely discrediting.

A discussion of Soviet historiography must begin with the question of its uniformity. The commonplace observation that Soviet policy determined how history was written and that Soviet policy underwent shifts from thaws to freezes and back again contradicts the notion of a single, Soviet historiographical style. Additionally, history was written by professional historians, but it was also represented on stage and on screen, in popular fiction and song.² Officially sanctioned versions of the past came in many forms and the political messages fluctuated.

Even the narrower question of whether or not the Soviet version of history – especially Party history – changed over time is important but fraught. Roger D. Markwick begins his study of revisionist Soviet historians with a summary of the debate about how much control the Party exerted over the writing of history. Proponents of the totalitarian paradigm argue that “Soviet historiography was nothing more than the ‘handmaiden’ of politics” (Markwick 5). Markwick offers the alternative suggestion that scholars negotiated some freedom within the system of Party control, while he admits that Soviet historiography served to legitimize the Soviet regime, especially in the Stalin era. After the Twentieth-Party Congress the official stories, especially those that legitimized the cult of Stalin,

²For examples see *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: tales, poems, songs, movies, plays, and folklore, 1917-1953* edited by James Von Geldern and Richard Stites. For further analysis see *Russian popular culture : entertainment and society since 1900* by Stites.

altered. Within this period of change, some historians, such as Burdzhhalov and the other New Direction historians studied by Markwick, found some room to do valuable independent work on topics such as collectivization and the famine. Markwick believes that these historians who worked within the system posed a greater threat than openly dissident writers did. Nevertheless, Soviet historiography was subject to strict control and throughout Markwick's book, though he does make a case for the success of his protagonists, he must return again and again to Soviet-sanctioned models to explain the writings of even revisionist historians. Nancy Heer, a pioneering challenger of the totalitarian paradigm writing in 1971, also acknowledges that, "Significant changes have taken place since 1956 in the methodology and scope of historical research and writing in the USSR. However, the ideological rhetoric as well as the practice of the craft make it clear that historiography must continue to reflect party consciousness by focusing on class conflict and casting analysis in Marxist-Leninist semantics" (23). Thus Soviet historiography may not have been uniform or the "handmaiden" of politics, but certain *rhetorical* features remain typical and constant throughout the Soviet era despite revisionism and change because of the service history played to ideology.

Istoriia Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov): Kratkii kurs, published under direction of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1938 and written in part by Stalin himself, became the single most important historiographical document of the Stalinist period and set the tone for historians

for decades to come. Historians writing in the West continually referred to this work's sustained importance even after Stalin's death.³ Markwick explains:

In this sense, notwithstanding the formal repudiation of the *Short Course* at the Twentieth Congress, and the challenge to which its paradigm was subject in the 1960s, the *Short Course* approach, in every sense of that phrase, prevailed in Soviet historical writing at least until the advent of *perestroika*. Finding a way out of this conceptual cage was not as easy as might appear to outside observers, for what was at stake was not just establishing other ways of understanding, researching and writing history. It was a question of historians sloughing off a ruthlessly imposed straight jacket and generating a new historical consciousness – a process that could not occur overnight. (46-47)

This book had an immense influence on Soviet (and post-Soviet) historiography. Many historians argue that its influence is still felt: “The poverty of Soviet historical writing, laid bare during *perestroika*, was a legacy of the retention during the 1960s and 1970s of the ‘false schemas’ of the *Short Course*, which, though challenged, were never completely eradicated. At the height of *perestroika*, Yury Afanas’ev could justifiably despair that ‘in the past decade conceptually we have barely gone beyond the limits of the *Short Course*’” (Markwick 42). Émigré historian Litvin reports that Russian historians at an international conference in 2000 complained that textbooks still in use in Russian schools “had the same structure, and dealt with the same problems” as the *Short Course*, containing “even stylistic resemblances” (36-37). I have chosen to analyze this work of Soviet historiography precisely because of its stylistic influence on subsequent works of Soviet and Russian history. I believe that its influence extends to literary prose as well.

³See Kopossov and Litvin.

The pedagogical and ideological magnitude of the *Kratkii kurs* has been duly chronicled; however, it has not been systematically studied as a narrative.

Eric Naiman calls for this kind of attention to varied texts from the Soviet era:

Once Katerina Clark had to argue strenuously that Soviet literature was worth reading – from an intellectual and historical if not aesthetic standpoint. Now it seems that if we do not read texts from the Soviet period as if they were literature (or, at least, as fiction, as imaginative narratives, in short, as the stuff of literature), we will have nothing else to read. (310)

I propose to analyze the *Kratkii kurs* (as I will refer to it from this point on) as literature, paying special attention to its methods of emplotment and characterization and its distinctive style – a style that characterizes Soviet historiography in general. Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia engage and interrogate precisely these literary aspects of Soviet historiography.

The *Kratkii kurs* thus will be viewed as emblematic of Soviet historiographical discourse: Soviet historiographical discourse emanates from this book. Also, this book and its subsequent revisions for years determined what could be told and what must be left out of any version of the Soviet past – an important part of the Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia's polemic. These writers want to revise history. They are responding to a mistelling of history in a particular mode, and that mode is best represented by the *Kratkii kurs*.

HISTORY AND GENESIS OF THE *KRATKII KURS*

The Kratkii kurs was originally conceived as part of Stalin's consolidation of power. After the death of Lenin, as Roy Medvedev outlines, each contender for leadership published his own version of Leninism. Stalin was no exception: he

published a series of lectures entitled *Voprosy Leninizma*. His book was widely used throughout the educational system, but had a rival in the work of Emelian Iaroslavskii. Stalin set out to author a doctrine that would countenance no rivals. A new multivolume work was commissioned and an editorial board chosen; the board, however, suffered persecution during the Terror, and the project was reconceived (Medvedev 130-132).

After the Purges of 1937, a reference book on Soviet Marxist theory was particularly needed because the Party was left with a group of young, uninitiated members at the top (Avrich 544). By this time, Stalin's leadership was largely uncontested, and Stalin himself was left to oversee the writing of a history. This is not to say that Stalin was the author of the *Kratkii kurs*. Authorship of the work is disputed and was undoubtedly collective to some degree. Of the original historians on the board, only Iaroslavskii and Pospelov were left after 1937: Iaroslavskii the seasoned propagandist and Stalin's former ideological rival was suspect, but managed to survive the Terror; Pospelov was a newcomer and therefore the one Stalin chose to deal with on a regular basis. Both were terrified and easily cowed, according to Medvedev. Some claim that Zhdanov oversaw the project, but in reality only Stalin could make important decisions about the representation of the past (Medvedev 134-135).

What influence did Stalin have? He certainly proposed the chapter outline and chapter headings, from which Pospelov and Iaroslavskii did not deviate. It is known that he revised the text as well. In August of 1938 Stalin spent two weeks alone in his office working on the manuscript (Medvedev 135). Stalin was also

responsible for all of the theoretical parts of the work.⁴ Also according to Medvedev, each member of the Politburo of the time approved each chapter without qualification. The only suggestions made included further attention to the momentous role played by Stalin in the narrated events (135).

The resulting book consists of twelve chapters, a prologue and a conclusion. Chapters range from fifteen to forty pages. The first chapter covers the longest time span: 1883-1901. Each subsequent chapter covers a two-to-four year span. The narrative arc encompasses the history of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. Its primary theme is the unity of the Party. Deviations from the Bolshevik line comprise the plotlines of many of the initial chapters. The 1905 Revolution, the Stolypin Reaction, and the First World War are the subjects of chapters three, four, and five. The February and October Revolutions each warrant their own chapters, as does the Civil War. Collectivization and industrialization are the principle subjects of the final three chapters. The narrative ends with the adoption of the new constitution in 1937 and the successful struggle to build socialism. The plot is thus chronological and focused on isolating a sequence of victories for the Communist Party.

The book was originally published in *Pravda* in September 1938 – one chapter per day – but quickly appeared in a separate edition. It came out in October 1938 in 6 million copies. This printing sold out in 3-4 weeks (Medvedev

⁴Krushchev would say that Stalin was not the author at all. Stalin claimed to have burned the manuscripts, so at the time there was no evidence for or against his authorship. In fact, the manuscripts survived and Medvedev claims they prove Stalin's authorship of much and control over all of the publication. He needed Pospelov and Iaroslavskii as a cover to justify his glorification of himself: "обильное цитирование и непомерные восхваления самого Сталина" (137).

136). Four million additional copies were quickly printed and sold. Translations were made into all of the languages of the Republics and several foreign languages within the year (138). It immediately became required reading and the sole source of Party history. Ultimately, between 1938 and 1952, forty million copies would be sold in the Soviet Union and eleven million abroad (Avrich 546). After Stalin's death, the new leadership would need a new history that emphasized collective leadership and the role of the Party as opposed to its great leaders – the role of the masses as opposed to individuals (Avrich 550). The resulting revision by Ponomarev along with subsequent revisions contained vast sections copied from the original *Kratkii kurs* (Markwick 45-46).

PREMISES OF THE PROLOGUE

An analysis of the opening section of this document reveals many of the features that will characterize Soviet historiography and form the basis for the polemics engaged in through fiction by Trifonov, Ulitskaia, and Makanin. The first short paragraph sums up the purpose of the book in an authoritative narrative voice that does not waver through the several hundred pages that follow:

Всесоюзная Коммунистическая партия (большевиков) прошла долгий и славный путь от первых маленьких марксистских кружков и групп, появившихся в России в 80-х годах прошлого столетия, до великой партии большевиков, руководящей ныне первым в мире социалистическим государством рабочих и крестьян. (3)

This single sentence conveys the purpose of the *Kratkii kurs*: to detail the successful rise to power of the Communist Party in Russia. The central trope of this sentence – and of the work as a whole – is the road or journey, contained in

the word *put'*.⁵ This trope connotes single-minded progress. There is only one path to follow in only one direction. The path is "long" and "glorious" for it has lead to the "great" party of the present day. Throughout the book, the word *put'* will be repeated to emphasize the single trajectory of this and, in fact, all history. History in this work encompasses nothing more nor less than the story of the inevitable progress of the Party. Jeffrey Brooks in an analysis of rhetoric in the Soviet press recognizes that "the path" was "an organizing metaphor for the whole Soviet experience from the time of the civil war" (48). He traces the development of this metaphor and notes that its significance grows from merely designating the certainty of the future to signifying "moving from one planned period of activity to another" (49). Its effect, according to Brooks, was "to deny the present except as a means to something else, to restrict public attention to those on the path, and to limit authority to leaders who claimed to know it" (49). This work of Soviet historiography co-opts a traditional metaphor and gives it new ideological significance.

The introduction of the *Kratkii kurs* not only establishes the dominant trope of the path, but also foregrounds the importance of leadership. History may be a story of "glorious" progress, but people require great leaders to guide them in the correct direction. The leadership qualities of Lenin and Stalin form a significant component of this narrative and the means of characterizing leaders and enemies will be important for the authors of fiction under study here.

The next paragraph establishes a system of repeated verbal structures:
"ВКП(б) выросла на основе рабочего движения в дореволюционной России

из марксистских кружков и групп. . . . (3)." The third paragraph similarly opens, "ВКП(б) росла и крепла в принципиальной борьбе с мелкобуржуазными партиями внутри рабочего движения. . . . (3)." The following paragraph begins with yet another repetition of the verb *krepnut'* and the assertion that the party grew because of its struggles of the working class against all of its many enemies – "помещиками, капиталистами, кулаками, вредителями, шпионами, со всеми наемниками капиталистического окружения" (3). These three openings of three consecutive paragraphs illustrate several important aspects of the style of the *Kratkii kurs*. First, the repeated use of the verb *rasti* – "to grow" – foreshadows the preponderance of figurative language related to the natural world. The authoritative narrative of the progress of the Communist Party coopts the natural world, using metaphors taken from natural phenomena to underscore the inevitability of its success. These metaphors will frequently take the form of references to the tides, rivers, and floods. Again, Soviet historiography will continually coopt traditional metaphors for ideological purposes.

Second, these three sentences exhibit the repetition characteristic of this authoritative narrative. Each paragraph begins with the same subject. This subject – the party – emphasizes the collective nature of the action. The verb from the first paragraph is repeated in the second paragraph; the new verb introduced in the second paragraph is repeated in the third. The stylistic device of repetition serves to reinforce the inevitability of progress. Culminating in a list of enemies, the third paragraph adds a further element: accumulation. The repeated subjects and verbs along with the use of lists creates a sense of

building up which again highlights the inevitable, weighty dominance of the party. The use of repetition also evokes the form of a catechism, which will be analyzed in further depth below.

The third paragraph of the introduction introduces the crucial word *bor'ba*. This word, as we shall see, is central to both the plot and the style of the *Kratkii kurs* and the fiction engaged with it. Struggles with anti-communist elements will form the only deviations from Marxist progress in the plot of this narrative. The plot thus consists of an alternation between *put'* and *bor'ba*: the path and the struggle to remain on it. The word *bor'ba* is also used to denote heroism: the heroic working class and its heroic leaders overcome challengers and emerge the stronger for it.

This introductory section of the *Kratkii kurs* ends with the following revealing conception of historical knowledge:

Изучение героической истории большевистской партии вооружает знанием законов общественного развития и политической борьбы, знанием движущих сил революции.

Изучение истории ВКП(б) укрепляет уверенность в окончательной победе великого дела партии Ленина-Сталина, победе коммунизма во всем мире.

Книга эта кратко излагает историю Всесоюзной Коммунистической партии (большевиков). (4)

Throughout the work, long sentences containing multiple clauses will be followed by a short, simplifying summary sentence. This rhythmic feature again reveals the authority of the narrative voice that issues proclamations of truth as it underlines the pedagogical function of the narrative by emulating the formula of a catechism. Brooks reveals that early Bolshevik publications failed to reach a mass readership owing to the density of their language and inaccessibility of their

vocabulary (12-13). The authors of the *Kratkii kurs* do not make this mistake. The repetition of sentence structures and key words ensures comprehension by a mass readership, at the same time recalling a catechism both in form and purpose, a feature that will be analyzed in greater depth below.

Equally important in these closing paragraphs is the essential teleology disclosed. The purpose of the study of history is to "arm" one with knowledge, specifically knowledge of the laws of social and political development. One studies history in order to understand the ineluctable and certain events of the future. The past is studied in order to explain the present and what is to come. The narrative of history is completely subordinated to ideology. The remainder of this chapter will analyze in depth each aspect of the *Kratkii kurs* identified here: its teleological plot, black-and-white collective and individual characterization, and catechismal rhetoric.

THE INEVITABLE PATH AND THE CONSTANT STRUGGLE

Three types of emplotment typify Soviet historiographical writing: the path of progress, the struggle against enemies, and the omission of any character or event that might interfere with the successful path and struggle. The first chapter of the *Kratkii kurs* covers far more territory than subsequent chapters (1883-1901). The very brevity of this section covering the events that led up to the Revolution points toward its inherent teleology. Events of prerevolutionary times are only relevant in as much as they serve as causes of the Revolution. The structure of paragraphs and the arrangement of paragraphs also emphasizes a

backward cause and effect relationship – where the effect, or result, determines the narration of cause. The movement from the abolition of serfdom to the rise of Marxist groups (which then, inevitably, leads to revolution) spans twenty years in five pages of text. Revolution is presented as a given at every stage. I will quote at length to illustrate:

Помещики выжимали последние соки из отсталого крестьянского хозяйства различными грабительскими способами (аренда, штрафы). Основная масса крестьянства из-за гнета помещиков не могла улучшать свое хозяйство. Отсюда крайняя отсталость сельского хозяйства в дореволюционной России, приводившая к частым неурожаям и голодовкам.

Остатки крепостничества хозяйства, громадные подати и выкупные платежи помещиками, которые нередко превышали доходность крестьянского хозяйства, вызывали разорение, обнищание крестьянских масс, заставляли крестьян уходить из деревень в поисках заработка. Они шли на фабрики и заводы. Фабриканты получали дешевую рабочую силу. (6)

Everything in the first above-quoted paragraph leads to bad harvests and famine: the retention of landlords' rights after the elimination of serfdom causes crop failure, which we see in the next paragraph is the reason for worker migration to towns and the growth of the proletariat – crucial for the development of Marxist revolutionary circles who then circulate papers and pamphlets and agitate successfully for revolution. In this brief Soviet retelling of late-nineteenth century economic history, actors (peasants, landlords) exhibit essential natures that assure revolution. Events are explained both by the purpose they serve and their causes, but the rhetoric of the narrative underscores a teleological sense of predetermination.

These two succinct paragraphs stylistically reinforce the message of expediency and predetermination. Two primary methods of paragraph

development illustrated here dominate the *Kratkii kurs*. The latter paragraph uses rhythm teleologically. The long sentence containing enumerated woes is followed by two short sentences declaring emphatically where the woes lead: factories and low wages. In the former paragraph we see the emphatic, persistent use of transitional phrases to make explicit the cause-and-effect relationship between events, in this case *iz-za* and *otsiuda*.

The events narrated in the *Kratkii kurs* are so highly organized and subordinated to a single idea that even diction reflects plot. These transitional words (such as *iz-za* and *otsiuda*), which can be used to imbed subordinate clauses, are more often used simply as transitions at the beginning of sentences. This makes them emphatic rather than grammatical and demonstrates that this is a stylistic choice that furthers the ideologically driven plot. Other similar repeated words include *zatem*, *potomu*, *poskol'ku*, and interestingly, *ibo* – a highly literary and even biblical choice. Consider the following sequence, illustrating why the Revolution depends on the proletariat, rather than the peasantry:

Почему именно на пролетариат?

Потому, что пролетариат, несмотря на его нынешнюю немногочисленность, является таким трудящимся классом, который связан с наиболее передовой формой хозяйства, – с крупным производством, и имеет в виду этого большую будущность.

Потому, что пролетариат, как класс, растет из году в год, развивается политически, легко поддается организации в силу условий труда на крупном производстве и наиболее революционен в силу своего пролетарского положения, ибо в революции ему нечего терять, кроме своих цепей. (14-15)

The development of the central role of the working class is explained in logical terms, repeated to emulate the rhetoric of catechism. The phrase *potomu*, *chto* emphasizes the logic: this class works in heavy industry and is growing in

number and importance along with that industry. In the last sentence, *ibo* is used instead emotionally: this class will fight because it has nothing to lose. Logic and emotion are both employed through the use of emphatic transitional expressions in the service of plot development – to underscore the inevitability of Revolution. The cause-and-effect relationship between events is so well established that at times it is not spelled out explicitly. The *Kratkii kurs* also features juxtaposed events – events narrated one after another with no specific language to connect them – yet there can be no ambiguity about the predetermined cause-and-effect relationship.

The preceding examples illustrate the dominant plot device of the *Kratkii kurs*: the plot is one of progress through all obstacles. Cause leads to effect (and effects justify causes) over and over until not only is revolution achieved, but a perfect socialist society. The emphasis on linearity has greater implications.

Subordinating historical events to a strict cause-and-effect paradigm is a simplification that leads to falsification: This assignation of purpose to theory and historiography makes them means, not ends, and therefore the element of truthfulness in any transcendent (or empirical) sense is eliminated. No more can there be "history for history's sake" than "art for art's sake." (Garthoff 80)

Garthoff specifically analyzes the representation of the Brest Peace in the *Kratkii kurs*. He reveals how the authors manufacture evidence that the "Lefts" consciously wanted to undermine the Soviets by not supporting the Peace; in truth, no one knew what tactic to take at that difficult time. After the fact, acceptance of the Peace was relatively successful and, as always, the choice made was the correct choice (66-67). Markwick's analysis of the representation of collectivization comes to the same conclusion: "In sum, the Short Course

embodied a teleology, in which Soviet-style socialism was the lawful culmination of the long march of humankind” (45).

The road with its implication of progress is the perfect metaphor for this conception of history. The word *put'* is used repeatedly throughout the narrative to signal the only correct way forward. Collectivization is the correct path: “Это был первый шаг, первое достижение на пути колхозного строительства.” (304). In the conclusion, the successful Party is thus described:

Отсюда необходимость новой партии, партии боевой, партии революционной, достаточно смелой для того, чтобы повести пролетариев на борьбу за власть, достаточно опытной для того, чтобы разобраться в сложных условиях революционной обстановки, и достаточно гибкой для того, чтобы обойти все и всякие подводные камни на пути к цели. (338)

Like the road evoked to represent the Party's path, movement in the *Kratkii kurs* is overall in one direction. The table of contents lays out an explicit chronological organization, and the narrative never deviates from that chronological order, though struggles with enemies pose a constant threat of regression, leading to the secondary pattern of emplotment: the heroic struggle.

The *Kratkii kurs* embodies a strict division between heroes and villains. According to Marxist theory, the masses are the primary agents of history and the proletariat is the hero of the Revolution:

Marx and Engels did not formulate a special theory of the role of the individual in history, but from their writings there emerges a rather fatalistic conception of social development, governed by immutable laws. Consequently, the influence which an individual can have on the course of history is viewed as very limited under these general laws. It further appears, according to Marx, that historical progress is realized by the broad masses of the population. (Yaresh 77-78)

Indeed, in the *Short Course* their role is emphasized, as seen above. The struggle of serfs against landowners is cast as a drama between groups, one bolstered by the system of Tsardom: "Царское самодержавие являлось злейшим врагом народа" (6). The paramount importance of class is carried throughout the work. The 1935 constitution is called for, realized, and celebrated with collective governmental, not specifically human, agency: "VIII съезд Советов единодушно одобрил и утвердил проект новой Конституции СССР. Страна Советов получила, таким образом, новую Конституцию, Конституцию победы социализма и рабоче-крестьянской демократии" (330-331). It is the committee who approves the document and the people – workers and peasants – who benefit from it. As Konstantin Shteppa observes:

Mention of individuals who took a leading part in history was carefully avoided, or where exceptions were permitted, in the case of "popular heroes" and "leaders of revolutionary movements," the presentation was limited to the most general information without any personal characterization and without any biographical detail whatsoever, except possibly an indication of their "social origin."

The Soviet version of the past is "de-peopled"⁶ – ideologically clean, but lacking character and human interest. Markwick points out that dehumanized history is a logical result of the emphasis on the laws of production as the moving force in history: "pseudo-subjects" wreak havoc on a "faceless narod" (44). Stalin's historians tell a collective tale of collective experience leading to a collective socialist triumph. Individuals have no role to play; however, some individuals appear to be above even the laws of Marxism.

⁶This is Enteen's phrase.

The narration of the passing of the new constitution contains numerous references to the perceptive and enlightened figure of Comrade Stalin: "В своем докладе на VIII съезде Советов о проекте новой Конституции тов. Сталин изложил основные изменения, происшедшие в стране Советов с времени принятия Конституции 1924 года" (327). It turns out to be Stalin who perceives the changes in the country and articulates its development. Stalin intervenes in the actions of groups, committees and classes in his role as a solicitous and wise leader. As Medvedev noted, Stalin needed others to author this book so that the emergence of his heroic status would seem objective and as much a part of the scientific logic of history as the success of the Revolution.

Stalin is not the only hero in the book, nor is he the greatest. Lenin is given a special status. He is the only "character" who is introduced with a complete biographical sketch before he enters the historical scene.⁷ This sketch takes him from childhood to prison to leader. His personality is even developed: "Ленин пользовался горячей любовью передовых рабочих, с которыми он занимался в кружках" (18). Lenin is infallible, kind, and wise, and without him, the Revolution would not have succeeded. This portrait certainly contradicts Marxist theory. The *Short Course*, rather than being a truly Marxist tale of the triumph of the working class, is a tale of the glory of two leaders of the Soviet people – Lenin and Stalin.

Certain epithets stylistically reinforce the importance of heroes and establish a model for Soviet heroism that will be important in the fiction under

⁷See Chudakov's *Chekhov's Poetics* pp. 155-156 for a description of this method of characterization in Realist literature.

study here.⁸ Lenin's works are described regularly as "renowned" (*znamenityi*). His greatest strength is knowledge (*znanie*). The words *goriachyi* and *zhivoi* are also used regularly to describe his beliefs.

Stalin does not receive a full biography, but his deeds are described at length:

В это время тов. Сталин проводил огромную революционную работу в Закавказьи. Тов. Сталин разоблачал и громил меньшевиков, как противников революции и вооруженного восстания. Он твердо готовил рабочих к решительному бою против самодержавия. (77-78)

Lenin's knowledge and spirit are emphasized, whereas Stalin's steadfastness in action is highlighted. Stalin is also pictured supporting Lenin and upholding his legacy. This secondary position fulfills Stalin's political purpose, but it also presents a certain type of characterization. Stalin is the lesser hero, the follower, the actor according to another's plans. He is dutiful and perceptive, but he is not first.

Even so, many historians reveal that Stalin's role in the history of the Party was magnified and falsified. Maslov writes:

Для Сталина же и его присных правда факта, документа, статистики не имела значения. Они сознательно занимались мифотворчеством (например, по поводу руководящей роли Сталина в октябрьском перевороте), подтасовкой фактов (к примеру, путем экстраполяции обвинений «врагов народа» в подрывной деятельности применительно к октябрьскому и послеоктябрьскому периодам), искажением статистики и т. д. (245)

Medvedev agrees, citing evidence that Stalin was in Siberia, not Petrograd, at the time of the Revolution. He further identifies how Stalin's role was magnified even before the Revolution: Stalin insisted that the Prague Conference of 1912 marked the beginnings of the Bolshevik Party simply because he was in

⁸This model somewhat corresponds to the Socialist Realist positive hero.

attendance (134). In his description of the debates over the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, Garthoff cites evidence demonstrating that Lenin was in favor of the Peace, but that Lenin respected the opposition in the persons of Trotsky and Bukharin and stated that they "were not rationally calculating the relation of forces" (67). This reading is a far cry from the representation of the event in the *Kratkii kurs*, where Trotsky and Bukharin are accused of attempting to sabotage the Party.

Heroes and a collective heroic class are not the only characters singled out for attention; there are villains as well. Trotsky is primary among them, though there are many. Trotsky does not warrant a full biographical sketch; in fact, he is hardly introduced. It is assumed that the reader is well aware of his villainy. From his first appearances in the text, he is at odds with Lenin. He disagrees with the great leader about party membership and the course that should be taken in World War I. Eventually, Trotsky opposes Lenin on political policy, and Lenin is quoted as calling him "Judas Trotsky": "Троцкий повел себя, как подлейший карьерист и фракционер... Болтает о партии, а ведет себя хуже всех прочих фракционеров" (131). Trotsky is the *worst* factionalist and the *lowest* careerist. Characterization of heroes and villains is completely black and white. The good are very good; the evil are abominations.

Trotsky's characterization provides a model of the enemy, but more importantly it provides the second dimension of this narrative's plot. Enteen (who believes that Iaroslavskii was the primary author) writes, "Plot and counter-plot by rival factions became the substance of politics; factionalism became the almost

exclusive subject matter of Iaroslavskii's history and the guiding principle of narrative construction" (329). He details this additional layer of emplotment:

On the one hand, history manifests a pattern of progressive movement from primitive social order to communism; on the other hand, the Communist Party, which at a certain point becomes the governing agent of historical movement, becomes continuously enmeshed in factional conflict; that is, it tends to degenerate. There is an inevitable falling-away from a state of wholeness and harmony. Leadership is the key to the outcome of Party crisis.... The Party, through Stalin, overcomes degeneration by purging the ranks and finding the theory and policies necessary for regeneration.... The progressive upward spiral motion associated with Marxism is complemented by the repetitive and seemingly timeless motion of conflict between Lenin-Stalin and Trotsky-like double-dealers. (331-332)

The *Kratkii kurs* combines two major types of plot movement: the path of progress and the eternal struggle against enemies.⁹

There is a third type of plot movement associated with heroes and villains: ellipsis. We have seen how Stalin's role was exaggerated. In some cases, actions are left out: "A very limited and specific selection of facts and events, placed in a standard scheme, in conformity with Party directives . . . Anything not specifically declared as 'relevant' was passed over in silence. Historiography was nonexistent outside of the Party directives" (Myhul, quoted in Markwick 43).

Garthoff asserts:

Over a long span of time, silence can become an effective tool in a totalitarian society. Thus Stalin's role is retroactively enhanced by omission of mention of all colleagues in similar positions (excepting some who have died and are "safe"). Similarly, the support given Lenin by

⁹In *Metahistory* Hayden White describes Marxist historiography as "metonymical": "His [Marx's] categories of prefiguration were the categories of schism, division, and alienation" (281). His ultimate desire was for humanity to reach a state of "synecdoche," in which "genuine community" would be created (282). White notes that Marx's history contains "horizontal" movement (metonymy) and vertical integration (synecdoche) (286). These may both be seen in the dual emplotments of the *Kratkii kurs*, illustrating at least on this level an adherence to Marxist principles.

Zinoviev, Sokolnikov, and Smilga, quite as consistent and important as that rendered by Stalin, is silently excised. Silence is one of the means of facilitating and implementing the technique of simplification. (82)

Ellipses are ideologically expedient and stylistically not easily observed. By abandoning the professionalism of earlier Russian historians in fabricating an ideologically sound version of the past, Soviet historians participated in the politics of repression:

Фальсифицируя историю, деформируя сознание, насаждая мифы, история наряду с сугубо репрессивными органами подавляла, уничтожала, принуждала. Эта сфера ее активного функционирования не менее значима при определении места и роли исторической науки в советском обществе. Иными словами, она не только страдала, но и заставляла страдать. (Afanas'ev 9)

The *Kratkii kurs* functioned effectively to repress facts and substitute authoritative falsehoods; its methods of plot development and characterization, aided by stylistic devices, serve that end.

The plot serves to illustrate the theoretical aspect of the work, laid out at greatest length in the second section of the fourth chapter, written by Stalin, entitled “О диалектическом и историческом материализме.” Stalin explains the movement of history:

Поэтому диалектический метод считает, что процесс развития следует понимать как движение не по кругу, не как простое повторение пройденного, а как движение поступательное, как движение по восходящей линии, как переход от старого качественного состояния к новому качественному состоянию, как развитие от простого к сложному, от низшего к высшему. (102)

The design of the entire work follows this law-governed pattern of progressive movement. Thaden claims that Soviet historiography “... differed fundamentally from nineteenth- and twentieth-century European historicism in that it used

history to legitimate communist rule in Russia and in that it attempted to demonstrate that the continued expansion of communism lay in the long-term logic of history” (309). He defines Marxist historicism as “nomothetic historical development (*zakonomernost'*) arising out of changing productive forces and relations reflected in social formations... [which was] essentially teleological in its view of the universal historical process” (309). The “five-fold” progression of world history (derisively dubbed “*piatichlenka*”) – from primitive-communal, to slave-holding, to feudal, capitalist, socialist, and finally to communist victory, constitutes teleology on the world historical level. The theory laid out in this chapter seamlessly supports the narrative that unfolds around it.

RHETORIC OF REPRESSION

The theoretical and narrative sections are stylistically unified through poetic devices such as repetition, rhythm, and metaphors. The fourth theoretical chapter of the *Kratkii kurs* effects a seamless movement from narrative to theory back to narrative. The *Kratkii kurs* is above all univocal: the voice and tone remain constant, providing an account of the recent past that allows for no representation or interpretation other than its own. This is consummate authoritative discourse. Bakhtin’s definition of authoritative discourse is interesting to apply to this case. He writes:

The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. It is, so to speak, the word of the fathers. Its authority was already *acknowledged* in

the past. It is a *prior* discourse. It is therefore not a question of choosing it from among other possible discourses that are its equal. It is given (it sounds) in lofty spheres, not those of familiar contact. Its language is a special (as it were, hieratic) language. (342)

Like a religious text, this work is intended to command absolute belief from its readers. Clark and Holquist establish the practice of relating Bakhtin's theoretical writing to the times in which he lived; thus, although Bakhtin was a literary scholar, it is probable that Bakhtin's definition of authoritative discourse was informed by the language of Soviet power. The language the Soviets used to represent the past is so definitive that it seamlessly incorporates story and theory and does not distinguish between the two. What happened is equal to why it happened. Like a catechism, the *Kratkii kurs* intends to offer answers to any question and to quell any possibility of doubt. In his biography of Stalin, Robert Conquest asserts the importance of Stalin's seminary education for the further development of his intellectual and linguistic habits of mind:

Stalin's way of expressing himself throughout his life was very much in the tradition of the catechism. A recent Soviet article notes his use of 'What does correct selection of cadres mean? –Correct selection of cadres means . . .' as one of his typical turns of phrase, and gives other examples of 'the catechismal form, with endless repetitions with one and the same phrase used as a question and then as an answer, and once again with a negative participle'. (17)

The rhetoric of catechism, typical of Stalin's speech and writing, infects the *Kratkii kurs* from beginning to end.

The authority of the narrative manifests itself in a self-sufficiency illustrated by the use of rhetorical questions. In the very first chapter the fallacies of the Narodniks are questioned: "В чем заключались основные ошибочные взгляды народников, которым Плеханов нанес сокрушительный удар?" (13). The

answers include underestimating the power of the proletariat, overestimating the power of the peasantry, and setting too much store by the influence of individual heroes in history. Used throughout the work, rhetorical questions enhance the supremacy of the commanding narrative voice.

Repetition is also used throughout the work and it contributes to the imperative, inevitable, and desirably triumphant nature of events, supported by theory. Certain words are repeated throughout the work, as Afanas'ev notes:

Из этих общих установок проистекала соответствующая историографическая проблематика, новый язык советской исторической науки. Формация, процесс, класс, партия, революция, закон, марксизм, пролетариат – вот основы нового исторического словаря. Но, пожалуй, самым популярным и наиболее распространенным термином в советской историографии, начиная с первых самостоятельных произведений советских историков и до конца 80-х гг., станет слово 'борьба'. Отсюда же и формирование магистральных тем исторических исследований. . . . (21)

The repetition of words underscores the major themes and plot types.

In addition, sentence structures are repeated. These repeated sentence structures also underscore the themes of progress and heroism and are combined with repetitive diction. In the narration of the Civil War, repetition reflects the inevitable victory of the Reds owing to their political correctness:

Красная армия победила потому, что политика Советской власти, во имя которой воевала красная армия, была правильной политикой, соответствующей интересам народа, что чарод признавал и понимал эту политику, как правильную, как свою собственную политику, а поддерживал ее до конца.

. . .

Красная армия победила потому, что она была верна и предана до конца своему народу, за что и любил ее и поддерживал народ, как свою родную армию.

. . .

Красная армия победила потому, что. . . . (233-234)

The accumulation of evidence presented through repetitive phrasing and sentence structure in conjunction with the repetition of the words *politika* and *narod* drive home the idea that victory was inevitable. As Garthoff said, the choices made were always represented as the right choices.

Repetitive sentence structure leads to a kind of rhythm that is another hallmark of the catechismal style of this work that may extend to Soviet rhetoric in general:

События и поведение Временного правительства с каждым днем подтверждали правильность линии большевиков. Они все яснее показывали, что Временное правительство стоит не за народ, а против народа, не за мир, а за войну, что оно не хочет и не может дать ни мира, ни земли, ни хлеба. Разъяснительная деятельность большевиков находила благоприятную почву.

В то время как рабочие и солдаты свержали царское правительство и уничтожали корни монархии, Временное правительство определенно тяготело к сохранению монархии. Оно послало тайком 2 марта 1917 года Гучкова и Шульгина к царю. Буржуазия хотела передать власть брату Николая Романова -- Михаилу. Но когда на митинге железнодорожников Гучков закончил свою речь возгласом "Да здравствует император Михаил", то рабочие потребовали немедленного ареста и обыска Гучкова, говоря возмущенно: "Хрен редьки не слаще".

Было ясно, что рабочие не позволят восстановить монархию.
(174)

Punctuating a series of long paragraphs with a one sentence paragraph summing up the result emphasizes that the result was inevitable and highlights the cause and effect nature of the entire rational plot. Consider the following example:

Тов. Сталин указывал в своем отчетном докладе на XVI съезде партии, что буржуазия будет искать выхода из экономического кризиса, с одной стороны,-- в подавлении рабочего класса путем установления фашистской диктатуры, то-есть диктатуры наиболее реакционных, наиболее шовинистических, наиболее империалистических элементов капитализма, с другой стороны – в развязывании войны за передел колоний и сфер влияния за счет интересов слабо защищенных стран.

Так оно и произошло. (286-287)

This is just what happened, the narration claims. What Comrade Stalin said inevitably came to pass and the proletariat triumphed. This scriptural language, the language of catechism, attempts to transform reality itself.¹⁰ The rhetorical questions, repetitions, and rhythmic sentence construction all recall the panegyric of Orthodox hagiography and catechism, as Conquest and Deutscher both observe.

Finally, Soviet historiographic style, generalized from the *Kratkii kurs*, relies on metaphors, which have their roots in conventional literary tropes. Certain metaphors, as we saw in the introduction, are often taken from nature. The revolution is like a wave or flood, an inevitable force of nature, obeying natural laws: "Видя, как все более грозным потоком разливается по стране рабочее и крестьянское движение, царизм принимает все меры к тому, чтобы остановить революционное движение" (29). The workers' movement is as powerful and formidable as a flood. The images of waves and floods reappear throughout the work, most forcefully in the narration of the Revolution: "Несомненно, что соединение этих различных революционных потоков в один общий мощный революционный поток решило судьбу капитализма в

¹⁰Boris Groys' *The Total Art of Stalinism* develops the thesis that Stalinism – like avant-garde art – sought to transform the world and that Stalin played the role of "demiurge."

России" (204). In both cases, the flood represents the indomitable power of the collective.

Metaphors are also taken from family relationships, as in the following example: "Красная армия есть детище народа, и если она верна своему народу, как верный сын своей матери, она будет иметь поддержку народа, она должна победить" (234).¹¹ The party itself is compared to an infant at its start: "Подобно еще неродившемуся, но уже развивающемуся в утробе матери младенцу, социал-демократия переживала, как писал Ленин, 'процесс утробного развития'" (17). The human life cycle – an inevitable growth process – is brought to bear on the development of the Bolshevik Party. When Lenin dies "трудящиеся всего мира с глубочайшей скорбью провожали в могилу своего отца и учителя, лучшего друга и защитника – Ленина" (256).

Finally, in the conclusion of the *Kratkii kurs*, a lengthy quotation from a speech given by Stalin involving the Greek god Antaeus is presented. It bears reproducing here in full as it sums up many of the stylistic features of Soviet historiography discussed thus far:

У древних греков в системе их мифологии был один знаменитый герой -- Антей, который был, как повествует мифология, сыном Посейдона -- бога морей, и Геи -- богини земли. Он питал особую привязанность к матери своей, которая его родила, вскормила и воспитала. Не было такого героя, которого бы он не победил -- этот Антей. Он считался непобедимым героем. В чем состояла его сила? Она состояла в том, что каждый раз, когда ему в борьбе с противником приходилось туго, он прикасался к земле, к своей матери, которая родила и вскормила его, и получал новую силу. Но у него было все-таки свое слабое место -- это опасность быть каким-либо образом оторванным от земли. Враги учитывали эту его слабость и подкарауливали его. И вот нашелся враг, который

¹¹As Clark reveals in *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, these metaphors are also central in Socialist Realist novels. This connection will be further explored in my fourth chapter.

использовал эту его слабость и победил его. Это был Гераклес. Но как он его победил? Он оторвал его от земли, поднял на воздух, отнял у него возможность прикоснуться к земле и задушил его, таким образом, в воздухе.

Я думаю, что большевики напоминают нам героя греческой мифологии, Антея. Они, так же, как и Антей, сильны тем, что держат связь со своей матерью, с массами, которые породили, вскормили и воспитали их. И пока они держат связь со своей матерью, с народом, они имеют все шансы на то, чтобы остаться непобедимыми.

В этом ключ непобедимости большевистского руководства (Сталин, "О недостатках партийной работы"). (346)

Stalin uses a myth to metaphorically illustrate his conception of the Bolshevik Party. In this comparison, the masses are the Party's mother, whom the Party must remain in contact with to be strong. Stalin coopts family relationships to illustrate the Party's power. Again, the Party is a child: first, it was in the womb developing; then, it was orphaned when Lenin died; finally, it is a warrior who must remain true to his origins – his mother. In all of the above cases, Bolshevism is supplanting existing hierarchies (nature, family) with its own. The authoritative voice in the above quotation also features the stylistic qualities analyzed above in service of the teleological emplotment: repetition, rhythm, rhetorical questioning. The history of the Communist Party as laid out under Stalin is at once a linear, progress-oriented narrative, a cycle of interminable conflict with enemies, and a transformation of existing relationships through rhetoric and metaphor.

CONCLUSION

Soviet historiographic style as manifested in the *Kratkii kurs* is as poetic as it is bureaucratic, though the poetic devices may be employed in simplistic ways to serve ideological ends. The narrative of the victory of the Bolshevik Party over the Tsarist system provides three methods for emplotment: linear cause and effect (*put'*), plot-counterplot (*bor'ba*), and regular silences or ellipses. The repeated use of emphatic transitional words and phrases complements these types of plots. In addition, individual action is generally subordinated to collective action. The only individual characters that receive development are definitively heroes or villains. Finally, the rhetoric of Soviet historiography resolutely serves its ideological premises. A single narrative voice dominates the entire narrative; repetition and rhythm call attention to the inevitability and merits of victory. Also, metaphors serve to raise Soviet power above or make it equal to that of nature and the family.

Above all, as Markwick and Heer contend, Soviet historiography is a pedagogical tool with a transformative intention. The Party, in collaboration with historians, sought to publish textbooks that would simultaneously serve as histories of the past and guides to the future. Trifonov will bring the past into the present differently, eschewing the collective hero and zooming in on the remembered experiences of individuals typical of their generation.

CHAPTER TWO:

Trifonovian Counterdevices

INTRODUCTION

Iurii Trifonov began his career as a successful Socialist Realist writer. He won the Stalin prize for his debut novel *Studenty* (1950), a formulaic novel about a young man's struggle to become a fulfilled Soviet citizen. Trifonov did not follow up on this success and did not publish a novel for over a decade, working only on short pieces and sports journalism. In the early 1960s Trifonov was sent on an official trip to Turkmenistan to write about the Kara-Kum Canal project (Gillespie 5). The resulting novel – *Utolenie zhazhdy* – is in most respects a typical Soviet Socialist Realist production novel, but Trifonov began to experiment at this stage with multiple narrative voices – combining sections in first and third person – and after this novel a new phase of his career began.

Family history influenced the direction Trifonov's career would take. Trifonov inherited a number of significant family documents: his father's diary and letters, his uncle's letters, and his mother's brother's diary.¹ A keen interest in his own family's past informed Trifonov's best works on many levels. Trifonov was born in 1925: his father Valentin Trifonov was an Old Bolshevik of Cossack

¹Shitov's article on Trifonov's father and uncle ("Brat'ia Trifonovy" *Voprosy istorii* 11:2001) fully reveals the extent to which Valentin Trifonov's documents inform *Otblek kostra*.

descent and veteran of the Revolution and Civil War who disappeared at the height of the Terror in 1937. These two events – the Civil War and the Purges – reappear constantly throughout Trifonov's works of "urban prose" set in the Brezhnev era and it is the individuals' memories of these events that the author writes to counteract the falsified official versions.

From these family documents Trifonov constructed a narrative of the Civil War, the reliability of which was stunning for its time. Although a novelist and short story writer professionally, Trifonov contributed significantly to the body of knowledge about Soviet history. In fact, his early "documentary novel" *Otblesek kostra* was for quite a long time one of the most informative works available in the Soviet Union on the Cossack leader Mironov and the Civil War in the Don region (Ermolaev, "Theme of Terror" 96-97). Trifonov found in his father's diary references to the Cossack leader Mironov, whose story had been practically erased from Soviet history. This story becomes the inspiration for Trifonov's *Starik*, as will be shown below. What is interesting about the writing of this novel is Trifonov's collaboration with historians Starikov and Medvedev. They allowed Trifonov to read their manuscript – unpublished in the Soviet Union – *Philip Mironov and the Russian Civil War* (Ermolaev, "Proshloe" 137-138). Trifonov was involved with dissident historians of his time and this involvement had a stylistic and methodological impact on his prose.

Trifonov's familiarity with the lives of Soviet historians also furnished elements of characterization for many of his most successful works, most notably the character Sergei in *Drugiaia zhizn'*. Aspects of this character's life bear a

striking resemblance to the dissident historian Nekrich. In 1965 Nekrich published a controversial book arguing that Stalin was directly responsible for the Soviets' defeats at the hands of the Germans during World War II. Nekrich's thesis was not new: these arguments had been made publicly throughout the Thaw, but Nekrich became a victim of Brezhnev's crackdown. Brought before a Party control commission, Nekrich was asked, "Что, по-вашему, важнее – политическая целесообразность или историческая правда?" (Afanas'ev 24). Nekrich's answer in favor of truth led to his silence and eventual emigration. This opposition between expediency and truth is crucial for Trifonov. He replicates this very question in *Drugaiia zhizn'* and demonstrates the destructive effect of historical expediency on his protagonist, Sergei.²

Trifonov's career as a creative writer overlapped with the work of progressive historians, but this is only one of the reasons why Trifonov is perceived as a historian. He engages Soviet historiography in his best novels set in his present. From *Drugaiia zhizn'* to *Vremia i mesto*, the last novel he published in his lifetime, Trifonov included significant reversals of the style and story of Soviet historiography. This chapter will show how elements of Soviet historiographical emplotment, characterization, and rhetoric form a stratum of meaning in Trifonov's most critically acclaimed works.

Trifonov's career was wide-ranging and in many ways diverse, though unified by constant preoccupation with Soviet history and the ways in which stories of the past are told. Strictly speaking, he wrote two historical novels:

²Patera was the first to notice this in her *Obzor tvorchestva i analiz moskovskikh povestei Iurii Trifonova* (1983).

Otblesk kostra (1965) and *Neterpenie* (1973). I assert that his later works, so often read as “urban prose” or tales of Brezhnev era *byt*, maintain the historical-fictional imperative. I have chosen to analyze primarily five novels or *povesti*: *Dolgoe proshchanie* (1971), *Drugaia zhizn'* (1975), *Dom na naberezhnoi* (1976), *Starik* (1978), and *Vremia i mesto* (1981). Each of these novels features a protagonist reconstructing his or her past through memories elicited through contact with other people or with objects or documents from the past. The co-protagonists of *Dolgoe proshchanie*, Lialia and Grisha, relive their failed romance and in coming to terms with the failure of their common-law marriage, they come to terms with their life under Stalin. *Dom na naberezhnoi* similarly introduces a protagonist – Vadim Glebov – whose unwilling and incomplete reconstruction of the choices he made in the Stalin era and the consequences of his actions simulates the forced and partial narratives of history composed at that time. *Drugaia zhizn'* and *Starik* continue the practices of the previous two novels and also feature historian characters and thus contribute even more to my study. Trifonov's fictional historian in *Drugaia zhizn'* strives to write a more accurate and apolitical history – like his real-life counterparts Nekrich and Burdzhlov – and the attempt strains his health and ultimately kills him. The protagonist of *Starik* similarly dies without completing his historical quest to rehabilitate Migulin (Mironov) and justify his own unconscionable actions. Finally, *Vremia i mesto* forms a kind of compendium of Trifonov's historical-fictional techniques, alternating between the story of Sasha Antipov and an unnamed first-person narrator, both of whose overlapping lives span the Soviet era. These novels

taken together exhibit a new way of writing about Soviet history through a series of counterdevices that interrogate Soviet historiographic style and fundamentally call into question the value of the Soviet version of events. These devices may be divided into four general categories: associative fragments, juxtaposed narrative voices, ellipses, and metaphors.

ASSOCIATIVE FRAGMENTS

Beginning with *Dolgoe proshchanie*, Trifonov puts forward a fragmentary writing of history, foregrounding a suspicion of more complete, whole stories. He finds unconventional temporal relationships among events that contradict the notion of linear, chronological time. The circularity of his plots, the first counterdevice under consideration here, opposes progress, a fundamental tenet of Soviet historiography. Hughes explains, "Time, in most Soviet literature, is depicted as a force driving inexorably towards the goal. In Trifonov's work the point is rather that there are few worthwhile goals apart from the impossible one of regaining one's original moral purity. His heroes constantly retrace their steps to find out where they went astray" (476-477). Trifonov's narratives begin where they end, and along the way do not follow a chronological or even logical path.

The shape of his plots is best described by one of his characters. Ol'ga Vasil'evna in *Drugaiia zhizn'* perceives this fragmentariness in her own life: "Их жизнь распадалась, превращалась в осколки, в мозаику, и это было похоже на сон, всегда отрывочный, мозаичный, в то время как явь – это цельность, слитность" (II: 345). Just as her life turns into a mosaic in her memory, so the

past takes the form of a mosaic – without a *put'* or ideological direction – in Trifonov's prose.³

Trifonov tends to frame his novels of character reminiscence with poetic, impersonally narrated prologues and epilogues. The prologues set the reflective, backward-looking tone of the works. As Dalton-Brown notes, "This tone of retrospection and exhaustion is usually set via a distinctive feature of Trifonov's prose, the opening section or brief preamble which focuses on death and change" (711). *Vremia i mesto* begins: "Надо ли вспоминать? Бог ты мой, так же глупо, как: надо ли жить? Ведь вспоминать и жить – это цельно, слитно, не уничтожаемо одно без другого и составляет вместе некий глагол, которому названия нет" (IV:260). The omniscient voice proclaiming the "verb without a name" never reappears in the novel; however, the novel itself embodies the call to live and remember. The omniscient prologue is crucial for understanding the fragmentary, non-linear novel of memory. Life and memory are intertwined and through his fiction Trifonov consistently enacts this verb "without a name."

Dom na naberezhnoi, a novel of reluctant reminiscence, opens with a lament for the forgotten past:

Никого из этих мальчиков нет теперь на белом свете. Кто погиб на войне, кто умер от болезни, иные пропали безвестно. А некоторые, хотя и живут, превратились в других людей. И если бы эти другие люди встретили бы каким-нибудь колдовским образом тех, исчезнувших, в бумажных рубашонках, в полотняных туфлях на резиновом ходу, они не знали бы, о чем с ними говорить. Боюсь, не догадались бы даже, что встретили самих себя. Ну и бог с ними, с недогадливыми! Им некогда, они летят, плывут, несутся в потоке,

³Eremina and Piskunov use the term "montage" to denote a similar conception of Trifonov's plot organization, but I prefer mosaic for its spacial connotation.

загребают руками, все дальше и дальше, все скорей и скорей, день за днем, год за годом, меняются берега, отступают горы, реденут и облетают леса, темнеет небо, надвигается холод, надо спешить, спешить — и нет сил оглянуться назад, на то, что остановилось и замерло, как облако на краю небосклона. (II:363)

This introductory poetic passage is significant not only for establishing the backward-looking orientation, but also the rhythmic nature of the prose and the imagery. Trifonov's rhythmic prose acts as an incantation to resurrect the past through language rather than to transform the present. Soviet historiographic prose expressed through rhythmic sentence arrangement an inevitability of progress; Trifonov expresses through the same kind of rhythm the inevitability of loss. He revitalizes this stylistic device, giving it a new meaning in a new kind of historical writing.

Trifonov's novels are narrated mostly in the first-person or through free indirect speech, so an analysis of plot is inseparable from character analysis. He avoids omniscient narration, but as the opening of *Dom na naberezhnoi* demonstrates, he often frames his novels with omniscient reflections. *Dolgoe proshchanie*, the bulk of which does not feel like a novel of reminiscing, begins on a nostalgic note:

В те времена, лет восемнадцать назад, на этом месте было очень много сирени. Там, где сейчас магазин «Мясо», желтел деревянный дачный заборчик — все было тут дачное, и люди, жившие здесь, считали, что живут на даче, -- и над заборчиком громоздилась сирень. . . . Но, впрочем, все это были давно. Сейчас на месте сирени стоит восьмизэтажный дом, в первом этаже которого помещается магазин «Мясо». Тогда, во времена сирени, жители домика за желтым дачным заборчиком ездили за мясом далеко — трамваем до Ваганьковского рынка. А сейчас им было бы очень удобно покупать мясо. Но сейчас, к сожалению, они там не живут. (II: 131)

This anti-progress tone of lament does not continue into the main narration. This tone will return, however, in the novel's concluding sequence, which transfers the nostalgia to the characters:

Когда Ляля проезжает троллейбусом мимо восьми-этажного дома с магазином «Мясо» на первом этаже . . . ей вспоминается вдруг кое-что из прошлой жизни, восемнадцать лет назад: Гриша, театр, старик режиссер, запах сирени весной, собака Кандидка, гремущая цепью вдоль забора, -- и она испытывает странную мгновенную боль, сжатие сердца, не то радость, не то сожаление оттого, что все это было с нею когда-то. (II: 215)

The images from the opening are repeated, but assigned to Lialia's consciousness this time. Repetition in this case undermines the idea that history can be narrated linearly. The words, phrases, and imagery of the prologues and epilogues interact, lending the works a circular structure. The competing voices and competing versions of memory that comprise the main narrative taken alone could lead to the conclusion that truth is not available and that the past cannot be brought into the present via narrative, memory or any other means. The prologues and epilogues, in asserting the value of circularity and the ethical value of memory, do not allow for such pessimism. Trifonov returns in a sense to the nineteenth-century tradition of lyrical framing of memory, especially vivid in the works of Turgenev, that enhances the value of character memory and individual storytelling.

In fact, the typical Trifonovian plot, excluding his historical novel *Neterpenie* and early works influenced by the doctrine of Socialist Realism, consists of a middle-aged to elderly character confronted with a turning point in his or her life recollecting the past in order to try to understand how the present

situation came to be. His plots are character-driven, forcefully undermining the Soviet depersonalization of history. In Trifonov's mature works, this individual process of recollection mirrors the historical process of attempting to come to terms with the Soviet present by rethinking and rewriting the Soviet past. Soviet history erased people and events from the past in order to preserve an ideologically pure narrative. Trifonov posits character memory as a counterdevice to the Soviet manipulation of historical event.

Trifonov's characters – and there is not necessarily only one per work – do not reconstruct their past chronologically, but rather associatively. Nina Kolesnikoff shows how association is triggered in *Predvaritel'nye itogi*, and this is no less true of the later works:

As in true recollections, past events are linked to each other in various ways. Remembering a person can lead to past memories Or, physical resemblance can bring back the memory of another person. . . . Most frequently, however, past events appear in a chain sequence, with one event leading to another. . . (61)

Grisha is spurred on to recall his fear at the beginning of his relationship with Lialia because of a similar fear of appearing stupid at her premiere; later, he finds himself in front of his childhood home and engages in a series of reminiscences about his childhood. Ol'ga Vasil'evna's memory works in the same way: she narrates her relationship with Sergei basically chronologically from their meeting at the seaside up to their fights preceding his death, but within this basic structure she moves back and forth in time from nearly six months after his death to the more distant past based on associations prompted by photographs, objects, her daughter's or her mother-in-law's behavior. Glebov's memories tend

to follow emotional parallels: his first recollected memory of Shulepnikov is not from childhood, but rather of the intense jealousy he felt when Shulepa first appeared as a star at the institute. Later, Glebov jumps ahead to the acute memory of seeing Ganchuk eat a pastry immediately after his condemnation in association with recollecting his own humiliating stomach rumble upon interrogation by Shulepa's stepfather. Ordering events according to individuals' free association and recollection rather than an ideological cause and effect rebuts the logically driven trajectory of Soviet historiography, providing in its place a mosaic of individual lives. The pieces of the mosaic are not subordinated to a logical pattern, but preserve the illogic of personal associations and memory.

In this way, reminiscence is the dominant force behind plot movement and the resulting fragmented presentation in Trifonov's work. But what motivates the reminiscence? His characters reexamine their pasts to ascertain their guilt: the need to justify oneself often prompts the turn to the past. The centrality of the moral dilemma to Trifonov's work is commonly recognized by critics such as Ivanova, Leiderman, and Chapple. In fact, Chapple identifies fifty-two such dilemmas in Trifonov's *oeuvre* (285). Most of Trifonov's critics agree that he writes about the intelligentsia's guilt in Soviet history.⁴ The historical thesis reiterated in different ways throughout these works is that moral compromises of the past lead to moral bankruptcy in the present. The earlier works of the Moscow cycle deal with personal guilt, but guilt becomes public in his last three works, which deal with testimonies. Glebov is called upon to testify against Professor Ganchuk in *Dom na naberezhnoi* and effectively to end the

⁴Ivanova, Leiderman, Gillespie, Piskunov, and others.

professor's career; Pavel Evgrafovich struggles with the transcripts of Migulin's trials in which he participated and, as we discover at the end, through which he condemned Migulin; Sasha Antipov is called upon to testify as a literary expert in a plagiarism trial in one extended episode of *Vremia i mesto*. Only Antipov acts nobly in his trial, yet the feeling of complicity in a dirty business still haunts him.

Starik provides perhaps the most striking example of Trifonov's achronological approach to history. Bjorling notes:

The story of Migulin bears the seeds of a truly epic novel, but this epic potential is fragmented into a thousand tiny pieces which never come together in coherent narrative. . . . The chaotic and fragmentary nature of the presentation as regards orientation of person, time and place gives expression to the fact that this remains raw material, a material which the human mind can as yet comprehend in its entirety – whether that human mind belong in the fictional world (PE [Pavel Evgrafovich]) or in the real world of the Soviet writer and historian (Jurij Trifonov)." (Morality 156-157)

The novel begins with a scene set in 1972, flashes back to 1919 for only a few pages, then further back to pre-Revolutionary times, to the Revolution itself, and then back to the late 1960s for a brief interlude before returning to 1919. The remainder of the novel follows this disjointed, associative pattern. The events of Pavel Evgrafovich's life, never given in order, lose a sense of cause-and-effect relation. The history that results is a mosaic of memories collected according to the whim of the narrator's personality.

Associative recollections of the past are connected with insomnia in *Starik* as well as in *Predvaritel'nye itogi*, *Drugaia zhizn'*, and *Dom na naberezhnoi*. Insomnia provides a convenient motivation for the long periods of reminiscing that characters undertake. In *Predvaritel'nye itogi*, Gennadii Sergeevich finally narrates the whole story of his son and the stolen icon under the influence of

insomnia (II: 115). As we have seen, *Drugaiia zhizn'* is framed by Ol'ga Vasil'evna's sleepless nights. Her insomnia torments her and urges her to think through her understanding of and guilt toward Sergei. Glebov's narration in *Dom na naberezhnoi* is clearly explained as the product of one sleepless night's reckoning: "Вот что вспомнилось Глебову, кое-что благодаря усилением памяти, а кое-что помимо воли, само собой, ночью после того дня, когда он встретил Левку Шулепникова в мебельном магазине" (II: 490). Pavel Evgrafovich also suffers from insomnia and as we have seen, spends all of his time focused on past events; it is at night that he demands the truth. Sleeplessness can merge imperceptibly with dreams or dream-like states, which are also important to the development of the irrational. When memory is associated with sleep it is both realistically motivated and cast into doubt – memories arising on the borders of dreams can take on a dream-like quality.

Blending dream and memory highlights the ambiguity of rational history. In some cases, the dream-memories reveal a subconscious truth unknown to the conscious mind, as Skarlygina states in her analysis of Trifonov's novels:

Перечитывая сегодня повести и романы Юрия Трифонова последних лет, ясно видишь, что писатель испытывал к сну как проявлению бессознательного, иррационального в человеке пристальный интерес. Сон-тайна, сон-предчувствие – постоянный компонент в прозе зрелого и позднего Трифонова. Погружаясь в депрессию, страдая сердечными болезнями, испытывая нравственные муки, находясь в ситуации экзистенциального выбора, герои Юрия Трифонова видят, по воле автора, таинственные сны, исполненные глубокого смысла. (123)

Dreams are bound up with the device of association, a device which counters the overt insistence on rationality and progression in the Soviet writing of history.

JUXTAPOSITIONS OF MULTIPLE NARRATIVE VOICES

Trifonov's novels are characterized by a multiplicity of voices, many of which are unreliable on some level. This would not be particularly notable, were it not for his unusual method of presenting the voices, especially in *Dom na naberezhnoi* and later works. Trifonov typically does not motivate a shift in narrative voice nor does he rationalize the presence of so many voices. Trifonov's novels manifest a belief that one's memories are enhanced in cooperation with others'. The single perspective is not enough to recall and represent history, but the interworkings of many can come close. Trifonov takes the truth out of authoritative hands and shares it among many, none of whom are authoritative. In fact, all of his narrators are unreliable in one way or another. Reminiscing has the advantage of knowing what happens, but not necessarily correctly judging, compelling action on the part of the reader to judge for himself or herself. This sort of narrative style ambiguates meaning, but it also contains a clue toward disambiguation through the presence of the impersonal third-person voice often heard in prologues and epilogues, suggesting tragedy in what was lost and value in what is resurrected through memory.

Trifonov practiced narrative confusion⁵ from the beginning of his career. Although the Moscow novellas are not as complex as later works, each has at least one moment of narrative confusion. *Obmen* ends with a surprising shift to the first person; what seemed like a conventional third-person narration turns out to be a kind of gossip. *Predvaritel'nye itogi* is narrated from a fixed first-person

⁵The term is Bjorling's.

perspective, yet that first-person alternates between the past and the time of writing and so the perspective changes. Also, Gennadii Sergeevich reproduces long dialogues within his monologue, and, as Kolesnikoff observes, "However subjective and one-sided in their interpretation, indirect dialogue offers the reader the possibility of a different perspective and evaluation" (63).

Dolgoe proshchanie is the first of Trifonov's works to be framed by the omniscient prologue and epilogue, and the genesis of later narrative explorations is contained in the brief forays into the consciousnesses of minor characters, Lialia's father Telepnev and her lover Smolianov. *Dolgoe proshchanie* also contrasts the world of the theater (Lialia's narration) to the world of the library (Grisha's narration) and the divergent lives of those who inhabit them.

The use of a double-voiced third-person narrator, unexpected shifts to a nameless first-person narrator and varying consciousnesses within single narrative strands are only a few of the devices Trifonov employs to multiply both the number and kind of memories in his works but also to force the reader to consider the effect of the way history is told. Trifonov's use of multiple juxtaposed narrative voices both reverses the practices of Soviet historiography and mimics them for his own purposes. Trifonov soundly rejects the unitary voice as he reveals the slipperiness of covert narration through alternating it with first-person narration and free indirect discourse. Trifonov's most inventive narrative devices lie in his final works: *Dom na naberezhnoi*, *Starik*, and *Vremia i mesto*.⁶ The complexity of these works warrants considering the narration of each at length.

⁶*Utolenie zhazhdy* (1963) is actually the first work in which Trifonov combines first-person and third-person narration within a single novel. This work will not be analyzed here, however,

Both *Dom na naberezhnoi* and *Starik* feature significant juxtapositions in the alternations among narrating consciousnesses. Events are presented as a mosaic as are the voices that present them. In *Dom na naberezhnoi* these are most strongly felt when Glebov's narration is interrupted by the first-person narrator. The third-person narration comprises the bulk of the novella, which spans about 35 years, from the late 1930s through 1974. The first-person narrator appears five times. The first three occurrences have at their center scenes from childhood. The fourth is set not so many years later, but at a completely different stage in this character's life, during the war when he is working with a fire brigade. The final occurrence of the first-person narrative happens sometime in the 1970s, when he is working on a book about literary debates in the 1920s and becomes reacquainted with Professor Ganchuk. Thus, the first-person narrative covers the same time period, albeit in a more fragmentary fashion.

The first-person narration contains many details and explanations, which are already known to the reader. For example, “. . . некий Минька, по кличке Бык – когда-то учился в нашей школе. . . . если бы они слазали «к Вадьке», они бы не тронули нас. Вадька и Бык жили в одной квартире” (II: 393). All of this we know from the preceding third-person narrative. One explanation for this redundant narration is to demonstrate the complete autonomy of the first-person narrative. This story is not subordinate to Glebov's, but exists entirely

because it still belongs to his early, essentially Socialist Realist period, and, as Anne Hughes points out, the two narrative strands are not well integrated in this first experiment.

independent of the third-person narrative. Another function of these two levels of narration is to point out discrepancies in their accounts of events, the most important of which is the complete absence of the character of the first-person narrator from the third-person narration. Every character Glebov mentions in his childhood reminiscences is also mentioned by the first-person narrator, leaving no possibility for the presence of this character in Glebov's remembering consciousness. What does it mean that the third-person narration – Glebov's consciousness – neglects this character entirely? The juxtaposition of two narrations of the same event raises crucial questions for the reader, questions which could not arise within one, single narration. Woll points out that the scene when Glebov's naming the boys who beat up Levka, turning them over to punishment by Levka's powerful father, follows a scene of sympathetic first-person narration and that this sequence leads the reader to judge Glebov more harshly. A later first-person section narrates an act of childish betrayal in the midst of Glebov's betrayal of Professor Ganchuk, again guiding the reader to judgment (93-94).

The predominant narrative problem in *Dom na naberezhnoi* is the presence of two completely independent narratives. There seems to be nearly a critical consensus that the first-person sections exist as a counterpoint to the main narrative – Glebov's consciousness – and serve essentially to condemn him.⁷ Leiderman makes a very good case for this: the third-person narration

⁷Some critics, such as Fiona Bjorling, believe that the first-person narrative is autobiographical. I do not believe enough evidence exists for this interpretation. Others believe that the first-person narrator is the boy called "Medved"; however, I do not believe that the descriptions of the two boys coincide. When Trifonov adapted this novel for the stage, he did not give the first-person

alone leaves those like Glebov with the excuse that the times required them to act basely, that there was no other way, but the inclusion of a contemporary's story removes that justification: "Время одно. Но в одно и то же время живут люди с разными ценностными ориентирами" (28). This is a powerful argument, and it corresponds to predominant interpretations of post-Stalinist historiography and politics. The first-person narrative would represent a reformer's position, whereas Glebov would represent conservative forces with an interest in maintaining the status quo by limiting access to the past.⁸ But perhaps these two narratives have more in common than it seems. If they are also partly complementary narratives then they support my historiographic thesis: multiple voices and multiplied versions serve to undermine the unitary impulse of Soviet historiography and the era that followed. I will show how the two specific narrative voices employed by Trifonov in this text mirror one another. Both exhibit shifts in focalization – from a retrospective position to an “in the moment” position *vis-à-vis* the events narrated – and both display degrees of unreliability. Neither voice on its own could tell the whole story. The redundant narrative voices undermine the status of unitary narratives. Trifonov's narrative style polemicizes with the style of Soviet historiography.

Both narrative components (third and first person) contain frequent markers of the retrospective position of the narrator. As Ivanova points out, this is quite obvious in the first-person sections, the first three beginning with the same

narrator a name. I believe that this further supports the interpretation that this narrator is not present in Glebov's narration.

⁸See Stephen Cohen *Rethinking the Soviet Experience*.

formula: "Я помню всю эту чепуху детства. . . . (II: 390); Я помню, как он меня мучил. . . . (II: 430); И еще помню, как уезжали из того дома. . . ." (II: 449).⁹

The third-person narration is linked to Glebov's remembering consciousness, as the following statement, appearing near the end of the work, makes absolutely clear: "Вот что вспомнилось Глебову, кое-что благодаря усилиям памяти, а кое-что помимо воли, само собой, ночью после того дня, когда он встретил Левку Шулепникова в мебельном магазине" (II: 490). Glebov's act of remembering is repeatedly accentuated. These places of marked remembering also provide a parallel between the two narrative strands. Both consciousnesses are fixed at a point well beyond the events narrated, and both reveal through this backward-looking stance their particular attitudes towards both their stories and the act of producing them. *Both* narrators engage in a resurrection (*vosstanovlenie*) of the past through memory (Ivanova, *Proza* 230).

Both narratives also contain admissions of forgetting. In the first-person narration: "И при этом мы чему-то безмерно радовались! Чему мы радовались? Так странно, необъяснимо" (II: 394); "Старую квартиру, где я когда-то бывал – о чем он, разумеется, забыл, да и я помнил слабо,-- он отдал добровольно. . . ." (II: 491) The first-person narrator is not an extremely unreliable narrator or recollector, but he is less than perfect. Glebov, conversely, is often accused of forgetting, but in fact his memory is remarkable. Levka says, "Наблюдательность адская, память колоссальная," because Glebov remembers every detail of the Shulepnikovs' apartment in the big house (II: 405).

⁹It is the first-person narrator whose voice parodies the repetitive, rhythmic sentence structure of the Stalinist historiographic catechism.

Glebov is simply unwilling to recall and has always resented his memories: "Глебов замечал потом часто, что Соня горячо интересуется совершеннейшими пустяками из его детства, из жизни с отцом, матерью, расспрашивает о странных, ненужных подробностях его прошлого" (II: 423). He even voices his distaste for memory: "Вот это застывшее лицо он сильно старался забыть, потому что память – сеть, которую не следует чересчур напрягать, чтобы удерживать тяжелые грузы" (II: 482). Both narrators emphasize the fact that they, or the consciousness being narrated, are recalling the past. Both narrators also let it be known that memory is imperfect. Memory is always subjective, and always subject to tainting by emotion or evaluating events from the vantage point of the present. Self-criticism in the narrative voice calls attention to the vicissitudes of any narrative – anathema to Soviet-style historiography.

My previous analysis of juxtaposition in this novel demonstrated that repetitive details assert the independence of the two narratives, Glebov's greatest narrative omission may be the existence of this narrator, and the discrepancies between the two versions of events reveal the first-person narrator's more noble narrative motivations. Is the first-person narration therefore more reliable? I believe that there is cause to speculate. One of the first-person sections opens, "Я помню всю эту чепуху детства, потери, находки, то как я страдал из-за него, когда он не хотел меня ждать и шел в школу с другим. . . " (II: 390). Although this at first would seem to refer to Glebov, we later learn that it is another boy, Anton, who causes the narrator's suffering. This narrator is

exceedingly jealous of Glebov's relationships with Anton and Sonia, the girl they all fall in love with, and this jealousy taints his narration: no one's memory is infallible in Trifonov's work. Trifonov highlights the limits of first-person narration and demonstrates the ways in which it can be as ambiguous – though in a different manner – as third-person narration. In first-person narration the referent is often unclear, especially when no narratee is designated. First-person narration is also limited by the biases of the character-narrator.

A scene in which the children “test their wills” by attempting to walk on a high balcony railing also contains some suspicious moments of first-person narration. In describing why he didn't (or doesn't) want Vadim as part of the club, the first-person narrator calls him *nikakoi*. Ivanova identifies this as the clearest moment of the first-person narrator departing from the norms of the implied author: “. . . здесь звучить голос лирического героя, а отнюдь не авторская позиция. Батон только с первого взгляда 'никакой'” (II:221). The first-person narrator continues to disparage Glebov's life: “Никакие всегда везунчики. В жизни мне пришлось встретиться с двумя или тремя этой изумительной породы – Батон запомнился просто потому, что был первый, кому так наглядно везло за *никакие* заслуги, -- и меня всегда поражала окрылявшая их милость судьбы. Ведь и Вадка Батон стал в своей области важной шишкой. Не знаю точно какой, меня это не интересует” (II: 433). This series of grievances bears a remarkable resemblance to Glebov's complaints about Levka, whom *he* envies, in the very beginning of the novel: “Ну почему, к примеру, ему и то, и это, и все легко, бери голыми руками, будто назначено

каким-то высшим судом? А Глебову до всего тянуться, все добывать горбом, жилами, кожей. Когда добудешь, жилы полопаются, кожа окостенеет” (II: 372). In general, parallels can be noted between these two consciousnesses in the tone and nature of their accusations and in their distance from the implied author’s values. The first-person narrator is vulnerable to irony just as Glebov is. The first-person narrator’s memories are subject to the same kind of emotional bias as Glebov’s (and Ol’ga Vasil’evna’s and Pavel Evgrafovich’s). The difference between the two is that this character does not manipulate people, only memory. These limitations of the first-person narrative mirror the ambiguity of consciousness in the third person, considered next.

The narration of Glebov’s consciousness is full of an ambiguous “two-in-one effect”¹⁰: his voice merges with the third-person narration through free indirect discourse, but the third-person narration also, often simultaneously, comments on Glebov ironically. Leiderman recognizes this phenomenon in the *povest’*, though he uses the term “author” to refer to the third-person narration that is distinct from Glebov’s narrating consciousness: “Но переплетение голосов автора и героя имеет предельно широкую амплитуду колебаний: от подчеркивания в речи повествователя даже временной, возрастной характерности речи героя, от слияния голоса автора с голосом героя до полного размежевания с ним и выделения голоса автора в обособленные комментарии и характеристики героя” (27). We cannot know if Glebov’s feelings and reactions are fully formed in his mind, or whether the narrator articulates what Glebov is unable to. There is no answer to this problem in the

¹⁰The term is from Dorrit Cohn’s *Transparent Minds*.

text. We are offered a discourse that could equally reflect a consciousness which knows it has done wrong in the past and knows that it has been wrong to try to forget the past, or a consciousness which on some level knows what has happened, but has not articulated it, and has not come to any conclusions about it. In the latter case it would be only the narrator who has the knowledge that wrong has been done. The reader must fluctuate between and balance these two possibilities while reading.

If one were to change the pronouns in the third-person narration to the first person, the effect would be startlingly different. Take the simple statement about Sonia's value quoted above: "Тогда ему, глупцу, этих даров казалось мало" (II: 454). If one were to change the pronouns, the sentence would read: "Тогда, мне, глупцу, этих даров казалось мало." In the first sentence, as it appears in the text, we don't know if Glebov considers himself an idiot, or if the narrator indicates that stupidity. If the narration were in the first-person, we would know that on some level Glebov regretted his actions. This means that the possibility that Glebov truly does repent exists within the text. The following passage demonstrates conclusively the necessity and advantage of monologue narrated through free-indirect speech, "Лучше всего оттянуть, замотать всю эту историю. Авось забудут или же дело сделается как-то само собой. Любимый принцип: пустить на 'само собой'" (II: 446). Constructed entirely without pronouns, this sentence need not be translated into the first-person by the reader in order to assign this sentiment to the remembering Glebov.¹¹ Such an impression cannot be conveyed through the first-person narration. That

¹¹Chudakov recognizes this technique in Chekhov's later prose in *Chekhov's Poetics*.

narration, being unmediated, is less ambiguous: we know and applaud that character's consciousness of the past and what it means.

Now that both components of the narrative – the third-person and the first-person – have been examined, one must consider how they work together. As noted above, similarities between the two exist. Both are retrospective and identify moments of remembering and forgetting. The differences are a matter of degree: the first-person narrator is *more* willing to remember, and remembers with greater avidity and reliability, but not necessarily perfectly. The main difference is in the mode of presentation: because Glebov is narrated through third-person monologue, much more uncertainty surrounds his character. The “two-in-one” effect of narrated monologue ensures that two possibilities exist for interpretation.

So, why ultimately are both components necessary? To accomplish a judgment of Glebov, Trifonov certainly did not need to include a counternarrative in the first-person. First person is a less mediated form of narration. As my analysis shows, the questions that necessarily arise in narrated monologue are absent in first-person narration. The reader always knows to which consciousness the statements belong. It is less ambiguous. By contrasting not only two very different consciousnesses with two very different attitudes toward the act of remembering, Trifonov makes an ethical point. By casting one of these voices – the more ethical one – in the first person, he makes a point about narrative voice itself. He shows how similar the two narrative forms can be, and how both taken together explore further possibilities of narrating the past.

Through differing forms of narration Trifonov presents differing forms memories take – an amalgamation akin to diversified collective memory. Demands are made on the reader to constantly question the sources of narrative information, and no clear answers exist in the text, calling the writing of history authoritatively into question, while at the same time creating a vivid image of the past that boldly elucidates consequences of Stalinism. Trifonov also plays with the reader's usual practice of identifying the second non-character related narration as the author's. Trifonov can never display enough ambiguity; he must always demonstrate the human foibles involved in reconstructing the past.

Starik furthers this practice. The central consciousness – Pavel Evgrafovich – is narrated in both the first and the third person. Fiona Bjorling has done a very thorough analysis of the voices in *Starik*. She identifies five "narrative situations" in the novel in addition to the quoted documents and Asia's letters. These are: 1) the sporadic, omniscient narrator, describing Pavel Evgrafovich and the heatwave of 1972 from the outside; 2) free indirect speech describing Pavel Evgrafovich from within; 3) first person, often in the present tense, usually narrating past events; 4) free indirect speech presenting Kandaurov; 5) free indirect speech presenting Izvarin ("Morality" 157-160). She makes the important observation that:

All the archive material is presented within N3 [first-person] sections, that is to say that it is mediated and chosen by PE [her identification of Pavel Egrafovich] himself. Asia's letters on the other hand are introduced within N1 and N2 sections; their effect is to challenge PE's personal witness (N3), for the material they present gives a view of the distant past which is not congruent with his version ("Morality" 160).

This division is perfectly plausible, but I believe it is also possible to dispense with the distinction of the omniscient narrator in this novel. As in *Dom na naberezhnoi*, the third-person narration in this novel is double-voiced and allows for the possibility that the consciousness narrated is entirely Pavel Evgrafovich's, given articulation through a narrator. The question is: why the shifts within Pavel Evgrafovich's narration? And is the function of the multiplicity of focalizations the same in this novel as it is in *Dom na naberezhnoi*?

What would the difference be if Pavel Evgrafovich was narrated entirely in the first person? In the third person? Without the additional voices? Bjorling answers, "Multiperspective exposes the selectivity of every individual point of view" ("Morality" 162). I agree that multiplicity of voices ambiguates judgement precisely because all the voices work together to evoke the past era. The first-person and third-person narrations associated with Pavel Evgrafovich display different relationships to the events narrated. It seems at first as if the present (the Brezhnev era) is narrated in the third person, whereas the past (Revolution and Civil War) is narrated in the first person, with a preference for the narrative present tense. This is the dominant pattern, but it does not hold true for the entire work. The difference in narrative voice in this work conveys a difference in tone: it is easier to judge the protagonist in the third-person just as it is easier to judge Glebov than the first-person narrator in *Dom na naberezhnoi*.

In addition to the juxtaposition of narrative voices representing a single character's consciousness, *Starik* creates meaning through juxtapositions of events, eras, and characters. *Starik* was the first work published in the Soviet

Union that faulted the Revolution for the decline in values perceived in the 1970s, according to Leiderman, and it does so by juxtaposing Pavel Evgrafovich's moral compromises and later denial of them to the petty deceptions and duplicity rampant in his children's generation, evidenced in the fight over Agrafena's vacant dacha: " . . . в "Старике" само революционное движение в России, в котором возобладали наиболее экстремистские идеи и тенденции, представлено главным источником зла. Отсюда пошли метастазы той нравственной порчи, которая поразила все общество и душу каждого отдельного человека" (Leiderman 35).

The juxtaposition of the revolutionary era to the present of the narration is not created by Pavel Evgrafovich, but results from the layering of narrative voices and subplots. In many of Trifonov's works, the characters are not fully in control of the presentation of events, and the presence of an implied author is felt where meaning is created through juxtaposition of memories, often from different characters or from contrasting characters' orientation toward memory. Juxtaposition of blocks of text narrated through different characters' consciousnesses, Trifonov's second counterdevice, suggests radically new relationships between events. Trifonov uses this device to overturn the cause-and-effect relationships between events in Soviet historical narratives. His illogical juxtapositions also call into question the teleological relationship between cause and effect that so dominated Soviet historiography.

The idea that Pavel Evgrafovich's memory represents Soviet historical practices arises through juxtaposition. The first major flashback extends almost

to the moment that has been vexing the old man – why was Migulin sent away from the front? Was Migulin deceiving the authorities or vice versa? Why was he mistrusted? Dangerously close to the secret he doesn't want to reveal to himself, the narration moves back to the present. The ensuing episode involves Galia's childhood friend Polina asking Pavel Evgrafovich to testify to her trumped-up revolutionary activities to get her into a decent home for retirees. He assents – an act of kindness, really – but then tells his grandson an even more embellished version of the same lies that Polina has fabricated (Woll 58). Pavel Evgrafovich no less than the frivolous Polina fabricates the past. The inference is that his narration of the Migulin story may have the same roots in self-promotion – or even kindness – that leads to distortion. Woll illuminates the consequences: “Forgetting the past and ignoring history or rewriting it for a variety of reasons are shown as the root causes of modern Soviet discontent and accidie” (54). The most telling juxtaposition in this novel is between the two secondary characters Kandaurov and Izvarin, whose differing reasons for evading memory illustrate different ways of writing history.

Oleg Kandaurov has a pragmatic (historically expedient) view of the old man and of history. In organizing his case for the dacha, he dismisses Pavel Evgrafovich as a threat and reveals his attitude toward the past, memory and other people, saying:

Старик Летунов – такая легенда там. Он ветеран, участник, видел Ленина, пострадал, помыкался. Попробуйте не уважать! Он тут же письмо, тут же все заслуги, рубцы и шрамы на стол. Но дед еще ничего, с дедом можно сговориться, он из той породы полувымерших обалдуев, кому *ничего не надо*, кроме воспоминаний, принципов и

уважения. . . Старикам, что им, собственно, надо? Койка, одеяльце да горшочек. Лежать да вспоминать. (III: 504)

Woll thus evaluates this character, "Kandaurov lives exclusively in the present. We know nothing about his background or family both because he is self-creating and because as soon as the present becomes the past he discards it" (Woll 57). Kandaurov represents the Soviet view of history: it can be manipulated or discarded to meet the demands of the present.

Sania Izvarin provides an opposing view. *Starik*, as noted above, is primarily a collection of Pavel Evgrafovich's associatively ordered memories. The two segments narrated by the consciousnesses of Kandaurov and Izvarin thus stand out and draw attention as juxtaposed opposites. Izvarin lived in the dacha settlement as a child and other claimants try to use him as leverage although he has no interest in the case. A call from Prikhodko brings back memories he is unwilling to recall, "Потом ехал в троллейбусе долго и делал усилия, чтобы не вспоминать. Но вспоминалось само собой" (III: 510). This kind of resistance to memory is very different from what we will see in Glebov. Izvarin's father was arrested and his family suffered in poverty: remembering his early years of happiness brings him nothing but pain. He recalls the dacha settlement as a "гиблое место" (III: 520). Far from Glebov's lack of sensitivity, Izvarin suffers from an acute sensitivity to loss. His childhood is recalled lyrically, and he recalls Pavel Evgrafovich and his family fondly, whereas Prikhodko and his family are shown to have been disrespectful to the orphaned boy. Izvarin's reluctantly recalled childhood echoes the evaluation of characters already established in the

novel. The juxtaposition of these three characters' memories produces an extra layer of meaning: a commentary of ways of representing the past.

In *Vremia i mesto* two very different narrations are present, one in the moment, one reminiscing. They tell different kinds of stories: childhood in the Stalin era and struggles in the narrative present (1960s and 1970s). In this work, as opposed to *Dom na naberezhnoi* and *Starik* the sameness of the narrators is repeatedly emphasized. Leiderman contrasts his interpretation of the narrators in *Dom na naberezhnoi* to this novel:

Особенно показателен диалог между кругозорами Антипова и его друга Андрея. Это не антиподы, как в "Доме на набережной", наоборот – "... он был слишком похож на меня (...). Он не нравился мне потому, что я чуял в нем свое плохое.". Однако линия Андрея – это не только рефлексия на жизнь Антипова, но и вполне самостоятельные события его собственной жизни. Оба персонала живут параллельно в одном и том же времени и месте. (39)

Their experiences are in many ways parallel, and they draw the same kinds of moral conclusions from their experiences: "Такое схождение духовных траекторий Антипова и Андрея оказывается самым сильным центростремительным фактором, стягивающим весь хаос эпического события в единое целое – они связывают и в известной мере упорядочивают это хаос своим со-гласием и со-чувствием" (39). The thirteen chapters of *Vremia i mesto* do not flow one into another: the jarring lack of transitions provides occasions for contrasting the tone and style of each. For example, the second chapter, "Tsentralnyi park" is remarkable for its tone of mature recollection of youth, whereas "Tverskoi Bul'var – I," narrated in the moment through Sasha Antipov's consciousness, is striking in its recreation of a

very immature, exploitative attitude toward the events described. Sasha's mother returns from exile and he is above all disappointed in himself for not finding a good title for the story he could write from her experiences. This contrast in narrative tone is a cornerstone of the work.

In an interview with Ralf Schroder, Trifonov described the structure of his last novel as *punktir* – a "dotted line" narrative:

Пунктирная линия жива, пульсирует, она живет, чем сплошная линия. Вспомним, например, роденовские рисунки Каждая глава романа «Время и место» -- новелла, которая может существовать отдельно, автономно, но одновременно все главы связаны друг с другом. Они соединены не только образами романа, но и временной цепочкой. (76)

Vremia i mesto represents the culmination of many of Trifonov's works in which fragmentary parts together create a unity through connections in images, contrasts in tone, and juxtaposed characters and voices. More than its predecessors, this novel also makes use of the space between the chapters – the ellipses – in the creation of meaning and meditation on memory and as such it will be analyzed in greater depth below.

ELLIPSES

Contrasts between Trifonov's plots and Stalinist-shaped Soviet historiography are evident not only through juxtapositions of narrative voices and character memories, but also particularly through the use of ellipses, Trifonov's third major counterdevice. Ellipses highlight the events not selected for incorporation into the plot – blank spots in history. By writing in a way that recalls Stalinist historians' ellipses, Trifonov's aesthetic principles and his philosophy of

history coincide with and neutralize the demands of censorship. He leaves out that which could not be published in the Soviet Union because of censorship, but at the same time he draws attention to the censoring of the Soviet past not only in literature but also in historical writings.

One may define ellipsis as when the *siuzhet* does not present the entire *fabula*: when the emplotment of a story does not include significant portions of the chain of events comprising that story. I believe that this can happen in four different ways. A fragmentary narrative can skip over parts of the *fabula*, simply leaving out years or eras as if they never happened (Genette 43). These omissions can be ascribed to either a narrator's or an implied author's choice to skip over certain amounts of time. A second type is what James Phelan calls "suppressed narration," when a narrator leaves out information otherwise specified as important to the story (138). This kind of ellipsis is ascribed to the narrator. Third, there can be information which is unavailable directly through the narration, but which both implied author and reader, and possibly the narrator, understand implicitly. This phenomenon may in fact be more productively called implicitness rather than ellipsis and can take the form of Aesopian speech.¹² Finally, unreliable narration of any kind creates a lack of certainty about the events of the narration, often taking the form of gaps or ellipses in the narrator's grasp of the story. The attentive reader usually fills in these final two forms of ellipsis. All four kinds occur frequently in Trifonov. In a 1977 interview Trifonov said, "Думаю, что любие, даже очень бурные, страстные порывы нашего темперамента, нашей души можно выразить как-то намеком, штрихом,

¹²For a discussion of implicitness see Dolezel 65-68, Champigny 988-991, and Genette 197-198.

деталью, даже умолчанием. Кроме всего, это заставляет не бездействовать читателя, не позволяет его душе лениться" (*Как слово* 284). Bakhnov quotes Trifonov as saying, "Пробелы – разрывы – пустоты – это то, что прозе необходимо так же, как жизни. Ибо в них – в пробелах – возникает еще одна тема, еще одна мысль" (qtd. in Bakhnov 172).

The previous section on plot began to illustrate the role of ellipses resulting from juxtaposition in the fragmentary narrative construction of the novellas and novels, especially in *Dom na naberezhnoi*, *Starik* and *Vremia i mesto*. These and other works also feature elliptical plots; more than mere fragments, these involve felt absences in information.

Dolgoe proshchanie exhibits an elliptical plot made clear by time markers more precise than in some of the later works. The prologue sets the main action eighteen years in the past: the main action begins in summer 1951, then skips to autumn of the same year and quickly moves on Lialia's premiere in March 1952. Summer and autumn 1952 are narrated through summary, and the winter extending into 1953 is narrated in detail before jumping to March 1953 when Grisha leaves Moscow. The final leap moves into the epilogue – again eighteen years ahead. Much of the characters' lives are narrated through summary or elided altogether.

Like *Dolgoe proshchanie*, *Drugaia zhizn'* does not set out to encompass a life story, rather the story of a marriage. Ol'ga Vasil'evna's marriage to Sergei is narrated generally episodically, covering sequences of events from their courtship to early years together (beginning in 1953), several incidents of

jealousy and other vexations and ending with the events perceived to have led up to his death seventeen years later in 1970. The fragmentary, associative links of these installments make it difficult to identify clear ellipses; however, a selection of events is evident and the jump from Ol'ga's dream to her "new life" at the end certainly provides an example.

This first kind of ellipsis – the skipping over of blocks of time – operates most clearly in *Dom na naberezhnoi*. The narrative is not presented chronologically, and, if we consider this to be a story of Glebov's life – how he got to be where he is and who he is – then we are missing some key episodes. The late 1950s and the 1960s are not narrated. This is presumably the time when Glebov is making his career, establishing himself and becoming the kind of academic we see in the opening and closing episodes, rewarded with a nice apartment, mahogany furniture, a dacha, and many opportunities to travel to Europe. If we consider this to be a story of his peers' lives as well – namely Levka and the first-person narrator – then even more of the story is left out. The first-person narrator informs the reader primarily about his childhood and adolescence, with a final narration of his work on a book, probably in the early 1970s. About Levka we know little beyond childhood – knowledge of his adult experiences is spotty at best: work for a football team, increasing drunkenness, work as a graveyard attendant and some kind of job in the furniture store.

What is the purpose of these gaps? The fragments chosen convey a sense of time to the reader, time which is not necessarily fluid, but preserves itself whole all the same. In *Dom na naberezhnoi* the most densely narrated

periods are 1937, 1947, 1951 and some years around 1974. Episodes are chosen in order to make a connection between the Stalin era and the present of its writing and publication – the mid-70s. In *Starik* the connection between the first years after the Revolution and the mores of the 1970s is made by juxtaposition; Pavel Evgrafovich's character controls the selection of events narrated from his life. He avoids the Stalin era and the fifties and sixties. In the earlier novellas, eliding certain periods while accentuating others performs the same function of making connections between seemingly disparate times. Ellipses in Soviet historiography, on the other hand, were intended to create a simplistic version of cause-and-effect connections between events.

Ellipses in Trifonov's works are not evidence of what is forgotten. Trifonov's works actually do not allow for lapses in memory; what is forgotten can always be recalled, consciously or unconsciously. Ellipses do, however, relate to the development of his ideas on the possibilities of writing history. Historical narrative for Trifonov is never a complete, well-rounded whole. Associative connections over time are more prevalent than chronology. Eliding eras allows for illustrating unorthodox relationships between time periods and highlighting the periods crucial to understanding the impact of the Stalin era on the present: "Трифонов остановился только на тех эпохах и тех исторических фактах, которые предопределили судьбу его поколения" (Ivanova, *Proza* 6). Through ellipses and fragmentary plot construction organized by association, Trifonov erases strict cause-and-effect links from the historical narrative. Individuals'

memories allow for idiosyncratic resurrection of the past, not according to ideological needs, not teleological, in fact, not logical at all.

The second kind of ellipsis – "suppressed narration" – is equally dominant in Trifonov's works and relates as directly to historiography: suppressed narration is nothing more than suppressed historical truth. The fact that the existence of these memories is conveyed to the reader means they are not fully forgotten even if they are not fully narrated. Censorship (even self-censorship) cannot erase the past.

One of the best examples of self-serving, teleological omission is in *Dom na naberezhnoi*. The third-person narration, focalized through Glebov and analyzed in more depth below, suppresses information that the reader knows to exist. This is most evident in what he claims to forget after extended memories about his childhood in the late 1930s and the scandals while he was at the institute:

Вот что Глебов старался не помнить: того, что сказал ему Куно Иванович, когда по нелепой случайности столкнулись на аллейке Рождественского бульвара. . . . Еще он старался не помнить лица Юлии Михайловны, когда та прошла мимо по коридору . . . И все остальное, что он старался забыть. Например, то, что сказал Ганчук на редколлегии, когда они встретились на одном обсуждении. . . . (II: 481-482)

None of what Glebov has tried to forget is made available to the reader at any point. We can only guess what Kuno said, what Ganchuk said, and later, what Glebov said at the second meeting that sealed Ganchuk's fate. Glebov knows the missing information, and so, presumably, does the narrator, but it is not

communicated. This suppression demonstrates how voice dominates plot in the work: the reader does not need to know the details, what the reader needs to know is that Glebov refuses to narrate them. Glebov's selectivity recalls the selection of events Garthoff and Marwick revealed in the "plot" of the *Kratkii kurs*, although the sophisticated reader posited by Trifonov can guess at the suppressed details, while the naive reader posited by the author of the *Kratkii kurs* cannot.

Pavel Evgrafovich suppresses memories of much of his life in *Starik*, the main example being his behavior at Migulin's second trial. He seems to have forgotten that he publicly allowed for the possibility of treason, but his guilty dreams, analyzed below, call that into question. He also suppresses memories of his behavior in the Stalin era. He was certainly repressed, we know he spent time in exile and that, in spite of his experience in the Civil War, he fought as a soldier in the Second World War. Yet the following admission seems to imply a certain amount of dishonor:

У каждого было. И у меня тоже. Миг страха, не физического, не страха смерти, а вот именно миг помрачения ума и надлом души. Миг уступки. А может быть, миг самопознания? . . . В двадцать восьмом году. Нет, в тридцать пятом. Галя сказала: «Я тебя бесконечно жалею. Это не ты сказал, это я сказала, наши дети сказали.» Ей казалось, все делалось ради них. Помрачение ума – ради них. (III: 436)

He cannot bring himself to fully narrate these incidents, though he clearly has not forgotten anything. The use of suppressed narration in these works serves to recreate the atmosphere of terror. So much of the history Trifonov strives to represent lies between memory and amnesia. Fear dictates that it cannot be

forgotten, but it cannot be told. Bakhnov shows how *Dolgoe proshchanie* is also imbued with the sense of pervasive fear: Grisha fears his neighbor, Lialia's father fears for his garden, Lialia is afraid someone will find out about her relationship with Smolianov, Smolianov fears Agabekov enough to leave Lialia in his clutches. "Только очень поверхностному взгляду может казаться, будто бы этот страх вызван лишь «бытовыми» причинами и никак не связан с «политикой»" (Bakhnov 175).

The above examples illustrate ellipses in which the omitted events are never made clear to the reader. The memories are not lost, but they are also not openly narrated. The reader can guess at the suppressed details, but will never know exactly what transpired. The following examples illustrate instances of implied information: information which is never stated, but is nevertheless made *entirely* clear to the reader. The Stalin era, as the above example from *Starik* begins to illustrate, is largely narrated implicitly. This fear cannot be openly discussed first of all because of censorship, but more importantly because of the very nature of fear. Trifonov's characters remember fear elliptically and narrate it implicitly. The elliptical technique becomes a moral and aesthetic, more than a pragmatic, necessity. Bakhnov recognizes this facet of Trifonov's style: "Дело в том, что склонность к недосказанности была заложена в самой природе трифоновского дарования; умолчание, недомолвка, намек – все это были важнейшие элементы его художественной системы, диктуемые не внешними условиями: «дозволено – недозволено». Это были черты его стиля, связанные с его представлениями о гармонии, достоверности, о

внутренних возможностях слова" ("Semidesiatnik" 172). And in a later essay, Bakhnov illuminates the ways in which censorship became a boon to Trifonov's style: "... Трифонову удалось употребить во благо своему дару все. Даже—цензуру. . . . эстетические принципы художника, вырабатывавшиеся вне зависимости от того, что дозволено, а что нет, оказываются едва ли не главным залогом его осуществления в обществе тотальной несвободы" ("Probely" 151).

Stalin's death is an important moment in much post-Stalin fiction, and Trifonov's work is no exception.¹³ The event is never explicitly specified, but the reader has no hesitation in identifying its implications. Explicit time markers in *Dolgoe proshchanie* prepare the reader for the end of the main narration coinciding with Stalin's death. Rebrov is on the train taking him away from Moscow and Lialia:

На пятые сутки утром в коридоре была шумная толкотня. Голосисто и странно, по-дурному кричала женщина: «Ай-ай-ай-ай-ай-ай!» Отпахнулась дверь, всунулось красное, какое-то смятое, кисельное лицо с глазами навыкате, дохнуло шепотом: умер. . . в пять утра. . . Ребров вышел в коридор. Из одного купе доносились рыдания, в другом – дверь была настежь – играли в карты. Какой-то человек, расталкивая теснившихся, бежал по коридору, держа перед собой громадный китайский термос. Ребров вернулся в купе, залез на свою верхнюю полку. Слезы душили его, он повернулся к стенке и, стискивая зубы, чувствуя лицом мокроту казанной наволочки, думал о жизни, которую успел прожить: да что же в ней было? (II: 214)

Without the previous acknowledgement of years and seasons, one may not know for sure that the event described is Stalin's death. The selection of images

¹³Siniavsky describes the importance of the leader's death: "When Stalin died, many people thought that everything had died, even those who weren't politically attached to the regime or worshippers of Stalin. It's just that Stalin had become a synonym for the entire State, for life on earth" (104).

conveys the ambivalence of the event. Grisha's extreme emotional reaction seems surprising; his life is undergoing a change as vast for him as the change brought about in the country by Stalin's death. This is one of many parallels created by Trifonov between individual life and historic event. The parallels serve not to belittle the life, but rather to create a sense of history which relies on memory rather than official documents or reports.

The events following Stalin's death are given a very different intonation in *Drugaia zhizn'*. The time of the beginning of their relationship is described as, ". . . начало весны, той тревожной, неясной, которую еще предстояло разгадать, . . . когда все кругом затаив дыхание чего-то ждали, предполагали, шептались и спорили" (II: 228). This is the spring following Stalin's death, and the fresh air of expectation of new life for everyone is reflected in their discovery of one another.¹⁴ Beginning their relationship at this time of high hopes draws an unavoidable parallel between the dissolution of their marriage and the betrayal of those hopes felt in the Brezhnev era. Ol'ga Vasil'evna does not register the momentousness of the times, however. A scene from their first seaside romance is telling: "Потом какой-то человек отозвал Влада в море, они отплыли от берега, и человек передал новость. Тогда было много разных слухов и новостей. Она забыла, что именно. Помнила только: Влад и Сережа необычайно возбудились. . . ." (II: 240). Patera identifies this event as Beria's elimination in June 1953 (228). Ol'ga Vasil'evna

¹⁴Trifonov recalls his own reaction in *Zapiski sosedai*. "В тот мартовский вечер, когда сотни людей погибли под сапогами толпы – а я с двумя приятелями ходил по Сретенскому бульвару, чему-то неясно радуясь, наверное, запаху перелома, который чуялся в воздухе. . . ." (quoted from Shitov, 250)

from the beginning is unable to look beyond her own happiness or unhappiness to see what others consider important, and this is the seed of her marital problems. Ol'ga Vasil'evna's narration reflects her attributes and is part of her characterization, but it also coincides with the demands of censorship: what she can't remember (because it doesn't concern her) can't be openly printed. As Bakhtov writes, "Писатель создал уникальную, в своем роде совершенную художественную систему, в которой умолчания вынужденные столь же органичны, столь же естественно вплетены в ткань произведения, как и умолчания иного рода" (172).

Sasha Antipov makes a decision of consequence at the time of Stalin's death as well. The time is identified equally implicitly in a chapter entitled, "Konets zimy na Trubnoi."

На бульваре плешинами белел снег, деревья темнели сиво, голо, и по черному асфальту, по трамвайному пути и по середине бульвара бежали к Трубной площади люди. Зима кончалась, воздух был ледяной. И ледяной ветер гнал людей к Трубной. Говорили, что в Дом Союзов будут пускать с двух, но люди тянулись уже теперь. Антипов, наверное, побежал бы со всеми, то, что случилось, волновало его страшно, ледяная стынь пробирала до дрожи, но он не мог отойти от дома. . . . (IV: 415)

He is waiting for the doctor who is coming to perform an illegal abortion on Tania, his wife. He stands outside and observes the crowds:

. . .некоторые шли шерогами, взявшись за руки, лица одних были скорбны, значительны, даже торжественны, другие были заплаканы, третьи мрачны, иные громко разговаривали, на них шикали, мальчишки шныряли в толпе, во всех чувствовалось то, что испытывал Антипов, какое-то полубезумие, -- и думал о том, что люди, которые будут жить через сто лет, никогда не поймут нашей душевной дрожи в тот ледяной март и того, что в такой день можно нервничать из-за такси, из-за того, что доктор опаздывает. . . (IV: 415-416)

Sasha thinks over his fate, how a manuscript was rejected and how he and Tania already have their hands full with a young son. The coincidence of the two events – Stalin's funeral and the abortion – lead Sasha and Tania to decide to have their baby. All of these events which tie personal life to public event without ever naming that event demonstrate a key to Trifonov's historical writing. Stalin's name does not appear in any of Trifonov's works other than *Otblesek kostra*. Bakhnov explains, ". . . и это не дань цензуре, а зияющий «пробел», над которым следует думать. Не Сталин был его темой, а сталинщина, ее истоки и последствия – в нашей жизни, наших душах" (173). This significant scene, which literally embodies the new life resulting from Stalin's death, is written without so much as a single mention of the ruler's name. Individuals' stories, especially those of representatives of their times such as Sasha Antipov and Pavel Evgrafovich, allow Trifonov to say much more about the times – about Stalinism – than he could by actually including a narrative about Stalin's death.

Leiderman identifies a remarkable aspect of this novel:

. . . события жизни Антипова приходятся на самое драматическое время: это разгул Большого Террора, испытания Отечественной войны, послевоенная эпидемия идеологических кампаний и судебных процессов, суматоха "оттепели". Однако парадокс в том, что в сознании главного героя эти, столь значительные исторические события проходят как-то вскользь, они проговариваются словно бы между прочим, нивелируясь в общем потоке повседневной суеты. . . . Антипов уравнивает их – частную жизнь и социальную историю. (38-39)

Another outcome of implicit narration of historical event, then, is this equalization of personal and historical time, observed here by Leiderman. Soviet narratives of the past encompass only historical time – there is no place for

personal narrative or private life on the great path of communism. Trifonov forcefully overturns this paradigm by privileging the narration of private life events.

The fourth type of ellipsis found in Trifonov's works results from unreliable narration. I find James Phelan's typology of six kinds of unreliable narration to be apt because of his differentiation of the various character motives which lie behind inconsistent or false narration. He lists unreliable reporting, unreliable reading, and unreliable regarding, as well as underreporting, underreading and underregarding as types of unreliable narrative strategies. Reporting relates to what he calls the "axis of facts, characters or events," in other words, telling the story. Reading refers to perception and interpretation. Finally, regarding signifies the narrator's (or 'narrating consciousness') evaluations and ethics (Phelan 214). Underregarding seems to be an unavoidable condition of remembering in Trifonov's works. The feelings of guilt and an instinct for self-justification often infect his narrators' most honest intentions. Dalton-Brown points out this source of various levels of unreliability: "The characters are depicted as subjective and error-prone, unable to comprehend the events taking place around them in Trifonov's 'novels of consciousness', which really illustrate lack of consciousness, the difficulty of accepting the reality of a milieu dominated by repression, and of accepting one's own part in contributing to such a repressive atmosphere" (709).

While unreliable narration plays a role in *Dom na naberezhnoi* and *Starik*, *Drugaiia zhizn'* demonstrates Trifonov's most interesting use of this device.

Drugaia zhizn' maintains an almost constant focalization through Ol'ga Vasil'evna's character. This is far from a simple narrative, however. Ol'ga Vasil'evna's voice is highly personalized and her personality affects every aspect of this elaborate story and its telling. Ol'ga Vasil'evna cannot be accused of unreliable reporting or underreporting: there is no cause to doubt the faithfulness of the events narrated. Unreliable reading and underregarding are the sources of unreliable narration and ellipsis in this *povest'*.

Ol'ga Vasil'evna's guilt feelings are established in the first paragraph, “. . . старайся понять, должен быть смысл, должны быть виновники, всегда виноваты близкие, жить дальше невозможно, умереть самой. Вот только узнать: в чем она виновата?" (II: 219). Her mother-in-law wishes her to feel guilty, but in defiance of that woman and in spite of midnight clamorings of conscience, Ol'ga Vasil'evna does not actually consider herself at fault in her husband's demise. The bulk of her narrative is marked by an efficient, worldly-wise and confident tone: Sergei himself contained the seeds of his own downfall, or the monsters he worked with ruined him, or perhaps his alleged mistress Daria Mamedovna is at fault (Kolesnikoff, 69-70). Ol'ga Vasil'evna reveals what she considered to be his faults as well as her undoubted sincere love for – and lack of understanding – of him. This lack of understanding is the real source of underregarding. Ol'ga does not realize the importance of events outside her personal life, nor does she comprehend the magnitude of the case at the institute. In this, as in later works, the narrator's attitude toward memory reveals to a large degree the reliability of the narrative. Memory is pain for Ol'ga

Vasil'evna, so she remembers reluctantly and dulls the pain by avoiding certain subjects, by not straining her memory too hard. All the same, the narrative implicitly reveals to the reader more than Ol'ga can understand, especially as regards Sergei's work in general and his persecution at the institute. Underregarding is the source of implicit information.

Ol'ga Vasil'evna, though able to remember some of the least flattering aspects of her own behavior, cannot remember details regarding Sergei's dissertation and the scandal that led to his resignation. After his death, some colleagues come to the house and Ol'ga Vasil'evna is on her guard, not knowing if they were on Sergei's side, even though it is suggested that Sergei might have told her: "Ольга Васильевна не была с ним знакома, но слышала фамилию от Сережи. Забыла, в какой связи. Кажется, он участвовал в разбирательстве Сережиного "дела", но Ольга Васильевна совершенно не помнила, какова была его позиция" (II: 260-61). She does not fully understand the kind of trouble he was in; she did not pay attention at the time, underreading the seriousness of the situation. She knows he had acquired a list of Tsarist secret agents, but doesn't really recognize its significance. "Что это было? Какие материалы? Она помнила только, что Сережа, когда достал их, -- это произошло как-то случайно и неожиданно, безмерно радовался" (II: 308). Neither at the time of remembering nor at the time of the acquisition does she understand the importance of this folder.

The aesthetic demands of Trifonov's text – consistency in Ol'ga Vasil'evna's character and narration – again coincide with the demands of the

system of censorship under which he wrote. Patera explains the controversial nature of Sergei's research. Ol'ga Vasil'evna does remember that Sergei's research dealt with the February Revolution. That topic, according to Patera's research, was one of actual controversy after Stalin's death, when the historian Burdzhakov argued, "на основе архивных материалов. . . что февральская революция в России возникла стихийно," a view hardly compatible with official Party history (231).¹⁵ Patera shows how, reading between the lines of Ol'ga Vasil'evna's fragmentary knowledge, one can conclude that Sergei was uncovering the pre-revolutionary histories of some, "не совсем простых смертных" (234). Trifonov could not go into great detail about these events any more than Sergei could write his dissertation on them. He has Ol'ga "underregard" the actual content, while giving the reader enough information to infer what kind of work was being done.

While events outside of her family lack interest for Ol'ga Vasil'evna, she is not unaware of those things most important to Sergei. She does understand what motivates him, though she does not grasp its worth: "Из того, что она уловила когда-то: человек есть нить, протянувшаяся сквозь время, тончайший нерв истории, который можно отщепить и выделить и – по нему определить многое. Человек, говорил он, никогда не примирится со смертью, потому что в нем заложено ощущение бесконечности нити, часть которой он сам" (II: 300). I contend that Sergei's philosophy of history and memory coincides with Trifonov's. In a 1977 interview Trifonov himself wrote, "Я хочу, чтобы читатель

¹⁵Donald Raleigh's introduction to the translation of Burdzhakov's *The Second Russian Revolution* explains the place of this work in post-Soviet historiography.

понял: эта таинственная «времен связующая нить» через нас с вами происходит, что это и есть нерв истории" ("Kak slovo" 288). The images and their construction in both quotations are nearly identical.

An incident at the dacha illustrates the position of those who espouse the current, favored (proto-Stalinist) historiographical practices. Sergei's mother, Aleksandra Prokofievna, wants to irritate Gena Klimuk and take him down a peg, so she reminds him that as a young man he asked her help in finding a lawyer to get his brother out of a tricky situation involving embezzlement. Klimuk responds, "Слушайте, это же театр абсурда! Какой-то гиньоль! Бог мой, зачем все это помнить – мне, вам, кому бы то ни было? . . . Есть такое понятие: историческая целесообразность. . . Вы знаете, кто сейчас мой брат? (II: 285-86) For Gena Klimuk, truth is irrelevant – the truth of the past is irrelevant – "historical expediency" indicates that the end justifies the means and the past need not bear on the present: an interesting view for a historian.

The novella brings together through the filter of Ol'ga Vasil'evna's recollecting several attitudes toward history. For Sergei history is a live connection to the past, but not necessarily a reliable one. When Sergei finally tracks down one of the agents from his list he encounters yet another surprising take on history, "Тот ничего не помнил, не знал, не желал, не ведал, ибо после магазина 'Жак' свалилась на него громадная жизнь, как гора камней, и все засыпало и задавило, что едва шевелилось в памяти" (II: 323). For Klimuk and Sergei's mother history is a weapon to be wielded against one's ideological enemies. And all of these views are filtered through the

consciousness of Ol'ga Vasil'evna, for whom the past seems quite a simple matter:

История представлялась Ольге Васильевне бесконечно громадной очередью, в которой стояли в затылок друг к другу эпохи, государства, великие люди, короли, полководцы, революционеры, и задачей историка было нечто похожее на задачу милиционера, который в дни премьер приходит в кассу кинотеатра "Прогресс" и наблюдает за порядком, - следить за тем, чтобы эпохи и государства не путались и не менялись местами, чтобы великие люди не забежали вперед, не ссорились и не норовили получить билет в бессмертие без очереди. . . (II: 297)

Her interpretation of history becomes more nuanced, however, and changes as she recollects more and more. Her interpretation of Sergei's life never reaches the level of the reader's, however, if the reader is familiar with Burdzhakov and Nekrich. Her narrative voice with its penchant for underregarding reiterates and repeats the concept identified above in plot analysis: ellipses, implicit information, and what is not known is crucial and mirrors the writing of Soviet history.

Even within this *povest'* that is technically narrated through a single character's consciousness, Trifonov manages to ensure that multiple voices are heard and that no voice is authoritative. Ol'ga Vasil'evna's narrated monologue proves a very flexible source of narration, as Leiderman observes. He shows how her monologue can actually contain three or more voices: her own voice from the past (the remembered time); her own voice from the present (time of recollection); other characters' voices through quoted or narrated dialogue: "Посредством такой организации речи, где само сознание Ольги Васильевны распаивается на множество граней и вступает в диалоги с

другими сознаниями, автор раскрывает процесс мучительной духовной ревизии героиней самой себя" (24).

METAPHOR

As Eremina and Piskunov accurately observe, metaphors play an important role in Trifonov's representation of time and the times. All of his works contain metaphors which represent the position of the individual in relation to time and to history.

Trifonov repeatedly uses the image of a flood or flowing stream to represent time. This metaphor appears in the prologue to *Dom na naberezhnoi*:

Ну и бог с ними, с недогадливыми! Им некогда, они летят, плывут, несутся в потоке, загребая руками, все дальше и дальше, все скорей и скорей, день за днем, год за годом, меняются берега, отступают горы, редуют и облетают леса, темнеет небо, надвигается холод, надо спешить, спешить – и нет сил оглянуться назад, на то, что остановилось и замерло, как облако на краю небосклона. (II: 363)

The rushing stream in this passage represents time's inevitable passing. Individuals actively join up with this river of time and are taken far away from the past, which is frozen and immobile. The image of time as a rushing river is repeated by the first-person narrator: "И вообще мы торопились напрасно. Испытания обрушились очень очень скоро, их не надо было придумывать. Они повалили на нас густым, тяжелым дождем, одних прибили к земле, других вымочили и выморили до костей, а некоторые задохнулись в этом потоке" (II: 438). Here again the times are likened to a force of nature. Individuals caught up in this flood have no chance of escape. The image of the *potok* appears yet again much later in Glebov's narration. In a narrated

monologue in which he is clearly trying to justify his actions, Glebov wonders if Ganchuk and those who accused him, such as Dorodnov, are actually the same, just temporarily switched:

Но это не так. Все же они делают разные движения, как пловцы в реке: один гребет под себя, другой разводит руки в стороны. Ах, боже мой, да ведь разницы действительно нет! Плынут-то в одной реке, в одном направлении. . . . Спасать его – все равно что грести против течение в потоке, в котором несутся все. Выбьешься из сил, и выбросит волною на камне. Неужели один *страх* – оказаться вдруг на камнях, в крови, с переломенной ключицей? Тогда не догадывался о страхе. Ведь страх – неуловимейшая и самая тайная для человеческого самосознания пружина. (II: 475-476)

In all of these instances the stream appears as an image representing not only the movement of time, but also that concept of “the times” at the heart of Glebov’s self-justification and against which this *povest’* stands.

I do not believe that the first-person narrator’s *potok* is equivalent to Glebov’s. The narrator’s speech and use of figurative language is striking in its genuine feeling, sadness for the fate of his friends *and* himself. This is actually one of the moments when the inexplicable sense of the narrator’s goodness is overwhelming: his ability to put into such words the experience of a generation with both pity and respect. None of this is present in Glebov’s narrated monologue. In each instance the role of the metaphor is different from its role in the Stalinist historiographical canon. In that work, the flood represents the inevitable triumph of the working class. Trifonov manipulates the Soviet image so that his individuals – both the first-person narrator and Glebov – are shown to be unwillingly caught up in that movement, in that history. Only in the prologue do

individuals actively swim with the flow, and as a result they are taken far away from their pasts.

The *potok* reappears in *Starik* side by side with an image of a train. Pavel Evgrafovich is trying to be honest, saying he did not choose his path – it was inevitable:

Ничтожная малость, подобно легкому повороту стрелки, бросает локомотив с одного пути на другой, и вместо Ростова вы попадаете в Варшаву. Я был мальчишка, опьяненный могучим временем. Нет, не хочу врать, как другие старики, путь подсказан потоком – радостно быть в потоке – и случаем, и чутьем, но вовсе не суровой математической волей. Пусть не врут! С каждым могло быть иначе. (III: 445)

The previous images of the flood and the circumstances of Pavel Evgrafovich's narration call this attempt at honesty into question. This sounds like the same kind of excuse Glebov makes. At the same time, Pavel Evgrafovich repeats this image in a more complex metaphor illustrating Migulin's fate: "Мигулин погиб оттого, что в роковую пору сшиблись в небесах и дали разряд колоссальной мощи два потока тепла и прохлады, два облака величиной с континент – *веры и неверия*, -- и умчало его, унесло ураганным ветром, в котором перемешались холод и тепло, вера и неверие, от смещения всегда бывает гроза и ливень проливается на землю" (III: 546). Applying the metaphor to another has a more compassionate effect, as the flood metaphor used by the first-person narrator in *Dom na naberezhnoi*. *Starik* also contains a reference to lava, in this case a more violent version of the *potok*:

Свиреп год, свиреп час над Россией. . . Вулканической лавой течет, затопляя, погребая огнем, свирепое время. . .

Когда течешь в лаве, не замечаешь жара. И как *увидеть время*, если ты в нем? Прошли годы, прошла жизнь, начинаешь

разбираться: как да что, почему было то и это . . . Редко кто видел и понимал все это издали, умом и глазами другого времени.. Бог ты мой, и как мало людей ужаснулись и крикнули! Потому что лава слепит глаза. Нечем дышать в багряной мгле. (III: 473)

These images are ambivalent: the power of the metaphor induces belief and trust in the sentiment, but all the same the sentiment is a self-justification for participation in Terror.

Lava also appears in *Dom na naberezhnoi*. The image of volcanic activity arises to describe a fierce fight at a dacha party, the pretext for which is a disagreement over an unpopular lecturer, Astrug:

Подоплека была, разумеется, другая. Совершенно, совершенно другая! И не в бедном Аструге было дело. Он, кстати, был из окружения Ганчука. Но и это в тот день не имело значение. Накопилось, как видно, какое-то вулканическое раздражение, томилось подспудно, скрытно от беглого глаза и вдруг прорвалась. . . . Все это опустилось на голодуху, на усталость на нервное ожесточение перед сессией и на то вулканическое, что клочкотало глубоко внутри. . . (II: 419)

Amid all the excuses of everyday life and youth, the image of “something volcanic” emerges. Is this yet another elliptical reference to Stalinism? Or just another of Glebov’s excuses? Or possibly the narrator’s explanation, from a greater vantage point, for all that is going on? The impersonal grammatical constructions, as well as the conversational idiom, make it difficult not to assign this metaphor to Glebov’s consciousness and to equate it to his typical self-justifying rhetoric; however, the power of the image makes it hard to disregard in this way. Trifonov uses both the river’s rushing flow and the flow of lava to illustrate the passage of time. In both his imagery and the imagery of Stalinist historiography, the natural world stands for powers beyond man’s control. In

conventional Soviet usage, these powers are harnessed to bring about the triumph of the proletariat and the victory of communism. In Trifonov's works, they are equally powerful and unstoppable, but it is individual lives rather than collective destiny that are affected, and the effect is far from exultant.

Heat is another important recurring image, as Dalton-Brown demonstrates: "Trifonov uses heat in this tale [*Predvaritel'nye itogi*] . . . as he does later in *Starik*, as a metaphor for time, the 'lava flow' which pursues man, catches him up, suffocates him, and ejects him finally on the shores of memory. That is, if it lets him go at all, as *Dom na naberezhnoi* with its image of man swimming frantically in the river of time, renders doubtful" (711). Bjorling footnotes an observation about this image: "It is interesting to note that both *Dom na naberezhnoi* and *Starik* have the first story level set in the heatwave of 1972, when the woods around Moscow were ravaged by forest fires. Natural catastrophe signals the fact that something is wrong in the lives of the characters" (Morality ff 4, 167) Other recurring images from nature include storms (*Predvaritel'nye itogi*, *Vremia i mesto*), clouds, wind and the garden. Ivanova explains the use of natural images to represent time: "Время объективно сильнее людей, мощнее, природнее. Все поэтические сравнения, все тропы, связанные с образом времени, передаются Трифоновым через природу" (261). The destructiveness of Trifonov's natural imagery is striking. Soviet historian used these conventional images taken from nature to represent productive forces: the floods and tides signalled the end of the old, true, but more importantly, they issued in the Revolution and the new era. In Trifonov's works,

floods, lava, and storms destroy free will. Heat waves make human agency impossible and represent stagnation, precisely a *lack* of progress.

Another way in which Trifonov polemicizes with Soviet historiography is through a re-evaluation of the struggle plot. The word *bor'ba* is fraught with multiple meanings and used nearly metaphorically in Trifonov's fiction. Ganchuk – an ambiguous character to say the least – becomes a pitiable old man as a result of the struggles at his institute; likewise, Sergei dies amidst a battle for his professional reputation in *Drugaia zhizn'*. Antipov struggles against his standing as a son of an Enemy of the People, while Kiianov and Teterin engage in a brutal struggle of compromiser versus dissident in *Vremia i mesto*. In all of these cases, political struggles are depicted not as political, but as personal dramas with human costs.

Enemies also abound in Trifonov's novels. Each protagonist is betrayed and the betrayer's characterization bears some resemblance to the characterization of Trotsky in the *Short Course*. For example, Glebov's dream in *Dom na naberezhnoi* consists entirely of symbolic elements, "Глебову привиделся сон: в круглой жестяной коробке из-под монпансье лежит кресты, ордена, медали, значки и он их перебирает, стараясь не греметь, чтобы не разбудить кого-то. Этот сон с крестами и медалями в жестяной коробке потом повторялся в его жизни" (II: 489) Leiderman asserts that the dream is a reference to Judas, "Это тот же образ тридцати сребреников, слегка подновленных временем" (28). Glebov is thus likened to Trotsky and his

characterization as a betrayer is solidified through this reference to the Soviet historiographical characterization of enemies.

Many of Trifonov's symbolic images and metaphors are more original and have fewer conventional associations, though one important image – the *bogatyr'* at the crossroads – played an important role in Socialist Realist literature (Clark 73-75). This image characterizes Glebov's indecision:

Это было, как на сказочном распутье: прямо пойдешь – голову сложишь, налево пойдешь – коня потеряешь, направо – тоже какая-то гибель. Впрочем, в некоторых сказках: направо пойдешь – клад найдешь. Глебов относился к особой породе богатырей: готов был топтаться на распутье до последней возможности, до той конечной секундочки, когда падают замертво от изнеможения. Богатырь-выжидатель, богатырь-тянульщик резины. Из тех, кто сам ни на что не решается, а предоставляет решать коню. . . . Теперь, когда прошло столько лет и видны все дороги и тропки как на ладони, ветвившиеся с того затуманенного далью, забытого перекрестья, проступает какой-то странный и полувнятный рисунок, о котором в тогдашнюю пору было не догадаться. (II: 451-452)

In and of itself the metaphor is quite effective. Through the comparison of Glebov to a familiar figure from Russian folk culture, his predicament is shown in a more universal light, and at the same time, by identifying him as a unique kind of *bogatyr'* through the use of further metaphors - the stretched rubber band - his character becomes more concrete, his shortcomings more pronounced. The figure that becomes discernable with time is compared to a lost city, buried beneath the sand and visible only from the air:

Многое заваяно песком, запорошено намертво. Но то, что казалось тогда очевидностью и простотой, теперь открывается вдруг новому взору, виден скелет поступков, его костяной рисунок – это рисунок *страха*. Чего было бояться в ту пору глупоглазой юности? Невозможно понять, нельзя объяснить. Через тридцать лет ни до чего не дорыться. Но проступает скелет. . . [ellipses Trifonov's] (II: 452)

The skeleton image represents not only fear, but also the role of fear in understanding history. Only with the passage of time can the true pattern be discerned. *Dom na naberezhnoi* is ultimately concerned with recovering these patterns once the skeleton has emerged. The entire plot may be reduced to this image: Levka at the furniture store is the skeleton and Glebov's reaction is to step back and through remembering, discern the pattern of fear in his past. These two recurring images structure the remainder of the narration of Glebov's betrayal of the Ganchuks.

The text ensures that two interpretive possibilities are always open. This may be the narrator commenting ironically on Glebov's character, or this could be Glebov, consciously or unconsciously with the help of the narrator, commenting ironically on himself.¹⁶

Но надо всем этим мучившим душу нагромождением тайно светился – тогда невидимый, теперь же обрел рисунок – невзрачный скелетик, обозначавший *страх*. Вот ведь что было истинное. Ну, это потом, потом! Проходят десятилетие, и, когда уже все давно смыто, погребено, ничего не понять, требуется эксгумация, никто этим адским раскопом заниматься не будет, внезапно из темноты, серой, как грифель, выступает скелет. (II: 455)

The image of the skeleton takes on additional meaning here. It is not only a representation of the dangers of Stalinism, but of the danger of not remembering. This unfolding of the metaphor is more clearly within Glebov's character – no one wants to undertake the exhumation, but the memories will not stay buried. Glebov seems to be alternating between the necessity associated with the

¹⁶Leiderman believes the bogatyr image to stem from the narrator's speech, based on the tone, "Авторский голос достигает памфлетной язвительности: "Богатырь-выжидатель, богатырь – тянульщик резины" (28).

skeleton image, and the paralysis associated with the crossroads. Glebov's dying grandmother asks him to talk to her, and he can think of nothing else to say, other than to recount his troubles, ". . . а в голове будто колокол: там коня потеряешь, здесь жену, а тут и жизнь саму" (II: 473). Again, in all of these situations, the metaphor appears to belong to Glebov's narrated monologue. If so, then is it conscious or unconscious language? Is this a case of the narrator's idiom merging with Glebov's or vice versa or both?

One of the most important regularly appearing images, already encountered in this analysis, is the thread stretching through time. First Ol'ga Vasil'evna uses the image of threads to show how Sergei is still attached to her life though not physically present:

А жизнь состоит из прикосновений, потому что – тысячи нитей и каждая выдирается из живого, из раны. Вначале думала: когда все нити, самые крохотные и тончайшие, перервутся, тогда наступит покой. Но теперь казалось, что этого никогда не будет, потому что нитей – бесчисленно. Каждый предмет, каждый знакомый человек, каждая мысль и даже каждое слово, все, все, что есть в мире, нитью связано с ним. (II: 273)

Leiderman explains, "Образ нити, который был знаковым у Сергея, переключивается уже в сознание Ольги Васильевны" (26). Next, Gena Klimuk uses the thread to threaten Sergei:

-- Историческая целесообразность, о которой ты толкуешь, -- говорил Сережа, -- это нечто расплывчатое и коварное, наподобие болота. . .
-- Это единственно прочная нить, за которую стоит держаться!
-- Интересно, кто будет определять, что целесообразно и что нет? Ученый совет большинством голосов? (II: 287)

Only then is the image given according to Sergei, though filtered through Ol'ga Vasil'evna filtered through third-person narration, "Он искал нити, соединявшие

прошлое с еще более далеким прошлым и с будущим.” (II: 300) And later, “У него это началось – то, что он называл “разрыванием могил”, а на самом деле было прикосновением к нити, -- с его собственной жизни, с той нити, частицей которой был он сам. Он начал с отца” (II: 301). And near the end of his life, “Знаешь, почему все у меня с таким скрипом? . . . Потому что нити, которые тянутся из прошлого... ты понимаешь? -- они чреваты... Они весьма чреваты... Ты понимаешь?” (II: 313). Woll writes, “It is Sergei himself who embodies the thread,” (44) not the poet’s grandson or Koshelkov or any of the other sources he seeks out. “The ‘thread’ is not a chemical chain of molecules. Such continuity as exists in life comes from interest, informed by love. It is given fictional formulation in the genre of ‘remembrance-contemplations,’ to which all of Trifonov’s later work belongs” (Woll, 46). Ulitskaia will make this idea of a thread linking generations a generic principle in her novel/chronicles.

A final significant motif is traveling, especially train travel: Rebrov's final journey, Sergei's constant need to get away, Pavel Evgrafovich's trip to Asia. Dalton-Brown explains, “The motif of the journey or *ubeg* runs through the majority of the texts; the character frequently tries to escape the claustrophobic world of contemporary Moscow *byt*. However, his journey, whether a physical attempt at flight or a mental migration into memory, always ends with a return to the contemporary time scale of the narration or to Moscow. . . .” (713). The motif of the *ubeg* is thus connected to the circular structure of the prologues and epilogues. Rather than its traditional association with progress, train travel in Trifonov becomes circular.

CONCLUSION

Bakhtov refuses to call Trifonov a compromiser because he chose not to write for the drawer or emigrate. Instead, he writes, "Писатель верил в нас, в нашу способность думать и понимать, откликаться на сигналы, обращенное к запрытанному в личных «сценариях» Он сумел найти то эстетическое пространство, где его мысль оставалась свободной. Более того – тормошила, будила внутреннюю свободу читателей" (173). I argue that Trifonov succeeds in awakening a new kind of historical understanding in his readers by repudiating the style and narrative content of Soviet historiography. In doing so he paved the way for writers like Makanin and Uitskaia, who write in a more free era yet continue using his effective methods.

Trifonov's works feature a set of literary devices that counter the strategems of Soviet historiography. His first counterdevice is a fragmented plot motivated by character associations. Stories of the past do not follow a linear or chronological pattern. Events are narrated according to the meaning they have for the individuals whose stories comprise his novels and *povesti*. Trifonov thus undermines the teleological Soviet narrative of the past. His second counterdevice consists of the multiplication of narrative voices within single works of fiction. Trifonov asserts the value of many different means of narrating stories of the past. These fragments presented through multiple narrative voices create ellipses in his narratives, which point toward and repudiate the Soviet use of ellipsis to gloss over aspects of the past that do not fit into the established

narrative of progress and heroic struggle. Finally, Trifonov employs metaphors to represent the relationship between time and the individual. For example, he overturns the traditional metaphor of the flood by representing the flood of time as distinctly destructive, rather than progressive. He also fashions his own metaphors to illustrate his philosophy of history. Trifonov views history as a series of threads stretching throughout time connecting individuals to their own pasts and to bygone eras. While Makanin does not use this particular image, his philosophy of history is similar, as the next chapter will explore.

CHAPTER THREE: Makanin's Creation of Community

INTRODUCTION

Makanin polemicizes with and repudiates Soviet historiography no less than Trifonov does. He knew Trifonov personally and viewed him as a role model, as Trifonov's widow attests, "[Makanin] мне говорил, что тогда многому научился у Юры. Кажется, такту и. . . независимому поведению, умению не подлаживаться к чужому мнению" (59). Indeed, both writers stand out from their peers and defy critical categorization, though critics tend to refer to Trifonov in their analyses of Makanin, and many are drawn to write about both authors (Dalton-Brown, Peterson, Kustanovich, Piskunov, Bocharov, Ivanova, Spektor). Most comparisons focus on their depiction of city life and morality in the 1970s along with each author's supposed avoidance of overt judgment.

Vladimir Semenovich Makanin was born in 1937 in the Southern Urals in the town of Orsk. He excelled at math and chess as a young boy and eventually earned his degree from Moscow State University in mathematics: in fact, his first published book was on mathematics and his first work of fiction features a mathematician as protagonist (Lindsey and Spektor 3). Younger than Trifonov by more than a decade, Makanin was a child during the Stalin era. He grew up away from Moscow and his family did not suffer directly during the Terror. His

experience of the Terror was more removed than Trifonov's, which may explain the more abstract nature of his works on this theme.

Critics try to place Makanin in the ill-defined group called the "Moscow school" or "pokolenie sorokaletnikh" or even see in his work a continuation of Trifonov's so-called "Urban prose" (Peterson 349). Other writers similarly classified include Andrei Bitov, Anatolii Kim, Ruslan Kireev, and Aleksandr Prokhanov. These groupings are not effectual, evidenced by Peter Roll'berg's 1990 article aptly titled, "Proza 'sorokaletnikh' – izobretenie kritiki ili iavlenie literaturnogo protsessa?" Makanin's early works were not highly regarded, yet he continued to publish sporadically throughout the sixties and seventies (Dalton-Brown 1994 219). He largely published books rather than presenting his work in serial form in the more prestigious and more widely read "thick journals" of those decades. Makanin's career clearly took a positive turn in the late 1970s. Critics each identify a different transitional work: Elena Krasnoshchekova names *Portret i vokrug* (195), Serafimova cites "Grazhdanin ubegaiushchii" (35), Lindsay names "Golosa" (177), Vladimir Piskunov and Svetlana Piskunova simply identify the year 1979 as his turning point (42). There seems to be a consensus that between 1978 and 1980 his style significantly changed. I argue that this is when his serious involvement with dismantling Soviet historiography began.

I argue that both Makanin and Trifonov have tightly unified bodies of work. Both authors write and rewrite certain core images, characters, and plot lines. Both authors rework old images in new times. Kachur interprets Makanin's recurring images as evidence of his polemic with traditional forms of literary

emplotment: “This repetition, in a different context with minor or no variations, is a common device Makanin uses to re-contextualize and dialogize not only moments within one text, but, as in this case, large-scale utterances from one text to another. In and of itself this process of repetition debunks . . . linearity. . .” (37-38). I argue that through repeated images and recurring motifs Makanin also polemicizes with the linearity of Marxist-inspired Soviet historiography. Like Trifonov, Makanin uses repetition as part of the struggle to rescue the past from the falsification. Both authors struggle throughout their careers to find new, honest ways to represent the Soviet past. For both Trifonov and Makanin, this means interrogating the style and content of Soviet historiography and refiguring it in fresh ways.

To support my contention that Makanin’s *oeuvre* is unified and contains persistent reworkings of Soviet versions of the past, I will focus my analysis on selected works that span his career thus far. Four *povesti* – *Golosa* (1980), *Utrata* (1988), and *Otstavshii* (1988) and *Laz* (1991) – best represent his unconventional approach to emplotment. Two novels, *Stol, pokryti suknom i s grafinom v seredine* (1993) and *Andergraund: Geroi nashego vremeni* (1998), contain examples of overarching metaphoric construction as well as narrative experimentation. Finally, shorter works from his early career and from recent years provide further evidence for Makanin’s steady concern for the ways in which fiction can strive for truthful communication with readers about the Soviet past.

PLOT AND NARRATIVE COMMUNITIES

Makanin completely eschews the law-governed, linear sequence of cause and effect characteristic of Soviet historiography. Makanin's works are fragmented like Trifonov's, and his methods of plot organization bear a significant resemblance to works such as *Dom na naberezhnoi* and *Vremia i mesto*. But where Trifonov included poetic prologues and epilogues to signal a lack of progress and backward-looking orientation to his narratives, Makanin leaves his narratives open-ended. His protagonists end the narratives confronting the same problems they faced in the beginning. The story "Kliucharev i Alimushkin" (1979) ends with the morally tormented protagonist going out for a smoke, endlessly contemplating his responsibility for others' misfortunes. *Laz* finds its protagonist – again Kliucharev – still living between two worlds on the brink of apocalypse. *Andegraund: ili geroi nashego vremeni* leaves Petrovich – after committing two murders and spending time in the dreaded psych ward – back where he began, consciously choosing homelessness as a rejection of society and internal monologue as a rejection of literature. Refusing to resolve the thematic difficulties his plots develop reinforces the fact that Makanin writes against the dominant historiographical narrative structure. He refuses both closure and progress, as Piskunov and Piskunova explain: ". . . развязка – совершенно ненужный и несущественный момент повествовательной структуры. Иногда представляется, что «разрушение» литературы Маканин как раз и начал с уничтожения развязки как некоего итога фабульного движения" (Piskunov and Piskunova 54).

This is not to say that Makanin's works are plotless. Rather than the scattered fragments of Trifonov's mosaics, Makanin often uses multiple plots that tell multiple stories to create parallels between events that counter the perpetually horizontally moving Soviet progress plot. Makanin's early story "Rasskaz o rasskaze" (1974) may be his first example of manifold plotlines, but the potential of this device is not fully actualized until the 1980s. *Golosa*, *Utrata*, and *Otstavshii* each encompass two or more stories within complexly related plots. *Golosa* is a genre-defying work including short narratives, essay-like digressions, anecdotes, and re-tellings of folk tales. *Utrata* combines the legend of Pekalov, a drunkard who earns sainthood by digging a tunnel under the Ural River, with a series of first-person narratives and essays that may or may not belong to the same narrator.¹ All of its components deal with the theme of pursuit of dreams and hopeless quests. *Otstavshii* is more unified: it contains a writer's autobiographical reminiscences along with the narrative of his current situation with his ailing, elderly father, as well as a work of fiction he is writing on the supposedly legendary figure of Lesha, a boy who finds gold in the Ural mountains whenever he is lost – left behind.

These works encompassing multiple stories are organized in two primary ways, both recalling Trifonov: association and juxtaposition. Both methods produce the parallels through time that contribute to the eradication of the linear, progress-oriented narrative of Soviet historiography. Association dominates

¹Peterson identifies Pekalov as "a familiar hero of fantastic literature of the 1970s and 1980s" (355).

Makanin's first-person narratives; juxtaposition dominates the third-person or mixed narratives.

"Rasskaz o rasskaze," *Otstavshii*, *Andegraund*, and *Stol, pokryti suknom i s grafinom v seredine* are each first-person narratives and feature associatively ordered plot events. Association of events works in Makanin's fiction just as this technique functions in Trifonov's works. The narrator's memory or imagination controls the presentation of events, and events may be related by any subjective criteria that occurs to that character/narrator. The narrator of "Rasskaz o rasskaze" (1976) has lost a story he wrote some years ago. At once this is a story about losing a story and the telling of the story itself. The narrator, Viktor, begins a relationship with his young married neighbor, Alia, through the thin walls of their Soviet-era building, a large building with fourteen entryways, a structure typical of life in the Brezhnev-era Soviet Union. The relationship between Viktor and Alia is not physical, and the development of sincere emotions between the two is the main plot of the story. At the same time, the story includes a secondary plot – about a crying child.

Taken together, these two plots make the story about something far greater: alienation and connection in Soviet life. The plots are related associatively. As the narrator remembers his relationship with Alia, which began through the walls, he also remembers the mysteriously crying child whom he heard through the same walls: "На том, что где-то в дальней квартире ночью плачет ребенок, мог быть затеян отдельный рассказ" (I:253). Viktor hears this crying child eight entryways away, and he asks after this child and is repeatedly

told that no children live in the apartment from which the crying is heard. However, ". . . только в последнюю полоску, которую съедает дверь, в просвет, ты успеваешь заметить на полу детскую игрушку. Что-то плюшевое, с бантом" (I:254). He is unable to find the child, to stop the crying – no communication is made, in much the same way as he and Alia talk through the walls but never touch. In addition, this story contains narrative reflection on the nature of events. The narrator finds himself equating Alia with a girl he loved as a boy in the Urals, "У каждого был в молодости такой рассказ про Алю" (I:258). A parallel connection between the present and past love stories is made. Makanin's story is about alienation resulting from failure to communicate in Soviet life, and by locating that alienation in parallel plots located in both the present and the past, Makanin's story comments on this lack of communication throughout Soviet history.

Isolation and connection in Soviet society is one of Makanin's major themes, and he explores it historically. Makanin posits new kinds of connections between individuals as he posits new kinds of connections between story events. At the beginning of the tale the narrator proclaims, "В те давнее время я искренне считал, что мой рассказ может помочь строить дома" (I:249). Yet this is really a story about the role of literature. It will not – in a parody of the Soviet "engineering of souls" – teach engineers to construct better walls; it will, however, engineer new connections between events and individuals, between writer and reader, that point toward a way out of the isolation Makanin repeatedly represents. Dowsett claims:

In “Rasskaz o rasskaze” we find posited, perhaps for the first time in Makanin’s oeuvre, the distinction between two modes of writing, one of which is “unauthentic” and the other “authentic” in their respective treatments of human interrelatedness. The “unauthentic” mode is characterised by stereotypical constructions of plot and character and the constant movement of the literary text towards closure. The “authentic” mode of writing is, conversely, an almost autonomous activity which, eschewing linear space and time, is open and ultimately oriented towards incorporating author, character and reader into a communicative whole. (31-32)

This early story explores methods which will be fruitful for analysis of the later Makanin; it illustrates the way that he uses associative plots to tell complex stories with many levels of meaning throughout time.

Otstavshii (1988) epitomizes the possibilities of associative narration. The ancient tale of Lesha intertwines with the first-person narrator’s (fictional) autobiographical reminiscences of his first love in the 1950s, his first attempt at becoming a published writer during the Thaw, along with the narrative present. The novel opens in the present with a midnight phone call from the narrator’s father, who complains of a recurring nightmare in which he runs from the house barely dressed to catch a truck, knowing the whole time that the truck is gone and he has been left behind. In response to his father, the narrator meditates:

Есть своеобразный соблазн: совмещать времена. Я, видно, искал в ту минуту утешающие слова. И не находил. И вот сказал по телефону моему постаревшему отцу, мучимому снами отставания: «А ты не помнишь старую уральскую историю о Леше-маленьком? о золотоискателе? не помнишь?»

Вероятно, вопрос потребовал от отца слишком больших усилий памяти, отец не восхитился и не воскликнул . . . какая тут связь меж отставшим подростком (да, да, была какая-то история!) и его снами, в которых он так мучительно отстаёт от грузовой машины? Но никакой связи не было. Время лишь на миг сместилось, но ведь не совпало. (III:64)

The remainder of the novel, however, explores the connections among the stories. The common thread is the feeling of being left behind. The writer's first love Lera leaves him behind when she goes to the place where her father died in exile and there falls in love with a convict. The writer is left behind again when he brings his manuscript to the offices of *Novyi mir* only to find that the editor he seeks has been dismissed.² Lesha is left behind again and again because of his unusual talent to find gold whenever he sleeps alone. Finally, the novel ends with the same image that opens it: the father left behind by the truck. In response to missing the chance to have his story published, the narrator pronounces, "Я еще не знал, что отставание многообразно, но уже предощущал, что оно всегда личное и что оно надолго. . ." (III:127). Indeed, being left behind is a solitary position, but in this collection of stories those left behind are not alone. The narrator perceives their union throughout time and brings them together through his narrative. Once more Makanin proposes a historical narrative with parallel rather than simple linear connections.

Stol, pokrytyi suknom i s grafinom poseredine, for which Makanin won the Booker Prize in 1993, also represents parallel relationships throughout time through an associatively ordered plot. Kliucharev is narrating his anxiety the night before a routine interrogation by an unspecified Party committee. The novel begins *in medias res* with Kliucharev sitting at the interrogation table, describing the members of the committee across from him. Actually, he is merely anticipating the current interrogation at this juncture, drawing on previous

²Because of the timing of the story and the prestige of the journal in the narrative, the reader does not doubt that the editor in question is Tvardovskii. Like Trifonov, Makanin leaves much historical fact to the reader's devices.

experience. He anxiously awaits the next day, pacing through his apartment, taxing his wife and daughter's patience. His narration tends towards the iterative: this is how it always happens. The plot is again circular: the story never ends because it endlessly recurs. Makanin makes his story universal by having Kliucharev address a compatriot whom he assumes has had the same experiences and understands what he is going through. The associative narrative proceeds based on this assumption of shared experience; Kliucharev does not feel the need to explain himself. The novel covers the events of one night and one morning, but he associatively moves back in time and makes generalizations about what *always* happens. Through this method, time as a progression of events related by cause and effect is erased.

Through a series of associations in Kliucharev's mind, Makanin develops the idea that the interrogation at the table is a transformation of (but substantively the same as) all methods of torture throughout history:

Конечно, стол связан с подвалом. . . . Связь стола и подвала субстанциональна, вечна, и уходит в самую глубину времени. Скажем, во времена Византии. (И Рима, конечно, тоже, тут у меня нет иллюзий.) Как бы интеллигентно или артистично (вразброс) ни были поставлены на нем бутылки с нарзаном, стол всегда держался подвалом, подпирался им, и это одно из свойств и одновременно таинств стола. И следует счесть лишь случайностью, если из связь вдруг обнажается напрямую, как при Малюте или, слажем, в подвалах 37-го года, -- в слишком, я бы сказал, хвастливой и откровенной (очевидной) форме. (IV:172)

Kliucharev associates the ancient practice of torturing prisoners in dungeons with the table of his interrogation. He also reconstucts the feelings of those interrogated "во времена белых халатов," when, instead of enemies or

criminals, those under suspicion were treated as mentally ill.³ Finally, Kliucharev links his experience to labor camps:

Ночь. Не могу уснуть.

Ища, на кого переложить ответственность и ответ (вину), мой мозг среди ночи честно трудится и пашет, располагая, расставляя столы по времени – так меня учили и школили, -- я пробиваю время назад, то есть вглубь, где вырисовывается стол-судилище лагерных времен, с его серенькой официальнойностью, а затем (еще глубже) знаменитые тройки и ревтрибуналы, когда за столом всего трое или четверо сидящих. (IV:206)

Through a series of associations in Kliucharev's mind an alternate view of Soviet – even world – history emerges. Instead of the "piatichlenka" of communist theory explaining linear, progressive development through economic base and superstructure, Kliucharev imagines a sequence of eras identified by the method of torture and interrogation. Time for Kliucharev is not chronological: it is constructed through the recurring images of the multivalent table throughout time. In this work Makanin simultaneously personalizes and universalizes history through associative narrative.

Like Trifonov's protagonists, Kliucharev muses through a night of insomnia; his meditations are linked to dreams. These associatively ordered plots result in a personalization of history akin to Trifonov's. This personalization creates sympathy for the individual in Trifonov's works and in many of Makanin's. In Trifonov's works, especially *Drugaiia zhizn'* and *Starik*, we saw how guilt motivated associations. Makanin's works move in the same way. Kliucharev's

³Brintlinger analyzes the mental hospital as chronotope in *Andegraund*: "In making such a deliberate use of the Russian past, from its literary heroes to the insidious institution of the mental asylum, both authors [Makanin and Pelevin] force their post-Soviet readers to confront the fact that the flow of history is as much about continuities as it is about change" (44).

feeling of guilt motivates his reflections, though, as will be seen below, he does not know what he is guilty of.

Golosa, *Utrata*, and “Udavshiisia rasskaz o liubvi” are all third-person or mixed narratives that use juxtapositions to devalue the progress plot. Again, as in my analysis of Trifonov, I define juxtapositions as the placing of plot events close together without apparent connection through cause-and-effect or character motivation. *Golosa* is structured entirely of juxtaposed mini-narratives and essays.

The common theme of the fragments composing *Golosa* emerges slowly and only through juxtaposition. At first, the narratives seem wholly unconnected. The first part consists of the story of a sick young boy – Kol’ka – who is aged beyond his years and dies a miserable, painful death. The second – very short – part compares the concept of youth to the position of a bird whose feathers are torn out one by one by its family members. The third moves the action to Moscow, where employees of a certain office mock a young man who is down on his luck until ultimately he is transferred. The common theme that emerges is the suffering of the individual and the inevitable guilt of the collective. The individuals in question progress from fully innocent (young Kol’ka) to guilty. What is constant is the singling out by a community of a single individual.

The theme undergoes a transformation after part six, which introduces the concept of literary voices and literary types. An interpolated essay explores the thesis that voices are genuine while types are not. Makanin’s narrator claims that

literature consists of stereotypes and “. . . что живого письмом на бумаге не передать, как не передать его речью” (1:32). Social problems in the narrative sections are juxtaposed with literary theory in the essayistic sections. (Life is juxtaposed with literature.) The theme of the collective and the individual is also reflected in the form of the novel: a group of individual voices even without explicit connection becomes a community, a community of individuals who suffer at the hands of the collective. In the next section I will speculate on the role of narrative voice in the creation of this community and in defiance of the collective. At this point, it suffices to note that juxtaposition reveals this metaliterary theme.

Makanin uses multiple narrative voices to narrate his multiple plots; however, his narratives do not highlight unreliability as much as Trifonov's do. Makanin, rather, emulates Trifonov's technique of combining multiple points of view and voices in single works without accounting explicitly for their presence. Although the narrator of *Andegraund* – Petrovich – is highly unreliable, the reliability of most of Makanin's other narrators are not called into question. Makanin accomplishes “narrative confusion” through his experimentation with genre and his rejection of authoritative narrative.

Makanin uses a combination of voices and genres to make unconventional connections throughout time, as seen in the above analyses of *Golosa*, *Otstavshii*, and *Utrata*. One might call the relationship among these narratives one of a community of shared values. An explanation of this phenomenon appears in the following passage from *Golosa* that attempts to explain the process of composing a successful literary work:

Елси расширяющиеся минуты и впрямь компенсация, то почему бы не счесть такие вот выхлопы и выбросы души голосами людей, давно, быть может, умерших, которые, петляя по родовым цепочкам – прапрадед – прабабка – дед – мать – сын, - дошли наконец до тебя и иногда звучат, нет-нет и распурая тебя генетической недоговоренностью. Можно представить и вообразить пожарную кишку, длинную, наглухо закупоренную брезентовую трубу, которая в одном-единственном месте – в тебе – имеет случайную трещину, дыру небольшую и, стало быть, выход. И вот, передавая давление всей бесконечной водяной массы в трубе, через крохотное отверстие – через тебя, - уже бьет тонкой струей вода, уже фонтанирует, и иногда это довольно сильно, и можно подставить рот и напиться. Картинка не без красоты: целая вереница безъязыких или недоговоривших прадедов подсказывает тебе что-то, нашептывает, сокрушаясь и сетуя, что ты такой глухой и что ты так мало можешь расслышать. (I:34-35)

These ancestral voices that speak through the author recall Trifonov's *niti* and prefigure Ulitskaia's family chronicles. The very multiplicity of narrative voices – whether symbolically as in the above passage or literally as in the construction of *Golosa*, *Utrata*, and *Otstavshii*, lend literature credibility as a source of historical knowledge. Like Trifonov, Makanin includes multiple narrative voices and perspectives within autonomous works of fiction. Trifonov's narrative multiplicity, I argue, prevents the reader from excusing any one character's actions or failure to act by revealing collective complicity in the Soviet project. Makanin's myriad narrators, on the other hand, communicate with one another tacitly and with the reader to create a new complicity to overthrow conventional interpretations of historical events.

Written six years after *Golosa*, *Utrata* (1988) comprises at least three if not more narrative strands. The story of Pekalov the drunken tunnel-digger appears in fragmented fashion throughout the work. Interspersed with it are a number of

first-person narratives that may or may not belong to the same narrator as well as a number of short essays centered on historical anecdotes. The novel ends with a third-person narrative about a man returning to his abandoned native village (*zagrobnyi chelovek*). Like *Golosa* and *Otstavshii*, these fragments reflect varying approaches to the theme identified in the title. Piskunov and Piskunova explain this technique well:

Маканин выстраивает повествование, ориентируясь не на сюжет-фабулу, а на сюжет-ситуацию, который строится как развитие, варьирование одного исходного положения: по мере разворачивания сюжете оно оборачивается новыми гранями, обогащается новыми смыслами. (65)

More so than in the other works, parallels among seemingly separate narrative strands are crucial to understanding *Utrata*. For the first three of the eight sections, no connective narrative tissue exists and the reader is on her own to make the connections. After the initial relating of Pekalov's legend, his story is juxtaposed with the Chinese legend of a doctor who desired to perform a lobotomy on the emperor and was put to death for attempted assassination. The third section picks up Pekalov's tale again, and the fourth section describes the first-person narrator's time in a mental ward. Taken together, the interruptions of Pekalov's story highlight the themes of ambition and insanity. Varying the theme and turning it around to reveal new facets, as the Piskunovs illustrate, enriches the base story.

The penultimate section of this fragmented novella provides an example of juxtaposition becoming part of the story. The narrator – recovering from a serious accident and believing himself at times to be an airplane – hallucinates about

crossing the road to save a crying child from an abandoned building.⁴ Once in the building, he finds himself in a dripping tunnel and sees the figure of Pekalov:

Но может быть, он тоже видел? И, возможно, ему тоже было тяжело в своем подкопе и он так же хотел понять меня, как я его. Может быть, он провидел меня через толщу дней и лет, и вот он стоял, опершись на лопату, и смотрел, как в палате на больничной койке в бреду лежит разбившийся человек, лежит лицом вверх и без возможности повернуться. Возможно, в тот миг мы желали друг от друга одного и того же, он — надеясь на мое, я — на его прозрение и силу, оба бессильные, что и было определяющим в инновременном нашем соприкосновении. Он копал — я лежал в бреду. От неожиданности мы оба насторожились. Мы не успели обрадоваться. Каждый, замкнувшись, все еще оставался в своем, что и было, главным в этой краткой встрече. Встретились... Души молчали, не сознаваясь ни во взаимном страхе, ни в опасении заразы чужих чувств, протиснувшихся впрямую через толщу веков. (III:44)

The two primary storylines become one in a most unconventional way. The narrator does not simply claim to have hallucinated Pekalov; he believes that the essential correspondences in their situations brings them together across time. It is significant that the two characters are confused and silent. Just as certain literary works of Makanin's bring together stories with no explanation or commentary, these two protagonists encounter one another unprepared. The narrator's attempt to make sense of the situation mirrors the reader's process throughout the novella. Makanin presents the reader with clear parallels between different stories and different times, and he expects the reader to draw the connections between them. The encounter between Pekalov and the first-person narrator dramatizes encounters that take place throughout his stories. Makanin demands that his readers think unconventionally about different possibilities for narrating the past. Like Trifonov, he writes narratives of the past that reject

⁴Makanin himself endured a long recovery after an automobile accident in 1972 (Lindsay "Makanin" 175).

chronology or unity through narrative voice. Makanin ensures that the reader must participate in the generation of meaning in his texts. That does not mean that Makanin rejects meaning; he provides guides, as in the example of the Pekalov encounter. The reader must join in the community of characters, narrative voices, and parallel plotlines that Makanin incorporates into his works.

Otstavshii includes an important example of implied information, highly reminiscent of Trifonov's works, that epitomizes Makanin's creation of community through narrative. The departing truck that the narrator's father cannot catch up to is described parenthetically as "гремящая бортами полуторка тех лет" (III:60). The years are not specified, nor is it stated where the truck is going. The narrator asks his father if there is "хоть какое-то, пусть мизерное, достоинство, паз уж ты отстал?.. Возможно, что нет. Совсем ничего нет, только страх" (III: 60). The implication is made that being left behind may not be so bad. The truck recalls inevitably the trucks that carried crowds to the camps in the thirties and forties. Being left out might have been lucky for the father, but there is no dignity in it – only fear. Tatiana Tolstaya observes, "Главное, с чего начинается для многих 'загадка Маканина', -- это чувство тихого ужаса, постоянно присутствующее при чтении его вещей и неизвестно откуда берущееся" (82). I will argue that as truly present as this fear is in Makanin's prose, it is at least partially offset by the community created through the plurality of communicating narrative voices. Lipovetsky explains:

Он как бы намеренно оставляет «пробел», который должен быть заполнен читательским отношением или же найденной самим читателем итоговой мыслью. . . Но при этом автор обязательно тщательно подготавливает почву для нужного вывода, незаметно

подводит читателя к «запланированной» реакции, всегда точно предвидит меру читательского соучастия" ("Protiv techeniia" 158).

The phenomenon elucidated by Lipovetsky supports my analysis in three ways. First, he agrees that Makanin utilizes implicitness to great effect, compelling the reader to fill in the gap with his or her own knowledge of the past. That effect involves the reader and further supports my contention that Makanin's prose overcomes the isolation of individuals freed from collective authority through a multiplicity in narrative voices that includes the reader. Finally, Lipovetsky discerns a plan in Makanin's ellipses and fragments: Makanin is not a relativist or a truly post-modern writer who will allow readers to construct their own meanings. Makanin's readers are guided by the community of voices in his novels and *povesti* to participate in the apprehension of meaning he has created.

Like Trifonov, Makanin develops characters who are losers, failures, loners – the un-Soviet antiheroes (Serafimova). Kliucharev is a perennial example. Others include the first-person narrator in *Otstavshii*, the drunken tunnel digger Pekalov, and most notably, the narrator of *Andergraund* – Petrovich. Piskunov and Piskunova detail a long-standing lack of critical consensus about Makanin's characters. Some see in him a preeminent psychologizer, while others consider him to reject psychology (42). They resolve this debate by identifying his opposition between stereotypes and voices: "Место характера, психологического или социального типа у Маканина заступает голос. А «голос» - это то, что таится в каждом из нас и роднит всех нас между собой" (71). These voices are not necessarily confined to single

characters or single plots – Kliucharev, for example, cannot be confined to a single work. Makanin creates a community of voices within his stories and extends that community beyond his literary works to include the reader.

A glance back at the *Kratkii kurs* can shed new light on the debate about Makanin's characters' psychology. In that preeminent work of Soviet historiography, characters appear primarily collectively: the masses are the moving force of history, in line with Marxist theory. When individuals do appear, they are heroes – as in the case of Lenin and Stalin – or villains – typified by Trotsky. This tension between the insistence on masses as the movers of history and the glorification and vilification of the deeds of individuals is not resolved in the Soviet historiographical tradition.

Makanin acknowledges this tension in his works. Unlike Trifonov and Ulitskaia, for whom individuals form the nexus of relationships, Makanin includes consequential depictions of the masses – the collective. Many critics, including Serafimova, Lindsay, Stepanian, Tolstaya, and Dowsett, identify his major theme as the individual versus the collective. Makanin repudiates the Soviet conception of the masses by representing them as not progressive: they are reactionary and cruel.

The collective is portrayed as moving but not progressing in *Otstavshii*, and individuals are lucky to be left behind. *Otstavshii* includes some of the most sympathetic of Makanin's characters. Left behind, Lesha discovers his identity and encounters the one woman who treats him like a baby, like a son, the only moment a true human connection is made in his life. Left behind, the father likely

escapes the camps. Left behind, the author contemplates the links between all of these stories and produces a narrative in which they are all left behind together. Like Trifonov, Makanin values what is left behind. Trifonov's heroes go in search of a lost past. Makanin's heroes are saved by living in the past – by lagging behind the progressive crowd. Makanin opposes the cruelty of the forward-moving collective to the kindness of the stable, non-indoctrinated community.

DIRECT POLEMICS

In the above analysis, Makanin repudiates the progress plot, replacing it with fragmented narratives united through associative connections or meaningful juxtapositions. Makanin also overtly polemicizes with the idea of inevitable progress. Pekalov's story is the most evident example. Pekalov is digging a tunnel under the Ural River for no reason. His mission is hopeless and in fact useless. He is at first a laughingstock, then a criminal as his laborers become drunk and disorderly and a murder occurs on his watch. He eventually employs blind men to dig for him and does not tell them that they are digging under water, endangering their lives. In spite of this:

Легенда внушала: купчик Пекалов, пошловатый и забулдыжный, взялся сдуру за некое дело, дело притом сорвалось — и он остался кем был, пошловатым и забулдыжным. Но в длительности упорства есть, оказывается, свое таинство и свои возможности. И если в другой, и в третий раз он берется за дело вновь, от человеческого его упорства уже веет чемто иным. И вот его уж называют одержимым или безумным, пока еще ценя другие слова. И если, оборванный, голодный, он доведет свое до конца и погибнет трагически, как не начать примеривать для него слово «подвижник», хотя бы и осторожно.

Если же окружающие люди оценить его дело не могут, если подчеркнута неясность поиска как некоего божьего дела, которое и

сам он не осознает, то тем более по старым понятиям он и сам становится человеком призванным, как бы божьим, — а тут уже шаг до слова «святой» или до употребления этого слова (на всякий случай) в более скромной форме: в форме вознесения ангелами на небо — вознесем, мол, а там со временем разберемся, святой ли. Что и сделала легенда. (III: 22)

Makanin celebrates the very nonsense of this project and the very unlikeliness of its hero. In fact, he implies, the less noble the ends, the more heroic the mission. The legend of Pekalov is told precisely because it is not a tale of progress, but a tale of persistence, madness, wastefulness, and tragedy. Pekalov is in the tradition of the holy fool, an idiotic and unconventional drunk acting in no one's best interest, yet revealing an inspirational depth of character. Makanin celebrates the lack of progress and the irrational through this tale. Digging the tunnel under the river for absolutely no reason nearly satirizes a teleological view of history. In an exposé of the idea that "the end justifies the means," Pekalov's blind men sacrifice their lives for faith in a vision they will never see. Peterson interprets this work from a slightly different angle: "*The Loss* can serve as a poetic metaphor for the history of Makanin's own society which began with a fanatical belief in a miracle and ended with a tragic loss of faith" (356).

The short story "Kliucharev i Alimushkin" provides another good example of Makanin's polemics with Soviet historiographic principles. Kliucharev – Makanin's recurring protagonist – finds himself believing that his good fortune is directly related to another's demise: "Человек заметил вдруг, что чем более везет в жизни ему, тем менее везет некоему другому человеку" (II:5). This man confronts the other, unlucky, man and receives the following response:

"Ерунда Это вещи, не связанные между собой. Мне и впрямь не везет, но ты тут ни при чем" (II:5). Kliucharev, a well-meaning and decent man, persists in trying his best to change the luck of his acquaintance, but to no avail. In the end, the unlucky man dies, and, "Ключарев промолчал. Потом он вдруг захотел покурить и пошел на кухню, а жена уже спала" (II:24). In the end, the events were unrelated. Kliucharev's life has been turned upside-down through his agonizing over Alimushkin's demise, yet Alimushkin dies. This story ironizes the idea that all events are connected in a logical way. It posits the alternative: events are random and unconnected with no set cause and effect.

In Makanin's work, conjunctions and transitional words and phrases that signal cause and effect relationships are often used specifically to mark relationships which the reader knows to have little or no connection to one another or events whose connections are irrational, ludicrous, or even inane: "Вслед за Достоевским Makanin ищет не причинно-следственной связи слов и поступков. . . ." (Piskunov and Piskunova 70). In "Kliucharev i Alimushkin" the common connecting adverb "potomu" prevails. In fact, it is found in nearly every paragraph, lending the events narrated a distinct cause and effect relationship on the surface, although the reader knows that the events narrated – Kliucharev's good fortune and Alimushkin's bad luck – are not related but coincidental. Like the events narrated in a Soviet Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history, these events are clearly given meaning through rhetoric and narrative structure, not through internally logical relationships. Makanin builds in a disconnect between language and content.

Makanin uses the same device throughout his career. In *Utrata* the word *ibo* is used to signify the delusional relationships perceived by those in the mental ward:

У него был вполне современный и довольно распространенный сдвиг: он считал, что все часы испортились и что их надо уничтожить, ибо они показывают неверное время.

Мы с ним поладили, наши кровати были напротив — он рвал, а я вновь рисовал циферблаты; в этом процессе я тоже получал свою часть удовольствия, ибо в самом низу рисунка крохотными и незаметными для врачей буквами подписывался «ЯК—77». (III:32)

In both instances, *ibo* reveals the mental patient's delusion. In *Stol* the word *zatem* predominates, lending the circular events their air of inevitability:

Строго говоря, *белые халаты* приглашались судить юнцов не сразу: сначала решал трудовой или же студенческий коллектив (стол, с сидящими вокруг людьми), затем общественный суд (еще один стол с сукном и графином посередине) и, наконец, круг врачей и психиатров вместе с представителем общественности (третий и уже последний стол) — впрочем, можно было считать, что это один и тот же стол, но только удлинённый в три раза по случаю.

И вот что юнцов ждало: разрушенная после лечения психика; затем «тихость»; затем, как правило, быстрая, ничем не приметная смерть. (IV:190)

Events here are given a necessary order. Makanin ironizes the situation, however, by using rhetoric that implies that these events must occur in this order, when in fact the entire process is revealed to be arbitrary.

Makanin reveals that there is much that is irrational beneath the supposedly logical, law-driven system of official Soviet historiography through his manipulation of language. Makanin also exposes the Soviet manipulation of events by manipulating events himself. Makanin's ellipses operate like Trifonov's in that they recall the Soviet teleological manipulation of the past, but they are motivated differently. Trifonov's ellipses were motivated by the psychology of his

characters, characters reluctant to remember aspects of their own past. Makanin's are motivated extradiegetically: they result primarily from the fragmentation of plot.

Stol, pokryti suknom i s grafinom poseredine operates around an absence of information – a slightly different kind of ellipsis. Kliucharev anticipates interrogation throughout the novel, but the reader never learns what the interrogation is about. The questions and answers he anticipates boil down to silence: "И ответа тут нет, потому что и вопроса как такового нет, но ведь ты молчишь и не успеваешь" (IV:161). In fact, Kliucharev himself, while he takes for granted that the interrogation is necessary and sees it as a recurring necessity, does not seem to know what he is on trial for: "Если говорить строго, заранее известна только половина, то есть только то, что они правы" (IV:164). This resignation alludes to the teleological nature of Soviet history as much as it does to the travesty of justice enacted through Soviet show trials. The object of the interrogation is left out as ultimately unimportant:

До сознания (вдруг) доходит, что жизнь как жизнь и что таких вызовов на завтрашний разговор было сто, двести, если не больше. Тянулся через годы долгий мелкий спрос; мелкий, но, в точности как и сегодня, вгонявший тебя в волнение, в непокой и в раздрызг. Вдруг понимаешь главное – повод (для спрашивающих) был неважен. И всегда был он им неважен. (IV:166)

What is important is the guilt Kliucharev feels: guilt that makes him aware of his difference from the collective, of his failure to progress, of his suspect individuality. In the end, Kliucharev has a heart attack and dies on the table before the interrogation begins – a victim of his own guilt. Makanin does not specify a reason for this interrogation much as Trifonov did not specify what

Glebov said at Ganchuk's trial or what Pavel Evgrafovich said at Migulin's trial. Trifonov could not go into detail about the purges and Civil War tribunals because of censorship. As a result, as Bakhtov argues, his novels recreate the atmosphere of fear through silence. Makanin wrote this novel in 1997 – free of censorship – yet he employs the same technique to the same great effect in this work: recreation of the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.

Stalin does not appear in Trifonov's novels, and he is likewise absent from Makanin's. In Trifonov's novels the presence of the leader is strongly felt, especially in his death. In Makanin's works, even his presence is annulled. A table stands in for the frightening object of cult worship. The majority of Makanin's works take place contemporary to the time of their writing: he writes about the era of stagnation in the seventies and eighties; he writes about the post-Soviet period in works published after 1991. The Stalinist past is not directly represented or recalled, as it is in Trifonov's novels. Instead, Makanin reveals the remnants of Stalinist thinking and speech in later periods through juxtaposition and ellipses.

"Udavshiisia rasskaz o liubvi" is the most obviously polemical of Makanin's works, and it is indeed a love story as well as a polemic with Soviet historiography. In Soviet days, Tartasov was a liberal writer whose stories barely passed the censor, until he luckily meets and has an affair with Larisa, a beautiful, young censor who helps him publish his stories. In present-day Russia, Tartasov is a washed-up host of a television show, interviewing artists, musicians

and writers and stumping them with the same hackneyed question: “Вам (лично вам) было плохо прежде – или вам плохо сейчас?” (IV:308). The question not only characterizes banal Tartasov, but hints at the juxtaposition of times at the heart of the tale. The former censor, Larisa Igorevna, now runs a brothel (more irony). Tartasov does not know that he owes his television job to Larisa’s sacrifice: her former colleague, Viuzhin, gets Tartasov the job in exchange for Larisa’s “favours.”

Tartasov comes to Larisa’s establishment with no money and begs her to convince one of the girls to take him on as a charity case. When none will agree, Larisa and Tartasov drink mineral water and tea and travel together into their joint and respective pasts. Memory is literally time-travel in this story. In order to get to the past one must concentrate on a crevice, hole, or joint and then squeeze through it:

Он уперся глазами в норку, начиная мысленно в нее ввинчиваться. Не спеша, ме-ее-едленно. . . Все более и более втискиваясь, Тартасов свел плечи. Его царапнуло. Там, в узком месте, гудело и свистело. Тартасова стремительно потащило, понесло. Набирая скорость, он вылетел назад, в уже прожитую жизнь. (IV: 312)

These characters cannot choose the exact moment to visit – there is an element of chance. For example Tartasov once ends up at the dentist. Because of the randomness of this time travel, their affair is narrated elliptically.

As in Trifonov’s works, ellipses that signify gaps in the story result from fragmented plots ordered by association and juxtaposition. Makanin does not create ellipses in as sophisticated or complex a way as does Trifonov, but blank spots certainly figure in his thematics. Makanin creates ellipses, as Trifonov

does, to reveal the selective nature of narrative and draw attention to what has been left out of the official version of history. The implied author in this narrative selects episodes from the past, like Soviet historians selected episodes and like censors selected episodes – but the “censor” does not have control here, the author does.

In “Udavshiisia rasskaz o liubvi” the spaces between the story fragments is where all the meaning lies. Memory is compared to literal time travel and what is forgotten is literally equated to the past Tartasov and Larisa cannot reach. The time-traveler is also compared to a censor. Larisa ends up once at her former place of work: the bureau of censorship. She has approved one of Tartasov’s stories and an older censor lectures her on the dangers of the job:

Как много, как бесконечно много может провалиться (объяснял ей старый Арсеньич) – уйти в зазор меж двух слов. Туда и выбрасывает лишнее искусный хитрец-автор. Суть авторства – эта бездонная щель меж словами. Миры, целые миры провалятся туда, эпохи, цивилизации!... и ничего нет. Ни следа. Это узкое место, этот гениально коварный стык меж двумя соседними словами!... На этих стыках, на этих зазорах родилась динамика письменности. Родилась словесность, а уже с ней (и в ней) высота духа и чекан мысли. (IV:322)

The very same vocabulary (*uzkoe mesto*, *styk*, *zazor*) is used to describe the places where Tartasov and Larisa gain access to the past. The same vocabulary is used once more to describe a woman’s body. The past, the truth, and physical pleasure are all accessed through these narrow places, and Larisa attempts to control access to each. She cannot control the forays into the past, suggesting that the censor’s (and mistress of the brothel’s) work is futile.

Makanin also devalues the authoritative narrative voice of Soviet historiographic discourse. As shown above, ellipses themselves undermine the idea of an authoritative narrator. In “Udavshiisia rasskaz o liubvi” Makanin overtly rejects the very idea of authoritative narrative. The first paragraph includes the parenthetical insertions which characterize this narrator:

Что чувствует женщина, всю жизнь любившая одного-единственного мужчину? ... А ничего. Решительно ничего. Во всяком случае, ничего исключительного она, Лариса Игоревна, не чувствует. (Досаду на судьбу? Нет. Ничуть.) Как-никак была долго замужем. За другим мужчиной. Теперь живет одна. (Разошлась.) Уже давно одна. (125)

The voice belongs to an overt narrator, posing a general question and answering with the example of a character, in that character’s speech pattern (short sentences, informal style.) The relationship between the prose and the parenthetical insertions is that of a dialogue. It is always unclear which is the character and which is the narrator, but the parentheses guarantee the presence of multiple voices and multiple viewpoints on the narration. In this paragraph the voices concur, but at other points they vary. Sometimes the parenthetical insertions provide ironic commentary on the character’s inner monologue, transforming it into a dialogue of sorts: “-- Я не переменился, -- надменно поднял голову Тартасов. (Тупой.)” (157). At other times the parenthetical insertions lend a poetic touch to the prose or a play on words: “Выбравшись (как вырвавшись) из подземных сплетений метро, Тартасов шел наконец малолюдной улицей.” (131) Whatever their function, the parenthetical insertions destabilize the primary narrator. Larisa cannot control access to the past, her own or Tartasov’s feelings, or even her own dialogue.

MAKANIN'S METAPHORS

Many conventional metaphors taken from nature appear in Soviet historiography and fiction. Trifonov reworked many of those same metaphors, giving them his own meaning. Makanin employs metaphors differently, as Ivanova observes:

. . . маканинская метафора отличается от подобных – скажем, историческая метафора «лавы», «оползня» в прозе Юрия Трифонова носит служебный (по отношению ко всему массиву повествования) характер; у Маканина она есть первое условие сюжета. Маканинская метафора реализована в повествовании. Для сравнения – это как если бы у Трифонова по испепеляющую лаву (без всяких кавычек) или под оползень действительно, в прямом смысле слова попали герои «Обмена» или «Старика». ("V polosku" 197-198)

Indeed, in words such as *Otstavshii*, *Stol*, *Laz*, and "Udavshiisia rasskaz o liubvi," the plot consists of manifold illustrations of central, organizing metaphors.

Running away and being left behind are motifs that appear in Trifonov's and Makanin's works. Dalton-Brown writes, "Makanin has also used . . . Trifonovian motifs, such as that of the 'ubeg', found in many of Trifonov's texts (i.e. *Obmen*, *Predvaritel'nye itogi*, *Drugaiia zhizn'*). Makanin's characters in his early texts travel, like Trifonov's *neudachniki*, in order to escape themselves, fleeing the knowledge of their own weakness and immorality" (221). Dalton-Brown also notices the similarity between *Otstavshii* and *Obmen*, where Trifonov's Dmitriev laments missed opportunities like Makanin's narrator in the former work. She notices that both may be taken from Chekhov's character Trigorin in *Chaika*, who missed his chance to be a writer (226-227). Makanin's narrator overcomes his isolation by feeling like a link between generations (to his

father and his daughter), and Dalton-Brown briefly links this to Trifonov's philosophy of history in *Drugaia zhizn'* (227). I agree with this thorough analysis of similarities between Trifonov and Makanin, but important differences in the use of these images exist as well. For Trifonov, the act of running away and leaving others behind or feeling left behind is a plot motif: it is an essential component of the story being narrated. In Makanin's work, the motif transcends the plot and becomes a metaphor for the position of the individual in Soviet society. Makanin's characters do not just run away or get left behind; they symbolize the metaphysical condition of isolation.

Makanin also uses imagery taken from nature metaphorically on a more localized level. For example, he and Trifonov share a predilection for the image of rivers. Pekalov digs under the Ural River and the river reclaims his tunnel. The tunnel has temporal significance, as does the water it bypasses. In one of the first-person narratives, the narrator observes a group of blind people bathing in the river. Finally, the man from beyond the grave visiting his abandoned village notices that the river has destroyed the chapel (in honor of Pekalov) that stood on its banks. The river seems to be indifferent to the efforts of humans. Trifonov used the image of the *potok* to reveal the inadequacy of those who make excuses for their behavior by appealing to the destructive force of the times. In the Soviet tradition, rivers and waves signalled inevitable progress toward communism. Makanin's rivers are also immovable and inevitable, but rather than celebrating or excusing human behavior, they destroy every trace of it.

Mountains and stars function similarly. In the first narrative of *Golosa*, the narrator and Kol'ka regularly hike through the distinctive mountains of their region:

Пройдя долинами пять или шесть, иногда восемь гор, пацаны обычно успокаивались на достигнутом и дальше не шли. Тут случался известный парадокс. Желтые горы оказывались не там, где мы сидели и где разжигали дневной костер, а дальше — горы как бы отодвигались. Сколько ни иди, *желтые* вершины отодвигались, и попасть на них было нельзя — а видеть их было можно. Это относилось не только к горам. Это относилось к чему угодно. Рукой не взять, а видеть можно — формулировка включала в себя огромный, часто болезненный опыт прославленной уральской широты и терпимости. (I:5)

Like the river, the mountains signify that which is beyond human potential to reach, to affect, or to change. Makanin reclaims these natural metaphors from the Soviets, who co-opted them to support their claims to transform the world. Makanin's mountains assert the futility of such efforts, as do his stars. Kliucharev experiences a sense of his own powerlessness to alter the fate of others while gazing at stars:

Над головой были звезды. Он шел, глядя вверх, и думал, что звезд полнымполно, и небо огромно, и звезды эти видели и перевидели столько человеческих удач и неудач, что давнымдавно отупели и застыли в своем равнодушии. Им, звездам, наплевать. И не станут они вмешиваться и посылать кому-то удачу, а кому-то неудачу. (II:8)

Serafimova, Piskunov and Piskunova all note that stars in Makanin's work symbolize what is constant and beyond man (Serafimova 37; Piskunov and Piskunova 48). They do not notice, however, that his stars are a direct reference to Lermontov's "Fatalist." Kliucharev's experience of the stars directly echoes Pechorin's experience walking home after witnessing a man carelessly gamble with his life. Pechorin understands stars to be indifferent to human's fates; he

asserts that they are only perceived to be influential or involved in predestination. Like Tolstoy in *War and Peace*, Lermontov's protagonist believes that human experience (or history) – symbolized by the distant and unchanging stars – is a series of contingencies controlled neither by humans nor by fate. The existence of this metaphor far before Makanin's use of it only serves to highlight his theme and further call attention to the Soviet manipulation of nature imagery.

Makanin's most original metaphors are his metaphors for time. His metaphors lead to a new conceptualization of time – not progress-oriented or backward-looking, but both at once. Ivanova explicates the title metaphor in *Laz*:

Писатель предпочел пространственную метафору *лаза* любой временной метафоре. Лаз – это граница между верхом и низом (в данном случае оценочно парадоксально меняющиеся местами: *верх* темен, опасен, покинут; *низ* обитаем, дружелюбен и светел), между светом и тьмой, ненавистью и дружбой; но Makanin, переосмыслив стереотип верха и низа, усложняет свою метафору: в светлом и дружелюбном *подполье* совершенно нечем дышать, там не хватает воздуха, с избытком имеющегося *наверху*, где невозможно жить из-за остановки всех жизнеобеспечивающих систем. ("V polosku" 197)

Serafimova reads the manhole image a bit differently, deciphering its role in the *povest'* on a more personal level: "Название 'Лаз' расшифровывается в пространстве повести как многозначная метафора, как душа, как поиск человеком пути к другому человеку" (39). I believe both critics correctly identify how this image relates to important themes for Makanin, discussed above. This metaphor for time also appears in "Udavshiisia rasskaz o liubvi" in the form of the narrow place – a hollow, hole, joint or opening – through which an individual can

gain access to eternity through art, memory or sex. All are made level through this unifying metaphor.

The act of digging also has metaphorical significance, as Peterson discerns: "Digging as a metaphor is used by the unnamed hero to describe his attempts to bring back the past" (355). The tunnel dug by Pekalov is the central metaphor for time in *Utrata*. It is the location for the meeting between Pekalov and the narrator across time. The tunnel is a representation of time that is linear, yet unconventional. Tunneling through time allows for parallels across centuries and the revelation of non-linear, correspondences throughout time that are not related by cause and effect. The tunnel is not unlike Trifonov's concept of the threads through generations.

Piskunov and Piskunova interpret these images slightly differently. They identify "nakedness" as a recurring image for Makanin, signifying, "стремлени[е] Маканина постичь скрытый смысл бытия, обнажить «жесткий каркас конструкции», снять, сдернуть с окружающего покровы всего поверхностно-видимого чувственно-иллюзорного. . ." (45). Nakedness is connected to Makanin's peculiar positively valued depiction of destruction: "На развалинах слышнее «голоса предков», мощнее выбросы той надличностной, коллективной памяти, что ушла куда-то в подсознание, в миф, в легенду и невозродима в лирических ламентциях и элегических всхлипах" (46). Nakedness and destruction lend a unified symbolic significance to the images of digging, tunnels, and underground life and relate these images to Makanin's narrative style: the evocation of collective memory through multiple narrative

voices, many of which are tied to myth and legend. Loss and being left behind, digging and squeezing through narrow holes, allow Makanin's characters to move toward nakedness and destruction – to lose their accumulation of artifacts, habits, and stereotypes that isolate them and come closer to the true voices of community. Loss, being left behind, digging, and squeezing through are all positively evaluated. Taken together, Makanin's metaphoric system, as Piskunov and Piskunova explain, "стимулирует максимальную освобожденность человека от власти времени, максимальную очищенность его сознания, приуготовляющую внутренний слух к восприятию голосов" (49). Finally, Piskunov and Piskunova relate these images to Makanin's style: he destroys and lays bare the conventions of traditional prose *and* conventional (and Soviet) historiography through his fragmented plots, multilayered narratives, and multivalent symbolic systems.

CONCLUSION

Like Trifonov, Makanin undermines the Soviet version of history through plot, narration, and metaphor. Makanin writes works with multiple, circular plots and multiple, competing narrative voices. He creates unconventional parallels throughout time which counteract the linear narrative of progress and heroic struggle put forward by Marxist-Leninist Soviet historians. At the same time, Makanin makes certain that his readers will actively participate in the dismantling of the official Soviet version of the past by deciphering his parallels and at the

same time construct their own new, meaningful versions by participating in the story along with his narrators.

Makanin leaves so much open to interpretation that there is a temptation to read his works as essentially relativist, calling into question the very possibility of accurately representing the past. I resist that temptation. Makanin rejects the authoritative narrative voice of Soviet historiography as well as conventional narrative forms, but I do not believe that he rejects the possibility that literature can embody truth. Like Trifonov and Ulitskaia, Makanin maintains the role of the writer as historian. He continues to write about the Soviet experience, trusting his readers to value the opportunity he gives them to participate by filling in the blank spots through their reading. Ulitskaia will personalize the Soviet experience even further.

CHAPTER FOUR: Ulitskaia's Privatizations of the Soviet Past

Like the works of Iurii Trifonov and Vladimir Makanin, the short stories and novels of Liudmila Ulitskaia participate in a dialogue with Soviet historiography through fragmentation of plot and narrative perspective, creating many individual narratives of the past within the confines of a single literary work. Ulitskaia explains the attraction of contemporary writers to the Soviet past:

Относительно советского прошлого – оно, возможно, сегодня представляется более актуальным, исключительно по той причине, что в сознании российского народа есть непрожитая драма, неотрефлексированная катастрофа - преступления власти не проговорены, замалчиваются, это рождает большую ложь. (email to the author)

Ulitskaia addresses these crimes, silences, and lies throughout her fiction; she consciously participates in a rewriting and reworking of the officially sanctioned methods of constructing stories of the Soviet past.

Liudmila Evgen'evna Ulitskaia was born on February 21, 1943 in the village of Davlekanovo in Bashkiriia where her family was evacuated during the Second World War. Both of her parents came from Jewish families and were educated professionals – her mother a biochemist who worked in pediatric medical research and her father an agricultural machine engineer. Ulitskaia's parents divorced when she was young and she grew up with her grandparents in

Moscow, where she still resides. Both of her grandfathers spent much of her childhood in prison for political unorthodoxy. Although both of Ulitskaia's parents lost their jobs in the 1950s during Stalin's "anticosmopolitan campaign," Ulitskaia herself encountered no obstacles to education or employment.

Ulitskaia attended Moscow State University and graduated in 1967 with a degree in genetics. Married for the first time while a student, her second marriage was to a physicist and fellow genetics researcher with whom she had two sons. Ulitskaia herself worked in a genetics laboratory that was shut down in the early 1970s after several of its members were found to be translating, typing and sharing manuscripts of forbidden foreign works, including Leon Uris's *Exodus*. She explains:

Это было в 70-м или в 71-м. Самиздатское время. Мы читали как сумасшедшие, по полной программе - от Кюстина до Солженицына. Тысячи трепанных книг, фотоотпечатков, перепечаток на папиросной бумаге... Ночное преступное чтение... Кто-то донес, конфисковали мою машинку "Эрику". Ее забрали, а меня - нет. Только с работы выгнали. Так и закончился мой роман с генетикой. (Skvortsova-Ardabatskaia 3)

Although prevented from working during the 1970s, Ulitskaia suffered relatively few consequences after the incident apart from losing her job and her typewriter. In 1979 Ulitskaia found work doing research for the Moscow Jewish Theatre. She then began writing film scripts before turning to fiction. She is now married to the successful Moscow artist Andrei Krasulin. The two enjoy a productive artistic relationship; in November of 2000 Krasulin exhibited sculpture and collage made entirely from manuscripts of Ulitskaia's most recent novel.

While several of her individual stories were published in *Ogonek* and other journals from 1989 on, her first published book was a translation of *Bednye rodstvenniki* that came out in France. Her works have since enjoyed steadily increasing popularity in Russia and abroad. Translations of her first *povest'* "Sonechka" won the Medici prize in France and the Penne prize in Italy. In 2001 Ulitskaia became the first woman to be awarded the Russian Booker prize for her novel *Kazus Kukotskogo*. Reactions were mixed to this event. She herself humbly declared, "Присуждение мне премии я воспринимаю как несправедливость. Я точно знаю, что мое место второе" (Latynina 1).

Ulitskaia's fiction – be it novel, *povest'*, short story or cycle of stories – is not unitary: her plots are often fragmented and achronologically ordered and may seem to lack cohesiveness, especially in her novels. Events frequently tend toward the irrational, and explanations and cause-and-effect relationships are lacking, resembling the structure and plots of Makanin's prose. In spite of the dominance of the third-person in her works, she shuns the all-knowing, omniscient tendency of this form. Her works, like Trifonov's and Makanin's, leave important moments unspoken and they rely as much as the other two authors do on the reader's participation. Above all, Ulitskaia personalizes history. Medea Mendes, Pavel Kukotskii, Sonechka and all of the girls whose stories comprise *Devochki* are unique individuals. Their stories intersect with the larger narrative of Soviet history and augment it, contradict it, reshape its truths and discredit its one voice by their many. Like Trifonov and Makanin, she does this without

endangering belief in the concept of truth and the possibility of fiction to approach it. Ulitskaia's work also reflects contemporary historiographic trends, reflecting aspects of the "privatization of history" observed by critics and scholars such as Ivanova and Paperno. She participates even more than Trifonov and Makanin do in a general reorientation toward the individual's role in history, as explained by Sokolov:

Именно поэтому в процессе перестройки нашего общества проблема освобождения каждого конкретного человека от уз тоталитарной системы, превращения его в полноценного субъекта истории, творца и хозяина своей жизни сразу заняла центральное место. И нынешние, пугающие своей бескомпромиссностью споры о путях выхода страны из охватившего ее глубочайшего кризиса в первую очередь связаны с решением вопроса о том, какой простор будет дан частной инициативе, какое место в общественном развитии будет отведено индивидуальным формам существования. (Sokolov 5-6)

Ulitskaia foregrounds individual life stories in her fiction. She addresses the question of big ideas versus private life and gives clues as to why in the following polemical essay on Solzhenitsyn, in which she defends her deceased friend Vadim Borisov from what she perceives as slander by Solzhenitsyn. In response to Solzhenitsyn's assertion that one's family is not more important than the memory of the millions who were tortured and killed in the Soviet era, Ulitskaia writes, "Логика узнается большевистская: если собственные дети не дороже памяти замученных миллионов, то ведь и замученные миллионы не дороже светлого будущего всего человечества" ("Vozmozhno li...", par.13-14). She continually asserts the value of individual and family over any abstract ideas of humanity, ideology or nation throughout her fiction.

The importance of family in twentieth-century Russia pervades all of Ulitskaia's works. This is a crucial theme in Russian literature of the twentieth century as Soviet – especially Stalinist – policy officially fostered a sense of allegiance to the state as “family” over any personal ties. Her earliest short stories, published individually in literary journals and as a collection in 1993 in France and 1994 in Russia, depict the struggle to reclaim the bonds of family from the Stalin era to the 1970s period of “stagnation” to post-Soviet times. Trifonov and Mukanin rehabilitate nature metaphors; Ulitskaia will rehabilitate family metaphors.

Ulitskaia's characters come from the fringes of Russian society. Her protagonists – most often female – are Jewish, Central Asian or Crimean Russians of Greek descent. Ulitskaia's works often have a historical dimension: one of her most frequent devices is to review Soviet history by tracing the life of an elderly character from pre-Revolutionary times to the present of the narration. Events of national importance are relegated to the background as she emphasizes private life and the personal development of her characters. For example, Stalin's death recurs in her prose as an event against which children discover their identities vis-à-vis the state. Faith and morality also figure prominently in these works. Her characters frequently do not espouse traditional Jewish or Christian beliefs; rather, they tend to develop idiosyncratic forms of faith and morality, often through real or imagined contact with a world beyond.

Of the three writers under consideration here, Ulitskaia is the only one who did not publish before *glasnost'*. In spite of this, Ulitskaia continues in the

tradition of Trifonov. She employs silences, ellipses, and implicitness to recreate the atmosphere of fear under Stalin, as Makanin does. In contrast, she is not as metaphorical a writer as Trifonov or Makanin. Like Makanin, however, Ulitskaia does occasionally employ metaphors which structure her entire texts. This chapter will elucidate both the features of Ulitskaia's prose that align her with Trifonov and Makanin and those that set her apart.

STORY CYCLES AND PARALLEL PLOTS

Ulitskaia's plots are no less fragmented than Trifonov's or Makanin's.¹ Because she publishes more short stories than they do, especially in the form of short story cycles, fragmentation occurs somewhat differently in her *oeuvre*. While the plot of an individual story may be chronological and linear, her stories arranged into cycles take on a circular dimension.²

Ulitskaia uses the genre of the story cycle to create the kind of community that Makanin creates through juxtaposition and combination of voices. She uses this narrative form to repudiate the false "truths" of official Soviet versions of

¹I will be analyzing Ulitskaia's short story cycles at length in this chapter. Many of Makanin's stories have appeared together in book form, but it is unclear whether they are collected according to the author's or a publisher's plan. Trifonov authored one important semi-autobiographical short story cycle, *Oprokinutyi dom*, which I have not considered in my analysis since its settings and characters differ greatly from those of his *povesti* and novels.

²The following liberal definition of the form appears in the introduction to a volume of criticism on the genre: a short story cycle is "a formal rubric that may be said to include all collections of three or more stories written and arranged by a single author" (Kennedy, ix). The relationship between the story cycle and the modernist novel, which through fragmentation and decentralization reflects modern subjectivity, is also explored. Kennedy also points to the influence of commercial interests on the development of the genre (xi). This influence is perhaps even more profound in Russian markets, where republishing repackaged stories is par for the course. Ulitskaia more often than her contemporaries manages to keep the integrity of her cycles throughout publication and republication.

history, replacing them with her own personalized, fragmented truths. Literary critic Gerald Kennedy writes about the story cycle as community, and his observations apply nicely to Ulitskaia's works. He notes an affinity between story cycle and the oral storytelling tradition, which has been lost. Turgenev's "Bezhin Lea" provides evidence for him of the link between storytelling and the story cycle, as well as proof of the loss of that link in that story's narrator's solitary state. Some cycles – such as Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* – are explicitly evocative of a community. The genre lends itself to commentary on community, consisting as it does of the stories as a whole, connections among them, and the insurmountable fact of their separateness. Ulitskaia's cycles do the same. The lack of communication between characters whose situations are parallel or even identical demonstrates the breakdown of community in works like Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and Joyce's *Dubliners*, as well as Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*, analyzed by Kennedy: "Figures who walk the same streets and whose stories appear side by side nevertheless remain oblivious to each other and unconscious of parallels between their own situations and those of other characters" (196). Ulitskaia employs the form to all of these effects. Her cycles illustrate this critic's assertions about the genre's potential to convey both loneliness and community, yet she writes about a specifically Soviet community and solitude in the spirit of Trifonov and Mukanin.

In an article on Gloria Naylor and Louise Erdrich, Karen Castellucci Cox argues that short story cycles provide outlets for writing the history of repressed communities – especially those who have been silenced or stereotyped. She

writes about Native American and African-American women's experience, but her theories apply well to the actual lived experiences of Soviet people as opposed to the official versions of history. Cox, like Kennedy, maintains that story cycles are linked with an oral storytelling tradition, reflecting many consciousnesses and refraining from linear, forward-moving, chronological narratives with causal links, forcing the reader to learn to read associatively: "Such storytelling patterns underscore the selective process of remembering and retelling where concrete events are sometimes occluded by the less tangible visions of diverse memories and imaginations" (2). Often "associated but conflicting stories" refuse to "intersect conveniently with one objective truth" and provide a representation "of how diverse cultures experience private histories or revise those told about them by an outside voice" (5). More precisely, "the story cycle form lends itself to this project of historical revision because it has already disrupted our tendency as readers to look for unity and chronology, confronting us instead with the unknowability of gaps between stories" (8). Cox particularly emphasizes the importance of these gaps and breaks which correspond to ellipses in novels and blank spots or ellipses in history, so evident in many Soviet historical narratives and so well exposed by Trifonov and Mukanin.

Cox's description of this genre recalls my previous analysis of Trifonov's fragmented, mosaic-like plots with their silences and ellipses and it describes Ulitskaia's use of the story cycle genre very well. Her stories – as well as the characters and narrators within them – remain separate, but they are united by the cyclical structure – as Kennedy observes. Ulitskaia's stories also reflect the

state of the community whose narratives they contain and act as a vehicle for community history, telling private, publicly unknowable stories. The history conveyed by her story cycles counteracts the official Soviet version of history in its free, fragmented construction and its combinations of disparate narrative voices that silence dominant historical narratives. Ulitskaia's work, like Makanin's, thus reiterates a number of Trifonov's strategies.

The title of Ulitskaia's first story cycle itself implies that the stories are related and conveys a sense of family. The eight stories of *Bednye rodstvenniki* were published first in Paris in 1993, then in Russia in 1994. The cycle consists of discrete, self-contained stories, yet these stories clearly belong to one "fictional universe." They are linked by place: all are set in postwar Moscow, most of them in one neighborhood.³ The stories are also linked by recurring characters. Although each story is devoted to a separate character, the characters in the first five stories know one another. Anna Markovna is a Jewish matriarch at the center of the web of relationships. The protagonists of the first and fourth stories are her relatives, she herself appears in the second and third stories, and the relative from the fourth story figures in the ending of the fifth. The final three stories lack this strong character connection, but retain a link to the others in time and place. The stories are also centered on female protagonists.

A 2005 republication includes a brief introduction by the author on the front cover:

Все хотят быть богатыми, здоровыми и красивыми. Но мир состоит почему-то главным образом из бедных и больных. Но чудесные дары

³In a public reading and talk Ulitskaia identified that region of Moscow as surrounding the current Novoslobodskaya metro (February 13, 2005).

– сострадание, милости, верности – чаще всего являются именно там, в тени жизни, на ее обочине. Открытие это невелико, но когда оно происходит, немного изменяется картина мира, возникает новая точка отсчета и другая система координат. . . .

Ulitskaia's conception of the story cycle overlaps with Cox's. She uses the separate stories to augment a theme which itself has many facets. She also has a sense that the stories taken together provide a new system of coordinates – a new telling of history. Ulitskaia in this introduction emphasizes the acts of kindness that populate the stories. In *Bednye rodstvenniki* Ulitskaia shows how closely intertwined and indistinguishable kindness and terror can be and how the one does not occur without the other. Trifonov and Mukanin elided specific events to recreate an atmosphere of fear and terror; Ulitskaia does not hesitate to narrate fearful moments explicitly, but she locates them in private life rather than in public events.

The familiar narrative of history – be it Soviet or dissident – is relegated to the background or the spaces between the stories. Revolution, war, famine, antisemitism and the camps are all present, but they do not dominate the main plots of the stories. The most striking example is the story "Gulia" in which the title character's marital history is identified with her penal record: "Ее трижды сажали: дважды, как она считала, за мужей, а один раз – так она сама объяснила – за излишки образования. Этот последний раз случился уже после войны, в небольшом отрезке ее незамужней жизни. Обычно мужа у нее скорее находили один на другого. . ." (209).

The Second World War and the Holocaust are present in an aside in "Schastlivye," a story of an elderly couple's loss of their child. Mattias had lost

children before, "Первая его жена четырежды рожала ему девочек, но дым их тел давно уже рассеялся над бледными полями Польши" (13). Nothing more is said of these children's fates. Bron'ka's mother Simka ends up in Moscow under mysterious circumstances: "Симку прибило в московский двор волной какого-то переселения еще до войны" (36). We discover later that she used to live in Birobidzhan. War brings Bukhara to Moscow from her native Uzbekistan as the wife of a Russian military doctor. Katia describes her ordeal in the camps, during which time her mother seduced her husband and replaced her. None of these events are crucial to the plot, which tells a different history: personal suffering and attempts at kindness, family relationships and strained communities.

These stories provide a new, highly personalized telling of Soviet history as they relegate the dominant narrative to the spaces in between. Trifonov narrates individual stories that in some ways parallel and in some ways reverse the principles of Stalinist historiography, and Ulitskaia continues in this tradition, though her characters are unique to her. The stories of *Bednye rodstvenniki* challenge conventional historical accounts of the atmosphere of terror and fear in the postwar Soviet Union as well as conventional sentimental portrayals of kindness. In her privatizations of history, Ulitskaia avoids trite formulas and conventional heroes.

All of these stories of kindness in tough times reveal the impossibility of pure kindness in an atmosphere of terror. In "Doch' Bukhary," Bukhara must leave her daughter in order to save her; the heroines of "Gulia" and "Lialin dom"

demonstrate a neighborliness that becomes seduction of the innocent, as older women seduce young men who appear to help with household chores.⁴ The final story presents a Christian interpretation of suffering. Zina, ill and grossly overweight, has been dependent on her mother her whole life. When her mother dies she is left to beg at the cathedral. The other beggars nearly drive her away, but Katia – herself disabled – comes to the rescue. Katia, apparently with no place of her own, comes home with Zina and drunkenly shares her philosophy of the poor:

Люди-то злы, им очень утешительно видеть, что другому еще хуже. . . . Вот оно, мое место: калека, стою у храма, проходят люди мимо, каждый посмотрит и про себя скажет: слава тебе, Господи, что ноги мои здоровы и что не я стою здесь с рукой-то! А другой и совестью зашевелится, смекнет, что Богу неблагодарен за все благодеяния его. Ты на попрошайек не смотри, Зина, у них одна забота – денег набрать. А настоящий нищий, Зиночка, Божий человек, Господу служит! Он избранный народ, нищий-то (252-253).

This final story acts as a coda, providing a new meaning for the suffering of the previous stories: suffering is the only pure form of kindness. This story also assigns a role to the reader, who must determine her reaction to the suffering characters as Katia describes above, considering her own history in light of the stories and either identifying with the community of "nastoiashchii nishchii" and "bednye rodstvenniki" or remaining on the outside, deriving comfort from relative good fortune.

⁴Goscilo identifies the sexual themes of these stories: "In general Ulitskaia credits women with a range of sexual appetites, her stories teeming with the kinds of sexual encounters that under the Soviet regime would have been unimaginable for a woman. The eponymous protagonist of 'Lialia's House,' for instance, not only enjoys but becomes addicted to sexual intercourse with her son's closest friend and becomes traumatized to discover him also engaged in sexual intimacy with her daughter. 'Gulia' portrays a woman in her sixties, if not older, who seduces the son of her closest friend and then indirectly brags about it. Ulitskaia treats female sexuality with generosity and humor" (ff. 82).

The cycle *Bednye rodstvenniki* provides an alternate historical narrative of the Soviet period – one that openly acknowledges the crimes against humanity committed by the Soviet regime openly, but places at the center the private acts of discrete individuals, each of whom can tell his or her own story. As in *Winesburg, Ohio* and *Dubliners*, though these characters "walk the same streets," they do not intimately know one another and their stories exist in community only to the reader. Like Mukanin, Ulitskaia represents individuals isolated from the collective but presents them in a narrative community. Both writers employ literary form to model social connections that differ from those dictated by Soviet ideology.

The cycle *Devochki* works in much the same way. These individual stories also clearly belong to the same fictional universe. The girls on whom the cycle focuses are almost all introduced in the first story, and each subsequent story focuses on one or more of the girls, all of whom are in the same class at the same school in Moscow in the 1950s.

In *Devochki*, as in *Bednye rodstvenniki*, the spaces in between the stories speak of history unwritten or untold. In many cases it is the dominant narrative – the Soviet version – which is left out and silenced. In other cases the horrors and outrages of the Soviet system form the background. Stalin's death and the Doctors' Plot form the background of "Vtorogo marta togo zhe goda" and the neighbor whom Viktoriia claims is Gaiane's real mother has a reputation for anti-Soviet behavior. Also implied in the silences is the fact that these girls are not really friends. Their experiences parallel one another, but they are not shared.

Girlhood under Stalin is portrayed as a very lonely endeavor. Only the reader is empowered to perceive commonalities. A community is created – but only in the reading. The cycle, of course, remains fragmented. A new story of the past is written, but it remains an incomplete story. Many versions of the same past are presented but in different voices – voices that do not communicate with one another. These spaces allow room not only for the reader to make connections but also – in some cases – to add her own memories and experiences to complete the picture.

In *Devochki*, the narrator of each story examines a guilty feeling, much like Trifonov's Ol'ga Vasil'evna and Makanin's Kliucharev. Together, the stories assert a feeling that innocence is impossible for these girls, growing up under and in the wake of Stalinism. In a 2004 essay for *Novaia gazeta*, Ulitskaia wrote the following, "Гораздо более крепко, чем узами любви, люди связаны между собой общей виной. Общая, групповая вина уменьшает долю личной до неуловимо малой величины. . . . Преступление часто бывает массовым, покаяние, по своей природе, - персонально" ("Portret", 22). This is a theme important to Trifonov as well. His representations of boyhood under Stalin in *Dom na naberezhnoi*, *Vremia i mesto*, and *Ischeznovenie* similarly assert the impossibility of innocence against the ugliness of everyday life in the Stalin era.

All of the girls are introduced in the first story, "Dar nerukotvornyi."⁵ The title makes clear that this is a story about the power of art and faith. It is the

⁵One moment in particular supports the assertion that this collection may be read as a cycle: "Гайка Оганесян от любопытства едва не заболела, а Лиля Жижморская была мрачнее тучи, потому что была уверена, что затевается что-то лично против нее" (28). These girls appear as heroines of later stories, but as non-pioneers, they do not play a role in this story.

artistry of high Stalinism that entrances the girls and inspires their faith, but the truth disillusioned at least one of them. The title echoes Pushkin's phrases "pamiatnik nerukotvornyi" and "dar napasnyi," not to mention biblical associations. The icon *Spas nerukotvornyi*, which in the Byzantine tradition was formed when Christ wiped his face on the road to Golgotha, is certainly a referent of the title. It is the first icon, the foundation of faith and proof of the historical existence of Jesus Christ. In this story a woman born with no arms needlepoints an image of Stalin with her feet and sends it to him, after which it is displayed for the public. In this version, the gift "not made of human hands" is a fraud, truly made not by hands, but for personal gain, not to glorify the leader, and the attention the woman's act generates gains her a new apartment. The story questions these faith-inspiring images.

The structure of Ulitskaia's story cycles cannot be separated from their themes. "Dar nerukotvornyi" has two parts: the ceremony of induction to the Young Pioneers and the visit to Tania's armless aunt Toma. It opens with an image reminiscent of Soviet-era propaganda posters, evoking nostalgia: "Во вторник, после второго урока, пять избранных девочек покинули третий класс «Б». Они уже с утра были как именинницы и одеты особо: не в коричневых форменных платьях с черными фартуками и даже не в белых фартуках, а пионерских формах «темный низ, белый верх», но пока еще без красных галстуков" (7). The details evoke a clear image for the reader, and likely a longing for that past in the reader who herself wore such a uniform on such a day. Precise descriptions of the cherished pioneer uniform and the pomp

surrounding induction bring back the feeling of exultation inspired by high Stalinism. The reactions of the girls to the Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia story are evidence of the power of the ceremony: "Алена Пшеничникова плакала, хотя она про это давным-давно знала. Всем в эту минуту тоже хотелось поджечь фашистскую конюшню и, может быть, даже погибнуть за Родину" (17). The narration here is collective: each girl feels the same way.

Nostalgic evocation of the past sets the stories in the real, remembered past of the reader and involves the reader in the ethical reevaluation of that past, much like Trifonov's works. The two parts are further distinguished by Ulitskaia's use of language. The first part is narrated in clean, standard intelligentsia Russian with collocations typical of young girls. The second part introduces not only Toma's cynicism, but also her vulgar speech.

The visit to Toma, in contrast to the opening scene, reveals the real motives behind the cult of personality. Alena's consciousness dominates the narration of the visit. Her feelings of shame begin to raise the questions for the reader: "И в этот момент ей почему-то стало так стыдно, как потом никогда в жизни" (34) and "Испытывая жгучее чувство неправильности жизни, Алена расстегнула замок портфеля, вытащила кучу мятых рублевков и сунула их в шейный мешочек, покраснев так, что даже пот на носу выступил" (35). First they find out Toma prefers drawing cats and roosters to drawing Stalin, then she tells them the truth – how she used the thank you note from the Kremlin to bully the local housing authority into giving her a room. Alena cries on the way home, thinking, "Противная, противная, обманщица. . . и товарища Сталина она не

любит" (41). The ending reveals a further layer of truth: Toma took their money to buy a bottle of wine for a neighbor and friend- neither of them particularly wants to drink it, but the touching gesture ends the story with yet another "nerukotvornyi" gift of Toma's. Narration limited at different points to different characters' consciousnesses reveals a distrust of surface interpretations, be they nostalgic, trusting, or disillusioned.

One final story cycle should be included in this analysis. *Skvoznaia liniia* is called a *povest'* and is published without a table of contents, divided into titled chapters. These chapters are discrete stories, however, with the same central character: Zhenia.⁶ Zhenia at various points in her life listens to and is affected by other women's lies, and these lies comprise the plots of each chapter. The action of each story is independent of Zhenia – she is only an observer or interloper. The stories are arranged chronologically and the setting of the action moves from the Crimea to Moscow to Switzerland, following Zhenia. The title emphasizes the work's unity of theme, as does Ulitskaia's commentary in an interview:

А в книге рассказы о той лжи, которая нужна всем, чаще женщинам, но нередко и мужчинам, чтобы украсить жизнь, придать вид желаемого невзрачной картине, устроить некоторую праздничную иллюминацию, чтобы на минуту то, о чем мечтаешь, как будто уже состоялось. И десятилетняя девочка придумывает себе старшего брата (это я лично придумала старшего брата Юрочку в шестилетнем возрасте. Мне удалось себя реабилитировать: когда родился младший - назвала его Юрой!), или роман со взрослым художником, или нечеловеческие испытания в прошлом, или что-то романтически-

⁶Zhenia reappears in a later story "Iskusstvo zhit'" and a character/narrator with similar functions named Zhenia reappears in Ulitskaia's later collection of short cycles *Liudi nashego tsaria*.

прекрасное. Иногда это травмирует окружающих, доставляет боль разочарования (Zaitsev, 8).

The unifying theme of lies, given different treatment and different protagonists, reflects the same kind of meditation on truth and history we find in Trifonov, but in Ulitskaia's works history is even more bound in individual experience. Zhenia acts as a historian and models the reader's experience, sifting through false representations of the past to find individuals' truths.

The heroines of these stories create their own alternate histories by telling lies. The reader reads two stories at once: the false life story of the heroine and the story of Zhenia's discovery of truth. The first two stories, analyzed in greater depth below, focus on lies that appear true and truth that appears false. In the first, Zhenia's interlocutor's tales of her parents' international origins and connections with espionage seem ridiculous, but turn out to be true, whereas her accounts of four children's deaths appear tragically real but are in fact inventions. In the second story, a young girl tells tales of dancing in Spain, UFO landings and solving a murder at a tender young age, all of which turn out to be in accordance with facts; what she lies about is the simple existence of an older brother. The final two stories together explore what one might call literary lies. "Izavlenie prirody" is a poetic story of plagiarism. Zhenia is but a minor figure in this drama, appearing late in the narrative. Her professor and mentor at the end of her life meets a crude engineer's daughter in the park and takes up her education, in the course of which the professor passes off the poetry of Tsvetaeva, Pasternak and others as her own. Zhenia must set the girl straight and dash her dreams of having encountered true genius. The final story,

"Schastlivyi sluchai" reveals how one woman's lie becomes a lifeline for struggling prostitutes in Zurich, and Zhenia's delicate treatment of the subject is only fodder for a fortune-hunting filmmaker.

Throughout the cycle the lies are fully elaborated along with Zhenia's revelations, but the motivation for the lies is left open to question. We never discover why Irene invents four dead children or why Nadia fabricates a sibling. We can speculate why Zhenia's niece lies about having an affair with an uncle, why her professor pretends to be a poet and why the prostitutes cling to a storybook version of their lives, but we never know for sure. As in the previous story cycles, the connections are entirely left to the reader to draw. Ulitskaia's liars remain isolated in spite of their common habit and only the reader, guided by Zhenia, begins to perceive deceit as a fundamental condition of the Soviet and post-Soviet experience. Ironically, Ulitskaia once said of this collection, "Это моя самая правдивая книжка" (Zaitsev, 8).

The short story cycle form as practiced by Ulitskaia influences the structure of her longer works. Her novels tend to have large casts and a fluctuating narrative style. The novels are generally not chronological and they move freely through time, from a narrative present back and forth to various characters' pasts. The plots are not always connected by cause and effect: elements of each novel stand alone, creating the illusion of a lack of cohesion. In fact, the novels are unified through association, juxtaposition, parallelism, and repetition. Like Trifonov's and Makanin's fictions, Ulitskaia's longer *povesti* and

novels take a multifaceted approach to plot and narration and include multiple temporal and narrative planes. She recreates the community of perspectives inherent in the story cycle in her – theoretically – more unified longer works.

In the following analysis I will focus on *Medea i ee deti* and *Kazus Kukotskogo* because of their historical themes concerned with the creation and maintenance of community and family.⁷ Ulitskaia uses parallelism in plots as an organizational strategy. The novels are not cyclic but involve both horizontal and vertical movement to avoid linear structure, leaving connections to the reader. *Medea i ee deti* uses the presence of multiple generations to motivate parallel plots, each of which involves betrayal. In the present time of the main narration, two of Medea's nieces – Nika and Masha – compete for the attention of Butonov, a successful massage therapist and doctor of sports medicine. Butonov's own history in Soviet sports and the circus also involves a series of betrayals – but not romantic in nature. Butonov is betrayed by the promises made by an idealistic system and the reality of cheating and bribes. Butonov's past is developed in a separate chapter entirely devoted to him – outside the time of the main narrative. Medea herself is involved in a plot of betrayal – her sister slept with her husband, leading to the birth of the same Nika of the first plot. Medea's plot unfolds gradually, as present circumstances give rise to recollections of her past. The reader thus horizontally constructs each story of betrayal, while at the same time making parallel connections among the three plots which give the novel depth. Medea's understanding of the course of events is described in terms antithetic to

⁷ *Kazus Kukotskogo* was originally published as *Puteshestvie v sed'muiu storonu sveta* in *Novyi mir*, 2000.

conventional historiography, "Может быть, потому, что она знала: кроме обычных причинно-следственных связей, между событиями существуют иные, которые связывают из иногда явно, иногда тайно, иногда и вовсе непостижимо" (73). The title of the novel implies yet another tale of mythic betrayal informing the novel's structure. The mythical Medea's revenge is never actualized in this novel, but stands in the background as a possibility and, according to Shcherbina, gives texture to this novel of tragic redemption and forgiveness.⁸

Kazus Kukotskogo is likewise complex in terms of plot construction, consisting of a realistic and a metaphysical plane. The realistic narrative spans the Soviet era, from Pavel Alekseevich Kukotskii's childhood in the early years of the Revolution to his adopted daughter Tania's rebellion in the sixties to her daughter Zhenia's life in the late days of the Soviet era. Parts One, Three and Four follow this multigenerational story. The metaphysical plane – confined entirely to Part Two – involves characters who are alternate versions of all the main characters from the realistic plane in an allegorical search for meaning in life and the afterlife. These characters ostensibly experience another plane of existence.

Elena Kukotskaia – Pavel Alekseevich's wife and Tania's mother – is the central figure in this plot. She is called "Noven'kaia" and plays the part of a new

⁸Shcherbina writes, "Читая роман, мы убеждаемся, что название 'обманка': у героини Улицкой детей и вовсе не было. Но автор все идеально рассчитал: когда, закрыв книгу, читатель вспоминает название, его тут же осеняет догадка. Названием, как ключом, он открывает потайной ход романа" (par 3). And later the reader resolves the riddle, "Но вот и разгадка заглавия: дети у Медеи, хоть и не свои – сестринские – были. Измена мужа тоже, как у мифологической Медеи, случилась. И хоть не от ее руки, а сами – дети все равно погибли. Мы живем в виртуальном (духовном) мире, бал правит судьба, которая без всякой вендетты с нашей стороны держит мир в равновесии" (par 11).

arrival, making sense of her bleak yet inspirational surroundings.⁹ We are prepared by her diary in Part One to believe that she is capable of extraordinary experience. She writes of a childhood illness during which she encounters her dead grandfather in another world, "Боль обступала меня со всех сторон, она была и больше меня, и раньше меня. Я просто была песчинкой в бесконечном потоке и то, что происходило, я догадалась, как раз и называлось 'вечность' . . ." (105). One of the main figures in the metaphysical plot called "Dlinnovolosyi" represents Tania's lover, whom Elena doesn't meet until near the end of the novel – some hundred pages after the metaphysical part. "Лицо у молодого человека было не просто знакомым, а наизусть известным: брови густые, светлые, в одну линию, верхняя губа чуть нависает над нижней. . . Он положил саксофон рядом с корзинкой, мотнул головой, залез пятерней в волосы, отбросил назад знакомым жестом. . . Полно песку в волосах – пришло в голову Елене . . ." (392). The sand of the metaphysical landscape enters her everyday reality when Elena finally meets him. The two plots remain parallel, although at moments like these, they almost intersect. Again, as in *Medea i ee deti*, the reader is more aware of the parallels than any of the characters, even Elena.

Critics have not received the fragmentary nature of Ulitskaia's novels favorably, but I will argue that Ulitskaia complicates her novels' structures to

⁹Ulitskaia claims this part derives from her own experience: "Сочинила я совсем немножко. Совсем. Я вообще визионер по природе. Вижу очень яркие и сильные... не могу сказать "сны": это не совсем точное слово. Прозрения, наверное. Они иногда объясняют происходящее или показывают точку, где я нахожусь. Поэтому почти вся "странная" вторая часть - да, это в каком-то смысле мой практический опыт" (Bossart 3).

underscore her polemic with typical Soviet historiography. Ermoshina disparages the double plot of *Kazus Kukotskogo* for the following reasons:

Маленький человек достоин большего-философского осмысления своей жизни. Так появляется прием параллельных повествований, почти не связанных друг с другом. Обычная жизнь в какой-то момент прекращается, и героиня попадает в потустороннюю среду, похожую на бред, наполненную, как кажется автору, непомерным философским смыслом и высшими идеями о добре и зле, жизни и смерти. Героиня блуждает то ли в своем помрачном сознании, то ли в загробном мире, каким он представляется автору, то ли в песчаной пустыне безвременья-сна (202).

Ermoshina does not rate this device very highly, critiquing the fact that the two parts remain isolated from one another although the narration and style of the language remains constant. Slavnikova agrees, "Идеально идеальный план, который Людмила Улицкая описала по-земному пластичным и ярким языком, именно поэтому и недостоверен в заявленном качестве. Не хватало какой-то косвенности, способности 'мыслить около'" (200). Ermoshina also feels that the Biblical symbolism of the desert and the death of the body to renew the soul is heavy-handed and too neatly delineated for the reader: "Столь жесткий контроль за повествованием действительно направляет его в нужное бетонное русло и не дает возможности читающему создать свою версию происходящего – слишком уж управляем и рукотворен поток" (203). I contend that the isolation of the two parts may be seen as more effective in the context of the relations between stories in a cycle. Like story cycles, Ulitskaia's use of parallel plots negates teleological history as it encourages the reader to participate in the community of voices that narrate each separate plot strand. As for the symbolism in *Kazus Kukotskogo*, in dialogue with

the themes of the realistic plane – abortion, family, etc. – it takes on a certain complexity it lacks on its own. Ulitskaia said in an interview, "Речь идет не о смерти. О некотором параллельном мире, в той или иной степени знакомом каждому. Мире снов, интуиции, догадок, пересечения своей, чужой и ушедшей жизни" (Bossart 3).

Kazus Kukotskogo also contains an abundance of digressions. The story of Il'ia Goldberg's many arrests and exile, his wife's illness and the fate of his sons – one of whom fathers Tania Kukotskaia's child – is given at great length in Part One. Part One also contains a lengthy chapter devoted to the life story of Vasilisa, the devout old woman who cares for Elena and Tania, before and after their entry into the Kukotskii clan. Tania's lover Sergei (Dlinnovolosyi of Part Two) is attacked by a serial killer – Semen, whose story is told in some detail at the end of Part Three. No central unifying consciousness exists to make connections between these several plots. Thematic and character-related connections do exist, however, both among the digressions and back to the main plot.

All of these life stories reveal modes of expressing dissidence.¹⁰ Goldberg stands for academic and scientific freedom. Vasilisa maintains religious beliefs. Sergei plays Western-style jazz music. Even Semen's story reveals opposition to the maltreatment of the mentally ill. All these minor characters' stories tie in with the main characters Elena, Pavel and Tania – asserting many truths against the

¹⁰Ulitskaia explained in an interview: "У меня есть простодушные читатели, которые говорят: вы написали роман об абортах. Нет. Конечно, я писала роман о свободе. Но о свободе невозможно говорить как об абстрактном понятии. Для живущего человека свобода - это всегда личное действие в данных обстоятельствах. И для меня, если хотите, "Казус Кукоцкого" - это исследование возможности реализовывать свободу в очень жестких тоталитарных условиях" (Kukulin, 9).

background of Soviet lies. Elena's illness – perhaps Alzheimer's, perhaps dementia, but in any case predicated on forgetting – symbolically relates to the forgetting of the past inherent in Soviet historiography. Pavel Alekseevich gets drunk to avoid a meeting in which he would have had to speak against his Jewish colleagues during the Doctors' Plot – and he never stops drinking. Alcoholism becomes his cowardly, yet highly effective, version of dissent. Tania rejects the life her parents desire for her and makes her own self-destructive journey of discovery. Soviet history is comprised of these personal, private and individual stories of distinctive lives which contend with one another in the novel.

The background narrative of the history of the Soviet state is always present in this novel, but it never takes center stage: history is written between the lines here as much as in the spaces between the stories in the cycles.¹¹ Ulitskaia recreates the atmosphere of fear – familiar from Trifonov's novels – right at the beginning of *Kazus Kukotskogo*, as Pavel Alekseevich, serving as a military doctor in the Second World War thinks:

Только ли социальные факторы определяют характер поколения? А может, правда, влияние звезд, или питания, или состав воды. . . Ведь говорил же учитель самого Павла Алексеевича, профессор Калинин, о «гипотонических» детях нашего века. . . Как же, наверное, они были не похожи на теперешних, с крепко сжатыми кулачками, с подогнутыми пальцами ног, с напряженными мышцами. Гипертонус. И поза боксера – сжатые кулачки защищают голову. Дети страха. Они, пожалуй, более жизнеспособны. Только вот – от чего они защищаются? От кого ждут удара? . . . Размышления об этих испуганных детях уводили Павла Алексеевича в другую область: думая о судьбах близких ему людей, он обнаруживал, что почти все они тоже уязвлены страхом (26).

¹¹The name “Kukotskii” itself has historical connotations, recalling Sergei Ivanovich Spasokukotskii, an eminent and well-known Soviet surgeon (Kuklin 179).

Everyone has rich ancestors to hide, German blood, or parents in camps. Such fears are identified and described in the narration through free indirect speech. Like Trifonov and Makanin, Ulitskaia counts on her reader to read between the lines. Fear is an unspoken secret. As will be seen more clearly below in the culmination of *Medea's* tale, Ulitskaia offers family as a sanctuary from the destructive events of Stalinist history.

As in the works of Trifonov and Makanin, Stalin's death proves to be a pivotal event in the lives of the young. Here, the funeral becomes the background for young Tania and her adopted sister Toma to have an adventure and confirm their friendship. At the news of the leader's death, the varied reactions of family members are described – from Toma's wailing to Tania's indifference to Pavel Alekseevich's relief and Elena's renewed hope that her exiled parents might now be found. Their responses recall the portrayal of Stalin's death in Trifonov's novels and other works by Ulitskaia, notably *Medea*, which will be analyzed in the next section. Tania and Toma – from different motivations – decide to attend the viewing of Stalin's body. The young girls are nearly crushed in the crowd and first Toma, then Tania, takes refuge behind a boarded-up doorway, "Они рванулись друг к другу, как разлученные возлюбленные, обнялись и замерли. Именно в этот момент они стали сестрами. Всю жизнь они помнили об этой минуте, не выветрилось воспоминание о многочасовом объятии в парадном, в десятисантиметровой близости от сдавленной толпы, от самой смерти . . ." (138). Stalin's death gives these two characters an opportunity for lifelong friendship to emerge: in his absence, bonds between people are closer, emotions

freer. Ulitskaia narrates historical event from a wholly personal standpoint: politics, economics, and social class prompt what is, in her value system, more important and lasting – human intimacy.

Public and private are nearly impossible to disentangle in *Kazus Kukotskogo*: this is a novel about one doctor's crusade to legalize abortion in the Stalin era, but even more so it is a novel of the disintegration of his marriage as a result of his political and ethical stance on abortion. It is a novel about the politicization and falsification of science in the Stalin era, but also a novel about the alcoholic friendship of two doctors.

Ulitskaia's strategies of fragmentation, juxtaposition, and parallelism have analogues in Trifonov's work. While Trifonov certainly never includes an allegorical parallel plot in his novels, the long dream sequence concluding *Drugaia zhizn'* does move in this direction. Also, the presence of a novel within the novel *Vremia i mesto* functions similarly. Trifonov's novels and novellas all consist of various plots and voices, none of which intersect or fall under the domain of an omniscient narration – even when such narration is intermittently present. Ulitskaia's parallel plot lines create a greater sense of unity among her cast of characters. The tragedy lies in the lack of communication among characters. Unlike Pekalov and the narrator in *Utrata*, her characters never meet across time. Even though their stories echo one another, Ulitskaia's characters, like Makanin's, remain unaware of their connectedness.

CHARACTER NARRATION AND NARRATIVE COMMUNITY

Ulitskaia creates a community of narrative voices in which the reader must participate much like Makanin does. But Ulitskaia depicts characters whom the dominant Soviet historical narrative cast as outsiders: Jews, Asians, the ill and elderly.¹² In addition, as noted above, a majority of her protagonists are female. Trifonov and Makanin dwell on male protagonists with rare exceptions. Yet Ulitskaia's characters do bear a striking resemblance to Trifonov's. The character of Georgii could be copied straight from Trifonov: a mediocre academic, unhappy with his wife, unable to finish his dissertation, takes a yearly pilgrimage or "ubeg" to the Crimea: "Как хорошо бы он жил здесь, в Крыму, если бы решился плюнуть на потерянные десять лет, на несостоявшееся открытие, недописанную диссертацию, которая всасывала его в себя, как злая тряпина, как только он к ней приближался. . . ." (22) Georgii is clearly a reflection of Gennadii Sergeevich, Sergei Troitskii and Pavel Evgrafovich's son Ruslan.

Characters dominate narration throughout Ulitskaia's fiction, and this fact is most evident in her novels. In *Medea i ee deti*, Medea is the most privileged character, though hers is not the only voice present. Medea's knowledge and perception are overtly commented upon in the narration: "Ощущая это глухое время бессонницей, Медея тем не менее находилась в тонкой дреме, не

¹²In an article in *Neva*, Lev Kuklin describes Ulitskaia's works, "Обобщая, можно сказать, что все рассказы Л. Улицкой – это казусы. Именно – случаи: так и было. И не более того. Но в ее творчестве наличествует не очень радующая читателя особенность: всяческие беды, уродства, болезни и прочие несчастья, включая нелепые смерти, прилипают к ее ущербным персонажам, словно мелкие гвоздики к магнету. Даунизм и сумасшествывые – частые гости на страницах ее рассказов (179).

прерывавшей ее привычных размышлений: полумолитв, полубесед, полувоспоминаний, иногда словно невзначай выходящих за пределы того, что она лично знала и видела" (46). Like Trifonov and Makanin, Ulitskaia uses insomnia as a precursor to associative character narration. Ulitskaia goes even further, though, attributing omniscience to thoughts aroused by sleeplessness: Medea knows more than can be rationally explained: "Проницательность Медеи, вообще говоря, сильно преувеличивали, но именно сегодня она оказалась в эпицентре. . ." (147). Medea is only sometimes at the center of things. This novel contains commentary on its own "narrative confusion," undermining the concept of authoritative narration.

Other characters – especially Georgii, Aleksandra, Nika, Masha and Butonov – take their turns and add their exclusive stories to the mix. Chapter Ten, in which Masha and Nika both sleep with Butonov, provides a good example. The chapter begins with each character's state of mind narrated from the outside, in language and clarity potentially unavailable to the character in the moment. The voice shifts, however, as Masha and Butonov come closer to consummating their attraction. Masha's consciousness dominates and the narration becomes her narrated monologue. Poetic imagery typical of her character along with free indirect speech takes over the scene:

Они шли вниз, к набережной, и Маша вдруг увидела со стороны, как будто с экрана, как они быстрым шагом, с видом одновременно вольным и целеустремленным несутся вдоль курортного задника с вынесенными ко входам в санаторий вазонами с олеандрами, мимо фальшивых гипсовых колонн, . . . и музыка, конечно, «О море в Гаграх». . . Все приобретало кинематографический охват и одновременно кинематографическую приплюснутость. . . . Да, да, кино разрешает игру, разрешает легкость. . . страсть. . . брызги

шампанского. . . он и она. . . мужчина и женщина. . . ночное море. . . Ника, ты гениальная, ты талантливая. . . никакой тяжести бытия. . . никаких натуженных движений к самопознанию, к самосовершенствованию, к само. . . (141-142).

The narration becomes a method of characterization as well as a reflection on the events described in this chapter. Masha's affair with Butonov is life-altering and eventually fatal: the beginning of their relationship is thus narrated with as much attention to and sympathy with her voice as her suicide will be several chapters later. Nika's relationship with Butonov is superficial, convenient and light-hearted. It is narrated summarily and punctuated by free indirect speech: "Ника никак не предполагала, что ее раздраженный совет будет принят с такой торопливой буквальностью. . . «Нехорошо как. . . Подарить, что ли, ей этого спортивного доктора? – думала Ника. – Ладно, все равно я уезжаю. Как будет, так будет . . .” (149). Inclusion of different voices narrated differently adds to the sense of a privatized past. Each voice tells a different story in a different way and each story vies for its inherent truth.

The characters' belief in the supernatural allows Ulitskaia to further undermine the authority and linearity of Soviet historical narrative in a manner that stands apart from the techniques used by Trifonov and Makanin. Trust in the otherworldly is evident in *Medea* from the beginning, "Медея не верила в случайность, хотя жизнь ее была полна многозначительными встречами, странными совпадениями и точно подогнанными неожиданностями. Однажды встреченный человек через многие годы возвращался, чтобы повернуть судьбу, нити тянулись, соединялись, делали петли и образовывали узор, который с годами делался все яснее" (10). *Medea*

believes in a higher power, which bestows meaning on even the most insignificant of connections. Ulitskaia employs a term familiar from Trifonov to evoke connectedness: *niti*. Threads that seemed strictly metaphorical in Trifonov take on a supernatural tone in Ulitskaia through her use of character narration.

In a similar way, the dead appear to the living in *Medea i ee deti*, and no character questions the veracity of these appearances, whereas in Trifonov's works the dead appear only in dreams and in Makanin's works they appear in hallucinations. After Medea's parents' untimely death, she sees them:

Они были к ней ласковы, но ничего не сказали, а когда исчезли, Медея поняла, что она вовсе не дремала. Во всяком случае, никакого перехода от сна к бодрствованию она не заметила, а в воздухе ощутила чудесный запах, она догадалась, что своим появлением, легким и торжественным, они благодарили ее за то, что она сохранила младших, и как будто освобождали ее от каких-то полномочий, которые она давно и добровольно взяла на себя (29-30).

In response, Elena describes her family's evacuation in November of 1918. The night before their departure, a relative appears to her and says an Armenian word that signals to her that she must stay behind. Medea responds to this revelation with no surprise or even curiosity, "Ты не смущайся, не пытай себя вопросами, зачем, для чего. . . Все равно мы сами не догадаемся. Помнишь, ты читала мне свой любимый отрывок из Апостола, про тусклое стекло. Все разъяснится со временем, за временем" (32). Also, Sam dreams of his mother the night after the first evening he spends with Medea. He wants to marry her and in the dream his mother says yes (56).

These appearances of the dead to the older generation are reflected in the younger generation's plot in Masha's angel. The angel teaches Masha

clairvoyance and she sees Nika and Butonov together: "Они ее не увидели, хотя она была совсем рядом. Длинной запрокинутой Нинкиной шеи она могла бы коснуться рукой. Ника улыбалась, даже, пожалуй, смеялась, но звук был выключен" (245). After this vision, which Nika's experience seems to confirm as more than a hallucination, Masha jumps from her balcony, ending her life.

Supernatural elements play an even more important role in *Kazus Kukotskogo*. As Slavnikova observes, each major character has an extraordinary ability, with the exception of Toma: "Одаренность, подключающая героев романа к неким космическим токам, одновременно делает их уязвимыми – и только Томочка, этот хорошо закупоренный горшочек, живет благополучно и все, что надо, даже ученую степень, получает своевременно" (Sub"ektivnyi obzor 200). Pavel Alekseevich has the uncanny ability to see into the human body and identify illnesses. Elena's illness, while resembling Alzheimer's or dementia, is not fully consistent with either and remains unexplained, though it seems to be connected to the time (or timelessness) spent on the metaphysical plane.¹³ Likewise, the metaphysical plot is not rationally explained. Not just these two novels, but much of Ulitskaia's *oeuvre* is characterized by an unexplained presence of the irrational in her overwhelmingly realistic works. In the short story "Zver'" an unidentifiable animal invades a woman's home and changes her life after her husband's death. Bukhara treats her own cancer with Uzbek herbs and predicts the day when she will die. Like the story "Brat Iurochka," where the truth

¹³A similar illness befalls Lialia in "Lialin Dom" and the twins' mother in "Podkydish" and "Chuzhie deti."

appears fantastic and lies appear to correspond to fact, Ulitskaia's works imply that the truth may not be predicted through rational systems, nor can it be represented in one, consistent manner through one, consistent voice. Because Ulitskaia's narration is always rooted in character, those characters' perceptions and experiences allow her to comment on varying experiences of Soviet reality and to posit illogical and even supernatural connections among events.

Both *Medea i ee deti* and *Kazus Kukotskogo* contain also narratorial commentary in the form of a lightly sardonic, casual observer of events outside of the characters' experiences. This narrative voice may be considered a parody of the authoritative narrative voice that dominates much historiography. Ulitskaia uses the device of the "authoritative" narrator not to proclaim unarguable truth, but to make light of the more weighty elements of the plot. The chapter describing Stalin's death in *Kazus Kukotskogo* opens from this point of view:

. . . растерянность тех, кто должен был теперь вести вперед советский корабль, была столь велика, что они решили сперва известить миру о его [Stalin's] болезни. Эти фальшивые бюллетени о состоянии здоровья покойника сообщали не только о постепенном ухудшении уже не существующего здоровья. Приводили медицинские слова и цифры, которые сами по себе мало что говорили обыкновенным людям, но само сочетание слов «Анализ мочи в норме» означало, что небожители тоже расстегивают ширинки, достают большим и указательным пальцами член и производят некоторое количество мочи (130).

Not only do the diverse stories of the many characters privatize history, but so also does the narrator's tone with respect to the death of the larger-than-life leader, whose most private parts are made public after death.

Jokes about the Soviet system in the narrator's voice, closely connected but not identified with Medea's consciousness, abound in *Medea*. During the

Stalin era, everyone working at Medea's clinic is invited to a meeting, "Решительно всех, включая слабоумного Раиса с асимметричной улыбкой на пол-лица. А когда велели приходить Раису, это означало, что собрание государственной важности" (51). The gravity of political meetings in the Stalin era is given a humorous touch by this playful, pseudo-authoritative narrator. Likewise, Medea's sister Aleksandra's nonconformism is diagnosed in medical terms, ". . . ее гражданская неполноценность была установлена, и ее неискоренимое легкомыслие стало диагнозом, освобождавшим ее от участия в великом деле построения... чего именно, Сандрочка не удосуживалась вникать" (74). The mocking tone continues in the narration of one character's problematic first marriage to a Lutheran, ". . . но в послереволюционные годы идея эта была забыта и даже стала смехотворной: глубокие разногласия между конфессиями без остатка развеялись в воздухе нового мира, который ни о каких шамалькальденских пунктах и знать не желал" (81). These moments of derisive political commentary serve to undermine the idea of a stolid, official historiography.

Both novels contain some first-person narrative as well, recalling Trifonov's consistent blending of first and third person. One such example is Elena's diary in *Kazus Kukotskogo*. In response to my question about the inclusion of this diary as a kind of "found document," Ulitskaia explained, "Она нашла другого способа, как описать ее болезненные состояния" (email to author). Elena asserts herself through this diary as her sense of self is weakening:

Жизнь моя сама по себе столь незначительна, и сама я столь незначительна, что мне никогда бы в голову не пришло что-то записывать, если бы не одно обстоятельство – память моя делается все хуже и хуже. . . . Ужасно, что тогда вся прожитая жизнь делается бессмысленной. Если человек все про свою жизнь забыл – и родителей, и детей, и любовь, и все радости, и все потери, -- тогда зачем он жил?" (97)

Elena's diary acts as a counter-narrative much like the "I" sections in *Dom na naberezhnoi*. Though she is a player in the main drama – like the "I" – her voice is seldom heard. Like Trifonov, Ulitskaia plays with the reader's tendency to trust first-person narrators.

Medea contains two types of first-person narration. First, the entirety of several of Medea's and Elena's letters are included. These do not contrast the main narration, which often enough reveals these two characters' participation in events. Rather, the letters serve as characterization through language. Ostensibly, the women write to one another in French and maintain a level of girlish intimacy into their old age. The second first-person moment is the epilogue. In response to my question about the function of the epilogue, Ulitskaia wrote that she included it "for idiots": "А вдруг не поняли? Прокричала в нескольких строках то, чему посвящен весь роман: человечество представляет собой единую семью" (email to author). The first-person narration here serves to further involve the reader in the intimate world of the novel. This narrator also reveals the bias in her chronicle, "Стихи ее [Masha] оценивать я не берусь – они часть моей жизни, потому что то последнее лето я тоже провела с моими детьми в Поселке, в доме Медеи" (253). Again,

like Trifonov's first-person narrators, Ulitskaia's are presented as potentially unreliable.

Both novels, as we have seen, contain first and third-person narrative sections, and within the third-person the voice is not uniform: it moves from a universally mocking tone to a very subjective and often sympathetic narrated monologue. The novels' structures also undermine the unitary, univocal nature of Soviet historiography, and the presence of unexplained or supernatural events, or events which do not serve to further either story or theme, undermines the relentless rationality (or rationalization) of that writing of history. As Cox observed in the story cycles she analyzed, these kinds of events open the reader's mind to alternate possibilities and sabotage the dominant narrative of history, exposing its teleological foundation.

Like Trifonov, Ulitskaia combines narrative voices to draw attention to the narrativity of history. Like Mukanin, Ulitskaia combines multiple narratives to create community through her fiction, but community is even more important for Ulitskaia than for Mukanin. Ulitskaia's fiction also establishes relationships: the relationship between characters and among character, narrator and reader motivates much of the fiction's interest. Ulitskaia recreates the tone of intimate conversation in many of her best narratives, thereby privatizing history to a greater extent than even Trifonov and Mukanin do.

For example, in the title story of the collection "Bednye rodstvenniki" poor Asia visits her affluent cousin Anna Markovna to pick up cast-off clothes, food,

and money and to gossip : "Ей не надо было каждый раз придумывать вопросы, она спрашивала последовательно о всех членах семьи, и обычно Анна Марковна коротко отвечала, иногда увлекаясь и вкладывая в свои ответы подробности, предназначенные для более значительных собеседников" (26). These details include her daughter's fiancé, his father's alcoholism, and his mother's virtue. Asia for her part contributes news about poor relations, who has a new coat or new grandchildren. Each gains from the exchange, showing differing relationships to what is told: "Они плели этот житейский вздор, Анна Марковна – снисходительно, с ощущением выполняемого родственного долга, Ася – чистосердечно и старательно" (30). When tea is served they switch to French – a special language of intimacy since their schooldays.

This intimate, yet unbalanced, relationship is mirrored on the level of the narration, with Asia asking questions, listening carefully, and Anna providing information. A special language communicates the story to the reader, who is avid for the details the narrator has to offer, mirroring Asia's relationship to Anna Markovna. The reader's position is rewarded in the end. The narrator conveys in the same gossipy tone the truth about Asia's character: she is not a charity case, but in fact the source of charity herself. She delivers to a bed-ridden friend the food, money and news that Anna Markovna gave her ". . . и Ася Шафран, наша полоумная родственница, сияла" (35). The use of the first-person plural

possessive pronoun in this closing statement includes the reader in the family and in the secret of Asia's true identity.¹⁴

Markers of shared evaluations and assumptions that demand reader participation in the creation of meaning pepper all of the stories in the collection *Bednye rodstvenniki*, bearing witness to the intimacy and collusion between narrator and reader. The story "Doch' Bukhary" describes the efforts of an Uzbek woman – abandoned by her Russian husband in Moscow – to secure a future for her daughter, who has Down's syndrome, after her death. The story is introduced from the point of view of the community:

В архаической и слободской московской жизни, ячеистой, закоулочной, с центрами притяжения возле обледенелых колонок и дворяных складов, не существовало семейной тайны. Не было даже обыкновенной частной жизни, ибо любая заплата на подштанниках, развевающих на общественных веревках, была известна всем и каждому.

Слышимость, видимость и физическое вторжение соседствующей жизни были ежеминутны и неизбежны, и возможность выживания лишь тем и держалась, что раскаты скандала справа уравнивались пьяной и веселой гармонью слева (112).

This third-person narrator's self-conscious statement about the centrality of gossip in the community draws attention to its importance for the story's theme. Into these close quarters Bukhara moves and immediately becomes the object of gossip: "Бухара – так прозвал двор анонимную красавицу – не терпела чужих взглядов, а пока забор не был выстроен, ни одна соседка не упускала случая, проходя, заглянуть в притягательные окна" (116). The narration

¹⁴Ryzhova considers this story to be artistically weak, specifically citing the ending, "написанный в стиле плакатной публицистики советских времен . . . Впрочем, начало XX века открыло удивительную сторону массового сознания: во всех странах плакат не только понимают, но и искренне верят ему" (11). This may be a weakness, but does not negate my interpretation. Invoking the early Soviet ad campaigns may serve to further the connection of the reader to her history.

continues to reflect the view of Bukhara from the outside – Bukhara as a curiosity. Bukhara of course is not even her real name, but a city in Uzbekistan which the neighbors substitute for her foreign name and use to solidify her standing as an outsider. Initially, it seems that gossip is a malicious force here.

Bukhara's daughter Mila is rescued at the end by her mother's ingenuity and is rewarded by becoming part of this communal communication, approved of and looked after by the community. Bukhara marries her off to a mentally challenged young man and they literally live happily ever after: ". . . они были так заняты друг другом, что совсем не замечали чужого, нехорошего интереса" (154). Bukhara herself leaves to die in Uzbekistan. The story ends with the housekeeper Pasha sitting on a bench gossiping with other old ladies:

-- Много вы понимаете! Да Бухара всех нас умней оказалась! Все, все наперед рассчитала! И Милочку выдала за хорошего человека, и сама, как приехала в это самое свое. . . так на пятый день и померла. А вы говорите!

Но никто ничего и не говорил. Все так и было (155).

Gossip has created a communal consensus about Bukhara and her daughter. Once Bukhara accepts that isolation will not serve her or her daughter's best interests and participates in the life of her community, the stories told about her change.

In the novel *Medea i ee deti* a similar relationship is maintained. The events described are the common fare of gossips. The family bond is represented by the sharing of intimate details. Two parallel betrayals form the crux of the plot and secrets are not revealed, except by the narrator to the reader. This narrator is given character only through an epilogue. The last lines

of the novel serve to finally confirm the story as intimate, shared information, bringing the reader into this special group as an insider: "Это удивительно приятное чувство – принадлежать к семье Медеи, к такой большой семье, что всех ее членов даже не знаешь в лицо и они теряются в перспективе бывшего, не бывшего и будущего" (253).

The sharing of intimacy, bringing the reader into the initiated, is another function of these works. Unlike Soviet history, Ulitskaia's history is inclusive. The communal narrative voice of the *Bednye rodstvenniki* stories is colloquial, casual, and makes assumptions about the reader, creating an inclusive network of family and friends. The narrator of *Medea i ee deti* makes the reader part of the family chronicle. Ulitskaia creates a particular kind of omniscience in which everything is known by the narrator or narrators and an assumption is made that the reader can know everything as well. The creation of an exclusive bond between narrator and character or among characters is contrary to the narrative tone of Soviet historical writing.

In the Soviet historiographic discourse, the past was co-opted for the future. Progress was the dominant narrative and abstract representations of class and nation obscured individual stories. Ulitskaia turns all of this around in her fiction that strives for a truthful representation of diverse individual past experiences. Ulitskaia's narratives feature the elderly, the poor, the sick, the social outcasts – characters whose stories have no place in the official narrative and whose histories are transmitted through narration emulating intimate communication and community.

INDIVIDUAL BIOGRAPHY AND FAMILY CHRONICLE AS METAPHORS OF THE SOVIET EXPERIENCE

Ulitskaia's works often portray female lives spanning the Soviet era. The symbolism of these characters' lives is often heightened by their names: Medea, Bronka, Bukhara and even Sonia. The short stories "Vtorogo marta togo zhe goda," "Bron'ka," "Gulia" and the *povesti* "Veselye pokhoroni" and "Sonechka" all present biographies of central characters with historical significance. Trifonov and Mukanin reclaim metaphors from the natural world; Ulitskaia reclaims metaphors related to familial relationships. Here I will analyze primarily *Medea*, the most lengthy and fully elaborated example of Ulitskaia's biography-metaphors. The strategies at work in the novel are the same as those replicated in miniature in the short stories.

Medea is a novel of private history, where the biography of an individual is conflated with the history of an epoch. I contend that Shcherbina exaggerates in her indictment of this work: "И это, пожалуй, первое произведение, в котором советская эпоха описана и осмыслена как стиль частной жизни" (Par. 8). *Medea i ee deti* may be read as part biography, part family chronicle. Mini-biographies of each minor character are scattered throughout the narrative. The characters may not be important to the plot, but it is important just to assert that each individual has a biography.¹⁵ For example, Miller, Aleksandra's first husband, is given a detailed life history, as are several of Medea's nieces who play no role in either plot. In Soviet historiography, only heroes and leaders

¹⁵This is a strategy Chudakov associates with Turgenev and traditional Russian realism; see introduction.

deserved full biographical development; in Ulitskaia, everyone's life story is important.

Explicit parallels are drawn between Medea's life and family and the Soviet Union, conflating biography and history. Medea was born in 1900 and she comes of age along with the new state (her parents die in 1916); she dies in the late 70s or early 1980s, before the collapse of Soviet power. She meets her husband Sam in 1929 when Stalin consolidates power, and Sam dies just before Stalin, appearing to Medea to predict Stalin's death. Their marriage is intimately tied up with the Stalin era. Sam dies in March, exactly one year before Stalin. Medea knows that Sam will appear to her after death:

Первый раз он приснился ей в начале марта, незадолго до годовщины смерти. Сон был странным и не принес утешения. Прошло несколько дней, прежде чем он разъяснился.

Самуил приснился ей в белом халате – это было хорошо, -- с руками, испачканными гипсом или мелом, и с очень бледным лицом. Он сидел за рабочим столом и стучал молоточком по какому-то неприятному остро-металлическому предмету, но это был не зубной протез. Потом он обернулся к ней, встал. И оказалось, что в руках у него портрет Сталина, почему-то вверх ногами. Он взял молоточек, постучал им по краю стекла и аккуратно его вынул. Но пока он манипулировал со стеклом, Сталин куда-то исчез, а на его месте обнаружилась большая фотография молодой Сандручки.

В тот же день объявили о болезни Сталина, а через несколько дней и о смерти. Медея наблюдала живое горе и искренние слезы, а также бессловесные проклятия тех, кто не мог это горе разделить, но оставалась вполне равнодушной к этому событию. Гораздо больше она была озабочена второй половиной сна: что делала во сне Сандручка и что предвешает ее присутствие. . . (163).

Soon thereafter Medea finds Aleksandra's letter to Sam revealing their relationship and Nika's true parentage, and she prepares for her trip to visit Elena. On the long train ride she observes:

Все это было для нее отдаленным гулом чуждой жизни. Теперешние дорожные попутчики, эти отдельные люди, образующие народ, теперь громко тревожились, боялись своего сиротского будущего, плакали, другие, молчаливые, тихо радовались смерти тирана, но и те и другие должны были теперь что-то решать заново, научиться жить в изменившемся за одну ночь мира.

Странно было то, что и Медея, по совершенно другому поводу, переживала похожее чувство (173)

The feeling and effect of Stalin's death is made both concrete and personal through these aspects of Medea's biography. Her privately experienced emotions parallel, but are not identical to, the public sense of mourning. Her loss followed by acknowledgement of betrayal also parallels the entire Soviet post-Stalin experience. These parallels draw attention to large-scale historical events, but most of all they accentuate Medea's private experience.

The parallel relationship – Butonov with Nika/Masha – also has political ramifications: Butonov's appearance is tied to the Soviet state through the following imagery: "Он все более приближался к собирательному облику строителя коммунизма, известному по красно-белым плакатам, нарисованным прямыми, без затей линиями, горизонтальными и вертикальными, с глубокой поперечной меткой на подбородке" (89). Butonov is no less than a Soviet poster boy, the very embodiment of a popular hero, and he is the downfall of the younger generation's heroine, Masha. As discussed above, the motif of betrayal connects the plots, and Soviet imagery connects these personal stories of betrayal to large-scale political betrayal of the people by the Soviet state.

Medea's character – like that of the nation and state she represents – is not entirely innocent. She tries to bury her past hurt in a way which parallels

Soviet cover-ups: "За долгие годы – почти тридцать лет, -- прошедшие с его смерти, само прошлое видоизменилось, и единственная горькая обида, выпавшая ей от мужа – как ни удивительно, уже после его смерти, -- растворилась, а облик его в конце концов приобрел значительность и монументальность, которой при жизни и в помине не было" (45). Medea perceives herself as solely responsible for collecting, preserving and passing on family history. This kind of sole responsibility recalls the unitary nature of Soviet historical thought, and carries with it the same dangers: "Это был настоящий семейный архив, и, как всякий настоящий архив, он укрывал до времени неразгласимые тайны" (150). Medea does not use her secrets, however, to manipulate people, unlike the Soviet state.

When historical events are mentioned in the novel, they are either elided (communicated implicitly) or explicitly personalized. The novel opens with an appeal to Medea as witness to history by a young Tatar, and her responses all bring large-scale events – such as the deportation of Crimean Tatars – down to the level of personal life story. The civil war is represented by the death of her brothers: "Оба впоследствии и погибли, один от красных, другой от белых, и всю жизнь Медея писала их имена в одну строку в поминальной записке... (28)." The Tatar man who comes to ask her for stories of his people's past she discovers is the grandson of the driver who rescued Elena and her mother in 1918, alluding to the turbulent history of the Crimea in the Civil War.

Ulitskaia's use of ellipses is subtle. The first elliptical reference to Stalinism occurs in the first descriptions of the first chapter: Medea's contemporaries have

either died or been resettled ("были выселены") and she was saved probably because of her last name. Later, the visit from the young Tatar causes Medea to engage in associative meditation: "Всплыло в памяти то, о чем мы не так уж любим вспоминать: о мытарствах тех лет" (11). She remembers Samuil's life, and his biography remains incomplete: a poor childhood, youth in Odessa, influence of the Jewish Enlightenment, followed by Zionism and Marxism, and exile in 1912. Samuil ended up in Moscow for the revolution:

. . . начальничал там на среднем уровне, поскольку был обряжен в чоновскую кожу и откомандирован в Тамбовскую губернию. На этом месте славная биография таинственным образом обрывается, зияет пробел, и далее он становится совершенно обыкновенным человеком, лишенным всякого высшего интереса к жизни, зубным протезистом, оживляющимся лишь при виде полнотелых дам (49).

As in Trifonov's works, aspects of the past remain unmentioned, although censorship no longer can account for these gaps. Ulitskaia's occasional use of elliptical historical narration attests to the artistic effectiveness of Trifonov's style.

Some of the novel's imagery contrasts Medea's life and character to the character of the times through which she lived:

. . . и эта безотлучная жизнь, которая сама по себе стремительно и бурно менялась – революции, смена правительств, красные, белые, немцы, румыны, одних выселяли, других, пришлых, безродных, вселяли, -- придавала в конце концов Медее прочность дерева, вплетшего корни в каменистую почву, под неизменным солнцем, совершающим свое ежедневное и ежегодное движение, да под неизменным ветром с его сезонными запахами то высыхающих на берегу водорослей, то вянущих под солнцем фруктов, то горькой полыни (165)

The novel is not simply allegorical. Medea's relationship to the nation and state to which her life is intimately tied is complex. She carries within herself, most importantly, a link to the past and the future through her bonds with her family

and these are the bonds shown to be at odds with the values of the Soviet system:

На этом самом месте, выписывая крупными идеальными буквами родные имена, она всегда переживала одно и то же состояние: как будто она плывет по реке, а впереди нее, разлетающимся треугольником, ее братья и сестры, их молодые и маленькие дети, а позади, таким же веером, но гораздо более длинным, исчезающим в легкой ряби воды, ее умершие родители, деды – словом, все предки, имена которых она знала, и те, чьи имена рассеялись в ушедшем времени. И ей нисколько не трудно было держать в себе всю эту тьму народа, живого и мертвого, и каждое имя она писала со вниманием, вызывая в памяти лицо, облик, если так можно выразиться, вкус этого человека. . . 186

Medea is intimately connected with the land, as is her family: "Для местных жителей Медея Мендес давно уже была частью пейзажа" (6). Her relatives start to appear when spring plants start coming out of the ground. A more direct treatment of history and the land is provided when the narrative voice merges with Georgii's:

Он любовался этой землей, ее выветренными горами и сглаженными предгорьями, она была скифская, греческая, татарская и хотя теперь стала совхозной и давно тосковала без человеческой любви и медленно вымирала от бездарности хозяев, история все-таки от нее не уходила, витала в весеннем блаженстве и напоминала о себе каждым камнем, каждым деревом. . . (16).

Medea's family represents the Soviet family of nations and they are intimately bound up with their land. Shcherbina observes this as well, "Национальность родственников Медеи тоже мифологична: это та самая советская 'дружбонародная' семья, где перемешались греки, евреи, грузины, русские, корейцы, узбеки" (paragraph 8). This is shown in the novel at Masha's funeral: "Когда автобус с гробом подъехал к церкви, уже собралась толпа. Семья Синопли была представлена всеми своими ветвями –

ташкентской, тбилисской, вильнюсской, сибирской. . . К разномастному церковному золоту окладов, подсвечников, облачений примешивалась и многоцветная медь синоплинских голов" (248). As Ulitskaia herself admits, the epilogue makes this connection abundantly clear and extends this family of nations beyond the confines of the Soviet Union:

Я очень рада, что через мужа оказалась приобщена к этой семье и что мои дети несут в себе немного греческой крови, Медеиной крови. До сих пор в Поселок приезжают Медеины потомки – русские, литовские, грузинские, корейские. Мой муж мечтает, что в будущем году, если будут деньги, мы привезем сюда нашу маленькую внучку, родившуюся от нашей старшей невестки, черной американки родом из Гаити. . . . Это удивительно приятное чувство – принадлежать к семье Медеи, к такой большой семье, что всех ее членов даже не знаешь в лицо и они теряются в перспективе бывшего, не бывшего не будущего. (253)

Medea i ee deti may be read as a historical novel recasting the Stalinist concept of the "Great Family" to include a wider range of types and a broader historical dimension.¹⁶ This is part of the way Ulitskaia assaults Soviet historiography.¹⁷

¹⁶Clark traces the development of a "Great Family" myth in Stalinist novels in *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 114-135.

¹⁷Ulitskaia also spars with the mythology of village prose. This novel in particular may be seen as a polemic with that school. As Shcheglova demonstrates, Ulitskaia's elderly characters contrast those familiar from village prose. In village prose, the older generation also lives in the country and relatives come to rejuvenate and revitalize spiritually through connection to land, but their biographies are quite different:

О жизни Медеи Л. Улицкая рассказывает предельно конкретно: не скрывает она ни сложности ее жизни, ни многочисленных потерь, постигших героиню и ее семью. Да и саму идею все-таки не идеализирует: может Медея, пишет автор, быть и скуповатой, и замкнутой. Что уж говорить о том, что ни о каком "золотом веке", то бишь о прежнем прекрасном времени, когда всем жилось куда лучше, Медея и не слыхала: разыщешь его, пожалуй, среди тяжелых ударов судьбы, на которые Бог для нее не поскупился. Старики и старухи из "деревенской" прозы лишены опоры на реальность, они скорее есть сюжетные знаки, символы, призванные намекать на царивший некогда в жизни гармоничный миропорядок. Тут даже не хочется напоминать совершенно очевидную истину, что молодость этих героев приходится, между прочим, у кого на годы предреволюционные, когда деревню раздирали противоречия, и кого – на годы гражданской войны, а у кого – и на коллективизацию. Когда же именно мог царить в деревне сахаринный "лад", воспетый, к примеру, В. Беловым, совершенно непонятно. Впрочем, искать истоки

Individuals' biographies function metaphorically, transforming what the Soviets wrote as collective experience into intensely private experience. Ulitskaia also uses family history as an extended metaphor for the history of the Soviet Union in several of her works. Many critics have called Ulitskaia's works "family chronicles" (Kuz'minskii, Novikova, Ermoshina, Danilkin, Ryzhova, and Galina). One critic writes, "Автор будто и не роман пишет, а ветвистое генеалогическое древо рисует" (Babintseva, par.9). Another provides a summary of the connection between family and history in *Kazus Kukotskogo*: "Герои нового романа Улицкой – столичные медики и биологи, чья биография формировалась биографией страны на протяжении почти всего XX века. Отсюда – вся положенная историческая атрибутика. Война, эвакуация, дело врачей, гонения на генетику, похороны Сталина. . ." (Galina, 10). Ulitskaia herself makes her intention explicit:

Жизнь нескольких поколений советских людей была запрограммирована государством, которое стремилось очень последовательно разрушить семейные ценности, и государство сильно в этом преуспело. Павлик Морозов был одним из предлагаемых героев. Общая установка на то, что "общественное" выше "личного", привела к тому, что люди считали нормой предательство на семейном уровне. А между тем именно семья формирует человеческую личность (Zaitsev, 8).

Placing family history at the center of her narratives is another way in which Ulitskaia participates in the privatization of the past and reclaims Soviet history from Soviet historians. Placing multiple generations into her narratives provides a ready-made historical plot. Continuity and contrasts among the generations are

этого "лада" надо вовсе не в жизни, а в типично славянофильском идеализировании прошлого (187).

natural and provide an outlet for historical commentary. At the same time, Ulitskaia responds to the Soviet historiographical co-optation of the family into its symbolic system.

Like the short story cycle, the family chronicle has an important place in the Russian literary tradition. Turgenev, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Leskov and Bunin, the latter two often named by Ulitskaia as favorite writers, made important contributions to the tradition defined in Russia by Tolstoy and Aksakov. A characterization of the classic form of the genre in Russia shows the important connection between Russian history and the genre:

«Семейная хроника» -- романный жанр, основное содержание которого составляет показ соотношения человека как части целого (семьи, рода) и истории. Предметом изображения служит бытовое течение жизни нескольких поколений данного рода. Основой сюжета «хроники» является не интрига, а временная последовательность составляющих ее содержание событий (Gracheva, 65).

Gracheva notes the rise of the genre in Russia in the 1860s, a time of social upheaval and change and also links the genre with times that feel like the end of an epoch, especially the early twentieth century. Both apply to the time of Ulitskaia's writing – the aftermath of the Soviet period – equally well. Ulitskaia pens novels of family history that counteract the familiar Soviet narratives of the past.

CONCLUSION

The centrality of history to the fiction of Iurii Trifonov, Vladimir Makanin, and Liudmila Ulitskaia takes similar forms. Ulitskaia, like Trifonov and Makanin, fragments her plots through a reliance on character narration blended with

impersonal third-person and first-person narrative components. Ulitskaia's most innovative work is done in the genre of the short story cycle, in which she writes multiple stories of multiple characters who experience the past in similar ways. The themes of community and isolation so prevalent in Makanin's prose take on a more concrete, personalized, and conventionalized tone through Ulitskaia's insistence on narrating individual private life. Her characters' very lives become metaphors for the entire Soviet era.

CONCLUSION

The drastic social, political, and cultural changes that marked the fall of the Soviet Union changed the conditions under which literature was written, published, and read. Nevertheless, continuity may be perceived in certain aspects of literary tradition. Trifonov pioneered ways of representing history through fiction that polemicized with Soviet historiography while maintaining literary integrity. His methods remain effective in post-Soviet conditions, as the works of Makanin and Ulitskaia demonstrate. Makanin and Ulitskaia's literary works and reputations do not allow for the assertion that Russian literature or Russian writers have lost their moral status. These two writers, following in the footsteps of Trifonov, maintain the elevated position traditionally accorded writers in Russian society by tenaciously striving for more truthful ways of engaging history through fiction.

I argue that these three writers are actively involved in polemics with Soviet historiographical style, of which the *Kratkii kurs* is emblematic. They interrogate Soviet historiography on four fronts: emplotment, characterization, narration, and use of imagery. Many of their techniques are similar, yet others remain distinct.

The plot of Soviet historiography was one of linear progress punctuated by heroic struggles with enemies. Trifonov dismantles this plot by organizing his

narratives as characters' memories arranged associatively. Associative narration counteracts teleology by privileging process over result, negating determined cause-and-effect relationships. A reliance on character narration motivated by unreliable character memory allows Trifonov to expose the Soviet practice of using ellipses to skip over events that did not fit into the progress scheme.

Makanin continues Trifonov's practice of dismantling the Soviet linear narrative through his own circular stories consisting of multiple, parallel narrations. Makanin's works stand apart, however, in their complexity. Makanin's works demand a high level of reader participation. While Trifonov's multiple, fragmented plots are united by either character (*Starik, Drugaia zhizn'*) or setting (*Dom na naberezhnoi, Vremia i mesto*), Makanin's are often united only by theme. In Trifonov's works, character narration makes a separate analysis of plot and character nearly impossible; in Makanin's works, plot and narration are inseparable. Makanin's idiosyncratic narrators provide clues for linking his seemingly disparate parallel plots.

Ulitskaia works with plot fragmentation as well, but her work in the genre of short story cycles sets her apart. Like many practitioners of this genre, Ulitskaia collects stories whose structures and themes interact so that each individual story, read in the context of the cycle, gains a new level of meaning. Her interrelated stories fundamentally challenge a teleological worldview. If Trifonov's plots resemble mosaics and Makanin's comprise balanced parallel lines, Ulitskaia's plots are cyclical. Rather than cause and effect, Ulitskaia's cycles encourage a reading that begins where it ends, as the last story of a cycle

may shed a new light on the first. Her novels are as cyclical as her short story cycles. Ulitskaia's novels mirror the human life cycle through their focus on characters whose lives span the Soviet era. She polemicizes with the dominant emplotment of Soviet historiography by asserting that a human life irrationally lived has as much value as a Marxist conception of progress.

Each writer also combines various types of narrators within single works of fiction, undermining the authoritative narrative of Soviet historiography without abandoning a search for truth. Trifonov manipulates readers' expectations about the reliability of first-person narration to reveal each individual's complicity in the Stalin era. By combining many varied narrative voices that narrate the past differently, he also calls attention to the narrativity of history but positively values that narrativity. By combining many individuals' stories, Trifonov approaches a potentially more honest way to approach the writing of the past. Ulitskaia follows his lead, combining multiple individual stories to recreate a communal rather than collective history. Her narrative communities involve the reader's participation: her narrators do not know how much they have in common; it is up to the reader to perceive the connections. Mukanin likewise relies on the reader to join in the writing of history by interweaving narratives with complex connections left to the reader to make.

Mukanin and Ulitskaia address in similar ways the theme of individual isolation in Soviet and post-Soviet society through plot and narrative structure. Though the themes and plots of Ulitskaia's stories interact, her characters do not. Her protagonists remain isolated within their own narratives, and only the reader

perceives their common situations and shared suffering. Ulitskaia draws in and empowers her reader to overcome isolation through this knowledge, even while her characters, such as Medea, remain isolated. Makanin, on the other hand, allows his characters to create community through narration, exemplified by Pekalov's physical appearance to the presumed (fictional) author of his story. All three writers reject self-sufficient, authoritative rhetoric through the openness of their narratives that involve the reader in the rewriting of the past.

In addition to polemical plot and narrative devices, Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia oppose Soviet historiographical characterization through their resolute promotion of the role of individuals vis-à-vis the collective. All three writers produce intensely private stories of individuals' lives. Each writer employs character narration to personalize the Soviet "de-peopled" version of events. They reject collective heroes such as classes or nations, and at the same time they reject the cult of personality surrounding state leaders and heroes by focusing on outsiders, underachievers, and eccentrics.

Likewise, Trifonov, Makanin, and Ulitskaia each employ metaphors and symbolic imagery in their reclamation of figurative language from its employment by Soviet historiographers. Trifonov uses violent, destructive natural forces to represent the flow of time. These same forces were productive and in harmony with human endeavors in Soviet rhetoric. Trifonov instead posits new metaphors for time – *niti* – which unite individual experiences rather than collectivizing them. Makanin's nature is untouchable and beyond human control or intervention. Instead of *niti*, he has his characters literally squeeze and dig through small

spaces. Access to the past is difficult and unpredictable for his characters, but it is a project worth undertaking and Makanin places guides in his fiction to ensure that his readers remain hopeful. Ulitskaia's metaphors revolve around private and family life. Her main trope is family and she does more than others to reclaim this metaphor from its Soviet co-optation.

Trifonov, Makanin and Ulitskaia are not the only Russian writers who interrogate and reject the style and content of Soviet historiography through their fiction. They are, however, three writers whose works consistently engage the Soviet version of the past through both direct refutation and a constructive alternative. These three writers refuse to relinquish the writer's role as more than writer: they encourage a belief in the possibility of creating a genuine, shared experience of the past through their fictional texts. Their works support Hayden White's claim that "[o]ne can produce an imaginary discourse about real events that may not be less true for being imaginary" (*Content of the Form* 57). Unlike many of their contemporaries both in Russia and abroad, these writers, I argue, cannot be categorized as postmodern. Although they do compose open-ended texts that blur the line between history and fiction, they maintain a belief in the fiction's power to represent the past and the writer's responsibility to attempt to do so. The community they each create among writer, reader, and character through their fictional strategies supports my assertion of their belief in the continued serious role of literature.

By bringing these three writers together, I demonstrate a continuity between late-Soviet and post-Soviet writing. I also establish the relevance of

Soviet and post-Soviet fiction to debates about the representation of the Soviet past. Trifonov, Mukanin, and Ulitskaia participate in a larger project of privatizing and personalizing history through their character-driven and fragmented works of prose fiction.

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