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Narcissistic elements in Lermontov's work

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goes to sleep and sees before him rich viands and sparkling wines; he devours with delight the airy gifts of fancy, and he seems to feel relief, but as soon as he awakes - the vision vanishes." V.N:131

It may be added that, as opposed to an emotional insight which fosters the ability to confront reality, the intellectual insight rather obfuscates reality. An over-intellectual interpretation of reality is deceptive as it presents too logical a picture. Logic is the narcissist's defense against the complex richness of life which includes the emotions. Pechorin's reflections on love well illustrate this point:

"... true, infinite passion, can be mathematically expressed by means of a line falling from a given point into space: the secret of that infinity lies solely in the impossibility of reaching a goal, that is to say, reaching the end." V.N.:101

The intellect becomes in Pechorin's life a kind of straitjacket which forces him to repeat the same experience over and over again. Logics are by definition unchangeable. Pechorin chooses a small sector of reality where he is in control. This is the sector of rational and logical intellect. Here

he "feels" self-assured but the price he has to pay is the eternal repetition of the same experience, in other words, boredom and emptiness.

"... here we are, two intelligent people; we know beforehand that one can argue endlessly about anything, and therefore we do not argue; we know almost all the secret thoughts of each other; one word is a whole story for us; between us there can be no exchange of feelings and thoughts: we know everything about each other that we wish to know, and we do not wish to know anything more." V.N:78

It is against this background that the relationship between Pechorin and Grushnitsky should be examined. As the reader will remember "Princess Mary" centers around a pseudo-triangle drama enacted between the naively fervent Grushnitsky, the impressionable and wilful Princess Mary and Pechorin who both wants and does not want her. This latter aspect is determined by the fact that the real psychological drama takes place between Grushnitsky and Pechorin, where Grushnitsky, with his exaggerated display of emotions, acts as a foil for the emotionally controlled Pechorin. It is remarkable that whenever Pechorin mentions Mary his statement is immediately followed by a reference to Grushnitsky.

'... I note that various nasty rumours have already been spread in town about the young princess and me. Grushnitsky will have to pay for this!' V.N:115

'I shall sleep badly tonight', she said to me, when the mazurka was over. 'It's Grushnitsky's fault' I replied. V.N:112[1]

Pechorin's intense emotional involvement with the young officer can be traced to the fact that he sees in Grushnitsky's behaviour and attitudes the reflection of what he himself would be like, if he lost his intellectual self control. It is noteworthy that Pechorin's initial reflections in the introductory passage to the story proper foreshadow the tragedy that is to follow. The question "Who here needs passions, desires, regrets?" contains an ominous note, as it gradually becomes clear that Pechorin for all his intellectual superiority envies Grushnitsky's ability to experience life emotionally. The usual view of the Pechorin - Grushnitsky relationship is that Grushnitsky is a kind of parody and caricature of the Byronic hero and as such

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1) Also compare pp. 93, 98, 100, 101, 107, 114.

irritates Pechorin's refined sensibility. [2] Although this view has literary validity considering Lermontov's preoccupation with Byron, it fails to explain the full complexity of the relationship between the two adversaries. Grushnitsky is to Pechorin not just a fool to be scorned, but a real enemy to be fought. Pechorin's carefully planned campaign to destroy Grushnitsky indicates that the young cadet plays a central part in the protagonist's life space. It is noteworthy that already at their very first meeting Pechorin recognizes Grushnitsky as a potential victim.

"I feel that one day we shall meet on a narrow path, and one of us will fare ill". V.N:71

This feeling is sustained throughout the story and is echoed in the view of other characters. Dr. Werner, the spa doctor, senses the part Grushnitsky plays in Pechorin's life and comments:

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2) John Mersereau sees Grushnitsky as a poseur "who has only learned to ape the external characteristics of the Byronic hero." Similarly Dmitry Chizhevsky regards Grushnitsky as "a parody of the Byronic hero" and most of the Soviet critics hold a similar view.(cf.И.Гурвич"Загадочен ли Печорин?" Вопросы литературы,1983,2, стр.111-135)

"I have a presentiment that poor Grushnitsky is going to be your victim ..." V.N:79

The doctor's premonition is justified as Pechorin with every passing day grows more obsessed with Grushnitsky recognizing in him the hated projection of his own vulnerability. He seeks out the young officer and follows his every move. It is therefore not surprising that Pechorin overhears several conversations concerning himself as he never lets Grushnitsky out of sight.

"I hid in the crowd of men and began to make my observations. Grushnitsky stood next to the young princess and was saying something to her with great animation ... I softly approached from behind, in order to overhear their conversation". V.N:110

Most critics see the "eavesdropping device" employed several times (according to Nabokov, Pechorin eavesdrops as many as eight times in "Princess Mary") as a not too successful narrative technique, but in my view there are genuine psychological considerations motivating the device. A good example illustrating the psychological motivation of the technique is to be found in the ring episode. As the reader may recall Grushnitsky acquires a ring

commemorating his and Mary's first meeting when the latter pickes up a glass which the "wounded war hero" had dropped. Pechorin takes such intimate interest in that ring that he even knows the inscription inside it, which implies an obsessive interest in Grushnitsky.

"... there even appeared on his finger, a nielloed, silver ring of local production. It looked suspicious to me. I began to examine it, and what would you think? ... The name Mary was engraved in minuscule letters on the inside, and next to it was the day of the month when she picked up the famous glass."V.N:85

Pechorin's need to suppress and disown the part of himself which Grushnitsky represents, becomes so strong and overpowering that he leads the young officer to a situation of no retreat and kills him in a duel. Contrary to what he himself states, it is namely not he who is trapped into dueling, but the one who manipulates Grushnitsky into setting a trap.[3] The destructive cycle which Pechorin initiates and brings to its inevitable end well illustrates the operation of narcissistic envy and

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3) In purely literary terms there is a certain parallelism between the Onegin - Lensky duel and the Pechorin - Grushnitsky duel. Emotional Lensky it may be argued is a literary prototype of Grushnitsky.

hate. According to the analytic theory the essential core of narcissistic hate is the active desire to destroy the hated and threatening object, as opposed to mere passive avoidance. The narcissistic individual seeks out the hated object, cannot rid himself of obsessive thoughts about it and does not rest satisfied until he destroys it.[4] He "nurses" his hate, channels much attention and effort toward it and when the aim is finally achieved, the narcissistic person often experiences a sense of loss, since the hated object occupied a central part which gave meaning to his world. Significantly, once Grushnitsky is killed, Pechorin experiences an enduring sense of emptiness.

Pechorin's relationship to Dr. Werner, the second significant male character, is not motivated by the needs of the plot, but has a characterizing and psychological function. As opposed to the emotionally charged Grushnitsky, Pechorin recognizes Werner as an intellectual equal. In fact he even perceives Werner as spiritually akin to himself, but, as usual, Pechorin is mistaken. Although Werner appears to be as emotionally frigid as Pechorin, in his case it is but a Byronic mask put

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4) Naturally not all destruction is physical as actual killing. Maksim Maksimych is merely spiritually "killed".

on for the benefit of society. It follows then that when Pechorin kills Grushnitsky, both the protagonist and Werner come to realize the full extent of their differen . Werner recoils in horror as the shot is fired, does not believe until the very end that Pech arry his plan through. Dr. Werner who takes t joy in being dubbed "Mephistopheles" is horrified at having witnessed the brutal killing. It dawns upon him who the real Mephistopheles of Pyatigorsk is. Werner's response makes it clear to Pechorin that they differ greatly. Characteristically he interprets Werner's disapproval as a sign of emotional weakness. He distances himself from the doctor as, in his opinion, he fails to show the courage of his convictions.

"That's the human being for you! They are all like that: they know beforehand all the bad sides of an action. They help you, they advise you, they even approve of it, perceiving the impossibility of a different course - and afterwards they wash their hands of it, and turn away indignantly from him who had the courage to take upon himself the entire burden of responsibility." V.N:145

This passage interestingly illuminates the fact that Pechorin is trapped in his own system of merciless logics. He perceives events on a cause-effect base which allows for no deviation from predetermined

patterns. He does not realize that Werner does not think along the same logical pattern as he himself and hence his contempt for his former "mate".

The roles played by the women in the story "Princess Mary" highlight once again the narcissistic traits of the protagonist. As in the other stories, Pechorin's demand for gratuitous love and his concentration on the self preclude any meaningful relationships with women; as usual Pechorin reduces them to mere objects of personal gratification. This is particularly evident in the relationship with Mary who is used and then simply abandoned without any consideration or regard for her feelings. Pechorin manipulates Mary without having any real interest in her and breaks all relations with her, when he has achieved his goal of bringing Grushnitsky to a duel. Another destructive cycle is played out in relation to Vera. The protagonist's sense of entitlement enables him to demand Vera's love and devotion without giving anything of himself. Just as a child who wants to be unconditionally loved and satisfied, so Pechorin looks upon Vera as his exclusive possession demanding her constant presence and willingness to attend to all his wishes. In fact, this narcissistic sense of entitlement is characteristic for his treatment of all women. The women must be willing but not demanding, for if reciprocity

of love is asked, it is immediately perceived as menace. Likewise, marriage is prohibited, for then the woman gains something and the purity of her love cannot be believed.

"... over me the word "marry" has some kind of magic power. However much I may love a woman, if she only lets me feel that I must marry her - farewell to love! My heart turns to stone and nothing can warm it again. I am ready to make any sacrifice except this one." V.N:122

Pechorin's demand for unconditional love and devotion without giving anything in return is clearly infantile and may be likened to the love a child expects from its mother. The regressive need for the ever loving maternal figure echoes the central theme of the unfulfilled search for the idealized love object. According to analytic theory, the search for the perfect object is merely an idealized fantasy of a blissful union with the perfect mother of infancy who makes no demands and is selfless in her care. The reason that the search always ends in failure and loss is that no person can live up to the narcissistic expectation of gratuitous love or match the image of the idealized mother. Even Vera who comes near to

this ideal, eventually realizes the hopelessness of her sacrifice.

"... you loved me as your property, as a source of joys, agitations and sorrows, which mutually replaced one another... This I understood from the first; but you were unhappy, and I sacrificed myself, hoping that someday you would understand my deep tenderness, not depending on any circumstances. Since then much time has passed. I penetrated into all the secrets of your soul ... and realized that my hope had been a vain one." V.N:142

The futility of the protagonist's search for the idealized object sets into motion a life-long disillusionment with women who, in his view, never can reach the ideal of perfection. There is also another aspect to Pechorin's relationship with women. In the dichotomy heart-mind they clearly represent the heart or that eternal foe with whom Pechorin is struggling. His need to be always in control, in any love relationship, is to be traced to the same source as his hatred of Grushnitsky - the fear of his own irrational, emotional self. Whereas in relation to men the fear manifests itself as hatred, in relation to women it manifests itself as the need to dominate and control.

"One thing has always struck me as strange: I never became the slave of the women I loved; on the contrary I have always gained unconquerable power over their will and heart ... I must admit that, indeed, I never cared for women with wills of their own; it is not their department." V.N:87

Elsewhere Vera says to Pechorin "You know that I am your slave; I never was able to resist you ... and for this I shall be punished".

In trying to deny their significance for him the hero denigrates women and relates to them as mere objects which he can possess and discard at will. His detached and unfeeling attitude to them is clearly reflected in the discussion which he and Grushnitsky have about the young princess. 'You talk of a pretty woman as of an English horse', says Grushnitsky with indignation. (The reader may remember that Maksim Maksimych makes a similar observation in regard to Pechorin's attitude to Bela). Pechorin's reaction to Grushnitsky's remark is the following :

'Mon cher', I answered trying to copy his manner, 'je méprise les femmes pour ne pas les aimer, car autrement la vie serait un mélodrame trop ridicule!'. V.N:73

At the base of all these attitudes we find what we may term Pechorin's Achilles' heel - a fear of ridicule. "I am afraid of appearing laughable" he admits to himself analyzing his reasons for refusing Mary's love. When he protests the opposite to Mary - "if my outburst seems to you ridiculous please laugh", - his protestation does not ring true. [5]

Returning once more to the story "Taman'" it has been noted several times that Pechorin there plays an unheroic, not to say ridiculous role. [6] He was almost drowned by a woman and proved incapable of such a basic skill as swimming. This fact may on a deeper analytical level be seen as his inability to control the feminine element of water. The fact that Pechorin calls the woman who almost drowned him his "undine" points to the water-woman relationship. In

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5) Pechorin's self deprecatory remark to Mary is a typical narcissistic defence mechanism. Like his literary predecessor Onegin, Pechorin may well be "but a parody" (Chapter XXIV) but the difference between the two literary heroes is that Pechorin is acutely aware of this fact and ashamed of it.

6) Richard Gregg in his article titled 'The Cooling of Pechorin: The Scull Beneath the Skin" notes that the hero of "Taman'" is presented as a vulnerable and gullible young man " ... so desperate indeed is his plight that he must resort to the unheroic expedient of hairpulling to avoid being thrown overboard."
(Gregg, R. "The Cooling of Pechorin: The Scull Beneath the Skin", Slavic Review, (1984)43:389
This point is also stressed in R.A. Peace's article "The Role of "Taman'" in Lermontov's Geroi nashego vremeni", published in the Slavonic and East European Review, (1967)45.

the light of subsequent events (i.e. those in "Princess Mary") one may safely assume that Pechorin firmly decided never to play a ridiculous role again, never to lose control over a woman. It is Grushnitsky, the "ludicrous lover", who evokes Pechorin's intense hatred. In his antics he perceives his own behaviour during the "undine episode".

This episode has clearly left much deeper traces than is usually assumed. Pechorin's treatment of Mary cannot be interpreted as anything but an act of punishment. When he first meets her she appears indifferent and self contained, i.e. as a threat to his narcissistic pride. He decides to break her will (or "break her in" to use Pechorin's own "horse-imagery"). This he does by changing her indifference into passionate devotion for him, whereupon he shows her his supreme indifference. Pechorin realizes that Mary is an "undine figure" in her inner strength and independence. He is therefore determined to get the better of her, before she gets the better of him. He succeeds in his punishment and revenge scheme leaving Mary physically and spiritually broken. To Pechorin this clearly is also a symbolic act. In the person of Princess Mary he punishes all those women who make men into "fools" like Grushnitsky, or humiliate them

in other ways. Feeling at one stage like young Grushnitsky's mentor he tells him:

"But beware, Grushnitsky! Russian young ladies, for the most part, nourish themselves on platonic love, without admixing to it any thought of marriage: The young princess seems to be one of those women who want to be amused: if she is bored in your presence for two minutes together, you are irretrievably lost .... she will have her fill of flirting with you, and in ... ars or so she will marry a monster ... and ... start persuading herself that she is miserable, that she loved only one man, meaning you, but that Heaven had not wished to unite her with him because he wore a soldier's coat, although under that thick grey coat there beat a passionate and noble heart ...". V.N:85

To Pechorin, ridicule, humiliation and helplessness are synonymous, as his sense of inauthenticity renders him helpless before irony, mockery and laughter. In contrast, power and control, in his view, work to protect him and shield him from feeling vulnerable. Power is the narcissist's armour against exposure to possible humiliation.

"If I considered myself to be better and more powerful than anyone in the world, I would be happy;...." V.N:102

Likewise:

"... ambition is nothing else than thirst for power, and my main pleasure - which is to subjugate to my will all that surrounds me, and to excite the emotions of love, devotion, and fear in relation to me - is it not the main sign and greatest triumph of power?" V.N102

In his journal, Pechorin often speaks of his insatiable desire for power, of the pleasure he derives from destroying others' hopes and of his view of other people as food to nourish his ego.

I've fed on their feelings, love, joys and sufferings, and always wanted more. I am like a starving man who falls asleep exhausted and sees rich food and sparkling wines before him. He rapturously falls on these phantom gifts of the imagination and feels better, but the moment he wakes up, his dream disappears and he's left more hungry and desperate than before. V.N:157

This imagery is particularly interesting, as viewed in analytic terms, the narcissistic individual constantly feels emotionally hungry and devouring. The reason for this oral greed is that the core of the narcissistic self, being depleted and without essential inner strength, experiences a strong need

to attach itself to others and "feed off" them for any sense of strength and value. At the same time, the narcissistic individual feels that in the process of replenishing himself he drains others of their very life blood. As was briefly indicated before the vampiric motif is important in Lermontov's work.

Pechorin openly admits to understanding the vampire: 'There are times when I can understand the vampire' he notes in his diary. Pechorin's women are all transformed from vital beautiful young women to depleted shadows of their former selves.

Princess Mary:

1 The princess is very pretty. She's got such velvet eyes... The top and bottom lashes are so long that the pupils don't reflect the sunlight. They're so soft, they seem to shake you. Actually, her whole face seems excellent.

2 Heavens, how she'd changed since last I saw her, a short while before. As she reached the middle of the room she swayed ... Her pale lips made a vain effort to smile, and her delicate hands, folded in her lap, looked so thin and transparent that I pitied her.

Bela:

1 'She certainly was good-looking - tall and slim, with black eyes like a mountain goat's that looked right inside you.

2 She was pale and so weak you could hardly tell she was breathing... The whole day passed like this. What a change came over her in that one day! Her cheeks were pale and sunken, her eyes enormous;

The same fate befalls all female protagonists in Lermontov texts.

Tamara:

1. И влажный взор ее блестит
   Из-под завистливой ресницы;
   То черной бровью поведет,
   То вдруг наклонится немножко,
   И по ковру скользит,плывет
   Ее божественная ножка;
   И улыбается она
   Веселья детского полна.-
   Но луч луны,по влаге зыбкой
   Слегка играющий порой,
   Едва ль сравнится с той улыбкой
   Как жизнь,как молодость,живой. 2:139

her shining eyes are moist and bright,
Half-hidden by the jealous lashes.
She bends, she gives a tiny shrug,
Her eyes are with enjoyment brimming,
Her foot divine upon the rage
Is gliding, sliding, almost swimming;
And on her lips a childish smile
Plays full of mirth, devoid of guile.
That smile is gentle and disarming
Beyond description or compare;
In its appeal of youth more charming
Than all the moonbeams of the air

A.L:361

2. Она в гробу своем лежала,
Белей и чище покрывала
Был томный цвет ее чела.
Навек опущены ресницы... 2:162

She lay immovable and tragic
The veil upon her was not purer
or whiter than her pallid brow.
Her lashes' thick untrembling cover
Fell on the eyes whose light had fled.

A.L:405

Nina:

1. Она была прекрасна и нежна,
Ее глаза всю чистоту души
Изображали ясно. 3:34

She was beautiful and delicate
her eyes clearly reflected the purity
of her soul. I.B:

2. И вот оно прекрасное созданье,-
смотрите- холодно,мертво.3:106

Here she is the beautiful creature
now see - cold and dead. I.B:

Beyond the sexual sphere, Pechorin likewise "feeds off" other people. He could be called a voyeur in the sense that, having killed his own private sphere, he draws energies from watching other people and

their life dramas. [7] This "voyeuristic aspect" which is in fact an extension of the oral greed insofar as it also involves "devouring", is particularly marked in the final story of Pechorin's diary "The Fatalist".

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7) Barbara Schapiro explains that the desire to devour with the eyes is akin to the oral wish. The critic quotes Wormhoudt who feels that "the voyeur uses his eyes to take in forbidden sights just as the lips are used to suck at the breast".

(Schapiro, Barbara A The Romantic Mother Narcissistic Patterns in Romantic Poetry Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983 p.

2.3.3.5. "The Fatalist"

In the last section of the journal the vicarious nature of Pechorin's experiences emerges even more clearly than in "Princess Mary". These last two journal stories mirror each other in the treatment of Pechorin's attitudes towards male antagonists. These represent opposite aspects of Pechorin's own nature, respectively, - one, the hated projection of his own vulnerability and fear and the other an idealized vision of himself as superior and in total control. Grushnitsky is the man Pechorin does not want to be, Vulich the man he would like to be. The portraits of the two men are presented in terms of stark contrasts. It is interesting to compare their respective characteristics in regard to speech, gesture and other features of their behavioural pattern.

Vulich	Grushnitsky
"...his voice (is) calm and his speech slow and even."	"His speech is rapid and ornate."
"He speaks little but trenchantly."	"Grushnitsky's passion was to declaim he bombarded you with words".
"his movements were dignified"	"...he has a habit of tossing his head back and throwing his hands about."

"(Vulich) confined in none the secrets of his soul."	"...he's spent much time convincing others that fate has some mysterious trials in store for him."
"...unable to share feelings with others."	"..he is one of those people who make a solemn display of uncommon emotions and exalted passions."

These traits of character and their manifestations determine Pechorin's attitudes towards the two men. He despises Grushnitsky's unrestrained emotionality while he idealizes Vulich who displays self-sufficient detachment. Viewed analytically, the two men represent the opposing aspects of the narcissistic personality, one embodying the qualities the narcissistic self wishes to disown, the other the qualities it wishes to appropriate. Thence Pechorin's reaction to Grushnitsky is one of hatred and to Vulich, the main figure of "The Fatalist", one of envy. Pechorin's attitudes towards the two men emerge with particular clarity in the motif of the visual challenge. Both stories include a power struggle where victory and defeat are marked by the adversaries' ability or inability to withstand Pechorin's piercing gaze. Grushnitsky of course loses the visual duel:

"...now he was left alone facing me. For several moments I kept looking intently into his face....he

raised his eyes to look at me but then lowered his eyes embarrassed and gloomy." V.N:134

On the other hand in the encounter with Vulich, the Serbian officer stands up to Pechorin and meets the challenge of his glance, thus commanding Pechorin's respect:

"I looked fixedly into his eyes, but he countered my probing glance with a calm and steady gaze." V.N:151

Pechorin's regular references to eye contact form part of his constant concern with power and control. Consider for example how Pechorin measures a man's strength and courage by his ability to face danger fearlessly, specifically by his ability to meet danger with "open eyes". He therefore comments negatively on Grushnitsky's blind courage as the latter rushes into battle with closed eyes:

"I have seen him in action: he brandishes his sword, he yells, he rushes forward with closed eyes." V.N.71

By contrast, he views Vulich as a brave man because the Serb reacts in the opposite way, facing the enemy with his eyes wide open:

"...he dashed forward, carrying the soldiers with him and most coldly kept exchanging shots with the Chechens to the end of the engagement." V.N:150 [1]

Pechorin's observations well convey the nature of his attitudes towards the two men, as well as his "voyeuristic" cognitive approach. As the reader will remember, Pechorin in the story "Fatalist", under the pretext of conducting a philosophical debate on the question of predestination, actually manipulates Vulich into a dangerous situation of tempting fate. The reason for Pechorin's action is to be found in his desire to experience a close yet safe encounter with death. He wishes as it were to commit a suicide by proxy, by challenging Vulich to play "Russian roulette". He wants to prove his theory "experimentally", while he himself watches Vulich in the process. Pechorin's intense observation of Vulich's suicidal game has a distinct voyeuristic quality and vividly conveys the devouring role of the eyes. These are typical expressions used by Pechorin when he records the incident in his journal:

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1) It is interesting to note that Grushnitsky uses a weapon (sword) which allows for indiscriminate fighting, whereas Vulich is a master shot and marksman.

"I looked fixedly into his eyes", "I closely observed", ..."eyes expressing fear and curiosity", "I had never taken my eyes off".

In manipulating Vulich into the fatal game, Pechorin cunningly exploits the former's only "weak spot" - his passion for gambling ("There was one passion of which he made no secret - the gambling passion"). He is prepared to use any ruse to test his idealized hero's courage and apparent power which he covets for himself.

An important aspect of the nature of power is the envy it evokes in others. Power seems to confer on its possessor a mantle of superiority and sexual potency which the envious person desperately wants to possess himself, as he feels himself to be inferior and impotent. It is therefore not surprising that, having recognized the power Vulich has, Pechorin desperately wants to appropriate it. Just as a vampire who acquires the strength of its victim by depleting it, so Pechorin appears to believe that he will acquire the envied strength and potency which Vulich projects, if only he somehow will gain control of him. He therefore sees, or makes himself see, a "death mark" on Vulich's face which nobody else notices. If only his "premonition" comes true he will control Vulich, Pechorin believes. Like many rationalists, he is

far from immune to superstition and even a belief in "magic". Having been told of Vulich's fatal injury, Pechorin knowingly observes:

"I alone understood the meaning of these words: they referred to me. I had unwittingly foretold the poor fellow's fate. I had really read upon his altered face, the impr'nt of his imminent end." V.N:156.

It is questionable whether Pechorin's prediction was indeed "unwitting". It could well be argued that his prediction formed part of a well-planned scenario, however subconsciously formed.

Vulich's death reinforces Pechorin's feelings of omnipotence and gives him courage to test his own fate. In a curious turn of events (which however is fully explicable psycho-analytically) it is Pechorin in the latter half of the story who endangers his own life, showing the same fearlessness and disregard for danger that Vulich previously did. On a metaphorical level, Pechorin is satiated with Vulich's blood. The courage "absorbed" from Vulich must however needs soon exhaust itself and the suppressed fear re-emerge. The narcissistic cycle will inevitably be re-enacted again. At this stage however Pechorin himself realizes that there is no escape out of the eternal repetition of the cycle. Disillusioned with life and himself, bored by the

empty and predictable cycle, by the ever repeating scenario dictated by his own character, he tires of his meaningless existence. Ever more clearly he perceives that the only means of escape available to him, is the exit from life itself. In fact his encounter with Vulich during which he committed suicide by proxy, as it were, prepares him for death. Undoubtedly it was his intention to experience through Vulich - "a dress rehearsal" of the grand finale of his own life. It could well be argued that only death, which is absolute, omnipotent and unknowable from this side of existence, can offer the disillusioned Pechorin a climactic experience. The travels which Pechorin intends to undertake, as we are informed in the story "Maksim Maksimych", may therefore be regarded as a journey in search of death.[2]

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2) Richard Gregg draws a similar conclusion stating that the hero's thoughts of travel abroad are linked with the idea of his death.
"Asked where he (Pechorin) is bound, the reply "to Persia and beyond" suggests with its weighty pause in the middle an ontological shift from the specific toponym to a mysterious condition which reticence forbids him to name. Framed by the deathly presentiment which comes before... these words, gestures, and images cannot but instill the suspicion that Pechorin's ultimate destination is that "undiscovered bourne from which no traveller returns."
Gregg, R. "The Cooling of Pechorin: The Skull Beneath the Skin", Slavic Review vol.43 number 43 pp. 397,398.

Lermontov's poem "All Alone Along the Road I am Walking".

The "epilogue" to the novel.

Although outside the framework of the novel A Hero of Our Time, Lermontov's poem "All Alone Along the Road I am Walking" (1841) offers us a glimpse of Pechorin's final reconciliation with existence through death. Whether directly referrable to Pechorin or not, the poem reveals the Lermontovian persona's idealized vision of an harmonious union of the individual, freed from the yoke of his individuality in impersonal maternal nature. Thus, indirectly, it is applicable to Pechorin also, as the kinship between the Lermontovian persona and Pechorin is indisputable. The persona in the poem under discussion regains that blissful union with the maternal principle he has in vain sought all through life. "Pantheistic death" solves the irreconcilable problems of the narcissist's split and fragmented life.

> Чтоб всю ночь,весь день мой слух лелея,
> Про любовь мне сладкий голос пел,
> Надо мной чтоб вечно зеленея
> Темный дуб склонялся и шумел. 1:94

I would like a melody unending
Day and night to sing of happy love
And an oak, its heavy branches bending
To caress me gently from above. A.L:273

PART III

3. BIOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCES

3.1. The interaction of Lermontov's life and work from a psychoanalytic perspective

Without claiming any direct analogies between Lermontov's biography and his œuvre it is worthwhile to mention those factors which might have contributed to the author's insight into the narcissistic personality. There are namely, beyond dispute, elements in Lermontov's life which might be regarded as factors contributing to the development of the narcissistic syndrome. As has already been repeatedly noted above, early maternal separation and the unavailability of the mother during early infancy leaves the predisposed child with a poorly formed self, which impairs his capacity to form meaningful relationships. The reason for this is that the relationship with the mother establishes the very foundation of one's identity and ability to perceive external reality. In her introduction to The Romantic Mother, Barbara Shapiro[1] observes that the love theme so dominant in poetry in general and romantic poetry in particular is rooted psychologically in the earliest love relationship which the infant forms with its mother. She notes

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1) Schapiro, B. The Romantic Mother, Narcissistic Patterns in Romantic Poetry Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983

moreover that the poetical and particularly the Romantic search for the self ultimately reflects the search for the unattainable union with the lost mother of infancy. Her observation is borne out by Lermontov's biography and work.

The premature death of his mother, when he was two and a half years old seems to have left a strong impact on Lermontov's personality development. In a note dated 1830, the poet speaks of the sadness he experienced remembering the close relationship he once had with her.

"Когда я был трех лет,то была песня,от которой я плакал. ее не могу теперь вспомнить,но уверен,что если б услыхал ее,она бы произвела прежнее действие.Ее певала мне покойная мать." 4:383

In fact the poem "The Angel" (1831) could be regarded as the poetic expression of the very sentiments expressed in the note quoted above. The musical motif found in the poem carries the sense of bliss irretrievably lost, which is also found in the note and likewise linked to an infantile reminiscence. The lost paradise of the poem finds its analogy in the harmonious union with the mother mentioned in the note. Consequently the "dull songs of earth" in "The Angel", on the biographical level, symbolize the child's clash with a motherless reality.

There exists another, this time pictorial, document testifying to Lermontov's vague but intense longing for maternal affection. This document is a drawing by Lermontov from the year 1829 when the poet was fifteen and it shows a baby reaching towards its mother. [2] The mother's face is not visible marking the fact that the child is not reaching out for a concrete person but the Mother per se. (See appendix fig. 1). It may be noted that the mother is represented by her breast only, i.e. symbolized by her nuturing function.

As I already stated in chapter 2.3 and presented in detail in my article on Lermontov[3] Lermontov's idealization of nature can be seen as an extension of the search for the idealized mother. By projecting into nature the loving and nurturing aspects of his absent parent the poet revives his early and idealized state of maternal bliss.

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2) Laurence Kelly's book Lermontov: Tragedy in the Caucasus contains many drawings and paintings by Lermontov. The most detailed catalogue of Lermontov's paintings and drawings is by N. Pakhomov The Artistic Heritage of Lermontov published in 1948 by the Academy of Sciences, Moscow (c.f. Zhivopisnoye naslediye in Lermontovskaya Entsiklopediya p.163-169)

3) Buchman I.L. "Romantic Duality as Narcissistic Split in Lermontov's Work"
Proceedings of the Second Symposium on Slavic Culture, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1984

Я вопрошал природу,и она
Меня в свои объятия приняла.
В лесу холодном в грозный час метели
Я сладость пил с ее волшебных уст. 1:232

I entreated nature,and she
Accepted me into her arms.
In a cold forest at a threatening hour
of a snow storm
I drank sweetness from her magic lips. I.B.

In the preceding chapter it was also noted that the blissful reunion with the ideal mother is ultimately found in death i.e. in a regressive refusion with the maternal womb. It could well be argued that the search for the "oceanic feeling" as Freud termed it, essentially contributes to the poignant sense of loss permeating Lermontov's poetry.

Immediately after Marya Lermontova's death, a bitter family struggle between the father and the maternal grandmother ensued, leaving the child and youth in a state of divided loyalties, unable as he was to make a definite choice between them. This biographical

factor as well as the mother's early death could be seen as contributing to a narcissistic split. Certainly Lermontov's works contain motifs which seem directly linked to this early experience. Of particular interest here is the early play "Menschen und Leidenschaften (1830) which contains the following passage:

"I am like booty that is being torn apart by two conquerors; each wants to possess me." 3:300

This quote bears the stamp of the self experienced.

Much has been has been written about the nature of Lermontov's relationship with his father and its impact upon his personality[4]. Yuri Petrovich, the poet's father renounced the child under the pressure of the maternal grandmother and left the estate Tarkhany nine days after his wife's death. This event deprived the child of his second parental contact. Father and son saw eath other only very occasionally as the grandmother did everything to

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4) See for example the already quoted Mikhail Lermontov by John Garrard pp.1-4; Michael Lermontov, Biography and Translation by C.E. L'Ami and Alexander Welikotny, The University of Manitoba Press, 1967 pp.12-17. The Lermontovskaya Entisiklopediya is highly informative on the biographical aspect of the writer.

undermine their relationship and to keep father and son apart. Immediately upon learning of his father's death Lermontov wrote the poem "Terrible Fate of Father and Son" (1831) in which he bemoans his life of separation from his father and sees himself as the cause of all his father's torments.

Дай Бог,чтобы как твой,спокоен был конец
Того,кто был всех мук твоих причиной!- 1:225

Pray God,that like y[illegible]shall be the end
of he,who was the c[illegible]ll your torments. I.B.

The poem expresses a belief in his own destructive demonic power, a motif also found in other texts by Lermontov. Viewed from an analytic point of view this belief in one's own omnipotent evil reflects an infantile persecutory anxiety, which arises when the child unconsciously fears his own death from neglecting parents as well as the death of his loved objects caused by his destructive feelings. When in reality the infant or young child loses his loved object, the intensity of the anxiety, and pain,

caused by this loss, often trap the child into a narcissistic cycle of unresolved dependency (i.e. the wish for and fear of dependency). This "Mtsyri complex", discussed at length in chapter 2.3 is characteristic of all Lermontov's heroes and apparently also was of Lermontov himself. In his letter to A. Lopukhin in connection with the latter's marriage he writes:

Ты нашел,кажется,именно ту узкую дорожку,через которую я перепрыгнул...Ты дошел до цели,а я никогда не дойду: 4:440

It is very likely that Lermontov's avoidance of marriage should be seen in the light of the early loss of both his parents. Although on one hand yearning for the restoration of their bliss he is also aware of the suffering implied in the loss of bliss. Furthermore, in keeping with the later development of the narcissistic personality, we discern in the letter to Lopukhin a fear of the "narrowness", or entrapment which marital bliss conveys to the narcissistic personality. (Compare the specifics of Arbenin's and Pechorin's emotional involvement and the latters remarks on marriage N.V: 122)

Lermontov's many futile love affairs testify both to his search for emotional security as well as his

fear of finding it. According to psychoanalytic theory, the child who loses its parents is bound to spend the rest of his life searching for the lost object who would restore his vitality by loving him. Yet the fear of being abandoned once again by the "unfaithful" mother leads him to treat every potential replacement with ruthless and sadistic contempt.[5]

Before discussing Lermontov's relationship with women we must turn to the substitute childhood paradise which his grandmother's estate provided.

After the loss of both parents young Lermontov was brought up by his grandmother. Elizaveta Arsenyeva gave the child attention and care. It would seem that the writer's childhood with his grandmother should have satisfied all his emotional needs. But Arsenyeva's upbringing was too strictly authoritarian and curtailed the child's striving for independence. A strong and wilful woman, Arsenyeva showered affection on her grandson but demanded sole control and possession of him in return.

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5) Likewise, any substitute father figure, is cut off emotionally i.e. abandoned; (cf. "Maksim Maksimych")

"Любовь к внуку была одновременно самоотверженной и властной;ради Лермонтова она готова была на любые жертвы,но с тем,чтобы распоряжаться судьбой внука безраздельно." /6/

More serious than her authoritarian attitudes was the fact that she exalted her love of the child, creating a feeling of guilt by enforcing in the child a constant gratitude. In fact, the child's situation was comparable to Mtsyri's in the poem by the same title. Both are sheltered and secure but also restricted. Furthermore, both are aware that their "bliss" depends on obedience. Any attempt at achieving a separate sense of self (individuation) is punished. In Mtsyri's case the punishment takes the form of exclusion, and in Lermontov's case, financial and emotional disinheritance. It could be argued that the grandmother's emotional blackmail left other traces in Lermontov's life and work. Subjected to this kind of blackmail as a child, Lermontov's own attitude towards "love objects" assumes a similar blackmailing quality. It is interesting to note that in the poem "The Demon", the Demon's emotional blackmail of Tamara is couched in terms which remind of Arsenyeva's entreaties to

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6) Лермонтовская Энциклопедия,стр.36

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