Essays on
Karolina Pavlova

Edited by
Susanne Fusso and Alexander Lehrman

Northwestern University Press
Studies in Russian Literature and Theory

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NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY PRESS / EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
38. These discussions took place in connection with Pavlova’s contemporary the countess Evdokiya Rostopchina, whose collected poems appeared in 1841. One of the main theorists of “poetry of thought,” Stepan Shevyrev, observed that it was possible for women to write such poetry, but Belinskiy’s far more influential review disagreed (“Stikhotvorenia grafini E. Rostopchinei,” Polnoe sobranie sochineniy, 5:456–60. The review first appeared in Otechestvennyia zapiski 28, no. 9 [1841]: 5–8). He observed that her poems sprang from feelings that were unfortunately dulled by her tendency to render judgments (rasuzhdat’), and although he finds this harmful in men’s poetry, too, it seems even more detrimental in women’s verse (457). Belinskiy’s review appeared at the same time as S. Shevyrev’s more favorable notice in Moskvitinnia 4, no. 7 (1841): 171-82. Shevyrev, like most other critics, considered her verse essentially feminine, and he believed this to be the explanation for her focus on love as a theme, especially melancholy and disappointed love.

39. Pavlova, Polnoe sobranie stikhotvoreniy, 121.
40. The poem begins with a man thinking of a woman who awaits him, her beloved.
41. Pavlova, Polnoe sobranie stikhotvoreniy, 122.

Karolina Pavlova’s A Twofold Life

KAROLINA PAVLOVA was at the height of her literary career when Devojka zhizni (A Twofold Life) appeared in Moscow in 1848. The earlier publication of the first chapter and of the verse passage from chapter 5 (in 1845 and 1847, respectively) had already drawn readers’ attention to this unusual amalgam of poetry and prose. Catriona Kelly describes this work as being “at once lyrical diary, society tale, Künstlerroman, and contribution to the debate on women’s place in the public and private world.” Pavlova herself referred to Devojka zhizni as a poema and an ocherk. The former intentionally anachronistic designation signaled a sympathy with the canons of the Romantic poema even as it underscored a departure from that tradition. The latter designation, sketch—a popular genre of the time endorsed by Belinskiy himself—suggested orientation toward prose that wedded invention with socially minded objectivity rather than subjective individuality. In writing A Twofold Life Pavlova draws specifically on the productive tension she perceives between the outraged Romantic and the burgeoning natural schools. She seeks not merely to bridge these two traditions, but to establish their interdependency. The conjoining of prose and poetry in A Twofold Life and the plot generated by the interaction of the material assigned these distinct modes of expression reflect this intent.

An epigraph from Byron and Pavlova’s verse “Dedication” is followed by ten chapters, each of which begins in prose and concludes in poetry. The sharp, ironic prose advances a society tale narrative that recounts the attainment of that one goal traditionally afforded the heroine—a husband. The outcome, it would appear, is felicitous: the stratagems laid down by her friend’s scheming mother, who is preoccupied only with securing wealth and social standing for her own daughter, leave Cecily von Lindenborn (for so is the heroine called) with the poorer suitor, on whom her own choice had fallen. Yet what might have been the happy ending of a charming comedy of errors is seriously marred. “Choice” can mean but little to a girl whose upbringing has rendered her incapable of reflection and judgment. The narrator underscores Cecily’s innocence of what lies beyond the “mod-
ess appearance" and "almost feminine shyness" that attracts her to her intended. Her suitor, Dmitri Ivachenski—a mere pawn in the hands of a savvy mother who marvels at his tractability—is drawn to Cecily only after being apprised of the precarious health of a rich aunt and the brother who stands in the way of Cecily’s inheritance. (Both are in fact considerably more robust than Dmitri is led to believe.)

The setting of this narrative is the petty, affected world of high society. Its ballrooms and salons are peopled with shallow hypocrites for whom all genuine values are replaced with an overriding concern with appearances. In it ideals extend no further than konal’ščest’ (commas il faut behaviour) and pritichnyst’ (propriety).

In the latter part of each chapter Cecily drifts off to sleep, and accounts of the day’s rapid activities give way to renderings of her dream state, which are conveyed in verse. The same incisive narrator who penetrates appearances to level harsh criticism at the social world enters Cecily’s dream realm to translate her inarticulate visions into poetry. In this inner space, social norms dissolve and Cecily communes with that part of herself that those norms are intended to cut off. In contrast to the markedly artificial, fragmented outer world, Cecily’s inner dream world is aligned with nature and characterized by an organic wholeness. Illimitable starry skies and giant, mysteriously rustling trees whose scale points up the triviality of the beau monde are an integral part of Cecily’s inner landscape.

In a contemporary review of A Twofold Life, Konstantin Aksakov noted the distinct domains represented by prose and poetry in the work:

В прозе разказывается и виноват, скитая пустая жизнь, окружающая героиню Романа. В схватке выражается внутренний голос луки, в ней сознается, что в силах ее подчинить,5

Related in prose is the superficial, empty society life that surrounds the heroine of the novel. Expressed in verse is the inner voice of her soul, which she neither consciously perceives nor knows, but which always accompanies this superficial world that is powerless to crush it.

Aksakov’s distinction between the proxy action of the novel and the poetical stirrings of its heroine is borne out by the text. The generically demarcated oppositions of day and night, of conventional social behavior and true inner being, of waking and of dreaming, of artifice and nature are refracted and replicated in countless images and details throughout the poem.

Given the intensity with which Pavlova distinguishes Cecily’s daily routine from her dream life, it is scarcely surprising that critical attention has rested primarily on the incompatibility of these two realms. Yet the import of Dvejnost’ zhizni lies not simply in the opposition of these distinct domains, but in the potentially productive twofoldness they jointly create.

In the writing of A Twofold Life Pavlova demonstrates that both its prose and its poetry are dependent on her own recognition of this duality. This recognition fuels both her social criticism and her representation of Cecily’s subliminal sensations. Accordingly it is the interaction of Cecily’s prosaic and poetic worlds that generates the true plot of A Twofold Life: the development of a heroine who succeeds not merely in effecting nocturnal escapes from the contingencies of her diurnal existence, but in nurturing her inner world in preparation for a conscious repression of socially imposed restrictions. Cecily’s growth is limned by an increasing interplay between her waking and her dream worlds. Each passing chapter marks an advance in the crossover between these separate domains—both cause and effect of Cecily’s increased self-awareness and her developing capacity to articulate the inchoate stirring of her inner self.

In an illuminating study of Pavlova’s Quadrille, Susanne Fusso notes Pavlova’s replacement of Romantic stereotypes with a new literary model: "the toodle of a female character capable of reasoning and reflection." In A Twofold Life Pavlova sets out conditions that prepare the emergence of such a heroine. The challenge Cecily’s creator confronts is how to develop a conscious, responsible heroine in the context of a false, restrictive society that systematically destroys the means necessary to this end. Prepared to articulate the heroine’s inner urgings and to provide the means for the reintegration of her divided self, stands the poet.

It is significant that Cecily’s progress describes also the conditions necessary to the success of the poetic enterprise. If the prose carries forward a society tale narrative and the poetry delineates Cecily’s subconscious world, their interaction creates a bildungsroman of a heroine whose development constitutes Pavlova’s defense of women and of poetry in the male domain of naturalist prose.

The epigraph of A Twofold Life alerts us to the quintessentially poetic project of mediation that lies at the heart of Pavlova’s undertaking:

Our life is twofold. Sleep hath its own world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence5

Byron’s project in "The Dream," which opens with these lines, exemplifies vividly the thematic center of A Twofold Life: the crossing and re-crossing of the boundaries between the actual and the imaginative worlds. The introductory section of "The Dream" that supplies Pavlova’s epigraph refers to the subsequent account of an unsuccessful courtship as the recollection of a dream:

I would recall a vision which I dreamed
Perchance in sleep.5
The poem emerges, in other words, after an actual event in Byron’s life is first removed to the dream world and thence retrieved as poetry. In the verse “Dedication” that follows the epigraph, the author-narrator of A Twofold Life defines her own role as a poet in terms of mediation. She aligns herself with all women and distinguishes herself from her “mute sisters” only on the strength of her ability to give voice to their inarticulate dreams and unarticulated struggles. Her wish for her sen'ia bezobstan' (unknown family) is that its members be granted

Въ новой жизни этой твьной.
Хоть краёкъ мгновенный жизни твоёй. (231)
In the confines of this narrow life
At least a momentary burst of the other life.

A Twofold Life is precisely one such ezrye mgnovenii (momentary burst). Eruptions into the quotidian of the imaginative realm to which the poet has access can alert women to that productive duality on which Pavlova’s own creativity depends, thus providing them with a fertile means of self-determination.

The development of the heroine of A Twofold Life is dependent precisely on such flashes of insight that urge her to recognize that the social world in which she operates is but a small space carved out of a far larger sphere of existence. Cecily’s dark hair, pallor, and sickness distinguish her from the very start as a good candidate for such insight. Her atypicality is underscored by her blond friend Olga, who plays a role analogous to that of her better-known namesake from Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin. Yet the obrazonanie (education) imposed by her mother accomplishes a preobrazovanie (transformation) that makes Cecily as unlike her natural self as a tree in a Versailles topiary. (260). Cecily’s mother, a bubovark of the tyrannical, constricting society Pavlova scathingly criticizes throughout the novel, spares no energy in channeling her daughter’s development into the narrow straits of social convention. To this end Cecily’s spiritual and imaginative faculties are assiduously curtailed and her human potential trivialized. All of existence is reduced to the notion of propriety.

Цензия была воспитана въ страхѣ Бога и общества: заповѣдь Господня и законы привѣтны въ ея понятіяхъ: уважать, дѣйственно, первое и послѣднее казалось ей равно невозможнымъ и невозможнымъ. (248).

Cecily was brought up in the fear of God and society: the commandments of the Lord and the laws of propriety were equivalent in her view; to violate the former and the latter even mentally seemed to her equally impossible and unimaginable.

Living spirit is replaced with stultifying rules, truth with mean falsehoods:

In place of spirit they give them the letter, in place of a feeling that is alive, a dead rule, in place of holy truth, absurd deception.

Cecily’s singularity falls victim to her mother’s efforts:

Цензия, готовая для высшаго общества, затеряла науку всхъ его требованій и уставы, никогда не могла сдѣлать против нихъ малѣйшаго препятствія, незамѣтной ошибки, ни въ какой случай не могла забыться на минуту, вознаградить голосомъ на поляна, вспомнить со стула, увѣренно разговоромъ съ мужичкомъ до того, чтобы бесѣдовать съ нимъ на десять минутъ долге, чьмъ слабовато, или вызвать напрасно, когда должно было глядѣть налью. И нѣй она, осмѣшкуяльная, такъ приняла къ своему умственному корсету, что не чувствовала его на себѣ болѣе шелковаго, который снимала только на ночь. (248–49).

Cecily, prepared for high society, having learned by heart all its demands and rules, could never transgress against them in the slightest, or make even the most imperceptible of errors. Under no circumstances could she forget herself for even a moment and, raising her voice by a half tone, jump up from her chair or become so carried away in conversation with a man as to talk to him ten minutes longer than she ought, or glance right when she was to look to the left. And now, at eighteen, she had grown so accustomed to her mental corset that she did not feel it any more than the silk one she removed only at night.

The freedom Cecily attains at night, when the stays of her mental corset are loosened with her entry into the dream state, is barred from penetrating her waking hours by the success of her upbringing. The problem is not that her intensive schooling extinguishes Cecily’s dream life, but that it impedes the interaction of her dreams with her day-to-day existence.

What, then, are those explosive moments that can pierce Cecily’s mental corset to draw her beyond the ironclad social norms in which she operates? It would appear that perhaps errors, that ancient inciter of transgressive behavior, could accomplish this. Yet Pavlova rejects this possibility. She represents Cecily’s nascent sexuality not as a means toward liberation or self-awareness but rather as the fulfillment of inescapable destiny and loss of self:

Дочь Евы вкушала запрещенный плодъ: молодая женщина дохнула вознымъ, ароматнымъ, незнакомымъ воздухомъ, и опьяна отъ него. (270–71).

The daughter of Eve was partaking of forbidden fruit: the young woman breathed free, fragrant, unlawful air and was intoxicated by it.

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Eros promotes not self-affirmation but the assumption of a role preordained for all women. The wild horseback ride to which Cecily abandons herself and which Heldt calls “the most potent sexual metaphor in the non-dream sections of the novel”19 is terminated by a male tug at the bridle. This brief, illusory escape is replicated at the level of plot. Even as Cecily gallops at full tilt, glowing in zolotia alia (living strength) and polus osobodila ego (half-free will), 233) the machinations that culminate in her marriage are set into motion. The force of eros aligns itself with maternal efforts toward Cecily’s complete subjugation through marriage.

The forces that can traverse that seemingly impenetrable boundary between Cecily’s strained conscious life and her unbounded, subconscious dream world are mentioned in passing already in the opening chapter and elaborated as the work unfolds. They are, in order of appearance, death, nature, and poetry.

As the poem opens, Cecily is introduced not by name but by her desire to learn the identity of a person whose death is a topic of idle chatter. Her twice-repeated question “Who died?” (233) remains unanswered even as the larger underlying question it intends remains inarticulate. That “Who died?” is the closest Cecily can come to asking “What is death?” matters little, for no one in the commune is safe, where death is trivialized beyond recognition, would be capable of addressing it.

Cecily’s question retires inward and the anonymous dead man becomes a constant participant in her dreams, assuming alternately the guise of mystical beloved, mentor, and genius. This mysterious, sometimes enlightening, sometimes oppressive, and on occasion tedious spokesman of a part of the heroine herself leads Cecily to an expanded inner awareness that erodes those barriers erected by her upbringing. Thus already on the following day, even as her mother boasts of her success in quashing Cecily’s imagination, Cecily confides to a predictably dismissive Olga that she has dreamt of the dead man. Awake she yet retains the sense of something plausible only in a dream: communication with a man whom she had never met and who is now dead. In the subsequent dream poem a promising uncertainty arises:

Быть может, там есть были похожи,
Быть может, здесь ты меня.

Perhaps there everything was false,
Perhaps here you are real.

Although Cecily cannot yet consciously articulate this uncertainty, her confrontation with death has launched her development.

Nature too prompts connections between her dream world and her waking life. Having completed the ritual of pouring tea at the function described in chapter 1, Cecily walks out onto a balcony that hovers between the narrow, artificial salon and the expansive natural world. She stands silently contemplating the starry night and rustling trees. In the word “prostor drevstvennoj pustyni (free expanse of virginal emptiness),” 234) suggested by those trees we recognize a metaphor for Cecily’s own inner space and its potential.

In the third chapter, poetry, which has up to now been relegated to dreams, appears in Cecily’s waking hours. A reading at a social event hosted by Cecily’s mother provides Pavlova with a richly exploited opportunity to exposad on the obtuseness and hypocrisy of those assembled vis-à-vis poetry. The guests remain predictably unaffected by the reading, even though the poet reads the translation of the renowned Lied von der Glocke, in which Schiller sought to make poetry widely accessible without dehusing it. Their inability to understand poetry is part and parcel of the pettiness and falsehood exacted by society. Cecily, however, is profoundly moved. The concluding lines of the declaimed translation (although not of Schiller’s original) reinforce that glimpse into immortality she has gained from her confrontation with mortality:

Ли ужсть она, что все не ведно,
Что всё холодно проходит.

May it teach that nothing is eternal,
That all sublunar things will pass.

Verses and images from the poem continue to reverberate within Cecily and work powerfully to lead her beyond her habitual sphere: “I ве это выхож monde из обыкновых пределов, эра миел” (And all of this went completely beyond the customary bounds of her thought, 248). The recitation and her strong involuntary response suggest new possibilities and a gender a heretical thought: “не могли бы ты сама увидеть, как говорить печальній” (perhaps she too could talk that way, through song, 249). Cecily drifts off into a dream of boundless lyrical flow with which she merges in unprece- dented harmony. Yet within this very dream doubts surface about the utility of poetry and warnings appear of the poet’s difficult lot. These are countered, however, with a reaffirmation of the poet’s indispensable task to plant intimations of another existence in hearers’ hearts:

Но что бы вы, держали вы,
Ей ответили не могли.

But so that people, sensing the mystery,
Would not be able to spurn it.

This accords with the project described in the dedication of A Twofold Life. Its success is now demonstrated by Cecily’s reaction to the reading of The Song of the Bell. The development of the heroine is consonantly a defense of poet and poetry.
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Once Cecily's inner being quickens and her two separate lives begin to interact, the falsity of her diurnal life becomes increasingly palpable. Far from promoting escapism, Cecily's dream world now intrudes on and clouds the blissful, carefully engineered ignorance of her waking hours. Her daily life comes to be seen as an escape from the truths she recognizes in her sleep.

In Petrovsky Park, where Cecily and her mother next take up residence, sanna priroda děletas nevestes-viesen (nature itself was made unnatural; 252). Here Pavlova juxtaposes the affections and artificiality of the upper classes the common man who, undivorced from nature, faces and finds expression for the realities of existence. The social implications of this theme are only hinted at and remain undeveloped. Cecily is shielded from what would doubtless be highly instructive contact with commoners. (Even servants are absent from this work.) Only a folk song sung by an invisible night watchman penetrates her insular social existence, this in the midst of her delight at having secured Dmitrij's attentions. (She knows nothing of the scheming that has led him to her.) The song tells of a self-sacrificing woman and the perfidy of her beloved. Its melancholy contrasts sharply with Cecily's happiness: its story presages her fate. Cecily's subsequent dream incorporates the material of this song. It reiterates the futility of earthly striving that appears repeatedly in Cecily's dreams only to be denied. Her stern nocturnal genius now instructs her in the woman's lot, which he describes at some length as painful and demanding of stoic self-sacrifice. His account of a woman's fate parallels the events described in the song and at the same time resonates with the characteristics that defined the poet at the end of the preceding chapter. Woman and poet are steadily drawn into proximity. That the woman's role in life engenders specifically those qualities that define the poet counteracts the notion Cecily had entertained as she drifted off to sleep at the end of chapter 3 on the night of the poetry reading:

Она знала, что есть даже и женщины поэты, но это ей всегда было представимо как самое жалкое, невероятное, нечестивое и опасное блюдо. (249)

She knew that there were even women poets, but this was always represented to her as the most pitiful, abnormal condition, like a calamitous, dangerous illness.

Reference to Sappho's suicide (258) suggests the danger inherent in the coincidence of woman and poet projected in this dream and points to the high price exacted of her. Yet Cecily is urged nonetheless to pursue the solitary and essentially poetic path of one who, although misunderstood, persists in the sacred duty she has assumed. The rhetorical question with which this dream passage concludes is applicable equally to women and to poets:

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Зачем Творцъ всѣмъ такъ строгъ
И почему заставъ удить трудный? (260)

Why are the commands of the Creator so strict
And the lot of the powerless so much more difficult?

The material of both the folk song and the dream that followed it subsequently reappears in the social world, where—although trivialized according to prevailing custom—it continues to advance Cecily's development. Scraps of gossip about a woman who has just died describe a selfless, silently suffering individual who persevered in what was clearly a misguided love for an undeserving husband. For the gathered company the woman is an object of scorn.

For Cecily's mother she represents a didactic opportunity: "Vo vielk pro-stuplakh muzah, skazala ona strugom golosom, vinovata zhena" ("In all the misteps of a husband," she said in a stern voice, "the wife is to blame"; 262).

For Cecily, however, an alternative course her own life can take begins to emerge here. Her next dream affords her a vantage point on both the dead woman's crowded funeral feast—a false attempt to shrug off death—and the lonely grave surrounded by trees and fields that morn her passing. Blending into the sad rustling of the leaves, two voices debate the merit of the path taken by the newly departed. The first voice praises her unwavering faith in an ideal that found no support in the actual world. The second questions the value of futile sacrifice born of self-deception and insists, "Zhit' buchse slov, I pravda vyshye izh" ("Life is better than words and truth is higher than falsehood; 267). In this context of Romanticism with naturalism the exponent of the Romantic has the last word. The woman in question is redeemed by her faith in an unattainable ideal and her continual striving toward it. For Cecily two options are now in place: she can either pursue uncritically her day-to-day life in the society for which her upbringing has prepared her and which she will perpetuate, or she can dedicate herself to a higher ideal that society will disdain, but that will elevate her above its constraints and exempt her from its perpetuation.

Although in the narrative she remains but an unwitting pawn in Olga's mother's schemes, Cecily has developed a great deal since the beginning of the novel. She now enters into direct conversation with her nocturnal mentor and reproaches him for seeking to shatter her simple hopes and dreams. She has, in other words, achieved the capacity to consider at least subconsciously the options her diurnal and her nocturnal states suggest to her. The response of her genius acknowledges this growth and presages the surfacing of this capacity to Cecily's awareness:

И чувствую, что в тебя есть что-то
Нечастное теперь,
Что выше всякаго расчёта,
И всѣхъ блаженствъ, и всѣхъ потерь. (288)
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And feel that there is now something
Inexplicable in you
That is above all calculation
And all bliss and all losses.

Cecily now stands on the threshold of the final step in her maturation—
her marriage to Dmitriy. The description of Cecily’s last night before the
wedding emphasizes her shedding of restrictive garments and yet dwells
also on her departure from that tranquil bedchamber that has been aligned
throughout the work with her inner world. Cecily’s subliminal presenti-
ments of her beloved’s unworthiness now surface to consciousness in an
intense moment of elocution:

Наконец-то вернувшись, со взором, странно взволнованной в
думах, с невыразимой грустью на лице, Цепелина, сквозь стены и
пространство, словно достала до того буйного мира, словно видела
острые пальцы жемчуга и слышала роковой шепот знаменитого гения.

Leaning slightly forward, staring strangely into the twilight, with inexpress-
able sadness on her face, Cecily seemed to penetrate walls and space to attain
that wild feast, seemed to see the sharp flame of the punch and to listen to
the harsh laugh of a familiar voice.

Her last virginal slumber is heavy with death imagery. The parting
admonitions of her dream mentor presage an unenviable future to which
she is now irrevocably condemned:

Так и я по приговору,
Только вдвоем сильна,
Не надышись на опору,
Беззащитна и одна. (303)

So go as sentenced,
Strong only in faith,
With no hope for support,
Defenseless and alone.

The following day, when Olga secures a bracelet—the gift of Cecily’s
husband-to-be—at her wrist, Cecily echoes her mentor’s words:

Так и я по приговору,
Беззащитна и одна... (304)

So go as sentenced,
Defenseless and alone

Death imagery also invaded the wedding, at which the bride appears бедная,
kak мертвая (pale as a corpse; 305). Yet this is a death that presages a new
life, for Cecily’s pallor is that of her recently recognized model. The bonds
of marriage put her into a situation analogous to that of the deceased woman,
who exemplified lofty, self-sacrificing heroism in the face of an unenviable
reality. Cecily has now been prepared to follow her example.

Cecily stands no more chance of making a new man of her future hus-
band than she does of altering the false norms of her society. The quixotic
heroism toward which she is being urged is to derive its impetus specifically
from the discrepancy between the Dmitriy of her imagination and the
Dmitriy she is about to marry—from the incongruity of the actual and the
imaginary worlds out of which poetry springs.

Cecily’s development as a heroine is also her development as a poten-
tial poet. We cannot say with absolute certainty whether she will continue
to depend on her sister Karolina Pavlova for expression or will acquire a
voice of her own. It is certain, however, that in the ten chapters and three
months of A Twofold Life she has made considerable progress toward the
latter possibility. She has gained awareness of another sphere of existence
beyond her immediate world, has recognized avenues of mediation be-
tween those distinct spheres, and has both enabled and responded to their
interaction. Rather than to rebel against restrictive conditions, she has learned
to find freedom beyond them.

The enterprise is a late Romantic one expressed in specifically female
terms. Cecily accomplishes a transformation not of the surrounding world,
but of the inner self. In that inner sphere the illusory and false condi-
tions of the external world may be reprocessed and transfigured to bring
about a profound qualitative change. Thus, duplicity becomes productive
duality. The petty deceptions of the social world are replaced with a lofty
ideal—image net of what is, but of what ought to be. Here the stultifying
self-restraint exacted by social norms is translated into heroic stoicism and
that exercise of control over raw emotion and inarticulate urges that fosters
true self-expression. The мир лишено-страдий (world false and strict; 208) of
society is superseded by the exquisite discipline of poetry.

Cecily’s development is perhaps the strongest defense of poetry A Two-
fold Life offers, for this newly emerging heroine coincides in her essential
features with the poet, even as Cecily shares unmistakable traits with Karo-
лина Pavlova herself. The verses that conclude the work reaffirm the proxi-
imity of woman and poet indicated in the dedication and elaborated in the
work. This is no longer a dream poem but the poetry of the author-narrator,
who—as her dedication promised—has translated the events of those
two worlds into a text that productively integrates them. A Twofold Life
culminates with an emphatic reaffirmation of the poetic ideal vested
in Cecily’s fate, a reaffirmation that flies in the teeth of both the doubts that
assail the poet and the external demands imposed on her.

For her own part, the author retains a distinct superiority over the
heroine whose course she has charted. As a poet who conveys inner land-
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scapes in verse, Pavlova dedicated herself to those unattainable Romantic ideals that elevate her above the day-to-day. At the same time, however, as a prose writer of social criticism she does not relinquish the possibility of effecting a positive change in the surrounding world. In so doing she replaces the sequence of literary movements with their synchrony and projects herself rather than the Cecily von Lindenborn she has created as a paradigm for a new heroine—the woman writer.

Notes

1. Barbara Heldt titles her translation of Deejnaja zhizni: A Double Life (Oakland: Baro'sy Coast Books, 1986). This is an accurate rendering, but because the epigraph Pavlova selects from Byron's poem "The Dream" begins "Our life is twofold" it seems more appropriate to refer to Pavlova's work as A Tzofold Life.


3. For a recent study of the significance of genre in this work, see Diana Greene, "Gender and Genre in Pavlova's A Double Life," Slavic Review 54, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 563–77 (reprinted in this volume).

4. Karolina Pavlova, Polnoe sobranie stikhovorem, ed. N. M. Gajdenko; Biblioteka poeta, Bol'shaia sereia, 2nd ed. (Moscow-Leningrad: Sovetskij pisatel', 1964), 235. All subsequent quotations of Deejnaja zhizni are from this edition and their page numbers will appear in parentheses.


6. Anthony D. Briggs has considered the transitions from prose to poetry in his study "Two-fold Life: A Mirror of Karolina Pavlova's Shortcomings and Achievement," Saxonie and East European Review 49, no. 114 (January 1971): 1–17. Pavel Gromov has noted social criticism that penetrates Cecily's dreams in his introduction, "Karolina Pavlova," in Polnoe sobranie stikhovorem, 30. The specific interaction of Cecily's two worlds, however, has, to my knowledge, received no systematic attention.


11. Pavlova was an ardent admirer of Goethe and his Faust.

12. In A History of Russian Women's Writing, Kelly misses the author-narrator's return to center stage and erroneously attributes the concluding verses to Cecily herself (106–7). Kelly is nevertheless correct in noting that Cecily's development parallels Pavlova's own (107).