

*Nineteenth-Century
Literature Criticism*

NCLC

138

Volume 138

Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism

*Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Philosophers, and Other
Creative Writers Who Died between 1800
and 1899, from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations*





Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism, Vol. 138

Project Editors

Marie C. Toft, Russel Whitaker

Editorial

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Preface

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose works have been translated into English, the list will focus primarily on twentieth-century translations, selecting

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Karolina Pavlova

1807-1893

(Full name Karolina Karlovna Pavlova) Russian poet, novelist, short story writer, and translator.

INTRODUCTION

Pavlova is acknowledged as Russia's greatest nineteenth-century woman poet and the first woman of letters in Russia. Despite this, she had a mixed career and even today suffers a reputation as a marginal figure in world literature. Her greatest literary contribution was the development of the "story in verse."

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Pavlova was born Karolina Jänisch; in Yaroslavl, Russia, on July 10, 1807 to a German father and a French-English mother. Pavlova spoke four languages by the time she was five and took an early interest in drawing and writing poetry. Her father, Karl Andreevich Janisch, educated her at home, where she excelled at her studies. At the age of nineteen, Pavlova met Adam Mickiewicz, the great Polish poet who became her Polish language teacher. The two began a love affair and planned to marry, but the relationship ended in 1829. In the late 1820s Pavlova began translating Russian poetry into German and quickly made a name for herself in literary circles. In 1829 she began exchanging verse letters with the poets Evgenii Abramovich Baratynsky and Nikolai Mikhailovich Iazykov. By the time Pavlova had published her first book of translations, *Das Nordlicht* (1833), she had established herself as one of the finest translators of Russian poetry. Luminaries such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe praised Pavlova's ability to render the subtler aspects of poetry in her translations. When she was thirty, Pavlova married the writer Nikolai Filippovich Pavlov.

In the early 1840s Pavlova was known for her Moscow literary salon, where many of the literati of the day gathered. The salon provided a venue for exponents of the two major social philosophies of the day—the "Slavophiles" and the "Westernizers"—to debate their ideas. Pavlova was associated with the "Slavophile" movement, which emphasized Slavic cultural supremacy over western European influences. She was also a central figure in the Russian "Art for Art's Sake" movement. While Pavlova's salon made her a prominent fig-

ure, her German ethnicity and gender caused some antipathy among her peers. She had a reputation for being haughty, "unwomanly," and overly theatrical in her love of poetry and art. Despite this, Pavlova's novel, *Dvoinaia zhizn'* (*A Double Life*) was well received at its publication in 1848.

Meanwhile, Pavlova's husband gambled away her fortune and set up a separate household with one of her cousins, with whom he had two children. In 1852, Pavlova's father arranged for Pavlov's house to be raided. Pavlov was arrested for possessing banned books and then exiled to Perm. Pavlov's liberal friends and associates saw this as an act of treachery on Pavlova's part and she was thereafter shunned by Moscow literary society. Shortly after this her father died of cholera. When Pavlova did not attend the funeral, she was again heavily criticized. By the mid-1850s she was exiled from the Russian literary scene. Having completely fallen out with her literary associates, Pavlova left Russia for Derpt, Estonia, where she fell in love with a law student named Boris Utin. In 1854 she followed Utin to St. Petersburg and tried, unsuccessfully, to reestablish her literary reputation. By 1855 Pavlova moved to Dresden, Germany after separating from Utin. She continued to translate, focusing on the works of Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoi, who became her close friend. In 1868, Pavlova returned to Russia briefly to read from one of her translations. She was not well received and returned to Dresden. Pavlova died alone, without family, friends, money, or reputation, on December 2, 1893.

MAJOR WORKS

Pavlova first achieved fame by translating Russian poetry into German. Her translations of works by Alexander Pushkin, Iazykov, and others were collected in *Das Nordlicht*. The volume included several of Pavlova's original poems, but it was the translations that garnered praise from critics. Pavlova's next publication was a volume of Russian, German, English, Italian, and Polish poetry translated into French, entitled *Les préludes* (1839). Once again, critics hailed Pavlova's translations for their artistic coloring and faithfulness to the originals. However, Pavlova's work came under attack from some quarters because of the "Slavophile" tendencies of the poems chosen for inclusion in the volume. Pavlova's early poetry was heavily influenced by the German Romantics, and the original works in *Das*

Nordlicht and *Les préludes* have fairy-tale and fantastic elements, exploring the connection of the human soul with the mysterious powers of nature.

During the 1840s, Pavlova began her distinctive use of storytelling in poetry. Unlike lyric poetry or ballads, her short “stories in verse” included complex tales with distinct plots and psychological details normally found only in prose works. *A Double Life* is the finest example of her mixed-genre technique. Pavlova’s combined use of poetry and prose finds its most imaginative expression in *A Double Life*. The novel tells the story of Cecily von Lindenborn, a young aristocratic Russian woman who is to be married off to a suitable groom. The prose provides descriptions of the objective world, while the poetry gives expression to the inner life of the heroine. The work comments on the role and status of women in society, as well as exploring society’s attitudes toward poetry and the artist. Like much of Pavlova’s work, *A Double Life* draws on her own experiences as a woman and artist trapped in a society that denies her the freedom to choose her own destiny.

Pavlova’s later poetry, mostly in the form of longer narratives, continues to use this technique. The poems in *Razgovor v Kremle* (1854) relate episodes from the Russian past and considering the historical destinies of nations. The narrative poem *Kadriľ* (1859) is made up of four separate stories, each about a different woman and her fate in the world. The work deals with a theme that runs through much of Pavlova’s work: woman’s destiny.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Critical assessment of Pavlova’s writing remains mixed. During her life Pavlova was both admired for her poetic sensibility and technical mastery and reviled for the “unfeminine” and overly rational nature of her poetry and artistic outlook. During the 1830s she earned praise for her superlative translation work. Her fame as a poet and literary persona grew in the 1840s, although she was often criticized for the lack of serious content in her poetry and many complained that the poet subordinated sense to sound. However, as testament to her importance as a literary figure, the publication of Pavlova’s novel *A Double Life* drew the attention of all the important Russian literary journals. Reviews of the work called it original and remarkable, though some critics complained of her conspicuous Slavophilic tendencies and unconvincing social critique. Pavlova’s later poetry enjoyed mixed success, perhaps due to her personal unpopularity. Critics faulted her supposedly “neutral” position on important social questions. Although she continued writing and translating after her husband’s arrest, her reputation never recovered. At her death, not one Russian journal ran her obituary.

In the twentieth century, Symbolist poets reevaluated Pavlova’s work and a two-volume edition of her work was brought out in 1915 by Valerii Briusov. The Soviets at first dismissed her work as unprogressive, but did publish two editions of her writings, in 1939 and in 1964. Several Russian women poets, including Cherubina de Gabriak, Sofiia Parnok, Marina Tsevtseva, and Anna Akhmatova, have held Pavlova in high regard, appreciating her impatience with female passivity and her protest against the strictures that hampered female creativity. Since the 1970s, interest in Pavlova’s work has increased. Feminist scholars have revived interest in Pavlova’s writings about the role and destiny of women, as well as the story of her own life, as examples of the difficulties faced by women artists in the nineteenth century. Contemporary critics also examine the techniques Pavlova used, especially her combined use of poetry and prose. Some critics find her work to be disorganized, diffuse, lacking in artistic focus, and revealing too much of the writer’s personality. Others regard Pavlova’s lyric poetry to be masterful in its subtlety, her narrative prose to be exquisitely wrought, and her themes (the role of the artist, the place of women in society, and the strictures placed on feminine creativity) to be ahead of their time.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Das Nordlicht: Proben er neuen russischen Literatur
[translator and contributor] (poetry) 1833
Les préludes [translator and contributor] (poetry) 1839
Dvoinaia zhizn' [*A Double Life*] (novel) 1848
Razgovor v Kremle (poetry) 1854
Kadriľ (poetry) 1859
Stikhotvoreniia (poetry) 1863
Polnoe sobranie stikhotvoreniia (poetry, prose, and short stories) 1939

CRITICISM

Anthony D. Briggs (essay date January 1971)

SOURCE: Briggs, Anthony D. “*Twofold Life: A Mirror of Karolina Pavlova’s Shortcomings and Achievement.*” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 49, no. 114 (January 1971): 1-17.

[In the following essay, Briggs alleges that Pavlova was extreme in both her accomplishments and her deficiencies, which are reflected in her novel *Twofold Life*; her work, he says, is original but meandering, uncertain in its purpose, and contains too much of the writer’s personality.]

I

Like several other poets of the mid-19th century who were connected with the theory of 'pure art' Karolina Pavlova (1807-93) has clung to her posthumous reputation with remarkable tenacity. She has run the accepted gauntlet. Laughed off the literary stage in her own day, she languished in near-obscurity for half a century and was rediscovered in the age of the Symbolists. Bryusov published her in two volumes in 1915 and, what is more surprising, Soviet editors have re-issued her twice in the *Biblioteka Poeta* series, in 1939 and 1964.¹

There is much that is distinctive about Karolina Pavlova. She was the first true woman of letters in Russia and remains the leading Russian poetess before this century, with little to fear from her nearest rivals, Mmes Rostopshchina (1811-58), Zhadovskaya (1824-83) and Khvoshchinskaya (1825-89). She had a love affair with Mickiewicz, an unhappy marriage with N. F. Pavlov and a Moscow salon which ran successfully for several years, graced by many of the prominent literary figures of the day. She was German by birth (née Karoline von Jaenisch) and not unknown to famous fellow-countrymen; Goethe is said to have spoken highly of her translating ability, the famous naturalist and traveller Humboldt to have been charmed by her poetic manner. She can claim responsibility for the adjective *motyl'kovyy* which is frequently applied to works of the Art for Art's Sake movement, for Saltykov-Shchedrin created that term when reviewing a collection of her works (1863) which included the poem *Motilyok*, a proclamation of the total freedom of art. She anticipated even the pioneer Turgenev in propagating the gospel of Russian literature abroad and did much more than he in the way of translation. A. K. Tolstoy was particularly indebted to her as a translator into German. He acknowledged his debt and she responded more than once with gratitude for his encouragement. As a writer of original verse she was free-ranging and versatile, extreme in the heights of her achievement and in the markedness of her shortcomings. What these are, and how they are mirrored in her work called *Dvoynaya zhizn'* (*Twofold Life*), this article will seek to determine.

Her weaknesses as an authoress strike one first of all. She is easy to dismiss as a petty poet who turned out competent verses without much solid content. Her ideas are certainly few and confused; her collected work suffers from diffuseness. She bent to the will of others and tried to respond to the call of her times in a manner which twisted her talent into wrong directions. She broke a golden rule of pure art by allowing into her poetry the obvious intrusion of her own unhappy life. In summary, she was unable to dominate her own talent or to allow it to dominate her. For thirty years Pavlova lived uncomfortably with her own propensity for po-

etry, at times cherishing it, at times doubting that it had any value, and her break with the muse, a further thirty years before she died, was final. It was the same with everything she touched. Her early love life, her marriage, her finances, her salon, her life in Russia, all, like her art, began well, promised and achieved much, but dissolved prematurely through what seems now to have been an inborn capacity for mismanagement. There is too much in this for it to be a question of long-running bad luck; her life and her work suffered from a lack of purposeful organisation and application.

Although her poetic output was low (four or five poems a year for a quarter of a century, apart from her many translations and poems written in other languages), her subject-matter and method of treatment varied greatly. With Pavlova this range and variety is a weakness. It represents not the wide command of a poetic master, not even the search for fulfilment of a keenly felt potential, but the hopeful and haphazard directing of a poetic beam into many corners, sometimes under persuasion from other people, though almost always (to her credit) avoiding well illuminated spaces. She seems to have been sustained by the hope, vague but not entirely unjustified, that the process might either produce an occasional literary masterpiece or somehow improve an ever-saddening life. She moved through many genres without stamping her personality unforgettably upon any one of them, as did, for instance, Shcherbina on the anthological piece, Fet on the musical lyric and Grigor'yev on the gypsy song. One minor exception is the 'story in verse', a miniature morality piece not far removed in manner from balladry but distinctive because of its exemplary intentions. With Pavlova these stories amount to studies in monomania, warnings of what will happen if men lose their sense of proportion; probably the best of them is *Rudokop* in which an obsessed prospector at last sees the error of his ways, decides to reform himself but is killed in a pitfall before he can do so. Such cautionary ballads exemplify Pavlova's ability to strike an unusual, appealing note as she allows her poetic talent a free rein.

Much less of an impression is created by her long historical poems. These deserve separate mention as much for their own intrinsic weakness as for the serious attention accorded them by Soviet critics. P. P. Gromov's grave consideration of two of her weakest poems, *Razgovor v Trianone* and *Razgovor v Kremle*, occupying about one seventh of his introduction to the 1964 edition,² show criticism of a narrow-minded kind. To begin with, the former *Razgovor* (1848) was written purely in response to a contemporary demand for more meaningful content and lacks all natural poetic impulse. Gromov claims to like it and praises it, clearly for the dubious reason that it discusses the inevitability and justification of revolution. In fact as a poem it has little value, as a dramatic piece (for it is called a

'conversation' which hints at some interplay between characters) it has nothing to offer since Cagliostro is too dominant, and as a historical document it is without significance, presenting simply the personal theories of one man put into verse for no good reason. To the western eye the question of involvement or non-involvement in socio-historical issues cannot be a qualitative critical standpoint; for the Soviet critic they are of central importance since opting out of social commentary is artistically suicidal 'spinelessness'. Later on, in fact, Karolina Pavlova's overall failure as a poetess is assessed in these terms:

. . . and, properly speaking, she is an artist on a modest scale simply because the great issues of her time scarcely dawn at all in her poetry.³

Razgovor v Kremle is considered by Gromov to be an 'unconvincing and stillborn'⁴ work because of its neutrality. The poem certainly involves itself in socio-historical issues, and that is accepted as a good thing, but now the call is for the decisive expression of an opinion one way or the other.

The criticisms of these two poems appear to miss the target. Pavlova's undoubted failure in this genre is due to her being involuntarily drawn into a sphere for which her talents did not suit her. Historical poems are difficult to succeed in and Pavlova, as Gromov reminds us more than once, was persuaded by her critics into this alien realm in the fulfilment of an unavoidable duty. Poets can rarely be intimidated into creativity with happy artistic results, least of all those of the school of 'pure art'. Certainly her political attitude is mixed to the point of ambiguity; *Razgovor v Kremle*, for instance, is a strongly Slavophile poem which gives too much prominence to an Englishman and a Frenchman, enthusiastic devil's advocates articulate in their anti-Russian views, and then to the arch-Europeaniser, Peter the Great. The uncertainty, however, is due not to insincerity, lack of conviction or mere artistic inadequacy; it stems from a sheer lack of affinity for the genre.

The two *Razgovor* poems show Pavlova to have been influenced against her better judgment by the contemporary call for purposeful content. In this respect she falls short of the mulish resistance of Fet but is no worse than Polonsky who later in his career seriously infringed the unwritten Art for Art's Sake code to which he had once subscribed. A more serious shortcoming of Karolina Pavlova was to allow the unhappy trends of her own personal life to intrude into her work. The result is an unwelcome, overpainted sense of sadness, sometimes bitterness, frequently bypassing an elegiac melancholy to which no-one would object for an expression of disappointment in life which amounts to the poetess being sorry for herself. Her poetical reflections, her addressed poems, her cycle of love-lyrics are di-

rected by a negative spirit too anxious to condemn, to regret and despair. Finally her own life as a poet is called more and more into question. As early as 1842 she had looked back on a time when poetry was once dearer than her daily bread (*N. M. Yazykovu: Otvet na otvet*), with the clear inference that now it knows its lesser place. Later poems illustrate an abiding lack of confidence; those which are positive in intent, (such as *A. D. B[aratynsk]oy* (1858) and *Gr. A. K. T[olsto]mu* (1862)), conveying relief at her sudden realisation that it has all been worth it, that she is a real poet, merely emphasise the doubts which preceded them and which must quickly return.

Such are Karolina Pavlova's main weaknesses; they should not blind the reader to her real qualities. Her several Art for Art's Sake doctrinal poems (of which the famous *Motylyok* is the worst, because of its heavy-handed second stanza which explains the metaphor quite superfluously) are a clear and powerful assertion of the independence of poetry, though in a sense they speak the language of the enemy, for they themselves claim that poems should not involve themselves with argument and theory. Certain of the stories in verse (notably *Rudokop* and *Monakh*) contain both an interesting story originally combined with a human message; again, though, they are at least semi-didactic and in theory contravene the Art for Art's Sake code. There are fine individual achievements in several other fields. One need only list some of Pavlova's most successful lyrics; '*My stranno soshlis*' . . . (1854), *Port Marsel'sky* (1861), *Vezde i vseгда* (1846), *Ogon'* (1841) *Duma* ('Ne raz sebya ya voproschayu strogo . . .'; 1844), *A. D. Baratynskoy* (1858), *Prazdnik Rima* (1855), '*Nebo bleshchet biryuzoyu*' (1840), *Plovets* (1855), *Serenada* (1851) and '*Eto bylo blestyashcheye more*' . . . (1856-61) are some examples of first-rate poems taken from different periods of her life and written on widely different subjects and in different ways. If her muse is the least consistent of all the Art for Art's Sake poets, it is also the least repetitive, the most diverse in failure and achievement.

Karolina Pavlova served Russian literature in many ways but her major artistic contribution is right in the middle of the Art for Art's Sake tradition. It lies in the direction of poetic form. Pavlova is an accomplished craftsman and in this respect her talent is unquestionable and consistent. She has been credited with helping to free Russian rhyme from its earlier rigidity⁵ but it would not do to exaggerate her role as a rhymster. Her reputation is based mainly on two poems, the deliberately capricious *Vezde i vseгда* and the longer *Razgovor v Kremle*. In both poems all she does is to rhyme Russian words with foreign ones (*mir/Shekspir*, *Kolumb/rumb*, *shchedro/Saavedra*, etc.). This is strikingly unusual but it is still fairly accurate rhyming. There is no question of her introducing merely assonant rhyming

and only one poem uses dactylic rhymes (*K. S. A[ksakovu]* (1847)). Karolina Pavlova should not be classed amongst the revolutionary or virtuoso rhymsters of Russian literature; elsewhere, but for a number of compound but quite regular rhymes, her rhyming is soundly inconspicuous.

More important are her rhythmic innovations which concern primarily various combinations of binary and ternary metres, either within one line forming logaoeds, or simply within the poem as a whole. Here Pavlova made a genuine and important contribution to Russian verse; who can say that Fet's rhythmic innovations were not influenced by a knowledge of her work gained from his visits to her salon?

Above all Pavlova had a true sense of form, that instinct for matching the shape and sound of a poem to what was being said. There are a few lapses. For example, two of her Meditations seem to have an inappropriate metrical basis; 'Grustno veter veyet . . .' has a short line, trochaic trimeter, built into three octaves which rhyme AAAbCCCb and 'Khot' ustalaya doshlaya . . .' alternates iambic tetrameters with dimeters—splendid metres, both of them, but perhaps unsuited to the elegiac mood. Similarly, in *Kadril'*, where each of the four stories is told in a different metre for the sake of variety, two of them seem to have chosen an inappropriate one; Lisa's is in trochaic pentameter, a difficult line to sustain for a long story, whereas Ol'ga's is in iambic hexameter, too long, too stately for a story about a silly young girl's *faux pas* at her first ball. Similarly again, it is perhaps a waste of good anapaests to use them in a straightforward poetic counter-attack on those people who had turned on her and her mother, accusing them of disrespect when they left Russia on the eve of her father's funeral to avoid the risk of catching the cholera from which he had died. These are examples of Pavlova failing to create a perfect match between form and meaning. The fact that they are quoted at all indicates that she is a most capable craftsman for they are minor infringements, not all of them entirely beyond dispute. It is a tribute to her skill that one may point out these trivialities as (for her) egregious examples of mismatching.

Nowhere is her devotion to artistic form more apparent than in that strange study in metempsychosis, *Dvoynaya zhizn'*; in no other work does she make such a great effort to unite the form with the narrative. There are hidden effects in that work which give it a precarious unity despite its central dichotomy and its diffuseness on the prose side. In fact, some of the verse, especially in the earlier chapters, rises to the summit of Karolina Pavlova's achievement. The work is highly typical of Pavlova's own manner and that of the Art for Art's Sake school as a whole. It could so easily have been a singularly great piece of literature but disqualifies itself from

the highest rank by Karolina Pavlova's besetting shortcomings; a desire to do too much in one short space instead of aiming at a clear goal, and an inability to master and manipulate her own subject-matter. In this case that means arguing through several contemporary issues as well as telling some kind of fictional story, and all this within the impossible task of uniting heaven and earth in a mystical vision. It was an attempt at reconciling several polarities in a single artistic sweep which nearly succeeded in literary terms. It was Pavlova's superb and ingenious craftsmanship that brought her so close to success in so uniquely difficult a task.

II

Twofold Life is an unusual piece of literature, broad-ranging in its purposes, extreme in its strengths and weaknesses, striking in its originality, unorthodox in its use of literary devices. The duality mentioned in the title, inherited from Byron's poem *The Dream*, runs throughout, determining everything to the work's credit and detriment. In the first place it affects the very definition of the piece which is neither a novel nor a poem (though Pavlova called it a *poema*) but an attractive hybrid embracing prose and poetry totally dissimilar in content and yet uniquely conjoined.

The prose part of *Dvoynaya zhizn'* is concerned with the problems of 19th-century Russian society, and especially the position occupied by women; the poetry exists on an entirely separate plane of experience, expressing the mystical longings and adventures of a young girl enjoyed during trances which occur when she is asleep. Each chapter begins in prose, advances the earthbound story-line and ends with Cecily, the heroine, retiring, falling asleep and moving by means of a trance into the higher dimension. After the final chapter, however, it is the authoress herself who takes over the verse commentary to round off her *poema* and bid farewell.

The story of the prose section is fairly simple, not without interest, even a modicum of tension, certainly not without humour and criticism of contemporary *mores*. Cecily von Lindenborn has a scheming mother Vera Vladimirovna; her friend and rival, Ol'ga Valitskaya has a mother, Natal'ya Afanas'yevna, who is equally scheming and more resourceful. The Valitskayas, senior and junior, set their caps at Prince Victor, a wealthy new arrival, as a good potential husband for Ol'ga. Cecily's mother would like him for her own daughter though the girl herself falls in love with Dmitry, his impecunious friend. It is Ol'ga's mother who is the prime mover. She discovers Cecily's love, apparently returned by Dmitry, and uses it to ensnare Mme von Lindenborn. Her ruse is ingenious, if balanced on an unbelievable knife-edge. She persuades Prince Victor's grand, aristocratic mother to approach Mme von Lindenborn and

speak of the mutual love of her daughter and a certain young person. Naturally assuming the latter to be Prince Victor himself, Vera Vladimirovna makes a grand show of blessing their union, so that she is unable to back down when made aware that Dmitry was the man referred to. So the marriage goes ahead. Finally, Mme Valitskaya's schemes come to nothing when the Prince leaves town without marrying anyone. The story leaves Cecily and Dmitry on the threshold of their marriage.

There is thus plenty of action, though most of it consists in the to-and-fro movements of the plotters and the youngsters as they earnestly pursue the tangled ends of enjoying themselves, manoeuvring themselves into positions of strategic advantage and impressing everyone with their wealth and good taste.

One of the novel's aims appears to be the depiction of high society in colours so vivid as to be almost satirical. The remoteness of the other 98% of the Russian people is referred to several times; they stand and watch the comedy of these demi-gods open-mouthed, incredulous amidst their own poverty and rightly regarded as 'inhabitants of another world'.⁶ There is tacit criticism of the aristocracy also for its over-Westernisation; fashions, governesses, literary opinions, even modern vocabulary (with expressions like *mezalians*) were assumed and discarded according to standards established in the capitals of Western Europe, not in Russia.

The remoteness of the idle rich from the Russian people and the Russian soil is, however, only a peripheral issue. On its prose side this novel deals primarily with the question of women. All its main protagonists are female, two mothers, two daughters, gossipy friends, subservient domestics. Cecily's father is referred to briefly, but only in passing and to make it clear how much he was under his wife's control; the two male heroes are not literary figures at all, but pasteboard creations moved on and off stage according to the tiresome needs of the plot which called for the presence of two potential husbands-to-be. Without a doubt Karolina Pavlova is unsubtle enough here to overstate, or mis-state her case. Since no men are involved in determining Cecily's destiny, the battle seems like one between the generations, almost a pre-Turgenevan *Mothers and Daughters*, whereas the authoress is clearly meant to be arguing against the subjugation of the female by the male. Her main argument is that Cecily's life has been moulded, shaped, coloured and polished for her so completely that she is as incapable of as she is debarred from determining her own interests when she comes to a major decision. She was so used to being presented with everything but the truth that she did not know how even to consider the question of whether she really loved Dmitry. She assumed she did. Young women, according to Pavlova,⁷ were like trees in the park at Versailles, clipped and trimmed into columns, vases,

spheres, pyramids, any shape at all, just as long as it did not resemble the one which nature had intended. This is probably her main complaint; she was worried that women were married off in a daze, against their will, for reasons of money or prestige, but she was more worried that a girl's upbringing was so unnatural that on the rare occasions when she did have freedom of choice she was still unequipped to do herself justice.

These are the sundry targets on the prose side; to entertain by means of a mildly dramatic intrigue, to criticise the aristocracy for their senseless, expensive and un-Russian pursuits and to instruct society in the ways of bringing up young girls, or at least to show how they should not be raised and disposed of. The aims are not clearly spelled out, they are intertwined to a confusing degree, so that it is difficult to know what exactly the authoress is about. What is not in doubt, however, is that the novel has some critical intent. There is too little in the story for it to stand alone spread over ten chapters; there is too much obvious criticism for the novel to claim exclusively artistic intentions.

Parallel with the drama set in the real world is another, entirely separate one, which operates on a mystical plane. At the end of Chapter 1 the spirit of the sleeping Cecily moves into a new consciousness, perceives a tall, strong figure and proceeds through silent space towards him. He kisses her bowed head. From then on they meet regularly in the astral clime and become spiritually united. It is his task to express the accepted doctrine of all mystics, that the lower world of the senses is contemptibly limited and limiting, vain, deceitful and insubstantial compared with the ultimate mystical reality. The dialogue is sometimes curiously down-to-earth. One sympathises with the difficulty of the mystical bridegroom in persuading Cecily of his superiority, but in Chapter 6 his impatience and insistence have a mundane ring:

Ты думой темною, немую
Меня там ищешь одного;
В меня ты веруешь душою,
Меня ты любишь, не его.⁸

By Chapter 7 Cecily, whose affairs on earth are beginning to turn out well, shows her first real resistance to her mystic lover. She asks for release; he points emphatically to the emptiness of her life below. Chapter 8 shows them together with the stalemate still unresolved. Suddenly in Chapter 9 the heavenly lover renounces his claim inexplicably and frees Cecily to live out her earthly life in the normal way. He does this solemnly and without grace, seeming as petulant at his own loss as he is downhearted at her greater one; his words verge on the vengeful:

Так иди ж по приговору,
Только верю сильна,

