

On the functions of metrical dualism in M. Tsvetayeva's verse on the basis on the poem "How perfectly deceitful life is" (1922)

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Abstract. The article discusses the notion of metrical dualism as a phenomenon of the reader's perception of verse. The author analyzes the prosody and metrics of Marina Tsvetayeva's poems "Неподражаемо лжет жизнь" ("How perfectly deceitful life is", 1922). However, the aim of this study is not to interpret the metre of Tsvetayeva's verse, but rather to obtain a model of reading verse and thus show how the reader's perception of metre changes. Thus, the author consciously has not considered the metric or the logaoedic interpretations of this poem, while approaching the text from the point of view of the reader's *perception* which is always aimed at the revealing of symmetric structures. This approach makes it possible to take into account such aspects as the variety of metric interpretations, the dynamic development of verse metre, the internal and external metrical boundaries in text, etc. The analysis of Tsvetayeva's verse reveals the interaction of two rhythmic patterns in the text, which is connected to the general meaning of the poem that tells the reader about the *deceitfulness of life*.

The notion of "functional dualism" can be applied to the metrics of many of Tsvetayeva's poems. The notion of dualism was introduced by A. Kvyatkovsky who understood it as a double interpretation of a poem's prosody resulting from a) the explicit duality of its metric scheme, or b) the ambiguity and complexity of its rhythmic pattern (Kvyatkovsky 1966: 61). From the point of view of relative metrics the functional aspect of dualism becomes the most important – it manifests itself on different levels of duality when the metre of

various poetic text fragments is interpreted. For instance, a poem beginning in iamb undergoes loosening of the metre to end up with *dol'nik*. This makes the reader look at the poem's beginning again and reconsider the prosody of its intonation (hence, new approaches to the interpretation of the semantic structure of the text come into focus). Such cases seem to be even more interesting than cases of "pure dualism" when the whole poem can have a double interpretation (by introducing the latter notion, Kvyatkovsky does not give us any convincing examples of "pure dualism"). The notion is very close to the idea of "reversed verse" (see Shengeli 1960: 154–156). Dualism has not been accepted by critics of poetry and Kvyatkovsky himself does not seem to be very convincing either.

Dualism is often connected with rhythmic inversion. Inversion in Tsvetayeva's poems was described by M. L. Gasparov (1993: 102). The researcher registered frequency of inversion in Tsvetayeva's poems but the shift in accentuation was not seen as a *systematic* factor. Not by chance, Gasparov made an observation on the predominance of inversion in trochaic verses, although in view of functional dualism it is possible to describe inversion in Tsvetayeva's iambs as a morphogenic characteristic – this will be considered below. Purposefully, Gasparov does not allow any multiple interpretations of poem metrics.

It has to be noted here that our analysis of verse prosody will somehow differ from Gasparov's formal principles of the description of metrics. From the point of view of traditional prosody most of the poems described as dual might be referred to one of non-classical types of verse or presented as transitional metric forms (ТМФ; *переходные метрические формы*, or ПМФ in Russian). Without questioning the justifiability of such a description, we, however, would like to leave for a while a conventional approach to the interpretation of metrics. By distancing from it, the following important aspects might be taken into account:

1. Interpretation. From time to time poetry critics argue about the difficulties of interpreting metre, but in the end they prefer to ignore it by applying their own prosodic patterns. Despite this, as the text itself has departed from song and oral tradition it does not presuppose a straightforward recitation. By the way, traditionally, poetry studies do not take into consideration a poet's recitation while analysing verse prosody. We assume that the potential variety of recitations is a precondition of the text's functioning in

culture (similarly to the multiple interpretations of meaning), as rhythm results from the disparity between the metric scheme and its actual realization.

2. Functional aspects: formal classification of a text as *dol'nik* or TMF does not reflect the interconnection between metrics and semantics in every particular text. The functional approach allows us to consider

a) the metric context in which the metric expectation is violated;
and

b) the actualization of characteristics of quality which signal the change of strategy in the metric (and semantic) interpretation of verse in the process of the text being revealed to the reader.

With the help of this approach we can evaluate not only the degree of the metre's "loosening" but also *how* and *why* it happens. Moreover, the functional approach focuses not only on the "rhythm as such", but on the correlation of rhythmic determiners with other levels (semantics, phonics, etc).

3. Genetic / derivational aspect. From the point of view of relative metrics a verse can have a number of metric prototypes, and, as a result, a number of possible ways of recitation. At the same time, if we widen the range of possible sources of *dol'nik* (not only trisyllabic verse and variable intervals between ictuses, but also shifts in accentuation while preserving the syllabic order), we can identify various types of *dol'nik* from the genetic point of view. Additionally, it will allow us to reveal the interconnection between types of loosening traditional metrics in poems by different authors.

Thus, in this article we have consciously not considered the metric nor the logaoedic interpretations of this poem, as we approach the text from the point of view of a reader's *perception* which is always aimed at revealing symmetric structures. In this respect, logaoedic and *dol'nik* verses are always perceived by the reader as regularly occurring loosening of symmetric structures. The purpose of our study is not to interpret the metre of Tsvetaeva's verse, but rather to obtain a model of a verse reading, and thus show the changes in the reader's perception of metre.

Let us now consider Tsvetayeva's poems, particularly one poem from 1922 (see Tsvetayeva 2005). It is worth mentioning that poems written by Tsvetayeva in 1922 provide many examples of relative metrics. Despite the presence of an extra stress before the last ictus, the first line seems to follow an iambic scheme. The line realises the secondary rhythm of the Russian iambic tetrameter typical of Pushkin's and Lermontov's epoch: with the omission of stresses on the first and the third ictuses (U-U—U-Ū—) (for more

information, see Gasparov 2000: 140–142), the perfect example of which is variation VI of iambic tetrameter in Shengeli’s classification. (Shengeli 1923: 72). However, the extra stress on the word *лжет* is not phrasal as the actual division of the sentence makes us put a greater accent on the subject *жизнь* at the expense of the predicate *лжет*⁴. (We asked some people, who were not particularly interested in a certain way of a poem’s reciting, to recite the first quatrain of the text under analysis expressively. All of them accented *неподражаемо* and *жизнь*, by making the stress on the word *лжет* less distinct).

The need for rhematic accentuation of the predicate *лжет* will become evident as soon as the reader encounters the actualization of the seme 'ложь' (lie) and the phonic play of the sounds *ж, л, р, и* (see below). The second line confirms the reader’s expectation: the preposition *сверх* (above) is perceived as proclitic, although it is repeated twice in this line. Accentuation of the 4th (*ожида́ния*) and the 8th (*лжи*) syllables in the second line, that follow one another, makes the reader apply a strategy of rhythmic-metric interpretation of the text as iambic tetrameter with secondary alternating rhythm (besides, there is the possibility of paeonic recitation if the reader is quite experienced). The third line justifies this strategy: *Но по дрожа́нию всех жи́л...*

The fourth line ruins the expectations (*Мо́жешь узна́ть: жи́знь!*). In spite of the fact that this line does not suit the previously applied recitation strategy, the reader follows it automatically and tries to interpret this “measured” line from the syllabotonic point of view:

1) as iambic tetrameter with pauses (*/\ Мо́жешь /\' узна́ть: /\ жи́знь!*) – this pattern sounds quite unnatural and makes the reader change his strategy of metric interpretation; the reason behind it seems to be in the impossibility of making a pause at anacrusis;

2) as iambic trimeter with syncope and pause (*Мо́жешь узна́ть: /\ жи́знь!*; scheme: $\bar{U}-U-(U)-$). Despite its “unexpectedness” due to the number of ictuses, this interpretation seems to be more natural to the reader even though the iambic expectation is more violated in this line. Let us consider the arguments for and against which the reader might have while interpreting this line:

FOR: Despite the syncope on the first ictus the word combination *можешь узнать* sounds more like a secondary rhythm. In this case the poem’s metre is perceived as tertius paeon. The accent outside the pattern on the word *можешь* sounds less sharp. Moreover, the reader considers the word combination

можешь узнать as a tetrasyllabic foot with the stress on the last syllable under the influence of the phonic analogues: accented [a], repeated in the fourth syllable throughout the whole poem, the repetition of combinations with the sounds [o], [ж]. Besides, it is the second verb that forms the intonation core in the combination *можешь узнать*. If we consider this line as tertius paeon, then a verse with three pauses emerges: *Можешь узнать: /\ /\ /\ жизнь!* (scheme: $\dot{U}UU-\dot{U}$ |(UUU)- \dot{U}).

AGAINST: Inversion on a disyllabic word is hardly appropriate for iambic rhythm, even though Zhirmunsky wrote in 1925 that in the 20th century such inversion was becoming more acceptable due to the change in “the epoch’s tastes”.

Zhirmunsky's examples:

Та́йна? – Ах, вот что! Как в романе я... (V. Bryusov)

Жизни цветущие заботы... (S. Bobrov)

Зóри бегут через озера... (A. Adalis) (Zhirmunsky 1925: 50)

A trisyllabic period makes it rather difficult to appreciate a verse with the rhythmic momentum of paeon.

Thus, if the text is considered as one with dual rhythm, its metrics is going to be the following (we are suggesting both iambic and paeonic patterns in parallel):

Неподражаемо лжет жизнь:

Сверх ожидания, сверх лжи...

Но по дрожанию всех жил

Можешь узнать: жизнь!

$U-U-U-\dot{U}-\dot{U}$: Ia4 / $UUU-\dot{U}UU-\dot{U}$: paeon IV2

$U-U-U-U-\dot{U}$: Ia4 / $UUU-\dot{U}UU-\dot{U}$: paeon IV2

$U-U-U-U-\dot{U}$: Ia4 / $UUU-\dot{U}UU-\dot{U}$: paeon IV2

$\dot{U}-U-\dot{U}$ (U)- \dot{U} : Ia3 / $\dot{U}UU-\dot{U}$ (UUU)- \dot{U} : paeon IV2

3) The last line can also be read as dactyl (tri-ictus with a double pause before the third ictus, or bi-ictus – with the accented syllable in the *feminine* clausula (the word *жизнь*). In this case the reader is forced to reconsider the strategy of reciting the previous lines, and the poem will be recited in the following way:

Неподражаемо лжет жизнь:

Сверх ожидания, сверх лжи...

Но по дрожанию всех жил

Можешь узнать: жизнь!

-UU-UU-(UU)-: D4 / -UU-UU-U: D3

-UU-UU-(UU)-: D4 / -UU-UU-U: D3

-UU-UU-(UU)-: D4 / -UU-UU-U: D3

-UU-UU-(UU)-: D3 / -UU-U: D2

To sum up, the interpretation of the measure as a derivative of classic measures will depend on what the reader is more easily prepared to accept as a transformation of the metre: syncopes with stresses outside the pattern or omission of syllables in periods between ictuses.

4) Finally, the fourth line can be interpreted by the modern reader as a non-classical verse (i.e., as not correlating with any particular rhythm). Then its pattern -UU- again violates the flow of the previous quatrain. If stressed and unstressed syllables are to be presented “objectively” in this quatrain, the scheme can be presented as follows:

Неподражаемо лжет жизнь:

Сверх ожидания, сверх лжи...

Но по дрожанию всех жил

Можешь узнать: жизнь!

UUU-UU-: D4

-(?)UU-UU-(?) -: D4

UUU-UU-(?) -: D4

-UU-: D3

So we have now rhymed *vers libre* or *taktovik* (extended *dol'nik*) with intervals between ictuses 0–2. Typically, interpretation of the verse as *vers libre* leaves the reader with much uncertainty: the lack of ictus regularity (and arguable questions with the accentuation of the preposition *сверх*, the pronoun *всех*) comes together with the presence of a quite distinctive rhythm in this quatrain. However, if we try to identify some unstressed syllables as ictuses with the omission of schematic stress, we will be forced to come back to a derivational model again, which allows the reader to choose between bi- or *tri-dol'nik* rhythmic momentum.

Let us consider the second quatrain. Similarly to the previous line, the first line opens with a disyllabic “trochaic” word *словню*. The reader can choose

between two strategies of reciting the line: 1) as a dactyl with extra-pattern stress on the word *лежишь* and 2) as iamb with inversion on the first ictus, similar to the previous line.

Словно во ржи лежишь: звон, синь...

1) —'UU—UÙ—'(UU)—': D4

2) Ù—U—'U—Ù—': Ia4

By colliding stresses on syllables 6 and 7 Tsvetayeva bewilders the reader: a metric interpretation makes this incompatible. Hence, one of the syllables has to be considered as ictus, and another as a syllable in an inter-ictus interval with extra-pattern stress. The reader will be in a situation of rhythmic shock. He has to choose which accent is more important from the point of view of the text's intonation-semantic structure. In view of the actual division of the sentence, the verb *лежишь* loses its phrasal accent: here its rheme is – *во ржи*, while rhemes of a new phrase follow: *звон, синь*. On the other hand, in the first quatrain the level of phonics is actualized and the reader can notice the persistent repetition of the syllable [жы]: *Словно во ржи лежишь*. Partially, this syllable adjoins the final [с'ин']. Besides, the syllable [жы] has been already marked semantically in the previous quatrain: see [жы]знь, о[жы]дания, л[жы], [жы]л, мо[жъ^{си}]шь. With the exception of the words *ожидания* and *можешь* this syllable is accented, although only when the reader recites the last verse of the first quatrain in accordance with the iambic scheme. Thus the second syllable in the word *можешь* acquires a conditioned accentuation. Simultaneously, the conjunction *словно*, being occasionally accentuated – or metrically dual according to Zhirmunsky (1925: 116–120), easily loses its accentuation, thus allowing us to interpret the beginning of the line as the fourth paeon. However, the momentum of paeon is immediately ruined by the accent on the word *лежишь*.

If we return to the dactylic pattern of the line's reciting, we can notice certain phonic particularities even with this rhythmic scheme. When we accentuate the line as follows *Слòвно во ржи лежишь: звòн, /\ /\ синь...* we can easily notice the interchange of accented vowels [o] and [и], and consonants which surround them [в], [н], [с/з] around [o], and [с'/ж] around [и]. The alternation makes it possible to perceive the pause between the words *звон* and *синь* as a double pause.

The second line of the second quatrain does not allow the reader to follow one particular strategy of reciting either:

(Что ж, что во лжи лежишь!) – жар, вал.

1) —УУ—УУ—(УУ)—: D4

2) Û–U—U—Û—: Ia4

Moreover, the accent on the word *Что ж* seems to be much stronger than that on the word *словно* in the previous verse, although it is a monosyllabic conjunction. The emotional colouring of the text makes us put an emphatic accent on this *что ж*. The word *жар* seems to be more accented than the word *звон* whose position is similar to the one in the previous verse. The syllable [жа] re-echoes the words from the first quatrain where this syllable is in an accentuated position and has a distinct semantic marking (*неподражаемо, но по дрожанию*). In other words, this line makes the dactylic reciting more preferable for the reader.

Let us consider the third quatrain. Unstressed trisyllabic beginnings of the first two lines of the quatrain (*И не кори..., Заворожи...*) allow the reader to recite these lines in accordance with the paeonic scheme (in the second line we encounter a familiar phonetic four-syllable sequence with the accented [жы] at the end). The first line with the accent on the 6th syllable (*И не кори меня...*) allows us to recite the verse in accordance with the iambic scheme. At the same time, however, the endings of these lines contradict the two-part rhythmic patterns. This is a result not only of accentuation (collision of fully stressed *друг* and *столь* as the 7th and the 8th syllables), but from the syntactical-intonational pattern: the phrase divide and *contre-rejet* at the words *друг, столь* require a long pause between them. In spite of the possibility of having monosyllabic words with extra-pattern stresses within the iambic tetrameter scheme (as in the word *друг*), this interferes with the intonation of the rhythmic pattern, especially when the reader is still under the influence of another variant of rhythmic interpretation. The pattern stress in a similar position in the following line (*Заворожимы у нас, тел...*) has to occur on the preposition *у*; instead, it is put on the pronoun *нас*.

The third line of the quatrain is also interesting. In fact, it falls under the dactylic pattern. The phonic analogues, being actualized here, undermine the accented structure of the verse. In the word *души* it is the second syllable which clearly correlates with the marked syllable [жы]. Moreover, one more consonance is actualized in this line: [душъ(ы)_штъ_во(/\)т_ужъ(э)]. With the increase in abruptness and elliptic quality of the narration, the reader becomes more hesitant about the accentuation, for example, in the case of the accent on the metric word *вот_уже*: whether to place it on the first or on the

second word? This depends on the theme-rheme division. In its turn, the metric interpretation depends on the place of accentuation.

In the last line the accent is placed on the 4th syllable [ч'э:], which hardly matches the syllable [жЫ] from the second quatrain. From the point of view of metric interpretation this line has two variants of reciting: a purely dactylic (with the usual double pause) and a quite unusual iambic one:

Ибо – зачем пел?

1) —UU—(UU)—: D3

2) Û-U—(U)—: Ia3 / ÛUU—(UUU)— paeon IV2

Characteristically, the first line of the last quatrain does not seem to give an option of iambic reciting. There appears an extra syllable due to which the verse acquires the rhythm of dactylic *dol'nik*:

В белую книгу твоих тишизн,

1) —UU—UU—(U)U—: D3

Alongside with the disappearance of the marked intonation core we can see exact “placing” of dactylic accents into one pause before the last ictus. Paeonic reciting with the verse division into two half-stanzas (*белую_кни<гу>*) and (*твоих_тишизн*) sounds artificial and the second syllable in the word *книгу* appears as accretion:

2) Û-U—<U>U—U—: Ia3 / ÛUU—<U>UU— paeon IV2

There is one more possibility of a two-pattern rhythm: the first syllable in the word *тишизн* can be interpreted as accretion. However, in this case the accent on the word *твоих* is seen as extra-pattern, which distances the line from the iambic pattern even more:

3) Û-U—U—U—<U>—: Ia3 / ÛUU—UU—<U>— paeon IV2

Despite this being unnatural, paradoxically it will correspond to the following line, as will be shown below.

Yet taking into consideration the accretions and syncopes, the deformity of the disyllabic rhythm becomes quite significant, which is why the reader will favour a trisyllabic rhythm. At first sight, the dactylic rhythm becomes stronger

also in the following line, which looks like a rhythmic copy of the first one (Xxx Xx xX (xx)X):

В белую книгу твоих тишизн,
В дикую глину твоих «да» –

But the rhythmic disparity between the two lines is in fact much more serious than it seems to be at first sight. The reason behind it is in the pronoun *твоих*, which has two different types of accentuation in these two lines: in the first line it is considered as fully stressed (due to the neologism *тишизн* which makes the reader stop for a while after having pronounced this pronoun). In the second line it rather has the nature of a proclitic, making one metric word with the word *да*. That is why the second line, which begins in the dactylic rhythm, ends up in the iambic (paeonic) rhythm, and the reader considers the option for having syncope at the first word of the verse. The latter also makes the reader reconsider the first line of the quatrain by placing it within the iambic (paeonic) rhythm. In summary, therefore, we can have the following variants of the metric interpretation of this line:

В дикую глину твоих «да» –
1) —UU—UU—(UU)—: D4
2) ù-U—U—U—: Ia4 / ùUU—UUU—: paeon IV2

At the same time the reader can notice a new peculiarity here: phonic parallels appear again at the fourth accented syllable (on the basis of the phonic rhyme of the words *книгу* and *глину*). Nevertheless, syncope at the first trisyllabic word sounds unnatural, which undermines the disyllabic / four-syllabic rhythmic pattern. On the other hand, the accent and pause after the pronoun-proclitic *твоих* seem to be artificial in the second line of the quatrain – this argument does not favour the dactylic pattern.

However, the rhythm of the penultimate line of Tsvetayeva's poem (*Тихо склоняю облом лба:*) clearly shows the predominance of the dactylic rhythmic momentum. To make it compatible with the disyllabic rhythmic pattern it is necessary to allow two syncopes at notional and fully accented two-syllable words; from the point of view of the reader's expectations this is out of the question. That is why the line's interpretation will be as follows:

—UU—UU—(UU)—: D4.

In accordance with this momentum within the dactylic pattern the last line is also recited correspondingly, although, being metrically dual, the conjunction *убо* leaves us an option of the paeonic interpretation:

Ибо ладо^нь – жи^знь.

1) —'UU—'(UU)—': D3

2) UUU—'(UUU)—' пaeон IV2

Could it be supposed that for the purpose of loosening the metrics Tsvetayeva has applied the method of the intensified use of fully accented monosyllabic words, by means of which she places the reader in the state of “rhythmic shock”? A separate research might be needed for a further analysis of the degree of conscious use of this method. It is proposed that a special research should be conducted to reveal Tsvetayeva's interest in the Russian poetic tradition which existed before the “harmonic school” (to apply the term introduced by J. Brodsky which refers to Russian classical poetry of the 19th century.). Let us cite Derzhavin's line *Рев крав, гром жолн и коней ржанье...* The metric interpretation of such a difficult verse turns into an intellectual processing, which makes its appreciation non-mechanical.

In conclusion, we would like to stress again that we have not been aiming at a reconstruction of the author's ideas. Our main concern is connected with the problem of appreciation of a nonstandard rhythmic pattern, with the issue of de-automatization of the readers' expectations and with the change of the strategy to interpret rhythmic-metric patterns. Obviously, Tsvetayeva's text reveals elements of the author's play with the metric expectation of the reader. This play allows Tsvetayeva actualize ‘non-metric’ levels of the poem: its phonics, semantics (first of all, in connection with the actualization of rhematic and emphatic accents). Besides, “deceitfulness” of the metre corresponds to the general meaning of the poem which tells the reader about *deception of life* by colliding two concepts and two meters.

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О функциях биметрии в стихе

М. Цветаевой: «Неподражаемо лжет жизнь...» (1922)

В сообщении рассматривается стихотворение М. Цветаевой «Неподражаемо лжет жизнь...» (1922) с точки зрения релятивной метрики. Мы усматриваем в этом тексте функциональную биметрию и анализируем цветаевский стих с этой точки зрения: как выбор между потенциальными стратегиями метрической интерпретации. Здесь следует подчеркнуть, что метрика стихотворения анализируется не с точки зрения формальных признаков, а с точки зрения ее перцепции в процессе чтения. Мы исходим из представления о том, что потенциальная множественность рецитаций является основой функционирования текста в культуре (подобно множественности интерпретаций смысла), поскольку в основе ритма лежит разрыв между метрической схемой и ее реализацией. Иными словами, наш подход к стиху Цветаевой характеризуется тремя особенностями: 1) мы допускаем множественность метрических интерпретаций стиха; 2) мы рассматриваем не размер стихотворения, а набор сигналов, на разных уровнях указывающих на определенные размеры или на их смену; 3) мы затрагиваем также деривационную проблему: проблему соотношения реализации метра с его метрическим инвариантом.

Стихотворение Цветаевой строится на столкновении двух инерций – ямбической и дактилической, при этом в процессе чтения доминирует то одна, то другая, что «вынуждает» читателя прочитывать одни и те же строки по разным метрико-ритмическим моделям. Это создает ситуацию «ритмического шока» у читателя. В условиях ритмического шока, в свою очередь, автору проще актуализировать в стихе «неметрические» уровни: фонику, семантику (когда фразовые и интонационные акценты начинают участвовать в формировании метра). Кроме того, «обманчивость» метра коррелирует с общим смыслом стихотворения, рассказывающего читателю о *лжи жизни* путем сталкивания двух концептов и двух метров.

Meetrilise dualismi funktsioonidest Marina Tsvetajeva värsis 1922. a luuletuse "Jäljendamattult valetab elu" näitel

Artiklis käsitletakse meetrilise dualismi mõistet kui värsi lugejapoolse tajumise ilmingut. Autor analüüsib Marina Tsvetajeva luuletuse "Неподражаемо лжет жизнь" ("Jäljendamattult valetab elu...", 1922) prosoodiat ja meetrikat. Uurimuse eesmärk ei ole Tsvetajeva värsi meetrumit tõlgendada, vaid jõuda värsi lugemise mudelini ja nõnda näidata, kuidas muutub lugejapoolne meetrumi tajumine. Niisiis ei kasuta autor sihilikult ei meetrilist ega logaöodilist interpretatsiooni, sest lähenemine tekstile toimub lugeja *taju* perspektiivist, mille eesmärgiks on alati sümmeetriliste struktuuride avastamine. See lähenemine lubab arvesse võtta selliseid aspekte nagu meetriliste tõlgenduste variatiivsus, värsimõõdu dünaamiline areng, sisemised ja välised meetrilised piirid tekstis jne. Tsvetajeva teksti analüüsis tuleb ilmsiks kahe rütmimustri vastastiktoime, mis on seotud ka luuletuse üldise tähendusega, *elu valelikkusega*.