

**University of Alberta**

Urban Spaces in Olga Slavnikova's novel "2017"

by

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## **Abstract**

The subject of this thesis is the complex spatial organisation of Olga Slavnikova's postmodern novel "2017". The research reveals that the world constructed in the novel has a distinct bipolar structure, represented by the Riphean mountains and the city of Yekaterinburg with the inner spaces within them. The spaces are opposed as "external/internal", "real/magic", "peripheral/center" with the train station as the boundary between them. The city is shaped in a form of the labyrinth with the transitional zones inside, which the characters go through in order to reach the sacred center-the corundum mine. The characters' movement through the labyrinth and the role of the Maiden Stone, the helper and the mediator between the real and magic worlds, are also analyzed here. The spatial complexity of Slavnikova's world in "2017" is rooted in the Ural "mining mythology" as presented in Bazhov's tales, under the influence of which the author developed her own city mythology in the novel.

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## **Introduction**

The subject of this thesis is the structure, meaning and function of space in Olga Slavnikova's novel "2017". Olga Slavnikova is a contemporary Russian writer from Sverdlovsk (modern day Yekaterinburg) in the Urals. She is a professional journalist (obtaining her degree from Ural University in 1981), a fiction editor and a literary critic. Slavnikova is the author of seven novels and the winner of major Russian literary awards. Among critics, she is widely known for her original writing style, the complexity of the language and the peculiarity of spatial organization of her novels. She is considered to be a controversial writer and a challenging read due to her tendency to synthesize different genres and to overload works with analogies and complex comparisons. Readers admire Slavnikova for her ingenious mind and eloquence, for her ability to create unusual dynamic plots and for her attempts to fight a well-established political system in Russia.

Olga Slavnikova was recognized as one of the top contemporary literary figures in the country when her first novel, "Dragonfly the Size of a Dog" ("Стрекоза, увеличенная до размеров собаки") was short-listed for the most prestigious Russian Booker Prize Award in 1997. Later, she received the Pavel Bazhov prize in 1999 for her second novel "Alone in the Mirror" ("Один в зеркале"). Her third novel "Immortal" ("Бессмертный") won Slavnikova the Critics' Academy prize, the Gorky Prize, the Belkin and the National Bestseller prizes in 2002. In 2006 Slavnikova received the country's most prestigious literary award, the Russian Booker Prize, for her most recent novel "2017", which was

first published in 2005 and translated in English only in 2010. This novel, therefore, is still not very familiar to North-American readers and it has not been fully studied from an academic perspective.

"2017" is a strange, genre-defying novel. It is "a beguiling mix of romance, thriller, adventure, mystery and satire, enriched with the folklore of the Urals, the drama of mountaineering expeditions and the gruesome practices of the gemstone industry" ("Olga Slavnikova"). The novel begins with the description of the train station where a gifted gem cutter Krylov hurries to see off his mentor and gem trader Professor Anfilogov, who is going on an expedition to the Riphean Mountains. At the train station Krylov meets a woman named Tanya who, unbeknownst to him, is Anfilogov's wife. Not knowing each other's real names, nor phone numbers, nor addresses, they start their torrid affair in various parts of the city: old motels, abandoned houses, cellars or parks, which they randomly chose on a map. Krylov, magnetized by Tanya as if by the Stone Maiden of a local legend—"a being who shows some men the location of buried gems and lures others to destruction" (Sutcliffe 1), eventually finds himself standing idle and splashing the money that Anfilogov's left for him to buy gem cutting equipment. Meanwhile, Krylov's ex-wife Tamara, a wealthy and powerful funeral director who still plans to restore their relationship, hires a spy to follow the new lovers. At the culmination of the novel, while Anfilogov digs for gemstones in a poisoned landscape and dies as a result, Tamara faces a tremendous professional breakdown after an environmental scandal breaks out and reveals the origin of her finances. Tanya receives a huge inheritance from

Anfilogov and disappears from Krylov's life. He, meanwhile, is involved in an accidental death of the spy, and plans to go on his own expedition to the Riphean Mountains. The novel ends with a civil war that begins on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution (1917).

The events related in the story take place over the course of about 6 months, starting at the train station on the day of Professor Anfilogov's departure for an expedition to the Riphean mountains (June, 7, 2017) and finishing on the day of Krylov's departure from the same train station for the same expedition, one month after the October Revolution Anniversary, celebrated on the 7th of November.

Evidently, "2017" is a complex novel not only in terms of its genre affiliation, narrative and composition, but also in terms of the numerous problems it touches upon: ideological, political, social, philosophical, linguistic, and more. Among these questions, only the question of the ephemerality of Slavnikova's urban landscape has been studied by Dr. Benjamin Sutcliffe in his recent work "Writing the Urals: Permanence and Ephemerality". This work is dedicated to the analysis of permanent and ephemeral qualities of the City of Yekaterinburg, where the events of the novel take place. The permanence in the novel, to the scholar's mind, is associated with truth, while "the temporary connotes a virtual reality that masks falseness" (Sutcliffe 2). According to Dr. Sutcliffe, Krylov, even as a small boy, was "guided by the desire for truth" that he was pursuing first of all in the transparency of gemstones, "the quality that promises truth and permanence"(3), secondly, of Professor Anfilogov (also a *hitnik*/gem-cutter),"who

embodies transparency" for Krylov (Slavnikova 95), and finally in the transparency of Tanya, the Maiden Stone, "also known as the Mistress of the Mountain"(32).

In my research I will focus on analyzing the complex spatial organization of the novel with an emphasis on inner spaces as presented in the novel. This aspect of Slavnikova's work has never been studied before and gives me an opportunity to analyze symbolism of the city, apartments, graves and mines as the representations of inner space in the novel.

This study has a theoretical section and an analytical section. In the first chapter, the theoretical part of the research, I consider the existing theories of literary spaces developed by such well-known scholars as M. Bakhtin, D. Likhachev, V. Propp and the two most prominent Russian scholars from the Moscow-Tartu school of semiotics: Yuri Lotman and Vladimir Toporov. In my research I rely not only on their theories but also on their analyses of literary texts; for example, Toporov's discussion of Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" ["Преступление и наказание"], Lotman's work "The home in Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*" ["Дом в *Мастере и Маргарите*"] and his "Artistic space in Gogol's prose" (1988) ["Художественное пространство в прозе Гоголя"]. In my research I also refer to Vladimir Propp's studies of archaic narrative elements in fairy-tales, in particular the hero's journey, as represented in his book "The Historical Roots of a Fairy-tale" (1986), ["Исторические корни волшебной сказки"]. This helps me to examine the chronotope of the road in the novel. In my analysis of the structure and function of spaces in "2017", I also rely on Brian



McHale's book "Constructing Postmodernism" (1992), with a special focus on the chapter "Postmodernism in *The Name of the Rose*", and Katherine Hansen Löve's book "The Evolution of space in Russian Literature"(1994). In these books, both authors present their own analyses of temporal-spatial constructions of the novels "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco, "Oblomov" by Ivan Goncharov, "Mcyri" by Mikhail Lermontov, "Nevskij Prospekt" by Gogol, and others.

In the second chapter I analyze the spatial organisation of the novel "2017" and present my own interpretation of the role and meaning of space in Slavnikova's novel. I give an overview of the spatial structure of the whole novel as reflected in the first two sentences and I examine the Ural "mining mythology/folklore" as presented in Bazhov's tales, in order to explain the peculiarities of the region chosen by the author and the origin of its spatial complexity. In the third chapter I provide a closer analysis of inner spaces as presented in the novel. In particular, I examine Slavnikova's depiction of the city as a labyrinth, and the chronotopes of the city, apartment, mine and grave as sacred places, the role of gems as their sacred objects, and the function of the Stone Maiden as the mediator between the two worlds: the Riphean Mountains and the city. In the fourth chapter I analyze the chronotope of the road and its role in the novel's spatial organisation. I also examine the chronotope of the path as a trajectory of characters' movement, in particular, Krylov's movement through the labyrinths of the city and the Riphean mountains, using Propp's model of the hero's journey in fairy-tales. I finish this chapter with a short analysis of the transitional zones of the city of Yekaterinburg, through which transparency and emptiness as features

of magical/sacred spaces may move into the city and effect the Riphean citizens. I conclude that the roots of Slavnikova's city mythology lies in the city's own history, and I explain it with reference to the author's own theoretical works about her hometown Yekaterinburg.

In the conclusion I briefly present an article about the city and the Riphean mountains, written by Slavnikova after the novel had been published, and I compare her "epilogue" (that resembles Umberto Eco's postscript of "The Name of the Rose", where he explained the structure of the novel and even gave a scheme from which he built its space) with the results of my own research.

Conducting the research of the spatial organisation of the novel "2017", I have relied on its original online version in Russian. However, in the present text, for convenience in reading and understanding, I quote from the book "2017" in English, translated by Marian Schwartz and published in New York by Overlook in 2010. In those cases, where the translation is not accurate or omitted, I provide examples both in English and in Russian. All the italics in quotations from "2017", otherwise specified, are mine.

## **Chapter 1: The key concepts of space and time in the novel.**

Without reservation, Olga Slavnikova's novel "2017" can be qualified as a postmodern novel. To consider postmodernism, I rely on the definition, given by Brian McHale in his book "Constructing Postmodernism". He points to the multiplicity of definitions, but stops on one that perfectly describes the poetics of Slavnikova's novel. McHale first gives the definition of modernist fiction, and then, for contrast, the definition of postmodernist fiction.

"Modernist fiction is fiction organized in terms of an epistemological dominant, fiction whose formal strategies implicitly raise issues of accessibility, reliability or unreliability, transmission, circulation, and etc., of knowledge about the world. Postmodernist fiction, on the other hand, is fiction organized in terms of an ontological dominant, fiction whose formal strategies implicitly raise issues of the mode of being of fictional worlds and their inhabitants, and/or reflect on the plurality and diversity of worlds, whether "real", possible, fictional" (McHale 416-17).

This definition ideally describes Slavnikova's approach to the construction of her novel, where she uses the strategies of both modernist (fragmentation, juxtaposition, allusions, symbolic landscapes, etc.) and postmodernist (temporal distortion, hyperreality, pastiche, etc.) fiction with the emphasis on the ontological dominant (mode of being of fictional diverse worlds). The way Slavnikova constructs her novel and projects the world in it can be compared to "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco, a famous Italian writer and theorist (for

Slavnikova's generation it was a cult novel). It is evident not only from the similarity of the spatial poetics of the two novels, but also from the fact that Slavnikova wrote, as had Umberto Eco, a kind of postscript to her novel where she specifically pointed at the key features of those landscapes, urban and natural, that she portrayed in the novel. Therefore, speaking about postmodernism, we should, first of all, refer to the chapter in Brian McHale's book dedicated to Umberto Eco.

In "The postmodernism of *the Name of the Rose*", McHale claims that Eco's novel reveals two major issues: the "thematics of postmodernist space" and "the theme of apocalypse". Both of them are important for my further analysis of the novel "2017". In McHale's words, in his novel Eco constructs a doubling "upside-down" model of the world ("the world-within-the world"), which is "full of paradoxical and labyrinthine spaces": both interior (library) and urban (McHale 157).

"The order of the universe, which the ancients called 'cosmos'; [...] its structure is a scale-model of the known world, its floor-plan reproducing the map of the world; [...] it is a great labyrinth, sign of the labyrinth of the world [...]. This doubling of the world of "The Name of the Rose" by the world – within - the world which is the library opens up an abyss of potentially infinite regress" (157).

In this context the library represents a postmodernist space, which functions as "a cognitive map *en abyme* [‘mirroring’] of the postmodernist world, [which

pictures] its imminent end" (McHale 59). The end or apocalypse, McHale continues, in Eco's novel gets a different scenario of "large scale or a global disaster, natural or man-made" (160). It is displaced into the fantastic mode of the burning library, which becomes a "symbol of the loss" of the postmodern world (162). In "2017", Slavnikova also constructs a complex of labyrinthine spaces and introduces the theme of ecological disaster in the Riphean mountains and the terrorist political revolution in the city, which causes numerous deaths, economic crisis and a violent power shift.

Besides the spatial composition of the postmodernist novel and the theme of destruction, McHale's analysis of Eco's novel reveals some other important elements of the postmodern novel, such as magical realism, temporal distortion and hyperreality, which are also essential for "2017"(for instance, magical realism in Slavnikova's novel is realized through dreams, which become the characters' reality and eventually change their destiny and lives). For example, in his novel, Eco mingles "the novel's fictional world and a real-world historical *fact*" and combines historical personages with "fictional characters from other fictional worlds"(McHale 152-153). In "2017" Slavnikova also incorporates the historical "fact" of the Great October Revolution in the fictional world of her novel, and she populates it with both mythical characters (the Stone Maiden) and real historical people (for instance, president Vladimir Putin). Thus, it is evident that "2017" is constructed on the same premises, and possibly under direct influence of "The Name of the Rose". From McHale's analysis we also understand that post-

modernist writers, Slavnikova certainly being one, construct the novels and the worlds within them using special postmodernist techniques.

The space constructed by Olga Slavnikova in her postmodernist novel "2017", according to my hypothesis, are based on the concepts of time and space formulated by Vladimir Propp, Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Dmitry S. Likhachev, Vladimir N. Toporov, and Yuri M. Lotman. Slavnikova actively uses their theories as tools in the creation of spatial composition in her novel. Pavel Gurevich, a Russian philosopher and philologist, in his book "Categories of Medieval Culture" (1984) ["Категории средневековой культуры"], partially explains why modern writers like Slavnikova may rely on works of their contemporary theorists:

"Человек не рождается с *чувством времени*, его пространственные и временные понятия всегда определены той культурой, к которой он принадлежит" (Гуревич 44).

Also, Yuri Lotman, in his work "Artistic space in Gogol's prose" (1988) ["Художественное пространство в прозе Гоголя"], states:

" Художественное пространство представляет собой модель мира данного автора, выраженную на языке его пространственных представлений. При этом, как часто бывает, [...], язык этот, взятый сам по себе, значительно менее индивидуален и в большей степени принадлежит времени, эпохе, общественным и художественным группам, чем то, *что* художник на этом языке говорит, - чем его

индивидуальная модель мира. Само собой разумеется, что «язык пространственных отношений» есть некая абстрактная модель, которая включает в себя в качестве подсистем как пространственные языки разных жанров и видов искусства, так и модели пространства разной степени абстрактности, создаваемые сознанием различных эпох" (Лотман ).

An important role in the introduction of categories of space and time into literary studies belongs to Mikhail Bakhtin. He first presented the concept of literary chronotopes in his article "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics"(1990). According to the theorist, "[a chronotope] is the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin 84). In the same work, Bakhtin explains the chronotope as a combination of time and space in the following statement:

"In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterize the artistic chronotope" (Bakhtin 85).

As Bakhtin acknowledges, the origin for this concept of time and space comes from Emmanuel Kant, who defined space and time "as indispensable forms [...] in

the cognitive process" and used these categories "as forms of the most immediate reality" (Bakhtin 85). "We shall attempt to show the role these forms play in the process of concrete artistic cognition (artistic visualization) under conditions obtaining in the genre of the novel" (85).

Thereby, according to Bakhtin, chronotopes play an important role in the construction of narratives and the expression of an author's reality. Chronotopes are organizing categories, that have "narrative, plot-generating significance", and that also have "representational and semantic significance" (251). According to Nele Bemong, among the generic types of chronotopes, Bakhtin highlights the "adventurous", "adventurous-domestic", "idyllic", "mysterious", "carnival" and "folk" types. Furthermore, the scientist distinguishes chronotopes of situations or so called "motivic chronotopes": the chronotope of meeting, the chronotope of the road, the castle, the salon/hotel, the provincial town, the threshold and the square (Bemong 6).

In her article "The theoretical aspects of the analysis of spatial orientations of fiction"(2007) ["Теоретические аспекты анализа пространственных ориентаций художественной литературы"], Elena Gudkova clarified each of above-mentioned chronotopes. In her words, the chronotope of meeting, as classified by Bakhtin, is characterized by the predominance of time and a high degree of an emotional-valuable intensity ["высокой степенью эмоционально-ценностной интенсивности"]; the chronotope of hotel ["гостиница-салон"] is the place where meetings take place, intrigues are created, dialogues happen, features, ideas and passions of characters



open up ["происходят встречи, создаются интриги, происходят диалоги, раскрываются характеры, идеи и страсти героев"]; the cronotope of provincial town is the place of cyclical domestic time. Here there are no events, but only repetitive "residences". The signs of this time are firmly fused with the domestic localities: with little houses and rooms of the city, with sleepy streets and dust.

"Провинциальный городок - это место циклического бытового времени. Здесь нет событий, а есть только повторяющиеся "бывания". Приметы этого времени крепко срослись с бытовыми локальностями: с домиками и комнатами города, сонными улицами и пылью" (Гудкова 4-7).

Different scholars have classified Bakhtin's chronotopes according to different levels of abstraction: "major" and "minor" chronotopes, "chronotopic motifs" and "chronotopes of whole genres" (Morson and Emerson 374), "motivic" and "generic" chronotopes (Keunen 200), "basic" and "adjacent" chronotopes (Vlasov 44), "micro-", "incidental", "local" and "major" chronotopes (Ladin 212 36). For my research it is important to address "major" and "minor" chronotopes because this distinction defines the spatial structure of the novel "2017". Major chronotopes include the chronotope of the meeting, the road, the castle, the salon/hotel, the provincial town, the threshold and the square while the minor chronotopes can be expressed in a text as a clock, a river or even shadows (Bakhtin 224). Furthermore, these chronotopes may be included in each other. "But each such chronotope can include within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes; in fact [...] any motif may have a specific chronotope of its own"

(Bemong 6). All types of chronotopes function as "congealed event[s]", 'condensed reminder[s] of the kind of time and space that typically functions there" (Morson and Emerson 374).

Bakhtin's ideas were further developed in the works of another well-known Soviet literary critic - Dmitry S. Likhachev, who in his book "Poetics of Old Russian Literature" (1971) ["Поэтика древнерусской литературы"], noted that the time of a literary work does not always coincide with the real and grammatical time, but is affected by it. "Художественное время - явление самой художественной ткани литературного произведения, подчиняющее своим задачам и грамматическое время и философское его понимание писателем" (Лихачёв 234). Likhachev emphasizes that time in fiction is perceived due to the connection of events described in it rather than due to its calendar or chronological order (237). Speaking about literary space, the scholar identifies its different types and their characteristics. The first type is a *geographical space* that is presented in a form of a specific location: urban, suburban, or natural. It can be directed/undirected, open/closed, and close/distant. The second type of space is *psychological*, which is characterized as closed - it represents the inner world of a character. It may be static or dynamic, depending on the changes happening within a character. The third type of literary space is *fantastic* or magical space, which differs from the first two by its huge size, the presence of many magic creatures and events happening within it, which explains its dynamism. Another type of space is *cosmic*, it is vertically oriented, distant from a person, full of cosmic objects (sun, moon, stars). The last type of space is

*social*. It is typically inhabited by people; it is a familiar- 'safe' place with a social-public feature. All these types of literary space interact and complement each other (365).

Vladimir N. Toporov in his article "Space and Text" (1983) ["Пространство и текст"], writes about the interrelation of time and space as a unified temporal and spatial continuum in the archaic model of the world. He also first introduces the concept of a "mythopoetic chronotope" or a "mythopoetic space", which is very important for Slavnikova, because she actively uses folklore components (the Ural myths) in her novel.

"Прежде всего в архаичной модели мира пространство не противопоставлено времени как внешняя форма созерцания внутренней. [...] Пространство и время, строго говоря, не отделимы друг от друга, они образуют единый пространственно-временной континуум" (Топоров, *Пространство и текст* 231).

Toporov explains the continuity of space and time as the peculiarities of the primitive or archaic consciousness.

"Неразрывность пространства и времени в этой модели мира проявляется не только в «специализированных» обозначениях времени (ср. русск. *время* и т. д. - из и.-евр. \*uert-men-, от 'вертеть, вращать', [...]; или лат. *tempus* 'время' при *templum* 'освященное место, святилище, храм'; 'пространство, область') и частых случаях совпадения в обозначении больших единиц пространства и времени

(в ряде языков значения 'земля', 'мир', 'пространство', с одной стороны, и 'год', с другой, передаются однокоренными словами, ср. лат. orbis 'окружность, круг'; 'земля, мир' (orbis terrarum); 'страна, область'; 'небесный свод, небо', но и 'круговорот времени, год' (orbis annuus, orbis temporum), но и в том, что для первобытного или архаичного сознания всякая попытка определения значимости пространства вне соотнесения его с данным отрезком (или точкой) времени или, [...] принципиально неполна и тем самым лишена статуса истинности (т. е. высшей реальности, так сказать, сути бытия) (232-33).

In his other work "About structure of Dostoevsky's Novel in Connection with the Archaic Patterns of Mythological Thinking"(1973) ["О структуре романа Достоевского в связи с архаичными схемами мифологического мышления"], Toporov claims that space and time are not just a setting of the action, but rather they are its active participants, which influence or even manipulate the action itself (Топоров, *О структуре романа* 238).

To Toporov, space can be absolute or sacred (internal space) and non-sacred (external space), both of which are determined by the presence of things or objects which fill it in. Apart from these two types, Toporov separates space from non-space or, in other words, chaos (absence of space, lack of things-objects). In this regard, time and space, according to Toporov, are characterised by objects. The space frees up place for sacred objects, revealing through them its highest essence, giving this essence life, existence and meaning (Топоров,

*Пространство и текст* 235). Thus, things not only determine the space by specifying its boundaries, that separate the space from non-space, but also organize its structure, giving it meaning and value (semantic habitation of space).

"Пространство высвобождает место для сакральных объектов, открывая через них свою высшую суть, давая этой сути жизнь, бытие, смысл; при этом открывается возможность становления и органического обживания пространства космосом вещей в их взаимопринадлежности. Тем самым вещи не только конституируют пространство, через задание его границ, отделяющих пространство от непространства, но и организуют его структурно, придавая ему значимость и значение (семантическое обживание пространства)" (238-39).

As Toporov stated, between sacred space and non-sacred space there is peripheral space, which may be realized through a train station or a cemetery in the city.

Everything beyond non-sacred space becomes chaos. Toporov defines 'chaos' as the absence of space, which is determined by things completing it.

"Пространство не предшествует вещам, его заполняющим, а наоборот, констатируется ими. Вне вещей оно не существует. Не-пространство (отсутствие пространства) есть хаос, то есть пустота" (235). Toporov also talks about the qualities of space. First of all, it is matrix due to its ability to contain or fill in itself with objects. Secondly, it is separation from something that it is not space (chaos). "Если волю ищут вовне, то свободу обретают внутри себя, через серию последовательных ограничений, повторных возвращений

к своему Я" (238). The third quality of space is its freedom, openness and spatiality. Toporov shares Likhachev's opinion and also believes that temporal - spatial continuum is also realized through movement. But he specifies the direction of this movement: horizontal or vertical, to the sacred centre or to the periphery, connecting it to the sacred centre. In a story, movement is portrayed as a road (destiny) or journey, which characters have to take in order to reach their final destination, the sacred center. As it is described by Toporov, in the mythopoetic world-view the road connects the beginning and the end, neutralizing the oppositions "here-there", "own-alien", "internal -external", "near-distant", "visible-invisible", "real-false" and others.

Both Toporov and Yuri Lotman believe that the artistic space is three-dimensional. In his book "Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic theory of Culture" (1990), Lotman clarifies: "Human consciousness forms its model of the world from such constants as the rotation of the earth (the movements of the sun across the horizon), [... ] the physical constants of the human body, which posit certain relationships with the outside world" (Lotman 132). Hence, as the semioticians claim, literary space is constructed in a three-dimensional projection, composed of vertical and horizontal axes and divided into top and bottom, front and back, left and right. Moreover, horizontally it is organized by the principle of increasing sacredness: for example, city-square- temple. This horizontal division of space matches the division of major chronotopes into minor chronotopes. Vertically, the spatial axis is seen as the top (the dwelling of God, paradise), middle (people's world) and bottom (the dwelling of demons, Hell).

"Во многих случаях именно вертикальная ось пространства наиболее четко высвечивает иерархическую структуру объектов - покойники, души предков, демоны, злые божества (включая самого повелителя нижнего мира), хтонические животные - внизу; люди, животные - посередине; птицы, ангелы, высшие божества (включая главного бога), мифологизированные светила - вверху. (Топоров, *Пространство и текст* 257)

Moreover, the top of this vertical axis has always been associated with Truth while the bottom with Falsehood. In other words, top is the location of Heaven, and the bottom is the center of Hell. This opposition of top and bottom, according to Lihachov's classification, sets another opposition of geographical space (urban/suburban) and of imaginary space (unreal/real).

Yuri Lotman illustrates the meaning of the spatial axis 'top/down' using as an example Dante's "Divine Comedy". He says that this axis symbolizes the direction of the movement, or so called tempo-spatial fusion. The 'bottom' of this axis is "identified with the centre of gravity of the globe, and the 'top' with any radius directed away from the centre" (Lotman 177). "This axis penetrates Earth, its lower end being turned to Jerusalem, it passes through Hell, the centre of the Earth, Purgatory and ends in the shining centre of the Empyrean. This is the axis down which Lucifer was cast from Heaven" (178). So, Dante's top and bottom are opposed to each other in such a way that people located at different poles of the globe "face each other with the soles of their feet" (178). It is also important to note, that while Dante is moving along the vertical axis to the centre as a

representative of the deified, like angels and birds, Ulysses is travelling along the horizontal axis as the representative of all mortals, like other humans and animals, to the same center according to the existing hierarchy. The sacred center is located at the top while the bottom (abode of demons, dead and the Devil, the father of lies) coincides with the centre of horizontal flatness.

The opposition of top (Truth) and bottom (Falsehood) in the spatial model is also realized "in the opposition of the straight line directed upwards and the circular movement on a horizontal plane" (Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: a Semiotic Theory of Culture* 181). Circular movements, in the theorist's opinion, has always been a feature of sorcery and magic, and connected with the Devil from the medieval Christian point of view. That is why the hell is traditionally believed to be constructed in a form of a circle as "the image of perfection; a circle set at the top of the perfection of good, but the circle at the bottom is the ultimate evil. So the architecture of hell is ultimate evil" (181). This belief has been influenced by Pythagorean ideas about the perfection of the circle, in the form of which Hell is constructed.

"The circle is the image of perfection; a circle set at the top is the perfection of good, but the circle at the bottom is the ultimate evil. The Pythagorean system of binary oppositions had its influence on Dante, and in particular the opposition of the straight line taken as equivalent to good, to the curve which is the equivalent of evil" (181).



He also adds that "the movement of the sinners in Hell is round closed curves, while that of Dante is along an ascending spiral which eventually becomes a straight vertical (182). This concept had its influence on Dante as well. In "Divine Comedy", according to Lotman, "Dante's journey is judged on that scale, either a step up or down, Ulysses is along horizontal axis and on a map (182), and both of them are "heroes of the road" (183).

Lotman observes the same 'straight/circular' binary pattern in Gogol's "Dead Souls" ["Мёртвые души"]: "Жилище старосветских помещиков - особый мир с кольцеобразной топографией, причем каждое из колец - это особый пояс границы, которая чем ближе к центру, тем недоступнее для внешнего мира" (Лотман, *Художественное пространство в прозе Гоголя*).<sup>1</sup>

According to Toporov, a character travelling on this road faces a lot of obstacles that make the journey hard. "Трудность пути- постоянное и неотъемлемое свойство, двигаться по пути, преодолевать его уж есть подвиг, подвижничество со стороны идущего подвижника, путника." (Топоров, *Пространство и текст* 259). The direction of a character's movement is determined by his human or divine nature. "Простой смертный может реально вступить на горизонтальный путь и при особых усилиях проделать его, но

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<sup>1</sup> 'Evil' circular space appears also in Bulgakov's "Master and Margarita", one of the most influential novel of the soviet period: "The notorious Griboedov House, for example, is located on a ringed boulevard, in the depths of a run-down garden, circled by a wrought-iron fence. Moreover, two of the novel's most significant spots, the Variety Theater and Apartment Building No 302, are located on the 'ring road' - The Sadovoe Koltso. Since the ring road is near the centre of the city, and the city itself is partially ringed by the Moscow river, we get the same impression of infinitely expanding circles" (Weeks, "The Master and Margarita, Acritical Companion" 153).

вертикальный путь может быть проделан лишь фигурально - его душой"  
(261).

Vladimir Propp, in his book "The Russian Folktales" ["Русские сказки"], states that all fairy tales have a common feature: they are based on rites of passage and presented as a 'path' on which a hero has to pass and overcome a number of obstacles. Propp explains,

"The action begins when some kind of misfortune occurs. Misfortune steals up quite unnoticeably. Everything begins when one of the characters [...] leaves home for a time. Thus a prince goes on a long journey and leaves his pregnant wife alone. A merchant departs "for foreign lands" to trade, a prince goes to a war, a peasant goes away to work in the forest, and so on. We call this function temporary absent. It means that the old and the young, the strong and the defenceless, are separated" (Propp, *The Russian Folktales* 153).

It is important to mention for my further analysis that the absence is accompanied by a prohibition. Violation of this prohibition leads to a misfortune. As the theorist claims, there are special characters who provoke this violation: for example, dragons or Baba-Yaga. But a hero may have an invisible helper who comes into his life right after a hero leaves a house and takes the road. "With their help, a hero receives a magical object, and he is also subjected to a test" (Propp, *The Russian Folktales* 159). The initiation ritual ends with solving a final difficult task, whose fulfillment leads to recognition "by a star, a scar, a handkerchief, and

so on" (172). At the end of the road ("пути"), the character either dies or regenerates. A fairy-tale, in Propp's opinion, is a magic world used as a form of free conversation on sacred themes: life and death, its beginning and end, life after death, and so on.

The key component of space for Lotman is also a road (Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: a Semiotic Theory of Culture* 255). Movement on this road determines the character's type: stationary or moving, or, in his words, "heroes of fixed, closed or point" space as opposed to "heroes of open space or linear space"(256). Lotman understands closed space to be houses, rooms, chambers, and a city which all have clear borders. Edna Andrews in her book "Conversations With Lotman: Cultural Semiotics in Language, Literature and Cognition"(2003), speaks about the concept of the border as an essential distinctive feature of space. According to her, Lotman notes that it divides the space of the text into two mutually disjointed subspaces. The main feature of the boundary is its impermeability (непроницаемость), as the internal structure of each of the spaces should be different. The way the text is divided by borders is its distinct characteristic. For example, in a fairy tale, the space is divided into "home" and "forest". The boundary between them may be a river or a forest edge. The characters of 'forest' cannot get into 'house' because they are assigned to this particular area. Therefore, climactic events always occur in the border area: very often at the bridge where the battle with a dragon takes place (Andrews 204). Moreover, the closed/inner space has such features as 'warm', 'secure', 'ours', and opened/outer space is 'alien', 'hostile', 'cold'. It is important to say that both inner

and outer spaces, created by the author, represent his or her own worldview, which is expressed in the language of his or her ideas of space. The dividing line between these two opposite spaces may be a door, a window, or a threshold. As Lotman states, between these two worlds there is a "mirror-like relationship" (Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: a Semiotic Theory of Culture* 132). Therefore, the inside of the house space, for example, has always been treated as safe or positive, and across the border, the outside space has been considered as negative. This division has led to a number of other oppositions. Katherine Hansen Löve in her book "The Evolution of Space in Russian literature: Spatial Reading of 19th and 20th century Narrative Literature"(1994), differentiates between "sacred" and "profane", "known" and "unknown", "freedom" and "confinement", and, finally, "holy" and "sinful"(Hansen Löve 35).

In his book "The Structure of the Artistic Text" (1977), Lotman analyzes the artistic significance of spatial boundaries, directed space, domestic and fantastic space, closed and open space, and determines that the language of spatial concepts is primary and fundamental (Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text* 211-21). He also closely examines the structure of artistic space and its connection with the plot and point of view (221-34). In "Artistic Space in Gogol's Prose", Lotman suggests that any artistic space can be divided into point (точечное), linear (линейное), plane (плоскостное) and volume (объемное), where linear and plane spaces may also have horizontal and vertical directionality. The example of point space, according to Lotman, "can be found in Russian byliny (epic tales) where the fundamental characteristic of point space is its

bounded separateness (отграниченность). The presence of both point and linear spaces is demonstrated in Gogol's "Dead souls", in which point space is used for *home* and linear space for *road*" (Andrews 80).

As has already been mentioned above, both Toporov and Lotman believe that spaces are joined to each other so tightly that between them there is no interlayer of emptiness or zone of discharge. "[Они] так плотно и принудительно примкнуты друг к другу, что между ними нет прослойки пустоты, зоны разряженности" (Топоров, *Пространство и текст* 241). But yet, it is possible to move from one to another. Furthermore, according to Likhachev, movement becomes the only condition when the fusion of time and space is possible (Лихачев, *Поэтика древнерусской литературы* 365). For example, death is a form of transition from an opened space into a closed space, tending to zero ("стремящееся к нулю (хаосу)") (247).

Movement is one of the internal characteristics of space, according to Toporov's theory of temporal-spatial organisation. To him, path ("путь") has a starting point (usually a house), its culmination and finish (usually the sacred center). But it can also start at the periphery (train station), as he adds, like in '2017'. "Начало пути может быть на периферии и в таком случае совпадать с его началом" (Топоров, *Пространство и текст* 258). This path is also a mediator, it neutralizes the opposition" (right/left, visible/invisible).

"Путь - медиатор: он нейтрализует противопоставления. Этого и того (левого и правого), видимого и невидимого, сакрального и менее

сакрального" [...]. "Путь этот приходится на стык двух частей [...] по-разному устроенными подпространствами"(262).

According to Lotman, "this organization [of a narrative] is realized in the form of the semiosphere, and at the same time comes into being with the help of semiosphere" (Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: a Semiotic Theory of Culture* 133). By "semiosphere" Lotman understands "the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages"; it is built on "binarism and asymmetry"(124); it is "a special space-time structure [...] organized into a general system of coordinates: on the temporal axis into past, present and future, on the spatial axis into internal space, external space and the boundary between them"(134). In other words, internal space implies 'ours', 'my own', it is 'cultured', 'safe', 'harmoniously organized', and so on. On the contrary, external space is 'their space', 'other', 'hostile', 'dangerous' and 'chaotic'. "Every culture begins by dividing the world into 'its own' internal space and 'their' external space. How this binary is interpreted depends on the typology of culture"(134).

Therefore, in my research I will use the studies of the above mentioned theorists as the theoretical and methodological basis of my thesis, and McHale's analysis of Umberto Eco's "The Name of the Rose" as an example.

## Chapter 2: The Riphean Mountains and the City in the novel.

The literary space in Olga Slavnikova's novel "2017" has a complex spatial organisation. The basic principle of its construction is bipartition or "двоемирие", where the world of the Riphean Mountains is opposed to the world of the city.

The Riphean Mountains is an archaic name that stands for the Ural mountains. It is stretched from north to south through Central Russia. It divides the Eurasian continent into Europe and Asia. The word "Riphean" came into the Russian language from Greco-Roman antiquity, and it is used by the author as an element of creating an archaic layer for the Mountains. In the novel, Slavnikova uses the Ural "mining folklore"/ "mining mythology" as it is presented in Bazhov's Urals Tales (Бажов), which has remained popular up to the present day. In her article "Upper and Lower Landscapes of Yekaterinburg" (2002) ["Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга"], Slavnikova states:

"Актуальность Павла Бажова заключается в том, что он, черпая из воображения гораздо больше, нежели из фольклора, создал специфическую уральскую мифологию, в которой нуждалось столь же специфическое сознание обитателей Рифейского хребта"  
(Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

The specificity of Bazhov's Ural mythology consists in its correspondence to a more profound reality than that of folklore - the geological reality of the Urals. Slavnikova adds:

"Образам Бажова соответствуют структуры подземного горного мира, загадочные элементы скрытого пейзажа - не менее пластичного и выразительного, нежели видимый глазу верхний пейзаж, традиционно служащий интересам литературы"(Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

Revealing the mystical underground mining world of the Urals, Bazhov simultaneously influenced "специфический уральский менталитет" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*). First of all, the extraction of gems has become an essential part of people's lives; secondly, mountain surroundings determined people's passion for extreme sports like rock climbing and mountaineering.

"Отсюда неизбежность появления в столице Урала такого иррационального объекта, как недостроенная телебашня, она же "поганка", - одно из привычных екатеринбургских дневных привидений, принимающих в воздухе разные оттенки заводского дыма" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

This Toadstool tower will appear later in the novel as an object of conquering, climbing and skydiving, and as a place of accidental death and suicides.

Slavnikova explains the phenomenon of the Toadstool tower in the same article:

"Дело здесь не в прирожденной храбрости рифейцев и не в подспудной тяге к суициду: просто наше обитаемое пространство в принципе не-горизонтально, и вертикаль служит направлением



движения просто потому, что она существует. В каком-то смысле мир рифейца похож на мир насекомого" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

In "2017", the author often compares the main characters with insects. For example, here: "The world of the native Riphean, which Krylov was used to taking pride in, truly did look like the world of an insect instinctively crawling over tremendous obstacles" (Slavnikova 128). There is another good example: "The Riphean's world was patently nonhorizontal and in this sense like an insect's. The Toadstool was their cult, and for the town's teens, it was an ant trail to heaven" (67).

Moreover, Bazhov himself became a mythological figure, replicated by Soviet mass culture. In Slavnikova's words, Soviet authorities constructed an illustration to his texts, which received Bazhov's refraction in the city ("*базовское преломление*"). In her article "Upper and Lower Landscapes of Yekaterinburg", Slavnikova explains this phenomenon and compares Bazhov with a museum exhibit and a fictional Father Frost.

"Признаться, мне глубоко неинтересен Бажов - персонаж музейных экспозиций, где он ощущается как незримый школьный учитель (кем Бажов и был по первой своей профессии), проводящий скучноватый урок из обязательной программы. Дедушка Бажов, столь же непременный в культурно-развлекательных детских мероприятиях, как и Дедушка Мороз, был растиражирован советским маскультом

самыми разными способами, вплоть до шоколадных фантиков.

Любовь ли к уральскому классику, скудость ли ассортимента была тому виной, но кондитерские витрины моего свердловского детства создавали эффекты, благодаря которым впервые увиденные репродукции Энди Уорхолла показались мне смутно знакомыми и связались именно с Бажовым" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

Obviously, Vazhov's artifacts ("*бажовские* артефакты [...] крупные клубни на корнях власти, запущенных глубоко в повседневную жизнь"), penetrated into people's consciousness and influenced their "material" environment, in which, as Slavnikova, observes, contemporary Ural literature is acquired.

Yekaterinburg, as the Ural capital located in the middle of the Eurasian continent, in the center of the Urals, on the border between Europe and Asia, and as the city which overlaps with the horizontal midpoint of the Eurasian continent, forms an essential component of the local "geopolitical" mythology. Here, real geography merges with the symbolic geography. Describing this symbolic geography I am relying on two contemporary works: Maya Nikulina's "Stone. Cave. Mountain."(2002) ["Камень. Пещера. Гора".] and Vsevolod Abashev's "The Urals as a presentiment"(2008) ["Урал как предчувствие"].

According to Nikulina, "древние мифы откровенно настаивают на том, что Урал —земля отмеченная, занимающая особое место на планете". Abashev, explains the Urals' specificity:

"Это потому, что Урал осознавался как некий решительный рубеж в пространстве России, бесповоротно делящий ее на разные миры [...] Только перевалив через Урал, ты вступаешь в иное измерение, Россия уже за *шеломением*, а перед тобой открывается пространство войны и судьбы. [...] Урал воспринимается не только как пространственный рубеж, но и как рубеж в сфере духовных возможностей личности. Север, являясь областью пространства, в то же время есть мир, где кончается обыденное, тривиальное, привычное в мышлении и начинается фантастическое и магическое, это пространство вдохновения и дивинаций [...] также в терминах географического кода, проецируя их на географическую ось *север — юг*" (Абашев).

Nikulina finds elements of the Ural mythology in works of different writers. First of all, she talks about Bazhov's tales, which rely more on the land, on the Mountain ("уповают больше на Землю, на Гору"). Then she talks about another Ural storyteller Seraphima K. Vlasova, who believes that the Ural land has all the strength, it involves the key to human happiness - gems. ("В ней вся сила, и ключ-камень (отмычка к человеческому счастью) тоже открывает вход в землю, вниз"). Ural mythology has influenced the works of other contemporary Russian writers – Natalia Smirnova among them.

As we can see, in her works Slavnikova also develops this symbolic geography of the region. In her novel "2017" the symbolic geography of the Riphean mountains and the city (Yekaterinburg) is extremely important; it divides

the literary space and explains the nature of its dual modelling, in a three-dimensional projection.

First of all, the Riphean Mountains divides the whole continent and the country into west and east and, consequently, into left and right, as it is defined by the geographical maps frequently used by Anfilogov during his expedition in the mountains (Slavnikova 106, 126), by Tanya and Krylov during their love adventures in the city (13, 17, 102), by a spy following them everywhere (65), and by Farid, Dronov and Krylov when planning their next expedition (209, 218).

Here are several examples:

"Now Anfilogov had in mind this route: *to the southwest*, via the winter quarters, where according to the unspoken law of the taiga there were always supplies and matches"(198).

"В пятнадцати километрах *к северо-западу*, в абсолютно темной карстовой пещере, пронизанной гигантскими пипетками мокрых сталактитов, четырехметровая матрица Каменной Девки оборотила голову-яйцо в сторону своих порушенных корундов, пытаясь через злую бодрость оживить полумертвого человека"<sup>2</sup>(Славникова. 2017).  
[Fifteen kilometers to the north-west, in a completely dark karst cave, pierced by giant pipettes of wet stalactites, a four-meter matrix of the Stone Maiden turned its head-egg towards the broken corundum, trying to revive a half dead man with angry vigor.] (My translation)

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<sup>2</sup> Marian Schwarz does not translate this sentence at all.

Secondly, the city located in the middle of the Riphean mountains, breaks space down into north and south, or up and down.

"The professor had studied the corundum river's depiction and the map for months, and he knew it better than the crack in his own ceiling. [it was located] *on the north of the region*, ten kilometers east of Balakaevisk logging (Slavnikova 192, 356).

"By the way, isn't Petrovich back from the north? [...] I heard it's practically *heaven on earth in the north* - and *hell* simultaneously,- muttered Roma Gusev" (275).

It is important to note here that the phrase "не рай земной, а одновременно ад" in this quote justifies the fact that the semantics of the mountains is associated with both Heaven and Hell, full of well-being and of death at the same time. In other words, the Riphean Mountains is an extreme, ultimate point where all the roads lead; it is the sacred frontier, which the characters strive to achieve. This combination of hell and paradise in one place is not accidental. According to Nikulina' analysis of the Ural mythology, the picture of the Universe is represented in the form of a mountain, which is a vertical axis, connecting three worlds: upper, middle and lower. She says:

"Верхний мир - вершина, небо; средний - жилая земля, здесь живут люди, звери и птицы; и нижний - подземный - полость горы, пещера, царство мертвых. Средний мир - т.е. наш, человеческий - связывают с верхним птицы, а с нижним, преисподним, - ящерицы, лягушки и

змеи. Стало быть, с древнейших времен Гора была Землей и Небом, Небом и подземельем, Миром богов и царством мертвых. Именно так все и нарисовано на древних глиняных горшках и на скалах-писанцах. Их только на восточном склоне Урала уцелело более семидесяти, а было гораздо больше: впрок, значит, писали, подавали весть и надеялись быть услышанными" (Никулина).

The height of the mountains and its slopes as well as the Toadstool tower and ladders in the city set a third important vertical dimension. In the following example Slavnikova describes the eleventh day of Professor Anfilogov's secret expedition, where he walked along the crispy cobble shoals, examining the rocks and discarding the unwanted ones: "The muffled stone tapping skipped up *vertically* and seemed like the only sound in the whole world white intense blue, with the windy noise of the water spread *below* and the barely audible drone of Esmark's cod" (Slavnikova 100). Right at this moment, professor's assistant Kolyan finds a gem. The emergence of such vertical perspective becomes a sort of transition from one stage to another, and brings closer to the cherished "other" world. "Vasily Petrovich! Vasily Petrovich! [...] It's a corundum, Vasily Petrovich. A ruby even! Gem quality!" Kolyan cautiously unclenched his raw fingers, to which the vivid triangular crumb had stuck" (101).

The unusual geographic location plus its mythological roots only partially represent the uniqueness of Yekaterinburg as a city and help explain the author's choice. Elena Kozmina talks about the myth of Yekaterinburg in her article "Myth of Yekaterinburg in Mayakovsky's poem "Emperor" ["Миф Екатеринбурга в

стихотворении В.В. Маяковского "Император"], published in the book "Culture as a resource of developing territory" ["Культура как ресурс развития территории"] based on the materials of a student conference at the Yekaterinburg Academy of Contemporary Art in 2009. There she says that Yekaterinburg and the Urals are associated with Siberia, which in Russian cultural consciousness has acquired the properties and features of a mythological country of the dead. "Урал как часть, элемент *сибирского текста* русской литературы [...] в российском культурном сознании обрел характеристики и свойства мифологической страны мертвых" (Козьмина 89).

Professor Sergej Kropotov, who also contributed to the book "Culture as a resource of developing territory", continues in his article "Aleph in the basement of the Ipatiev's house: horror and shrines of the city, or Multum in Parvo" ["Алеф в подвале дома Ипатьева: ужасы и святыни нашего города, или Multum in Parvo"]:

"Екатеринбург - территория судьбы, локус исполнения самых жутких и самых светлых желаний, некий символический сгусток в глубинах Евразии - в *сердце тьмы* [...] Тьма принадлежит к самой сути города; она входит в его подлинное *я*; она в буквальном смысле владеет [им], в особенности и более всего тогда, когда жители города не владеют собой и своими жизненными перспективами. Именно тогда пространство берет на себя роль хора в трагедии и чего-то властно требует от лиц, действующих на сцене городской жизни" (Кропотов 28-29).

Such characteristics of the area, and the city in particular, are determined by its tragic past: the brutal, bloody murder of the royal family (цареубийство) and, as a result, the end of the Russian Empire: "Всё здесь точно подталкивает человека к совершению ужасных деяний...Подлинным источником преступлений служит сама жизнь города...Город становится сценой, где ради устрашения и развлечения столичной публики разыгрывались жесткие спектакли..." (Кропотов 64-5). Hence, Slavnikova intentionally chose Yekaterinburg as a point of intersection of significant political, historical and symbolic lines bound, with its mythological roots and the legends of the Urals, by an "invisible thread" (Slavnikova 13).

In "2017", the city is located in the middle of the mountains, from here the characters of the novel start their journey. The name of the city depicted in the novel is not mentioned, but due to the signs, names of some places, and facts about the city used by the author, it becomes obvious that this is the city of Yekaterinburg. In the novel, Slavnikova mentions the Opera, which "looked like a bulldozer", and clumsy names of the streets inherited from obscure revolutionaries (37). Margarita Alekseeva in her article "The object, not intended to develop: spatial model of the world in Olga Slavnikova's novel 2017" (2008) ["Объект, к освоению не предназначенный: пространственная модель мира в романе О.А.Славниковой "2017"] adds: "Город по имени не назван, но Екатеринбург-Свердловск<sup>3</sup> угадывается в целом ряде топонимов: проспект

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<sup>3</sup> The city of Yekaterinburg used to have the name of Sverdlovsk *after the Bolshevik party leader Yakov Sverdlov*, until 1991. (Yekaterinburg) After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the city



Космонавтов, гостиница Центральная, статуя Якова Свердлова, Кольцово" (Алексеева 214). I believe that the author intentionally omits the name of the city.

First of all, by doing so she wants to draw readers' attention not only to the peculiarities of the Ural capital through a complex spatial construction, but also to the image of modern Russia in general. For instance, she expresses her concerns about the destiny of the country since "the entire world with its sufferings, poverty, and diseases, [has become] simply *unreal*" (Slavnikova 187).

"This entire world, with its sufferings, poverty, and diseases, was simply *unreal*. A few wise guys who had taken up residence, especially, in the concrete institution decorated for the holiday, with the ruddy-faced mayor and his silence congratulations, had created a reality, that, rather than embody authenticity, robbed everything of it" (Slavnikova 186).

The second reason why Slavnikova does not want to name her city is explained by her fear of attracting tourists and *hitniki* (illegal gem hunters) who could harm the Ural environment, already experiencing an ecological crisis. In her article about upper and lower landscapes of Yekaterinburg and the Ural mountains, she says:

"Получается, что литература [...] делает описанное настолько реальным и явленным, что оно становится родом музея, лакомой приманкой для туристов" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

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regained its pre-revolutionary name of Yekaterinburg, which was given after the name of Catherine the First, in 1723.

Moreover, the city of Yekaterinburg, as she herself admits, "как среда и предмет литературного творчества, обладает несомненной спецификой - особым сопротивлением слову и герою"(Славникова, *О Екатеринбурге*). This may be the reason why there are just a few literary works describing the city, and why writers prefer to give the city another name or simply omit it - it is easily recognized due to its specificity. Slavnikova says: "у нас все время фигурирует то Горнозаводск, то какой-то Горноуральск, писатели выдумывают улицы, площади, как будто о реальных улицах и площадях совершенно нечего сказать"(Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга* ). In "2017" she definitely talks about Yekaterinburg and its real streets and main sights, but nevertheless avoids using its real name.

Speaking about the spatial organisation of the novel, the city includes its inner chronotopes of an apartment, a house and a workshop, while the Riphean mountains involve the chronotope of mines. All of these chronotopes determine the structure of the text as an opposition between "this side" and "other side", "here" and "there", "center" and "periphery", "proximity" and "distance", "interior/internal" and "exterior/external", "closed" and "opened", "safety" and "danger", "freedom" and "captivity", "love" and "animosity". This binarism is also preserved in their relation to each other. For instance, the external space of the city towards the internal space of an apartment becomes internal when it is compared to the external space of the Riphean mountains.

The principle of binary oppositions underlying the structure of literary space in the novel is also expressed in its temporality and phantasmagoria, which

are presented by the oppositions "now/present" to "then/past/future", and "fantastic /magic/false" to "real/true". Benjamin Satcliffe has already analyzed the opposition "false" to "truth" in his article " Writing the Urals: permanence and ephemerality in Olga Slavnikova's *2017*", where he talks about permanence as the association of truth, and ephemerality as an embodiment of false.

Yuri Lotman pointed out that "in the spatial structure of texts in which orientation towards an alternative world is a distinctive feature of the world-picture, the border between the two worlds is of great modelling importance" (Lotman, *The Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* 131-42). In "*2017*", chronotopes of the train station and of the tunnel function as a border/transitional space- they separate/connect two contrasting worlds: the Riphean mountains and the city. It is especially interesting to note that each of these conflict spaces possesses its own border, which separates a magic space ("волшебное пространство") from a real space. In the Riphean Mountains the function of the borderline is performed by the Pelma River ("Пельма"), and in the city they are doors and windows, which divide the external space of the city from the internal "magical" space of an apartment. I will analyze each border and space individually later in the paper.

The existing spatial-temporal structure of the novel is presented in the first two sentences.

"Крылову было назначено на вокзале, в половине восьмого утра.

Непонятно как, но он проспал и теперь спешил бегом среди

извилистых луж, похожих растянутыми позами на перепутавших  
«лево» и «право» Матиссовых танцоров"(Славникова, 2017).

"On June 7, 2017, Krylov was supposed to be at the train station at seven  
thirty. He had no idea how he'd overslept, and now he was loping between  
winding puddles that reminded him of Matisse dancers in extended poses  
who had confused right and left" (Slavnikova 9).

Here Slavnikova, first of all, introduces the temporal axis of the past, present and  
future. Krylov was appointed at 7.30 am (in the past), then he overslept (in the  
past) and now he is rushing (in the present) to the train station to see off Professor  
Anfilogov, who is "going to take the expedition three weeks to reach..." (in the  
future). The category of time is "impermanent" here. From the first part of the  
sentence we can see that Krylov is short of time, which goes fast, and as a result,  
he is late. But at the end of the sentence, after describing Krylov's haste,  
Slavnikova recalls Matisse's famous painting "Dance", where five nude figures  
are dancing in a circle. Circles produce an impression of uneven movement in  
time that is emphasized by the brought down rhythm and different rate of  
movement, its frequency, which makes time lose its boundaries and become  
infinite.

"The circle may be seen metaphorically as well, representing the absence  
of a way out, the dead-end and prison-like being of man's dwelling on earth. In  
this chaotic anti-world, orientation is impossible and movement senseless. As a  
result, the experience of time is bewildering" (Hansen Löve 120). The use of such

allegory of time at the beginning of the novel, immediately sets the notion of chaotic movement and chaos in general that is an important aspect in Slavnikova's novel, where nothing is stable and certain. This chaotic space-time is typical for both spaces of the city and of the Riphean mountains.

The experience of time is as fragmented and chaotic in the rest of the novel as it is presented in the introductory sentences. Here time behaves differently, depending on time of day and location, as if it acquired some magical features. It may go fast, slow down or disappear at all. Here is a vivid example of time's inconsistency and chaotic movement in the Riphean Mountains:

"White nights had come here, to the north end of the Riphean range; the *day faded infinitely*, and the sky was like the nacre of an open shell - wavy, like pale mother of pearl. Then came a *spectral, shadowless twilight*, and the red tent turned an unusual, somehow cosmic purple, and the sleeping river fronted gently, like an infant in swaddling clothes. In spite of *the infinite extension of time, air, and space, everything here, in the north, happened very quickly. Overnight*, the shoots of barely blossoming bird cherry trees went to sleep [...] - and *by four in the morning, when the sun was already beaming nonchalantly above the horizon*, [everything] was its dropping rhythm (Slavnikova 104).

There, in the mountains, time may lose its boundaries. At nightfall, Anfilogov did not know how to kill time. "He had neither book nor light for reading to fill the *existensible time*" (104). Time may also disappear at all. 2017 was unusual, in

terms of time perception, for those who went on an expedition that year. Krylov's friends, also gem cutters, once during their gathering talked about a strange disappearance of time:

"The table was silent. Once again they poured vodka, drank it down, and wiped their mouths on the sleeves. Then they started talking, lowering their muffled voices, about *the strange disappearance of time*. Virtually everyone who had been on expeditions this summer had encountered this phenomenon. *At first, time moved normally, but then suddenly it vanished*, like a river going underground, leaving the shining world in blissful *stillness*, in the distinctness of each and every being, in the childlike *immortality of everything*. [...] All the expeditions had a moment when the participants *lost track of the days*. Then both the days and the nights became amazingly transparent: the ordinary mechanisms of oblivion ceased to function and *everything that happened happened today*. The reason for this may have been the beauty dissolved in the air that had expressively renewed every stone and every beast; no matter where you cast your eye, beauty dispatched man into *eternity*. A sojourn in eternity - that was the expeditions of the summer of 2017"(Slavnikova 277-78).

In the novel, time also influences the behavior of surrounding objects. For example, at the train station, the reader has an impression that "an oncoming train that had filled the little station backed off to the left, hooted, expanded, and broke away, revealing a cold expanse the size of a steel lake", but "in fact the train was still waiting" (Slavnikova 12). In the Riphean mountains, the characters

experience the same illusion and time feeling that "the banks seem to be moving rather than the water, which itself seems to be straining to retain the reflection of the sky and the silvered clouds" (27). The day that started at the train station when Krylov met Tanya, "was a very odd, very long day" (14). It seemed that everything was slower than usual: they were wandering around the city, in a "lazy park", where it is always Sunday, though "it was definitely Wednesday" (16). Here time is so slow that it produces an impression of eternity, stiffness and stagnation. It seems that the city does not live in the present, but rather in the past (On Wednesday there is still "a faded Sunday menu" in a park café, Krylov and Tanya encounter on their way "a small movie house made appealing by the cheapness of its tickets and the touching old-fashioned quality of its sturdy columns" with "the white plaster seal of the USSR" (18). Even "the clock over the Old Passage, yellow and convex, the size of the moon, had always been ten minutes slow"(44). In the mountains, time seemed to stop as well and, even morecontrary, turned back to the past. Tamara in her conversation with Krylov states:

"Naturally, no particular deposits have been discovered there. But we've been receiving snapshots from satellites dating from two years ago and more, moreover the dates go backward from the present. You get the impression of someone transmitting old tapes to the satellite, on rewind" (Slavnikova 251).

The relaxing walk "in the pall sun" around the city ends up in Anfilogov's apartment at sunset, where new lovers fall "asleep instantly". And now, at night

time, opposed to the sleepy streets and lazy parks in the city, everything comes alive, and time seems to start moving faster: "The room's summertime semi-dark, without the negative intervention of a lamp at the transition from sun to night, was amazingly pure. [...] The decorative fish [...] swam freely about the room. [...] The blanket had slipped off" (Slavnikova 19, 20). In Krylov's apartment, even "the walls of his empty inhabitation stood fast" (Slavnikova 177).

Night time in the novel is also the time when "hostile" creatures like the Great Snake (Великий Полоз) or the Stone Maiden appear, as defined in Russian folklore. According to Toporov, in mythopoetical tradition, the sunset is a dangerous period when the powers of chaos enroach upon the word of people (Топоров, *О структуре Достоевского в связи с архаичными схемами мифологического мышления* 238). So, one night during the expedition Professor Anfilogov sees the Mistress of the Mountain.

"That night [...] he noticed next to the first prospecting pit [...] a woman's silhouette as if through tissue paper. The woman was standing under a deep umbrella, and he couldn't see her face, but Anfilogov recognized her by her slender legs and her laced boots sunk in the clay. The woman turned around very slowly and began walking uphill [...] before the creature vanished, without reaching the limit of visibility but simply dissolving in the drizzle (Slavnikova 113).



In "2017", twilight is also important because criminal activities happen at this time more often and it becomes dangerous outside. Thus, Krylov's trainer Leonidich is murdered at twilight.

"After a short time [after Leonidych was killed], cars flew into the courtyard with cold flashing lights that were waning *in the dusk*, but neither the cops with their official faces nor the doctors walking around in white amid the jagged linen that had fallen from the branches could change a thing" (92).

Also in the twilight, Anfilogov's assistant Kolyan dies in the Mountains, poisoned. "Overcoming the odd *daytime twilight*, Anfilogov searched among Kolyan's things for some clean linen, which smelled of cheap laundry powder. He could see that it had been there beforehand precisely for such an eventuality" (214).

The idea of negative characteristics of the night time such as a demon rules the world at night and causes all sorts of trouble, originates in Christian beliefs and is widely represented in literature, for example, in Gogol. "He uses the misleading lamplight as a tool to derange the natural order of things, and man is deceived by false appearance" (Hansen Löve 77). That is why in "2017", under electric illumination and under the power of darkness, the space in apartments is transformed, and as things fill it in, it became alive. An example of this phenomenon may be seen in Anfilogov's apartment during the first night that Krylov and Tanya stayed there.

Time is also expressed in the novel through age. Krylov, belonging to the artificial world of the city, was 40 years old. Tanya, the Stone Maiden from the

Ripnean world, has no age. She is immortal; transcending time. Once Krylov caught himself thinking:

"How old was Tanya? That he didn't know. She seemed young but at the same time completely ageless; her paleness created a haze, and gray hair, if any could be found in her coarse, icy-feeling hair, was completely lost in her natural gray aura. Tanya could have been thirty or fifty. [...] At times Krylov thought Tanya was in some way - by no means Christian - immortal" (Slavnikova 45).

Anfilogov's wife Ekaterina Sergeevna, who later turns out to be Tanya, certainly also did not have age. "Inspecting his Ekaterina Sergeyevna without any concern for what she thought of it, Anfilogov did not find in her standard, somewhat papery appearance, any specific signs of aging" (195). And later Farid comments on her as well: "She was ageless. Her few conventional wrinkles looked like they'd been penciled on wax paper that wouldn't take lead. She could easily have been past fifty" (284). I believe, here, the immortality of mountains represented by the Stone Maiden is being compared with the city's inclination to aging and dilapidation. That is why Krylov's lifetime is shown in segments depending on his age, from childhood to his adulthood. Each of them represents a new turning point in the character's life, splitting it into "before" and "after", or "now" and "then". It is interesting to note that each "turn" is usually accompanied by somebody's departure, death or disappearance, and causes a dramatic change in protagonist Krylov's mind.

The first phase starts in his early childhood in October, when the precious stones, which he treated in the novel as "magical objects" (Slavnikova 57) disappeared together with his aunt - "the princess, his friend, the beauty with a round face that glowed in the dark - she vanished without a trace "(59). Since then,

"everything changed. Nothing seemed real anymore but rather as if you were seeing it in a mirror in which you couldn't tell who was doing what or who was going where. Young Krylov still didn't have the right words but he did have a visceral sense of the distortion of things [...] The "move" dated from this time" (Slavnikova 58, 59).

The second phase starts after their (his family) departure from Asia to Yekaterinburg, Russia where, already being a teenager, he meets Professor Anfilogov and in six months starts working in his workshop as a gem cutter. In six months his trainer Leonidich dies. After his death,

"everything seemed to take a step back. [...] At the same time he (Krylov) suspected that his presence at the unexpected death has changed him in some way. Right when Krylov was balancing Leonidich's blood [...] something jumped from Leonidich to him. Not to say that Leonidich was such an unusually talented gem-cutter, but some immortal element of his that contained the necessary ingredients suddenly merged with the potential that slumbered in Krylov's subconscious. Krylov quickly figured out that he had been struggling with the cunning ways of his equipment,

whereas his true instrument was the transparency that reflected light"  
(Slavnikova 92).

The third of Krylov's significant life phases starts on the day when professor Anfilogov leaves for an expedition and he meets Tanya, who later turns out to be the Stone Maiden, and it lasts for three months. The last phase starts at the train station, on the day Krylov departs for an expedition himself.

Another important detail mentioned by Slavnikova in the description of puddles is that they "reminded him [Krylov] of Matisse dancers in extended poses who had confused 'right' and 'left'". Such an extension of puddles and their confusion of "right" and "left" create an effect of mirror, of specular reflection and distortion. In the whole novel the looking-glass theme develops as a form of transition between real and fantastic.

"Even without any precipitation, though, the fissured rock seeped moisture, which ran down the walls slowly, as if groping its way; overnight a bucket and a half of water collected in the prospecting pit.  
(Slavnikova 107).

"Однако и без дождя трещиноватая порода сама по себе сочилась влагой, стекавшей по стенкам медленно, будто на ощупь; за ночь подземных вод набиралось в шурфе на полтора ведра, и узкое дрожащее зеркальце делало дно колодца похожим на закатившийся глаз" (Славникова, 2017). [However, even without rain the fissured rock itself was oozing moisture, which was slowly running down the

wall, as if by touch, per night a half a bucket got full with groundwater, and a narrow quivering mirrr made the bottom of the pit looking like a rolling eye.] (My translation)

"Everything changed. *Nothing seemed real anymore but rather as if you were seeing it in mirror* in which you couldn't tell who was doing what or who was going where. Young Krylov still didn't have the right words but he did have a viseral sense of *the distortion of things*"( Slavnikova 58).

"More often, the wood stood in the mine like a *long mirror tongue* where the dark reflections of the vault were as motionless as the stones themselves" (210).

Another vivid example of the transitional function of glass is exquisitely shown in the sentence connecting Krylov and Tanya sleeping in Anfilogov's apartment with Anfilogov's train compartment, racing to the Riphean Mountains.

"In their sleep, the quotation marks fell away from their invented names; at half past five, when the streets deepened and a band of sunlight passed over the roofs, like a gilt fillet around *a glass's rim* (while in the grubby train carrying him northward, the professor suddenly sat up on his shifted mattress and pressed his hands against his angular face), they both surfaced from their dreams as other people and felt that this time was by no means the last" (Slavnikova 20).

Here, Slavnikova creates an unusual transition from one place (apartment) to another (train), from one state of mind (sleeping) to awakening, from night to

morning, from darkness to light with the help of an ingenious comparison of a sunlit strip of the roof with a gold ring on the edge of the glass cup, which is usually used on trains. Thus, Slavnikova again tied two places, two spaces, by means of an invisible thread.

Slavnikova also introduces the chronotopes of meeting, road and dream in the first sentences.

The chronotope of road is reflected in Matisse's painting: the roundelay of naked figures resembles a folk ritual, taking place at the beginning or during initiation. "Matisse's "The Dance" lies in folk dances, which even today preserve something of the ritual nature - albeit not always comprehended today- of pagan times" ("The Dance"). Robert Hughes, in his analysis of the painting, notices "that circle of stamping, twisting maenads takes you back down the line, to the figure vases of Mediterranean antiquity and, beyond them, to the caves. It tries to represent motions as ancient as dance itself" (Hughes). Slavnikova refers to dance later in the novel as well, when describing the beginning of the main character's journey: "Later they wandered *down* steep paths, which would occasionally turn into concrete steps sealed with rough plaster; once they came across a booming band shell, where well-dressed old women were *waltzing*..." (Slavnikova 18).

Moreover, Matisse's dance symbolizes the labyrinth, which the main character Krylov is walking as a part of his initiation. It is known that "prehistoric labyrinths are believed to have served either as traps for malevolent spirits or as defined paths for ritual dances. During Medieval times the labyrinth symbolized a

hard path to God with a clearly defined center (God) and one entrance (birth) ("Labyrinths"). Therefore, from the very beginning Slavnikova activates certain archaic images and motifs in order to create a "mythopoetic" picture of the world in her novel. For her, such spatial elements as "the centre/periphery", and "the road" assume great importance. At the same time, Slavnikova implies the chronotope of dream ("he's overslept"). We don't know from the first sentences if Krylov had a dream, but obviously that dream precedes and determines the symbolic beginning of the novel. As we find out later, dreams in "2017" have a prognostic function. For example, on the way to the Mountains Professor Anfilogov

"that night, under the muffled, machine-like sound of the rain, dreamed that this woman came to him. [...] There was nothing special in the lizard-narrow creature, but all the beauty on the banks of the corundum river had been a preface to this body. [...] Anfilogov awoke with an unresolved anguish in his loins" (Slavnikova 110).

Anfilogov knew it was the Mistress of the Mountain. A short time later, now awake, Anfilogov saw that woman standing in front of him again, he recognized her by her "slender legs" (113). As we see, dreams predict reality. That is why the characters experience such phenomenon as "deja vu". "It seemed to Krylov that not only had he met this man in real life, but he had dreamed him as well. [...] The deja vu experienced deep down in Krylov's brain at the sight of the spy drove him wild" (123).

In addition, the comparison of the city itself with the painting leads to the conclusion that the city and its residents are artificial, fabricated. The figures portrayed on canvas lack any details, their faces are erased, and their expressions are senseless. In Christophe Cacace's opinion, such technique "emphasizes the decorative element [...] to the detriment of the identity" (Cacace). "Everyone suddenly felt like heroes in a novel, that is, like characters in a made-up reality; [...] In some way everyone must have felt the world's falseness; helping one's neighbour in his *inauthentic* sufferings made no sense. A new culture had taken shape that had an internal unity, a culture of copies without originals regulated by hundreds of restrictions..." (Slavnikova 187).

We can also suggest that the history of Matisse's painting is important for Slavnikova. It is known that it was transferred to the Hermitage after the October revolution in 1917, and its hundredth anniversary becomes a central event in the novel. Paintings in general play an important role in the novel. Slavnikova directly mentions some famous paintings like Shishkin's "Morning in pinery" ("Утро в сосновом лесу"), refers to paintings hanging around as decorations and talks about "картийность" as a property of reproduction. In her article "Top and Lower Landscapers", she claims:

"Полуразрушенные каменные кладки, поддержанные вертикалями сосен и горизонталями полосатых от ветра озер, заключают в себе некую изначальную картинность, легко воспроизводимую даже начинающим живописцем. У пейзажа выработалось что-то вроде условного логотипа, равно пригодного как для картины маслом, так и



для торговой этикетки. Вообще Уральские горы напоминают декоративные парковые руины, только гигантских размеров и без особых удобств для отдыхающих. Еще это похоже на оперную сцену, где деревья, подобно хористам, располагаются продуманными группами на скальных уступах, в то время как в матерчатом небе назревает бедствие: промышленный сумрачный смог" (Славникова, 2017).

Here are a few more examples, supporting this point:

"Smiling and bowing, the maitre d' led the new arrivals to the most desirable booth [seated under a stylized portrait of the President of the Russian Federation, where the Russian leader was depicted as a warrior on the terrible shaggy horse, holding a sword of the size of a board made of good fenceand.]<sup>4</sup> (My translation)

"Later, when he had done some reading, Krylov learned that the picture was in fact held at the Tretyakova Gallery. It was hard for him to believe in the Tretyakov's reality and, consequently, Shishkin's painting itself vanished from reality. The word appeared to young Krylov as a string of copies without an original" (Slavnikova 57).

Thus, the structure of space in "2017", revealed in the first sentences of the novel, is characterized by the complexity of the Yekaterinburg and Riphean Mountains

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<sup>4</sup> The second part of the phrase is not translated by Marian Schwarz. "усадил под стилизованный портрет Президента РФ, на котором глава Российского государства был изображен в виде богатыря на страшном косматом коне, держащим меч размером с доску из хорошего забора (Славникова, 2017)

location, which creates a distinct bipolar composition, or "двоемирие". This is realized on two levels: Krylov as a hero and his romantic conflict on one hand and on the other the confrontation of external and internal, peripheral and central, realistic world and fantastic (demonic) anti-world, and the boundary between them in the form of the train station. The structure of space can be represented by a three-dimensional projection with the spatial axes constructed both vertically and horizontally. The protagonist moves along the horizontal axis in the direction from his enclosed dwelling to the transit zone of the train station. Within this complex spatial structure the author reproduces her own worldview and her concerns relating to the past, present and future of Russia.

In the following chapter I provide a more detailed examination of each of the chronotopes and an interpretation of the novel's spatial structure.

### **Chapter 3: Inner Spaces in the novel.**

In "2017", the chronotope of the Riphean Mountains includes the chronotope of city (Yekaterinburg) which, in turn, includes the chronotope of apartment and the chronotope of road connecting them all. The road expresses the characters' path, laid between different locations and moving towards the sacred space. The way these non-intersecting chronotopes surround each other and connect by means of one shared road/path resembles a labyrinth, which is traditionally presented in a form of expanding circles with the spiral turned into a meandering yet purposeful path. Generally, this path symbolizes a character's journey of reaching the center of the circle and returning back to the outside world with the acquired "sacred" knowledge. A path in this labyrinth is similar to Propp's journey in folk tales: both of them occur in a parted world (of the living and dead, real and unreal/fantastic, visible and invisible), where the border is marked by a river or any other place symbolizing "transition". Also, walking the labyrinth (in myths) and going on a journey (in fairy tales) are both considered as initiations. It is well known that those who go through a ritual of initiation are supposed to overcome trials on their way to a sacred center, and on their way back to be "born anew to conscious dwell in a human body, made holy by having got a taste of the Infinite Center" ("Labyrinths"). It is also believed that a labyrinth determines the character's fate and explores a man's ability to control his destiny.

In "2017" the city is a labyrinth. This is indicated in several instances where Slavnikova explicitly makes that reference. During Krylov's chase after the

spy, the author describes the convoluted city paths and a labyrinth of constructions:

"Abandoning his stuck property - something he had never once done before - the spy quickly stepped diagonally across *the side street*, where labyrinths of damp structures and sheds descended toward the river [...] Evidently, though he really knew these crazy labyrinths. He led Krylov in circles" (Slavnikova 238).

Slavnikova continues to compare the chaos of the outskirts with the intricacies of the labyrinth: "I am going to rip your head off [...], Krylov rasped, his hands on his spread legs and bodily blocking off the narrow path to the spy's home *labyrinth of human henhouses*" (239).

The way the city is planned reminds Slavnikova of a web. In the following example she even compares the spy with a spider in order to show his agility in orientating himself within the tangled backstreets: "The spy skillfully passed from handle to handle, like *a spider across a web* he personally had woven. On his paw, which stuck way out of his hairy sleeve, was a ring with a cornelia cabochon that looked like a wart" (308). Another example of the city as a labyrinth occurs in the description of the strike on the day of Great October revolution's anniversary: "The students dropped their soda bottles and scripts and were pushed toward the Swedish slope - a wide, paved conduit leading from the upper town to the lower, into *an escape labyrinth of spreading vegetation and lopsided ruins*" (Slavnikova 265).

The second important factor identifying the city as a labyrinth is its circular shape determined by the circular images and round objects used in its description and the circular direction of the characters' movement inside the city. The etymology of the word "labyrinth" explains its round shape. It is related to the word "ladyrinthos", which comes from "большое кружение" (a big swirl), which sets winding paths ("Миф о лабиринте"). A labyrinth is often confused with a maze, which may take a different shape. Hermann Kern in his book "Through the labyrinth" distinguishes between the two:

"*Maze* refers to a complex branching (multicursal) puzzle with choices of path and direction; while a single-path (unicursal) *labyrinth* has only a single, non-branching path, which leads to the center. A labyrinth in this sense has an unambiguous route to the center and back and is not designed to be difficult to navigate" ("Labyrinth").

The abundance of "circles" in the city resembles the circles of Hell, about which Lotman talks in his analysis of Dante's journey in the "Divine Comedy".

As we remember, the story of "2017" begins at the train station plaza with a fountain in the center: "a small fountain on a wet pole looked like a toy windmill, sparkling cheerfully in its watery *web*" (Slavnikova 13). Later Slavnikova, adds:

"Here, by the *circular fountain*, was a favorite meeting place for young people" (Slavnikova 37). "Led more and more downhill, they gradually approached the city's river with its park *pond*, deep *as belly*, where all the

things that fell into the river, including drowning victims, accumulated and stewed" (Slavnikova15).

The circular fountain captures attention not only because of its circular shape, but also because it represents the circular motion of water inside it. The notion of water and its constant movement resembles the infinity of time and its feature of changing velocity. Moreover, the comparison of water with a web is significant not only because it identifies its "labyrinth" nature, but also because it leads us to the underground, to the other world. Looking ahead, I should say that the city river is one of the transit zones connecting the labyrinth of the city (of the living) with the labyrinth of the dead, traditionally located below ground.

Further on, the characters, looking like "accidental prisoners of a sinister labyrinth" (Alekseeva), found themselves in "the lazy park", where "across the *pond*, swathed in an oily light, a dingy white swan glided in its own *wave*, as if on a *plate*" (16). Sitting in a red plastic cafe, they even ordered pizzas which first "looked like hard *balls* on two plates with the thick premade *circles* [put] into microwave" (Slavnikova 17). The farther the main protagonist Krylov and his acquaintance Tanya travel (periodically making short stops), the more contracted the circles seem and the more winding their path becomes:

"Led *more and more downhill*, they gradually approached the city's river [...] Here, *below*, they roamed cross-country - over fresh ditches with stone abrasions and old gray slopes sparkling and slippery from broken glass [...] They just *kept turning up* in places, often unfamiliar ones"

(Slavnikova15). "Later they wandered *down* steep paths, which would occasionally *turn into concrete steps* sealed with rough plaster; once they came across a booming band *shell*, where well-dressed old women were *waltzing...*" (Slavnikova18).

"The tentative curve of their movement described through the city" (Slavnikova 15) with its gradual descent ("here, below; led more and more downhill") shows that the characters are moving along the vertical axis, which at the same time turns into a downward spiral. The direction of Krylov's movement implies changes happening inside him as a person undergoing initiation.

"Movement in geographical space meant moving in the vertical scale of religious and moral values, the top of the scale being heaven, and the bottom – hell" (Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: a semiotic theory of culture* 171). In accordance with this idea, "a long journey makes a person more holy, and at the same time the path to holiness implies necessarily leaving the settled life and setting off on a journey. So going away to a monastery was a movement from a sinful place to a holy place and in this sense was like a death" (173). The discrepancy between Krylov's symbolic "downhill" movement to Hell and the initial purpose of the ritual, of becoming holy - of reaching Paradise, proves that the space created in the novel is inverted. Here everything is upside down. Slavnikova makes a hint at the literary space being inverted at the beginning of the novel, comparing puddles with Matisse's dancers who confused "left" and "right". The absence of certain direction may also define the path in a labyrinth and it is evident that Krylov and his new acquaintance moved from the train

station in no particular direction. Very often the path in a labyrinth is compared to the birthing womb as the opposition between the inner and outer spaces.

Slavnikova alludes to this in the first pages of her novel. At the end of the day when Tanya and Krylov first met, they found themselves in bed, fallen instantly asleep. "They lay chastely and closely, *like twins in their mother's womb*, and truly did start looking more and more alike" (Slavnikova 19).

Besides that, Krylov's dream of flying/falling off "a dizzyingly deep mountain gorge with a vertical cliff" (Slavnikova 189) , suggests how much he longs for the way out of this labyrinth.

"The height gave him a chill, and butterflies flitted in his stomach [...]. A half-naked fatman [...] seemed to be trying to make Krylov sit on the ground. But just when Krylov thought he had almost wriggled out of his opponent's slippery embrace, his soles couldn't feel their support, and the void rushed up at him, like a grenade" (Slavnikova 189-91).

Walking down the path also creates an illusion of a fairy-tale journey where, according to Propp, a travelling hero leaves his home in search of some unknown place (the sacred space) that has some precious objects. For Krylov, this wonderland is connected with gems that are associated with the Riphean Mountains.

Slavnikova characterizes the sacred (magic) places as places where there is no God presence. Like the corundum river in the Riphean Mountains, the apartment becomes the place where two contrasting worlds meet. Krylov himself



has a strange feeling of somebody's presence there. At first, Slavnikova speaking about Krylov's apartment says: "Since nothing happened *in the space freed from God's presence*, the sole event of that evening was Krylov's dream" (Slavnikova 189). Later on, as Krylov starts feeling God's "presence in there", Slavnikova claims: "При переходе границы своей территории и пространства, контролируемого Богом, едва не ушибся на лестнице, вдруг скруглившей под его подошвой скользкую ступеньку" (Славникова, 2017 137). [Crossing the border of his own territory and space, controlled by God, he hit himself on the stairs, suddenly rounded a slippery step under his foot.] (My translation)

As another example of a place "left by God" earlier in the novel the author describes a "dam tunnel and waterfall, above which some hotshot, one of the ones who liked to dangle his legs over the abyss, had written in bright white waterproof paint, *There is no God*" (Slavnikova 69). The same inscription was drawn "on the incline of the dam that dumped beery water into the soft icy flab the freshly repainted sign - *There is no God* - was titled, like a lure or a runway sign" (413). There are many more examples of this kind in the novel. I will return to them later in the analysis.

Furthermore, this causes a mystical/fantastic phenomenon in these places. An apartment seems to become a border between the two worlds. During the day there is God in there and at night, under the lamplights, demons start playing around; objects become alive and start moving. In addition, there is another significant feature of the sacred (magic) world, associated with its unique quality of transparency. In the Riphean mountains the sacred space (place) is located deep

in the mine near the corundum river Pelma, where Anfilogov and his colleague Kolyan went on an expedition. In the city, there is also a "sacred space". It is not real, but rather a reflection and distortion of it. Krylov finds it in Anfilogov's apartment, where the Professor kept "a collection of freaks [gems] in an altered habitat". He also finds it in a gem-cutting workshop and in his own apartment where "mysterious processes went on around and inside him" (Slavnikova 82, 176).

Nikulina, in her article "Stone. Cave. Mountain." devoted to the analysis of gems in mythology, explains that gems/stones are always placed on the borderline between the forbidden and permitted, the world of the dead and of the living:

"Камень, где бы он ни стоял: в центре святилища или храма, на развилке дорог или у входа в пещеру, на вершине холма или на могиле – всегда находится на границе дозволенного, на стыке миров и энергий: небесной и земной, земной и подземной; он и представляет собой разом замок и ключ, преграду и ворота, дверь, открываемую с помощью тайного кода, диктуемого из-под камня" (Никулина).

In Bazhov's tales, the gem also functions as a secret entrance or gate to the underworld.

"У Бажова, в полном согласии с мировой традицией, камень – тоже тайный вход и ворота под землю, он тоже помещается на границе живого и неживого, земли и подземелья, жизни и смерти. Механизм

проникновения в гору описан достаточно подробно: "камень качнулся", "по всей стороне щель прошла", ящерка показала, "в котором месте заходить, в котором выходить", "под камнем лестница открылась"... *Герой-избранник* попадает в пещеру легко: "нажал на камень – да и туда"; других она не признает и не пропускает. [...]

Кроме того, камень может быть вестью, но тоже только оттуда, из горы, – сюда, в человеческий мир. [...] *С камня начинается путь превращения: место – знаковый камень – каменный лес – подземное пространство – Хозяйка горы (сила, стоящая за камнем)*" (Никулина).

In Slavnikova's novel gems have the same function, but she creates her own mythology of gems. In the second chapter Slavnikova thoroughly describes Krylov's transformation into a *hitnik* (gem-cutter). When a child, he had a dream about a blue stone, which

"Young Krylov, smeared with blood, stubbornly held his find behind his back and retreated into the leafy shade, which was as hot as splashes of tea [...]. He had felt it with unutterable clarity at the time: the blue sliver contained something that almost never occurs in the simple matter around us: *transparency*, a special and profound element, like water and sky" (Slavnikova 55).

Since then Krylov had perceived "transparency" as higher, enlightened state.

"Transparency was magic. All simple objects belonged to the ordinary world, *this* world; no matter how cleverly they were arranged or how

tightly sealed, you could open them up and see what they had inside.

Transparency belonged to a world of a different order, and you couldn't open it up and get inside" (Slavnikova 55).

As Slavnikova states, the "move" dated from this time" (59). Now, we understand what the author meant by the move - transformation. Further in the novel, as if by fate, Krylov meets Professor Anfilogov, starts working in his gem-cutting workshop and plans his own expedition. Now Krylov is driven by the desire to possess gems and provide himself a better life. "At night, Krylov dreamed of big money- the kind of money that would last far beyond lifetime, settling its possessor in a comfortable eternity" (16). Krylov's desire to possess gems as the embodiment of wealth is decisive. Slavnikova's gems symbolize a power of fate and cause an inevitable death.

The sacred spaces in the city, as I have mentioned, are placed in various apartments. But before I describe each of them, I should clarify that an apartment in "2017" does not correspond to the notion of famous Bulgakov's apartment ("нехорошая квартира")<sup>5</sup> as an antipode of house (internal, enclosed space of harmony and security). On the contrary, here an *apartment* is the characters' refuge ("убежище") where they find peace and harmony and the *house* plays the role of a communal place (like Tamara's house). However, throughout the novel

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<sup>5</sup> "In Bulgakov the home is an internal, closed space, the source of security, harmony and creativity. Beyond its walls lie chaos, destruction and death. A flat, and especially a communal flat is chaos masquerading as home and making a real home impossible. The home and the communal flat are antipodes. This means that the common feature they share - being a dwelling place, living quarters - loses its significance, and all that remains are the semiotic qualities. The home becomes a semiotic element of the cultural space" (Lotman 191).

these refuges undergo some spatial transformations, and the apartments turn into anti-apartments.

In the novel there are two apartments that function as a refuge. The first is Krylov's secret apartment:

"Even before he met Tanya, who showed Krylov how one can suddenly, against one's will, put himself at the disposal of fate, though, unpredicted difficulties arose in making his refuge habitable in comparison [...]. Thus, by tormenting Adam, his refuge demanded an Eve" (Slavnikova 182).

Second, it is Professor Anfilogov's secret apartment, whose keys, as it turned out, Tanya gave to Krylov as a present at the beginning of their journey: "Krylov understood what it was to give a lover *the keys to her husband's refuge*, even if she didn't tell him the address" (287); "Это было убежище, чья пустота подчеркивалась запахом пыли, напоминавшим запах шерстяной нагретой ткани" (388). [It was a refuge, whose emptiness was emphasized by the dust smell, reminding of the smell of hot woolen fabrics.] (My translation)

Both of these secret apartments have at least one common feature: throughout the novel they transform from the places full of natural light, with "uncurtained windows" into dark gloomy spaces. In the latter, those uncurtained windows serve as a border between the external space of the city and the internal space of the apartment, but are still directly connected to the outer world. In the former, curtains are always closed and hard steel doors separate the inner space. In the apartments with uncurtained windows God is always present, in the dark

ones there is no God. In other words, they turn from apartments/refuges into anti-apartments. Let's have a closer look.

Krylov's one room apartment is located downtown, on the fourth floor of the "mustard yellow house" with the front door looking like "an old kitchen cabinet" (Slavnikova 175). When Krylov first came there, behind *the unlocked* door " the powerful infusion of a silence" awaited him (175). From the very start, here at home the protagonist is located at the center of several "concentrically wrapped protecting layers" (Hansen Löve 83). He is surrounded first by the walls of his room, then by his apartment, then by the building/house and then by the city (since his place is located in the downtown). This refuge not only creates an impression of protection (apartment as a shelter) and emphasizes the contrast of a safe internal space to the hostility of the external; but it also implies imprisonment, a life imprisonment to be exact: "Here Krylov really was safe - safer than ever. No one was going to come in here as long as he was alive, and if cops did get in, or neighbours, [...], that would mean Krylov himself was no longer among the living [...]. Any visitor who got into his refuge would immediately become a negative value" (Slavnikova 330). Krylov turns this place into "a dimension where not a single human being would enter until he died" (Slavnikova 176).

Later in the chapter, Slavnikova gives a more detailed description of the place. At first, it seems to be cramped and cluttered: the tenant's "massive armoire, [which] took up nearly half of the room" (176). On the short little mattress, his [Krylov's] long leg in his half-removed sock [was] hanging out"

(176). But despite this little discomfort, Krylov feels very comfortable there: he is sleeping for hours drowning in silence and sunlight.

"While he slept, mysterious processes went on around and inside him. Krylov woke up in the morning - not in someone's apartment but in his own *as if he had been born here*. Out the frosty window, thick gold smoke floated by like garlands of balloons, and the pock-marked parquet pieces burned like amber where *the winter sun lay on* them, Krylov glanced at the face of the antique marvel with the porcelain figurine fragment and figured out he'd slept for *18 hours*" (Slavnikova 176).

The very fact that Krylov constantly sleeps in the apartment speaks to the predisposition to immobility in the internal space as opposed to the haste and constant movement in the city. He cleaned the apartment, threw out all the old furniture and left it spacious and empty. "The walls of his empty inhabitation stood fast" (176). It became his refuge, "no one knew its address or telephone number. No one guessed it even existed" (176). Even the municipal representatives had no access to "his closed territory", so all the "demanded repair, Krylov would have to do himself" (179). He thought that "the space, once presented to the stranger, would differ markedly from the usual inhabitation, [and] a secret would be revealed (a sad, unneeded treasure which can't be spent on life or given to anyone)" (Slavnikova 181). Later on Krylov even installed "a mighty steel door, [so] his territory's boundaries were under lock and key". In here, he felt as though he had exited reality.

"Krylov was absent from the outside world, not only by force of the law which says that one body cannot be in two places at the same time, but *in general* [...] himself was a kind of amplified electrical impulse, but Krylov followed a regime of silence so his location could not be fixed. He never used the telephone fearing caller ID" (Slavnikova 178).

Moreover, Slavnikova continues:

"Not a single object there could be moved without Krylov's wishing it. Krylov alone was the source here of all the cause-and-effect connections [...] Each thing in the apartment existed simultaneously in Krylov's consciousness as a holographic copy [...] *After a while*, he noticed that the apartment 's space had become *transparent*: nothing was concealed from the very first glance, but the possibility of penetrating from without was excluded. *God*, should he wish to get this human insect with his straw, would have to smash the *refuge's transparency* to white powder [...] *The sense of freedom* Krylov experienced by shutting himself up here forever [...] In fact, Krylov acquired the habit of roaming about naked thanks to the ancient radiators under the massive windowsills [...] *The absence of a mirror* in the apartment allowed Krylov not to be shy [...] Now he realized with astonishing clarity that any person [...] could *drag God into his refuge*. Krylov literally *saw His presence* shining through the crumpled or simply everyday faces of his neighbours" (Slavnikova 180-181).



The time when Krylov started feeling freedom, the degree of “transparency” of his apartment and the presence of God, coincides with his developing relationship with Tanya, who later on turns out to be the Stone Maiden. Mysterious processes start happening there in his absence. Once when Krylov came home and

"unlocked his nice new steel door, [...] in the hall, silence and *a feeble band of light awaited him* from the bathroom where for some reason *the electricity was on*. Krylov was convinced that the bathroom was, of course, empty [...]. In the kitchen, Krylov *found two unwashed dishes* with picturesque traces of scrambled eggs; soaking in the dishpans full of *nasty water* was a cup from cocoa and another with a fly at the bottom, was white on the windowsill. It was *as if the apartment had taken Krylov for two people* at minimum. This was not the first time he had had the distinct sensation that someone had been in his refuge in his absence. Either he found extra dishes, like today; or it seemed to him that someone had touched the books and put them on the shelf in an unusual order, not characteristic of their owner" (Slavnikova 185).

The artificial electric light in the room plus its untidiness corresponds to the concept of “unclean space [...] locations ruled by the powers of darkness, which play an important role in archaic concepts of the world" (Hansen Löve 69). This unclean space causes the spatial transformations within it. "The misleading lamplight is used here as a tool to derange the natural order of things" (Hansen Löve 77). Thus Krylov's room, that was earlier associated with God, is turning from a "holy" into a "sinful" place, from an apartment into anti-apartment ("анти-

квартира"), where there is no God. By the end of the novel we can see that, "since there was no God on this territory, all cause-and-effect connections were launched manually. There was a mountain of dirty dishes in the sink, that was full of water, like an abandoned, multitiered fountain with food scraps and blackened parsley leaves floating in it" (Slavnikova 330).

The author gives another example of absence of God in Krylov's refuge: when he is hiding there from the police after he (as he thinks) had killed the spy. "Since the absence of God forced Krylov to keep each and every thing in his mind, he couldn't keep a weapon on this territory" (331). The spy's death becomes a turning point in Krylov's life because he realized how far his "gems passion" had led him, and his sunny apartment turned into complete darkness: "he suddenly discovered that he was standing in the vestibule, in the darkness, staring at the shining peephole, which looked as though it was filled with a drop of hot oil" (332). At this moment he heard somebody's knocking at the door. It was Tamara, Krylov's ex-wife, who "like no one else was [...] destined to bring nonexistent God to his refuge" (332). He showed her the way into "the empty room, from which *the smeared shadow* slipped into the kitchen..." (333). Krylov realized that "his refuge's space changed markedly. Evidently a dehermetization had occurred, and outside air flowed through the window cracks in layers, like jam from a pie. What was left of the lacy tulle rustled, and the cornice mounts creaked" (350). That night Krylov had "a distinct feeling he was seeing all this for the last time" (351). He felt an inevitability of his destiny. When he left the apartment and looked back at "his former window, which he had always kept only

partly drawn, [that it] was now *firmly curtained*", [...] "now it looked fake, and the balcony hung on his promise, as if it had been tied to the house with the old lady robe" (351, 372). After that night, Krylov went to his apartment to talk to Tamara but she was not there.

"When Tamara went inside, *she stepped out of reality*, and not because when she hid there she could not simultaneously be with her officials and lawyers; *she disappeared altogether*. This was as impossible to comprehend as it was to imagine eternity" (Slavnikova 372).

Thus, the space of anti-apartment is not simply "sinful", – it absorbs people like the pit of Hell. Laura Weeks in her article "House, Homes, and the Rhetoric of Inner Space in Mikhail Bulgakov", published in the book "The Master and Margarita, A Critical Companion" (1996) notes that the chief characteristic of "anti-house" (in our case *anti-kvartira*) is not only of being "a source of evil and falsehood", but "that in them people do not live - they disappear from them" (Weeks 38).

The same spatial transformation happened in Professor Anfilogov's apartment, but a bit earlier. As we already know, the transformation begins when the characters (first Anfilogov and later Krylov) meet the Maiden Stone (Anfilogov's wife Ekaterina Sergeevna who also turned out to be Krylov's Tanya). Thus, when Krylov first saw Anfilogov's refuge, it had already transformed into the anti-apartment (and Anfilogov is already moving in the direction of his death). The first thing that Slavnikova describes in Anfilogov's apartment is the

lamplight: "A separate, artificial light perpendicular to the ordinary daylight was falling on her (Tanya)" (Slavnikova 385). Krylov opened the door into Anfilogov's apartment with "the bundle of mysterious keys", that Tanya had given earlier to him. "His instantaneous dissolution into free atoms and instantaneous coalescence into a stinging, formless lump told Krylov what kind of place had opened up to him behind the door, which from the inside was an armored plate. It was a *refuge*." (388). "Это было убежище, чья *пустота* подчеркивалась *запахом пыли*, напоминавшим запах шерстяной нагретой ткани" (Славникова, 2017). [It was a refuge, which emptiness was emphasized by the smell of dust, reminded of the smell of a hot woolen fabrics.] (My translation)

From this example we can see that Anfilogov's anti-apartment is also unclean, dusty and there is emptiness or, as we will see later, transparency in it. In the same paragraph Slavnikova compares Tanya with "a magical bird" flying around the room. This metaphor refers Tanya to the "other" world (paradise according to Toporov's mythopoetic model of the world), and it emphasises a vertical spatial orientation: high and low or holy and sinful, where Krylov belongs to the second. Moreover, the apartment is located on the twenty-second floor. To reach it Krylov had to take "the express mirror elevator [which] bathed Krylov in bands of flickering life from below, as if it were taking a few Xeroxes of him" (Slavnikova 403).

The image of the elevator has a significant importance here. In the novel the elevator plays the role of stairs, which are traditionally considered to be a connection between Heaven and Earth. In "2017" the elevator also symbolizes a

decisive turn in Krylov's fate and a culmination of the plot. Krylov finds Tanya's habitation, reveals her true nature and, to my mind, finishes here his path in a city labyrinth. This apartment is another sacred space where Hell and Heaven coalesce and an inversion of opposites occurs: going upward on the elevator in fact turns out to be his downfall and destruction.

Professor Anfilogov's ghost, that Krylov meets in the hallway, is the embodiment of the underworld.

"Professor Anfilogov, wearing a stretched out house shirt that looked like it was made of tissue paper, was standing in an *iced-over* puddle of sunlight but was not *reflected in the hallway mirror*. [...] The professor nodded slowly [...] and went off into the depths of the apartment getting his dark feet stuck in the puddle of *cold sun*. Before he reached the turn he got very thin and then vanished, like a needle sleeping under the skin, as if his entire liquid content had been injected into *the empty* bright space" (Slavnikova 389).

Both Tanya (as a magical bird) and Anfilogov's ghost create an image of the place where two contrasting worlds intersect and make the space sacred.

Further on Slavnikova describes the same apartment as spacious and empty. There was "a long built-in cupboard, as *empty* as a train car. The apartment had a lot of room but very few things [...] lots of *unoccupied* rooms, lots of compartments and shelves covered with untouched, moon-cast *dust*" (Slavnikova 389, 390). "Dust mysteriously laid down by the emptiness, silver on the bare

surfaces" (402). In the center of the bedroom, where Tanya was standing, was "the round, roiled aquarium" (390), which functions as a sacred object in the whole place. Inside this aquarium there are gems, which professor Anfilogov kept in secret. The scene in the apartment finishes with the description of Tanya and Krylov's "transparent *circling* [searching for a pen and paper to write Krylov's phone number] as if each were *dancing solo*" (Slavnikova 402). I believe their circling solo dance is symbolic. As we remember they started their path together. Tanya led him all the way, closer and closer to the Riphean Mountains, and now when he is ready for the expedition and cannot resist his fate, she leaves him for another "*hitnik*", her next victim.

In the first chapter Slavikova introduces another of Professor Anfilogov's apartments. This place was never his refuge. On the contrary, many of his colleagues had access to it, including Krylov. From the very beginning, this apartment differed from the others by its irrationality and semantic ambiguity ("семантическая двойственность"), and it doesn't require any transformation. Slavnikova immediately declared this place as sacred where anomalous phenomena occur. As soon as Tanya and Krylov fell asleep, all the objects became alive:

"All the *dishes* in the room *were empty but seemed full*; the dull, congealed *crystal* of the cut glass on the desk, the size of a half-liter tin, *seemed to be reading* the newspaper under it through a magnifying glass. The decorative *fish no longer saw the glass wall of the aquarium as a solid barrier and swan freely about the room*, their tiny maws nibbled at

the offal of scattered clothing, and their insides looked like dark tangles, which would occasionally isolate a fat thread hanging in the air. *The blanket had slipped off*; almost simultaneously, struggling to retain the last grains of their winding, *all the clocks in the house went off*" (Slavnikova 19).

Professor Anfilogov lives in this place alone, or more precisely, with his library:

"his books, two colonies in the two apartments the professor personally inhabited [...], were *night creatures* and protected Anfilogov from delusions, gathering under his lamp in the dark time of the day. *They spoke three languages* with the professor, moreover some *lay opened flat* for weeks at a time, *sprawling in leaning poses* characteristics only of books printed in Russian" (Slavnikova 197).

Lara Weeks in her article "House, Homes, and the Rhetoric of Inner Space in Mikhail Bulgakov" makes an interesting comment about the infernal nature of Bulgakov's anti-apartment.

"The next thing we notice is how alive it is. With its talking clocks, its attentive lampshades, and its cream colored blinds, this is a house with eyes, ears, and a voice [...] So great is the harmony that reigns within the inner space that objects and inhabitants become interchangeable. Clocks become people, people's faces become clocks" (Weeks 144-145).

We can say the same thing about apartments in Slavnikova's novel. Here everything is moving around, the boundaries between reality and dreams are

being erased: "the decorative fish no longer saw the glass wall of the aquarium as a solid barrier and swam freely about the room"(Slavnikova 19). Another boundary erased is that between the apartment and the grimy train, through the emptiness/transparency of the glass cup ("стеклянного стакана") and of the sunlight on the roof.

"In their sleep, *the quotation marks fell away* from their invented names; *at half past five*, when the streets deepened and *a band of sunlight passed over the roofs*, like a gilt fillet around *a glass' rim* (while in the grubby train carrying him northward, the professor suddenly sat up on his shifted mattress and pressed his hands against his angular face), they both surfaced from their dreams as other people and felt that this time was by no means the last" (Slavnikova 20).

The fantastic phenomena start at nighttime and stop at dawn, when "a band of sunlight passed over the roofs" (20). As we already know, traditionally nighttime is believed to be the time when powers of darkness start controlling the world. There is no natural light in the apartment. The windows are tightly curtained. The lamplight is on.

"Anfilogov's apartment [...] *greeted them with the daytime gloom* of its only room, which was stacked to the ceiling with thousands of dark, inosculating volumes; from the outside, *the other side of the tightly closed curtains*, which were full of hot sunny color, a flock of pigeons was clawing hard at the metal" (Slavnikova19).



The curtained windows play the role of a boundary between the internal/closed space of the apartment and the external space of the city. They block daylight and make the room gloomy. "The room's summertime *semi-dark*, without the negative intervention of *a lamp* at the *transition from sun to night*, was amazingly pure" (19). The lamplight along with the untidiness of the room ("the cot was unmade", "an entire fortune gathering dust under the professor's cot," 82) also corresponds to the infernality of the place.

Another sign of mischief in Anfilogov's apartment is manifested by the comparison of tiny fish maws ("крошечные пасти рыб") with the offal of the scattered clothing ("с требухой разбросанной одежды). This produces an impression of Tanya and Krylov being eaten or sacrificed. Besides that, the adverbs ("будто", "словно", "видимо"), frequently used by Slavnikova in the description of this apartment, give it such qualities as illusiveness, theatricality and a sense of magic. The sacred object that produces magical "transparency" in Anfilogov's apartment is "the dull, congealed crystal of the cut glass on the desk, the size of a half-liter tin" (Slavnikova 19). Anfilogov has a whole collection of gems kept "not in display cases, like at Farid's, but in cardboard banana and cigarette cartons that buckled under the weight" (81).

"Anfilogov's collection was a cabinet of curiosities - a collection of freaks in an altered habitat. [...] Meanwhile, his freaks, preserved in deep pockets lined with soft nests of tissue paper, also had something inexpressively touching about them; *the small zones of transparency* in their stocky,

Siamese, dystrophic bodies were like their incredible souls"

(Slavnikova 82).

Besides the collection of "freaks", there is a round aquarium in the apartment, wherein Anfilogov "kept his largest stones, whose light refraction was close to the index for water [...] the aquarium served its owner as an optical safe [...] At the sight of these magnificent nesting places filled with beings whose firm mirrored or ribbed hides preserved marvelous mute zones of transparency" (97, 272). The amount of gems, the embodiment of transparency, collected in the apartment makes it the most concentric sacred zone in the city.

Krylov's path (journey) is based on the acquisition of more and more sacred concentric zones with sacred objects enclosed in them. His fate leads Krylov through these apartments and the city labyrinth, luring him into the Riphean Mountains, where the source of all transparency (as well as his death) is centered and concentrated. This is a corundum mine, whose " powerful force [and] the mysterious magnetism had kept the expedition to the bank of the corundum river" (Slavnikova 116). "*The vein demanded that the rock hounds die alive, that they burn the last calorie there was to burn in their human bodies and, emptied, remain here [...]. The obsession was so strong that time seemed to stand still*" (116).

In the novel, the protagonists merge with the sacred space into a single entity. "Корундовая местность неизвестным способом присоединила их к себе, превратила в свой биологический, природный элемент" (Славникова,

2017). [The corundum area attached them to itself in an unknown way, turned them into a biological, natural element.] The corundum mine is the place forgotten by God. For Anfilogov, "the corundum pit - more fully and clearly than those special cupolaed structures - had proved to be a place for encountering nonexistent God [...] Here he had earned the chance to leave God the loser" (Slavnikova 215). The mine is filled with water: "*вода стояла длинным зеркальным языком, и узкое дрожащее зеркальце делало дно колодца похожим на закатившийся глаз*" (Славников, 2017). [the water filled it with a long mirror tongue, and the narrow quivering mirror made the well bottom look like a rolling eye.] Evidently, water and its glassy (transparent) features reflect and predict its sacred (magical) origin. The mine functions here as a magical well, as a gate into the world of the dead and as the image of death itself. It is not surprising that there is no God in here, and that protagonists should inevitably die. This is what happened to Professor Anfilogov and later to his assistant Kolyan. "Kolyan lay at the bottom of the corundum mine, face down in the remains of the groundwater, which the pump was still trying to suck out as it jammed with sand" (Slavnikova 212).

The corundum mine is situated on the Pelma river, invented by Slavnikova. The name of the river is symbolic. The word "pelma" comes from Greek and means "the sole (of the foot)", the ground. "The word pelma is also allowed to mean not only the sole (of the foot), but also the end of anything" (Kavanagh 258). Thus, Slavnikova chooses this name for the corundum river to underline the nature of this place.

Slavnikova depicts the corundum mine as the ultimate anti-space. Hansen-Löve in her book "The Evolution of Space in Russian Literature"(1994) explains "holes are structured emptiness. The spatial concept of holes is but one step removed from the abyss, empty space in its most extreme form. The abyss means total destruction of space, it is the mainstream of chaos" (Hansen Löve 119). The corundum mine in the Riphean Mountains is closely linked with the apartments described previously in the chapter and is directly linked with the cemeteries of the funeral home "Granite" owned by Tamara, Krylov's ex-wife. All of them are evolving from life to death and represent, in the end, typical non-living and non-liveable space. It is eventless, timeless and immobile. Affected by the Stone Maiden, and as a result living in their enclosed "refuges", both Anfilogov and Krylov condemned themselves to death.

Evidently, all of these "transparent" and deadly spaces are produced by the shenanigans of the Stone Maiden or the Mistress of the Mountains. She is a mythological character in Bazhov's tales who often appears in the form of a lizard. In "2017" Slavnikova describes her as a creature that is sometimes

"hard to tell from a human. [She] can appear to a rock hound in the most ordinary guise - for instance, like the middle-aged vacationing schoolteacher stained with berries [...], or like the woman at the little train station's snack bar with the starched tower of bleached hair and puffy, yearning eyes.[...] She's no beast. She feels perfectly free to appear in the city. [...] The Stone Maiden is recognized only by whomever she has come to see. Suddenly, at the sight of a perfectly,

unremarkable woman, the rock hound's soul is strangely magnetized. [She does not] need any gem cutting skill from a man. In reality, she, like any woman, needs love, but it must be real love of that special and genuine composition whose formula no one has ever been given. [...] *Suicide over a happy love, over a fully reciprocated feeling, is not such a rarity in the Riphean capital, [...] the deceased was found with a blissful smile on his petrified lips*" (Slavnikova 33-4).

As a lizard she also appears around the city graves:

"на памятном камне, люди видели во всякий теплый день хорошенькую ящерку, на первый взгляд совсем обыкновенную – и лишь специалист, окажись он здесь, сообразил бы, что существо не относится ни к одному известному виду, и воскликнул бы «Не может быть!» при виде папоротникового узора на ее спине и крошечных ручек, словно одетых в черные перчатки" (Славникова, 2017). [ On any warm day people saw a pretty lizard on a memorial stone, at first sight it was absolutely ordinary, but only a specialist if were here could recognize such a rare kind and would exclaim: "No way!", when saw a fern pattern on its back and tiny hands in black gloves.] (My translation)

The role of the Stone Maiden in "2017" is played by Tanya (Krylov's lover), Ekaterina Sergeevna (Anfilogov's wife), and Nadya (Menshikov's beautiful stranger whom he met in a hospital). She lures them all, one by one, in a fateful

circle of their love dance and lures them through the labyrinths until they fall out of the circle into the abyss of death. This structure is strongly reflected by Matisse's "Dance", with its broken circle, alluded to in the novel's opening sentence. As soon as Anfilogov departed for the expedition to the Riphean mountains, Tanya targets Krylov. Around the time Krylov is getting ready for his expedition, his friend Menshikov "accidentally" meets a girl in an empty corridor in a hospital, who introduces herself with a random name, as she did earlier with Krylov: "Tell me, please, what's your name? - Nadia, let's say. [...] And yours? - Viktor, let's say, Menshikov responded" (Slavnikova 407). "Tanya, let's say. - You can call me Vanya. Then we'll rhyme, - Krylov proposed" (16).

#### Chapter 4: The Road and the Path in the novel.

In this chapter I will analyze the chronotope of "road" as presented in the novel. "The road" plays a significant role in the construction of the spatial organisation of the novel as it connects all of its elements together. However, it is necessary to consider that the word "road" ("дорога") in the Russian language has at least two major meanings: (1) "полоса земли, предназначенная для передвижения", and (2) "путешествие; пребывание в пути" (Ожегов). According to Lotman, in a literary work, "road" functions in two different ways:

"Дорога" - некоторый тип художественного пространства, "путь"- движение литературного персонажа в этом пространстве. "Путь" есть реализация (полная или неполная) или не-реализация "дороги" (Лотман 47).

In "2017", both "the road" ("дорога") and "the path" ("путь") are equally important for the author. Slavnikova differentiates them not only on a conceptual level but also on the lexical level, by the frequency of specific word usage in the text (the word "road" is used 16 times, while the word "path" is used 42 times).

"The road" is used to signify a particular space, usually a traffic area, where movement occurs. It is often associated with trains and cars as primary means of transportation. At the very beginning of the novel, Slavnikova places Krylov at the train station, where he asks himself a question: "What had actually held him back [go his own *road*] at that fateful *train station plaza*?" (Slavnikova 15). "Что же, собственно, не отпустило его уйти *своей дорогой* с рокового

вокзального крыльца?" (Славникова, 2017). Describing the city space, Slavnikova also refers to the railways.

"In this proletarian district that crowded *around the railroad*, he [Krylov] had tried to find a payphone that happened to be working" (327); "As they walked away from *the railroad*, they [Krylov and the spy] saw *a freight train* crawling out around the bend, as endless as the Great Wall of China" (322); "Due to a concatenation of events that seemed quite accidental, they left for *the rail and bus station*, man after man, and woke up with a start in an unfamiliar land" (Slavnikova 278).

"The road" is also the place of entertainment, car accidents and momentous changes.

"The grown-ups [...] scheduled crazy *rallies over forest roads*, which were nothing but rawsteepness with boulders hutting out" (67); "When his father [Krylov's] drank his boss' whiskey and drove *the Mercedes* into a silly but solid billboard [...] his boss had half his skull ripped off [...]. The accident was the fault of *a Moskvich* that was never found and that skidded and clipped a line of cars (there were plenty of reckless drivers among ordinary engineers driving *rusty old wrecks*)" (Slavnikova 70).

As we see from the last example, with the help of "the road" Slavnikova also demonstrates existing social inequalities in Russia: the hierarchy of social classes, the conflicting relationship between their representatives, their negligence to each other and to people of other nationalities. On the way to the train station, for



example, Krylov, a young middle class gem cutter, meets a lot of Asian unemployed immigrants in the underground tunnel. Slavnikova depicts this tunnel as a place of imposed social interactions.

"[There was] a dank tunnel occupied by a camp of *Asian beggars*" (10);  
Krylov managed to shake off a nine-year old *Asian child* hanging onto his companion, a wretch with lustful male eyes whose sticky paw had already nearly crept into the stranger's defenseless bag" (Slavnikova 13);  
"Крылову [были] *отвратительны* эти кучи прогорклого атласного тряпья, откуда тянулись *туземные руки*" (Славникова). [The piles of rancid satin rags stretched from *native hands* were disgusting to Krylov.]  
(My translation)

Another example, that vividly demonstrates the class division and social inequality connected and disclosed by the road, is when Tamara stops in her Porsche and disdainfully dismisses a homeless person.

"Tamara's Porsche, a new lady's model with swan outlines on its silver chassis and long door-wings, was shining coldly on a scrap of asphalt melted by the sun to the softness of bilberry jam. A young homeless woman wearing a rotten pink dress, and a filthy, vegetable-orange jacket, was applying makeup ton her bloated eyelashes in front of the rearview mirror. -Not again, said Tamara with a sigh, getting out her laser key. - Why do these train wrecks ("*синявочки*") like putting on their makeup in front of my car so much?" (Slavnikova 148).

The mirrored towers of the Economic Center, in which clouds were reflected like movies in giant plasma screens (183), are contrasted to little markets, where elderly women offer their goods" (38), [similar to the dappled, immediately faded garbage [...] it reminded of a refugee camp, forced migrants from the destroyed past.]<sup>6</sup> (My translation)

Also, while travelling around the city by randomly choosing the places for their dates on a city map, Krylov and Tanya first see "a brand-new private home ["свежестроенный особняк"] behind a lattice fence on a burning hot, bare lot, like an elephant in an open -air cage at the zoo" (39). Later on they find themselves on

"a rural street, or rather, what was left of a street, which ended in a huge foundation pit [next to] a dirty pink barracks with two mismatched porches- was barely clinging to the brick, where the soil had already rolled back like a droopy, worn-out mattress. Behind the long, accordion fence, which was black with damp, a wet dog panted and rattled its chain; and

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<sup>6</sup> The whole paragraph reads: "Вокруг машиностроительных гигантов ветшали спальные районы с жилыми башнями, словно собранными кое-как из плит и битого стекла, оставшихся от других, разрушенных домов; на деревьях под ними болтались молочные пакеты, выбеленные тряпки, лиловели на просвет чернильными разводами бывшие штаны. Лица обитателей районов были некрасивы, их скулы, казалось, были изъедены ржавчиной. Возле сырых, как туалеты, станций метро, вдоль заборов, просто на голой земле тянулись стихийные рынки: пожилые женщины предлагали товары, мало чем отличавшиеся от пестревшего тут же линялого мусора. Более всего здесь было разрозненных хрустальных рюмок, стоявших в строю как солдаты побитого войска, и поношенных детских вещичек – ярких, клочковатых, словно сшитых из шкур игрушечных мишек и собак. То и дело взгляд Крылова наткнулся на что-то поразительно знакомое: из детства, из родительской квартиры. Все это напоминало лагерь беженцев – вынужденных эмигрантов из разрушенного прошлого. Заводы, впрочем, были живы: в половине седьмого от проходных, куда втекала густеющим потоком вторая смена, доносились хриплые марши, пытавшиеся создавать впечатление, будто инструментами служат заводские трубы, домны, прокатные станы – весь строй механизмов славного рабочего труда" (Славникова, 2017).

from the dilapidated window nearest Ivan, an ill-pleased female face kept an eye on him" (Slavnikova 39).

For Slavnikova, "the road" becomes the point of intersection of paths and the fates of various people, who could never meet under any other circumstances. As a result of this intersection and inevitable interference, people's paths change and lead to new significant events in their lives, such as new friendships, divorce or even death.

At the beginning of the novel Krylov meets Tanya at the train station. As we already know, this meeting turns out to be life-changing for him. As the Stone Maiden, Tanya brings Krylov to the Riphean Mountains where he presumably dies, repeating the fate of professor Anfilogov. On the same road Krylov notices the spy who chases the lovers throughout the novel. With the help of the video the spy recorded on his phone (which Krylov got after the spy died in their next chase), he manages to find Tanya's apartment (the last sacred place). On "the road", Krylov also meets Dronov, a software developer, who in the end becomes his close friend and plays a crucial role in Krylov's preparation for the expedition to the Riphean Mountains.

It is evident that Slavnikova's construction of the the road chronotope reflects Bachtin's theory of "the road", presented in his book "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" (1975).

"Дорога" — преимущественное *место случайных встреч*. На дороге *пересекаются* в одной временной и пространственной точке

пространственные и временные пути многообразнейших людей - *представителей всех сословий, состояний, вероисповеданий, национальностей, возрастов*. Здесь могут случайно встретиться те, кто нормально разъединен социальной иерархией и пространственной далью, здесь могут возникнуть любые контрасты, столкнуться и *переплестись различные судьбы*. Здесь своеобразно сочетаются пространственные и временные ряды человеческих судеб и жизней, осложняясь и конкретизируясь *социальными дистанциями*, которые здесь *преодолеваются*. Это *точка завязывания и место совершения событий*. Здесь время как бы вливается в пространство и течет по нему (образуя дороги) [...]" (Бахтин 1975).

Furthermore, besides being the place where people's fates intersect and major events occur, Slavnikova's "road" functions as a typical transitional space. It goes through the labyrinths of the city and the Riphean Mountains, connecting the sacred spaces, located along the road like beads on a necklace. Each character chooses their own "path" in order to pass this road, to explore the sacred places and to obtain their sacred objects (gems).

In "2017", Krylov's path corresponds to Propp's model of the hero's journey in fairy-tales. The departure point in the novel ("исходная ситуация") is the train station. There, as in a fairy-tale, before starting the journey Krylov listens to the instructions of an older person, his Professor Anfilogov:

"If you would be so kind, then, be ready to work in mid-September, - he addressed Krylov, shifting to that dry, staccato tone that had won him a bad name among easily wounded university bosses. "Buy the rest of the equipment. You can spend all the money. We'll make up for it with interest" (Slavnikova 11).

In addition to the instructions to buy new gem cutting equipment for the workshop, Professor Anfilogov asks Krylov to look after his apartment and feed the fish. "Krylov [was] supposed to feed the unfinicky, nickeled fish [in] two days" (18). "Without waiting around for any more instructions or parting words, Krylov quickly climbed down from the car" (12).

According to Propp, the beginning of the plot development ("сказочная завязка") is usually associated with some kind of trouble. It may be a violation of the instructions given to the main character or the character leaving the house. In "2017", Krylov did both. First of all, instead of feeding the fish and buying the equipment as the professor instructed, Krylov starts an affair with the Professor's wife and spends all the money on her by buying presents, booking hotels, and dining out. "As he pulled another hundred out of Anfilogov's packet, Krylov tried not to test the envelope's thickness; nonetheless, there came a moment when just a few bills were left from the fat wad, not enough now even for his splitting machine"(Slavnikova 50). The instructions given by Professor Anfilogov may be interpreted as a charade, which Krylov unravels only at the end of the novel. As we know later in the novel, the aquarium with fish turns out to be the container of gems, sacred objects.

Secondly, Krylov leaves the compartment (and the train in general) after Anfilogov gives Krylov the instructions there. In the novel, the compartment functions not as "home" (enclosed space) but rather as Baba Yaga's hut. According to Propp, Baba Yaga's hut stands on the border between the world of the living and the magical world; the world of the dead. It is the ultimate transitional space. In order to reach the underworld, a hero needs to turn the hut (it does not have windows or doors on one side, and has an entrance on the other) and walk through it ("зайти и выйти"). Similarly, Krylov enters Anfilogov's compartment, and then leaves it for the "forest" of the city, but not the same one - the forest (the city) in its underworld variation, the labyrinth which he will need to pass. The fact that Krylov and Tanya belong to different "sides" of the borderline is supported by Slavnikova's own words: "In no case were they to look for each other in the real world because that would mean *coming at it from the wrong side*" (Slavnikova 20). The author deliberately italicizes this phrase in the text to underline its importance, it is one of the hints she gives to the reader.

It is necessary to note that Professor Anfilogov is associated here with Baba Yaga, a deceased ancestor. Slavnikova describes him as having a blue face, as if he were already dead. "На лице Анфилогова, лежавшего на голой полке прямо в своей брезентовой одежде, проступил такой же синеватый холод"(Славникова, 2017). [On the face of Anfilogov, lying on the bare shelf right in his canvas clothes, the same bluish cold appeared.] Krylov leaves the hut with a magical helper (Tanya).

"From time to time Krylov stole a peek at the woman through the dirty window mottled with the dried traces of either Chelyabinsk or Perm rain, like bird droppings. Once in a while the train shuddered [...] In fact the train was still waiting. The professor tapped his nails on the thick glass, looking out at the stranger, who ran up at his signal. Standing on tiptoe, she pressed her long, precisely delineated palm to the window. Anfilogov put his own there in response, and Krylov was amazed at how similar these hands were: there was something Latinate in their lifelines and a wonderful elegance to their finger bones. Without waiting around [...], Krylov quickly climbed down from the car. he was definitely in a bad way ["не в себе"]" (Slavnikova 12).

Moreover, Baba Yaga's hut is traditionally portrayed as a living creature on chicken legs ("избушка на курьих ножках"). In "2017", the train is also presented as a creature. It reminds one of a pangolin.

"At last he heard a low, ragged whistle, and the top of the locomotive pulling its train cars came into view, getting bigger and bigger, until it filled one of the long voids of perspective, [*the head* of the locomotive]. The train *swooped in*, its brakes *hissed* [...] Once in a while the train shuddered, and a gasping spasm rolled from *its head to its distant tail*" (Slavnikova 11, 12).

“Наконец послышался низкий мохнатый гудок: вдали показалась и стала расти, целиком заполняя собою и своими вагонами одну из

длинных строительных пустот перспективы, *башка* тепловоза. Поезд *налетел*, классически вспугнув побежавшую газету, *зашилел* тормозами, [...]. Временами поезд *содрогался*, ахающая судорога прокатывалась от *головой к далекому хвосту*" (Славникова, 2017).

It is not accidental that the train station is the starting point of Krylov's journey. In the novel the train station itself along with the pedestrian bridge, the tunnel and the trains, are perfect embodiments of the "crossing" ("переправы") - the border between the world of the living and the world of the dead. It becomes evident that Krylov's movement is directed from the city (the world of living) to the "other" world (first to the labyrinth of the city and then the Riphean Mountains) through the tunnel. In order to reach his destination, Krylov, just like a fairy-tale hero, has to cross this boundary. In order to emphasize the symbolic function of the train station as a transit zone, Slavnikova piles these synonymous elements ("вокзал", "мост", "туннель") one on another. It is also important to note that Krylov starts and finishes his journey at the train station, because this is the only place in the city that is both the entrance into the labyrinth of the city and the Riphean Mountains, and the way out of them. "There was only one exit - that same tunnel" (Slavnikova13).

In the novel, the train station, tunnel and the pedestrian bridge have common features. They are dark, gray, dusty and shadowed. Across the plaza, in front of the station, there was a "gray tower with the square clock" (9). "Krylov imagined the *shadowy cars* had rustled a little, and the sunny sliver spilled over



and, uncontainable now, streamed out" (12). The gray color is also expressed through *mud and dust* at the station.

"From time to time Krylov stole a peek at the woman through the *dirty window* mottled with the dried traces of either Chelyabinsk or Perm rain, like bird droppings" (12). "Kolyan [...] was trying to *smoke*, and *smoke* was pouring out his covered mouth like from a *damp stove*"(10).

Everything there seems old, worn out and untidy. Even "the arrival and departure board, [...] where, at irregular intervals, lines that had outlived their usefulness crackled to pieces, [was] half *erased* by the sun"(9). Krylov was "running his worn shoes over the crumbling steps [...]" (Slavnikova13).

These places are also *full of noise* and chant: "*the hubbub* of the platform" (11). The hum of people's talks is accompanied by the "low, ragged *whistle*" of the locomotive and its hissing brakes (11), which came into Krylov's view and "filled one of the long *voids of perspective*" (11), as opposed to the plenum of the train station. "Right then on the station plaza a brass band, the likes of which had never been seen before, struck up a tune" (13). They are *cold* and *nasty*. The tunnel was also dark and cold: "a *dank* tunnel occupied by a camp of Asian beggars who [...] set out what looked like boxes of chewing gum [...] (professionally sensing precisely where the *roof leaked*)" (10). *There is no direct light* in here. This place is *shadowed*. In the train they were "dragging it [the baggage] down the *sun-stripped corridor* [and] between the *shadowy train cars*

[there was] a slanting silver of sun, like a rifle with a blindingly bright bayonet [...]" (Slavnikova12).

As we already know, according to Propp's theory, a folklore hero usually meets a helper ("волшебный помощник"/ "даритель") on his way through a border. In the novel, at the train station Krylov meets Tanya, who throughout the novel, leads him through the city labyrinth by the invisible thread connecting them. This thread may be interpreted differently in the novel. It is associated with Anfilogov's camel hair sweater, which Krylov brought as a replacement for the other one, irreparably damaged by moths, and which had mysteriously disappeared right after Krylov left the train station with Tanya. This sweater represents an unwound ball of yarn/thread. Anfilogov's old sweater was worn out, and he did not receive a new one – so he lost a connection/thread with the helper. Such a loss foreshadows the Professor's death. After Anfilogov's departure, Krylov stays with the new sweater that shortly disappears at the platform - symbolically he acquires a connecting thread and a magical helper as if it were a baton.

"Stuck dumb, Krylov, who heard only the sound of his own plugged-up brain, took the stranger's elbow and tried to smile. The woman freed herself with a gentle shrug, and without looking at the band or the rank, set off quietly in the opposite direction, *as if testing the strength of the invisible thread that connected her to Krylov*. Where she was heading, everything looked brighter and better than in the other three corners of the world: [...]. Afraid that if he didn't start after her immediately *the woman*

*would simply unwind him, like a spool of thread, down to some naked core, Krylov hurried in her wake" (Slavnikova 14).*

Thus, Krylov's journey through the city labyrinth begins with an allusion to a connecting thread. The end of the novel brings him to his mother's apartment, a day before his departure for the mountains. Here the thread and the analogue of the sweater damaged by moths appear again.

"What are you laughing at?" His mother sat down at the table, *took her knotty crocheting out of her pocket and from the other pocket, which bulged with a ball of something, pulled a smooth thread.* "And you're going to Novosibirsk in such troubled times? Is it something profitable?" "Yes, Mama, very profitable!" Krylov assured her earnestly. Right then he realized he hadn't lied but had told her the God's honest truth. And in a way *this spoken truth let him feel that he might even return.* His mother's toothless, dropsical face smiled almost like a baby's, and it occurred to Krylov that she had in fact performed the main purpose of an adult's son's mother: *on the threshold of the unknown, she had made him believe he would come home.* "All right, then so be it," his mother said, gravely straightening *her holey shawl* on her shoulder. "Go" (Slavnikova 410).

From this example it is evident, that Krylov is likely to repeat Professor Anfilogov's fate. At the moment of the conversation with his mother, Krylov has already lost his thread (the ragged shawl) and his helper (Tanya is not the Stone Maiden anymore). Nevertheless, his mother took out a new ball of yarn from her

pocket and started to knit, which metaphorically expresses Krylov's hope of coming back. This example also points to the thread's inverse function - bringing a character back. But I don't think it is likely to happen as I will try to prove later in this chapter.

Each character in the novel receives an individual magical object from their helper (the Stone Maiden), which performs the function of a thread connecting them. For example, Tanya gives Krylov "a bundle of mysterious keys", which by the end of his path, helped Krylov to open the doors to the last sacred place - Anfilogov's second apartment (Tanya's temporary inhabitation after Anfilogov died). "What Tanya held out to Ivan across her plate [...] turned out to be a ring of keys [...] -"The keys to my apartment, " Tanya explained oofhandedly [...] -"Well, you know, just in case. Think of them as a souvenir" (Slavnikova 48). Ekaterina Sergeevna gives Anfilogov her handkerchief with its printed "forget-me-not" ("набивные незабудки"), which also served as a guiding thread through the labyrinth. Shortly before he died in the expedition, Professor Anfilogov found one of these handkerchiefs in a clay wall of the mine:

"Анфилогов заметил сбоку некую смутно знакомую складку. Брезгливо подхватив предмет сложенной вдвое запасной рукавицей, профессор спустился к реке. Там он прополоскал вещицу, первоначально похожую на складку земляного жира. Это оказался, как Анфилогов и предчувствовал, женский носовой платок: на серой ткани, как сквозь сон, проступили едва живой голубоватостью безусловно знакомые профессору набивные незабудки. Точно такие

платки были у Екатерины Сергеевны: купленные дешево целой упаковкой –[...], – они болтались во всех ее не очень опрятных карманах и сумках" (Славникова, 2017).

[Laterally Anfilogov noticed a vaguely familiar pleat. With a disgust, he picked up the object folded twice by a spare glove and went down to the river. There he rinsed the thing, which first looked like a lump of peanut butter. As Anfilogov anticipated, it turned out to be a female handkerchief: on the gray fabric like through a dream, familiar to professor printed bluish forget-me-nots stood out. Ekaterina Sergeevna had exactly the same handkerchiefs, bought cheaply in a whole package - [...] - they were hanging out in all of her not very neat pockets and bags.] (My translation)

All of the characters seem to share one uniting object - a map. A city map leads Krylov through the contrasting spaces in the city (remember mansions and barracks, an expensive city center and shabby lanes and alleys), inhabited by people of different social status. Thus, the use of a map connects the spy ("соглядатай"), who has a city map but hardly uses it, to Krylov. They seem to move together in one direction, but in fact they are moving in different planes of the same space: the real and fantastic, the world and underworld. As was mentioned above, Krylov is already in the "other" world, while the spy is in real space (since he didn't cross the border). Slavnikova conveys this idea through the description of two symmetrical hotel rooms, one occupied by the lovers and the other by the spying man.

"Эти стандартные номера [...] были *дьявольски симметричны*, тонкие стенки между ними служили как бы *двусторонними закрашенными зеркалами* – и в миг предельного мужского одиночества [Крылова], этот закудахтавший шпион, тоже одинокий на параллельном гостиничном матрасике, был *зазеркальным Крыловым*, его глухой невидимой частицей, его не докричавшейся до разума внутренней истиной" (Славникова).

[These standard rooms [...] were devilishly symmetrical, thin walls between them were like bilateral shaded mirrors - and at the moment of ultimate [Krylov's] male loneliness, this cackled spy, also lonely on the parallel little hotel mattress, was Krylov in Through the Looking Glass, his deaf invisible particle, his inner truth, which had not reached his consciousness.] (My translation)

In course of time, Krylov started to recognize the spy's car. He saw it very often parked in the alley. "Sometimes the car looked as if it had been abandoned for *several weeks* at least. [As if affirming the unreality of sleepy space], the weightless and tenacious shadows of rapacious crows roamed over its warmed hood" (Slavnikova 124). "Иногда [ему] казалось, что автомобиль стоит брошенным по меньшей мере *несколько недель*; как бы подтверждая *нереальность сонного пространства*, по его нагретой крыше разгуливали невесомыми и цепкими тенями хищные вороны" (Славникова, 2017).

As we can see from this example, in Krylov's "other side", space acquires the quality of somnolence and irreality, and time strongly decelerates. In the novel, we never see the spy driving his car. He always walks after Krylov and Tanya. Thus, in contrast to the chronotope of "the road" which is associated with vehicles, "the path" is taken on foot. For example, speaking about Krylov's shoes, Slavnikova notes that they were extremely worn because of long wandering around the city.

"The field tests of fate that had made Krylov's *boots fall to pieces like old bark- his second pair [...]. His dead footwear, which had literally been gnawed by the earth's teeth, [should be thrown out]. [...] Holding his calloused flat shoes that less than in a week was impossible to put on and return the shape of feet to it], Ivan realized that this his only material evidence of the intangible that had come to him at mid-life.[...] In essence, all he had were these lousy boots"(Slavnikova 126)<sup>7</sup>.*

In the same paragraph, Slavnikova explains why walking on foot is so significant.

"The journey he had taken hand in hand with this woman was, in his case, a literally physical journey across the Riphean land, whose look and composition made it unlike any other land on earth. No matter how built

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<sup>7</sup> In the translation the sentences are broken: the beginning of one sentence is connected to the second part of another sentence, and vice versa. " *Убитую обувь, буквально погрызенную зубами земли, следовало выбросить на помойку, но Крылов никак не мог решиться. [...] Держа в руках заскорузлую плоскую обувь, которую, не поносив неделю, уже нельзя было надеть и вернуть ей форму ноги, Иван понимал, что это и есть единственный вещдок того нематериального, что постигло его в середине жизни. [...] По сути, у него только и имелось, что эти драные ботинки" (Славникова, 2017).*

up or paved over the Riphean land was, *its crumbled stone teeth and the profound cold of its native rock could be felt through any sole. The land got to your nerves*; over dry land it penetrated footwear like dampness. Here and there, under the burdock or concrete, you could catch a glimpse of its characteristic, almost pickled colors with its impregnations of quartz and granite, *like an element in a reptile's pattern*" (Slavnikova 127).

As in fairy-tales, walking his path Krylov has to overcome different obstacles.

"The city, however, created its own obstacles on Krylov's route: the sudden cancellation of transport routes, traffic jams that moved from light to light like mercury in a giant thermometer"(44); "Ivan, wrapping his arms around her delicate ribs, would take little hops with her at the mighty speed bumps [on polygonal and hard road obstacles]" (Slavnikova 46).

"Иван, обхватив ее [Танины] тонкие ребрышки, вместе с нею припрыгивал на *многоугольных и крепких дорожных препятствиях*"(Славникова, 2017). [Ivan, embraced her thin ribs, bounced on polygonal and hard road obstacles with her.] (My translation)

Krylov also has to search for unknown places chosen for his dates with Tanya, to fight young hooligans, to chase the spy, to survive a terrorist attack on the anniversary day of the Great October Revolution, and to overcome many other challenges. In other words, the labyrinth purposefully creates obstacles for Krylov in order to test his ability to escape death, in order to help the *hitnik* to reach the



end point, located in the mine in the Riphean mountains. Indeed, after Krylov met Tanya he realised that now nothing can be turned back. He was thinking:

"Later, faced (fated?) with this experiment on himself, Krylov tried to figure out what had actually held him back at that fateful train station plaza?"(14). "Каждый раз они испытывали друг друга – но не столько друг друга: оба понимали, что слабы перед обстоятельствами и их стремления на самом деле очень мало значат. Они *испытывали судьбу*" (Славникова). [Each time they tested each other - but not each other: they both understood that they are weak under the circumstances and their ambitions do not mean much. *They tested fate.*] (My translation)

Slavnikova also finishes her novel (when Krylov and Farid are walking to the train station to begin their second path) with the following words about fate:

"In the dense crowd no one paid any attention to the two men - the dry old Tatar and the other, younger, *with a stony mouth* and a pointed hood pulled right over his eyes - who were striding evenly under enormous, well-packed backpacks. *Destiny was seeing them off*, stepping across the snow barefoot. It safeguarded them from an encounter with the drunken Cossack patrol that was firing their long -nosed Mausers at ravens and citizens and quickly *dragged them* through an intersection where a Young Communist blew up an army truck with a grenade five minutes later. [...] They reached their destination safely" (Slavnikova 414).

Krylov's stony mouth in this example hearkens back to the beginning of the novel, where Anfilogov has a stony expression of the face at the train station, and Kolyan's stony smile, when he died in the mine ("his workmate had died [...] with that apologetic smile, which had petrified quickly"), and other dead *hitniki* with blissful smiles on petrified lips ("with a blissful smile on the petrified lips"). This petrification of Krylov means that he is doomed; he is turning into one of the dead from the underworld where he has spent so much time already.

So Krylov's fate is defined. It carries him over all of the obstacles and brings him to his fateful target in the Riphean Mountains. Nobody walks him to the train station; there is no hope for his survival. Therefore, under the control of fate and with Tanya's help, Krylov's journey along the city labyrinth finishes at first in the apartment of Krylov's childhood, and then at the train station, after he had accomplished his journey through all the concentric, transparent (sacred) spaces therein.

Krylov's last expedition is not described in the novel. To analyze a journey in the Riphean mountains I have to refer to the journey of Professor Anfilogov. Due to the similarity to the *hitniki's* destiny analysed in the previous chapter, we may assume that both would have had similar experiences. On the way to the Riphean Mountains, Anfilogov entered the expanses of forest and mountain wilderness ("лесной и горной глухомани"), hoping to find gems there (36). The first obstacle that Anfilogov faced on his way is the forest itself. According to Propp, it plays the role of a major obstacle on the hero's way to the sacred object, and it is inhabited by mystical creatures like Baba-Yaga or Wood Goblin

("леший"), who prevent or sometimes help the hero in exchange for something they need (the Stone Maiden needs love). In "2017", these creatures are the Stone Maiden, the Great Snake, Goldilocks ("Златовласка") and Silver Hoof (the ancient deer with silver hooves, the oldest of the Mountain Spirits) (Slavnikova 164). At the beginning of his expedition, Professor Anfilogov feels that some twilight ghosts are coming from the forest, surrounding him behind his back (Slavnikova). Anfilogov thought,

"There was an ulterior motive to all this, and it had to do with the Mistress of the Mountain. The forest where the specter had gone this morning had plunged into the damp whiteness, and the trees close by were distinct, but the ones that came after them looked like their unfilled -in shadows on a white wall" (Slavnikova 117).

As soon as Anfilogov enters the forest, various mystical things start happening to him.

"The mountain spirits were making their presence known. The rock hounds had not been able to eat a hot meal or dry their socks for a week. Each time, the diligent Kolyan, [lighted a fire], a pale fire shot up from below like from a rocket nozzle- and the water in the pot, which had just come to a boil, was instantly transformed into a spongy ice that looked like a piece of the moon. [...] According to Anfilogov's calculations, the temperature inside the phenomenon was approximately seventy degrees below zero" (Slavnikova 193).

They also see a hair of Goldilocks on the trees, which is believed to turn into a snake, and those who see its eyes immediately turn into golden statues themselves." A few times the prospectors removed from branches and rough cliff ledges a vibrant, sharp thread - a hair from Goldenhair, the Great Snake's daughter, a woman three meters tall with an eyeless head wreathed in liquid gold who was capable of turning into a powerfully magnetized underwater snake" (Slavnikova 273).

Having overcome the obstacles, Anfilogov (and potentially Krylov) come to the Pelma river, where the corundum mine is located. The corundum mine, as we already know, is the sacred center of the Riphean Mountains, the intersection of the two worlds. Here Anfilogov and his assistant Kolyan disappear and die. The phenomenon of disappearance was mentioned in the previous chapter, where I analyzed the internal/sacred spaces of the apartments. It becomes evident that both the city and the Riphean Mountains have similar transit zones associated with the Stone Maiden, which people fail to pass. Instead they seem to fall through them into the other world. After this, they disappear for a long period of time and only afterwards appear as ghosts in their own apartments (like Anfilogov): "Опытные менты, изучившие почерк подобных исчезновений, называли эту зону *почтовым квадратом*" (Славникова). [Experienced cops, who have studied the handwriting of such disappearance, called this zone *the mailbox*.] (My translation)

Such a name comes from the circumstance under which their bodies are usually found:

"Любовник Каменной Девки *исчезал куда-то* вместе со своей подругой, не взяв ничего из вещей, *выложив деньги* – бывало, что и перехваченные резинкой толстые доллары, – *ровно на то заметное место, где лежало бы, покончи он с собой, последнее письмо*"

(Славникова). [The Stone Maiden's lover disappeared somewhere together with his girlfriend, taking none of his things, put the money out- sometimes thick dollars were tied by a rubber band, - on a noticeable place, where the last letter, if he committed a suicide, would be.] (My translation)

However, their bodies "with a blissful smile on their petrified lips - the mouth literally turned into a mineral, into a hard stone flower" could be found in a different place. As we remember, just before the expedition, Krylov visits his mother in their old apartment. He also brings a fatal envelope with money with him.

"Krylov looked around, trying to decide where to put *the envelope of money* so it didn't drown. [...] Then Krylov cleared off a corner of his ink-scratched desk; *there the white envelope stood out distinctly and could be seen right from the door*. When he turned around, the layout of the place was drawn in his mind with uncommon clarity: *the desk was the "mailbox"* (Slavnikova 410).

In the city there are several transitional zones, through which people may pass (disappear for everybody else) into the "other" world. In other cases the transitional zone is the mystical/magical space of the mountains, where "magic" is

defined by the high concentration of precious stones. At the same time, these transitional zones allow the transparency and emptiness associated with gems and certainly with the Stone Maiden (a lizard) to pervade the city. Here, the characters gain what they are seeking – and then die.

The first transitional zone is the train station. As mentioned, in the novel the train station functions as a gate in both directions: out into the mountains and back for the *hitniki* and also for the emptiness coming back into the city. Thus, Margarita Alekseeva in her article "The Object, not Intended for Mastering: Spatial Model of the World in Olga Slavnikova's novel 2017" ["Объект, к освоению не предназначенный: пространственная модель мира в романе О.А.Славниковой "2017"], published in the anthology "Literature of the Urals: History and Modernity" (2008), states that at first it seems that the space [at the train station] is overfilled but soon *the emptiness* starts to slow through (Alekseeva). Slavnikova also mentions the void at the train station: "The train hadn't pulled in yet, and the open expanse of *rails and cables was empty*, like a drawing lesson in perspective" (Slavnikova 10). Later she adds: "The day [at the train station] is gaining a full range of *sinister celestial emptiness*" (17). The emptiness and the transparency are the properties of the sacred space by which Krylov is strongly magnetized. "Later, faced (fated?) with this experiment on himself, Krylov tried to figure out *what had actually held him back at that fateful train station plaza* [...]. The reason probably lay in the social excitement, the alteration of his destiny that awaited Krylov in the event of the expedition's success" (Slavnikova 15, 16).

Apartments are another way through which emptiness enters the city. For example, entering his secret apartment Krylov disappears from outside life and shifts to a magical/invisible reality, full of emptiness. The significant feature of the apartments is that they are full of non-existing mirrors, which presence Krylov could feel. "A few times he thought the apartment did have a mirror after all" (Slavnikova 182). Mirrors make the apartment a very active space, which, as Alekseeva states, "generates phantoms or the doubles of their owners". For example, in Anfilogov's apartment Krylov sees an apparition of the host. This signifies another feature of the magical space: it shows only the reflections of its reality, but it never lets anybody reach it (a character must first go through the labyrinth of the city, and only then can he break out of it through one of its transitional zones).

As Slavnikova notes in the novel, the whole city is surrounded by different mirrored surfaces: lakes and rivers in the mountains, clouds, dusty mist around the Toadstool, glass windows of the city center and others. Maria Litovskaya, Doctor of Philology at Ural University, in her article "The Theme of the City as a Self-justification of a Biographical Author in Contemporary Fiction of the Urals" (2008) ["Тема города как самооправдания биографического автора в современной прозе Урала"], notes the importance of mirror and water surfaces in Slavnikova's work and states that they "reflect the phantom of reality" (Litovskaya). Thus, in the novel Slavnikova portrays the "flashy city centre" as another illusion of the invisible for the Ripheans and the much desired magical world:

"It was impossible to understand whether one was standing in a display window, in a shopping arcade, or under the open sky; only the puddles on the rose-colored tiles and wet strip of washed-out grass made Krylov feel that he had not yet been sucked into the transparent aquariums where people apparently moved through walls. For the first time in his life transparency felt hostile" (Slavnikova 413).

After Krylov "smashes his aunt's vase into shards", and after Anfilogov, another embodiment of transparency for Krylov, dies as "a victim of cyanide poisoning after discovering a lode of valuable stones in the mountains", and after Tanya, the Stone Maiden, leaves him, Krylov realizes that searching for this invisible reality (the only existing truth) is a risky business. It is "easier to desire [it] than to achieve" (Sutcliffe 3).

Therefore, the major transitional spaces in the novel related to Krylov are the train station and the apartments, and each in one or another way is linked to gems. Besides them, Slavnikova potentially identifies other transitional zones, which are not directly related to gems (and to the major narrative of the novel), but are also associated with emptiness and transparency. One of them is an unfinished, half-destroyed TV tower:

"The bluish Toadstool ("Поганка") that looms over the city [is] the largest of those irrational phenomena that seemed to have come about purely to arouse the Ripheans' principal instinct, which you might say was the instinct to climb something just because it was there, to conquer what you



weren't supposed to, or, even better, were forbidden to. [...] The Toadstool was their cult, [...] it was an ant trail to heaven" (Slavnikova 69).

As Alekseeva noticed, this tower symbolizes people's spiritual aspiration to *the vertical* in the novel (Алексеева 214). It gives them the feeling of delight, dissolution in the emptiness, when they are close to it. "Only on the border between death and life (when they get to the top to jump off) citizens realize the reality of their being", from which they want to escape (Slavnikova 215). The Toadstool becomes a ladder to nonexistence, to the emptiness of the invisible reality. The Toadstool in "2017" resembles the Tower of Babel, which was built by people in order to reach Heaven. It is known from the story (told in the "Book of Genesis" of the Bible) that the people's work on the Tower put God into a rage and the Tower of Babel was destroyed. Similarly, in the novel the Toadstool was "transformed into a neat pile of dust, like a candle that had burned down very quickly, plunging, halfway to the ground, into rising clouds of solid ash" (69), and the city was abandoned by God. The Toadstool turned into another phantom, the mediator between the two worlds:

"Even when the cumulus dust, thinning and translucent, rose to almost the full height of the vanished tower, the lambency didn't disappear; the dusty specter of a fatter Toadstool lingered in the air for days [...]. Even afterward, whenever the dust came up, it was like a faint impression being powered in the air, or if the sun came out from behind a cloud at an unusual angle, the tower became visible" (Slavnikova 70).

Slavnikova further notes "Even when the cumulus dust, thinning and translucent, rose to almost the full height of the vanished tower, the lambency didn't disappear; the dusty specter of a fatter Toadstool lingered in the air for days [...]. Even afterward, whenever the dust came up, it was like a faint impression being powered in the air, or if the sun came out from behind a cloud at an unusual angle, the tower became visible" (70).

Alekseeva further notes in her article that the city in the novel "2017" is a city without God indeed, which explains not only the ghost of the Toadstool tower but also why "the phantasmagoric project "Dome" ("Купол"), or the cemetery of the future", had been started there, and why the bloody revolution had broken out. Tamara's project "Dome" is not simply a cooperative cemetery. As she explains herself,

"[это] некрополь нового типа, оснащенный крио-техникой последнего поколения, снабженный всем необходимым - подъездной дорогой, паркингом, зоной отдыха для родственников и туристов, включая игровую комнату для маленьких детей. Но главная задача "Купола" - воплотить новую философию свободы и позитивности" (Славникова, 2017). [This is a necropolis of a new type, equipped with the technology of the latest generation, equipped with everything you need: access road, parking, seating area for families and tourists, including a play room for children. But the main goal of "Dome" is to bring a new philosophy of freedom and positivity.] (My translation)

Tamara wanted to change the whole format of the funeral ritual in order to make it less depressing for those who lost their relatives and friends. For example, in her funeral bureau she practiced playing the lottery and giving tickets for a short trip or for household appliances as presents to the bereaved. This all seemed scandalous for the conservative Riphean citizens. Thus, "Dome" is another transitional zone separating the past from the future, the land of the living from the land of the dead. "The plowed earth pulls as scary as it could pull the depths of the sea or mountain chasm" (Slavnikova 294).

It is interesting to note that the city itself becomes "ghostly" in the novel, along with its transitional zones connecting it with invisible mystical reality and mirror surfaces reflecting it, with the phantoms of dead *hitniki* and the ghost of the Toadstool and with the phantasmagoric project "Dome". The roots of the city's phantasmagoric nature lie in its history. Slavnikova, in her article "Upper and Lower Landscapes of Yekaterinburg", explains:

"Поскольку Урал - классическое место ссылки, то в этом смысле наше место *потустороннее*. Чувство *собственного исчезновения* свойственно как горожанам, так и самой столице Урала: это такое местное заболевание, осложнение после исторической золотой лихорадки" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

This phenomenon Slavnikova explains by the dualistic nature of the city, where Sverdlovsk (the concrete city) coexists with Yekaterinburg (the

invisible/transparent city). As we know from the history of the Ural capital, Yekaterinburg until 1991 was named Sverdlovsk, after the Bolshevik party leader Yakov Sverdlov. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the city regained its pre-revolutionary name of Yekaterinburg, given after Catherine the First in 1723.

Slavnikova in her article "Upper and Lower Landscapes of Yekaterinburg" says that, for her, this city is a "metropolis-spectre".

"Прежний Екатеринбург никакого Свердловска в себе не содержал и такой программы развития не имел. Новое, еще и не существующее, только-только обозначенное на местности разрытой под стройку землей, поглотило худо-бедно обжитый городок, - получается, что изначальный *Екатеринбург был поглощен пустотой*, помысленным будущим, как поглощается мегаполисом ближняя деревня. Только в нашем случае это *оказался мегаполис-призрак*, мегаполис-утопия: город-машина, сиявший над котлованами, в которых было черно от согнанных на стройку мужиков"(Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

Further on she continues: "По моему замыслу, Екатеринбург так и не был основан: то, что возникло, есть на самом деле сон Татищева, и все мы так или иначе - персонажи этого фантастического сна" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

Slavnikova compares the city with a dream in order to explain its unfinished state ("особое, будто на берегу текущего времени, состояние незавершенных объектов"). As we already know from the novel, only in dreams (unreality) may time go back or forward, stop or disappear at all. Similarly, a number of unfinished buildings in the city create the effect of being frozen in time.

"Здание как будто устремляется в будущее и одновременно оседает в прошлое, к земле [...] Настоящее, где здание могло бы присутствовать в своем естественном и завершенном качестве, вычитается из процесса: настоящего здесь не существует" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

Thus, in Slavnikova's mind, there is no city of Yekaterinburg and there never has been; it is just a dream or a play of imagination – and this is what she reflected in her novel "2017". There are only invisible labyrinths leading to transitional zones, through which the transparency and emptiness of the magical/unreal world come into the city and the citizens, in their turn, may come closer to the "other" (imagined) world and disappear.

## Conclusions

"2017" is a well-constructed novel with a complex temporal-spatial organisation, which interprets the geological reality of the Ural region and the archaic model of the world, as reflected in the Ural "mining mythology/folklore". In the novel there is a distinct binary which is represented by major chronotopes of the Riphean Mountains and the city, with apartments, graves and mines as sacred spaces within them. The train station plays the role of a boundary between the urban space of the city and the Riphean Mountains, while the doors and windows separate the apartments from the city. The train station along with the Toadstool tower and apartments (after they undergo a spatial transformation) function as a transitional zone between the real world and the world of dead. These places are directly or indirectly associated with gems, and transparency and emptiness as their primary characteristics. Through these zones people may pass (disappear for everybody else) into the "other" world, get what they are seeking for (gems/"truth") and die. In their turn, transparency and emptiness pervade the city through these transitional zones. Moreover, the structure of the novel is represented in three-dimensional projection, and with the temporal axis (as the fourth dimension). Both the "underworld" spaces of the Riphean Mountains and the city are presented in a form of labyrinths, which the protagonists have to pass through in order to reach the sacred center - the corundum mine. The protagonists go through the labyrinth of the city with the help of the Stone Maiden (appearing to each *hitnik* in a different image and connected to them by an invisible thread) and with the help of the magical objects she gives to them (keys, handkerchiefs,

maps). By the end of the journey the protagonists die. In her novel, it is evident, the author actively uses the mythological characters from Bazhov's tales, Propp's theory about the role of characters and their actions in the construction of narratives, Bakhtin's classification of chronotopes, Toporov's mythopoetic space and Lotman's doctrine about semiosphere.

Olga Slavnikova belongs to the top postmodern writers as defined by Umberto Eco in his "Notes in the margins of *The Name of the Rose*": "My ideal postmodernist author neither merely repudiates nor merely imitates either his twentieth-century modernist parents or his nineteenth-century premodernist grandparents" (Umberto Eco 71). Olga Slavnikova, however, does not assign herself to any literary movement at all. In her interview with Russian philologist Oleg Proskurin, she claimed:

"А вот если говорить о связях с каким-то сложившимся течением... Если так ставить вопрос и отвечать на него совершенно честно... Я пыталась подобрать авторов, которые мне близки, - их нет. На самом деле - нет. В этом смысле я, наверное, действительно одинокий человек. Приходится это признать" (Славникова, *Интервью с Олегом Проскуриным*).

Nevertheless, I am absolutely convinced that in constructing "2017", Slavnikova resorts to postmodernist techniques. First of all, from my analysis of the temporal-spatial organisation of the novel, it is evident that the author uses a non-linear timeline (temporal distortion): she begins the novel with the description of the

current events of 2017, then moves the reader into Krylov's expedition in 2016, then into his childhood and then leads to the future through the characters' dreams (which also characterize the novel as magically realistic). Secondly, Slavnikova acknowledges that in the novel she refers to Pavel Bazhov's tales (the technique of intertextuality).

"Бажов затронул одну вещь, очень важную для людей, которые живут на такой богатой сокровищами земле... Мир горных духов... Это мир удачи, мир форта, мир смерти, понимаете?.. Это то, что напрямую связано с жизнью. И это, в общем, очень актуально. [...] Мой роман [...] использует эту мифологию" (Славникова, *Интервью с Олегом Проскуриным*).

Moreover, the spatial composition of the novel with the city as an inner labyrinth and the Riphean mountains as the outer labyrinth, both of which have their own inner sacred spaces, is similar to Umberto Eco's dualistic division of space in his postmodern novel "The Name of the Rose". In "Upper and Lower Landscapes", Slavnikova, as well as Eco in his postscript, articulates indirectly the guidelines she used in the construction of her novel. In addition to Bazhov's mythology, she creates the opposition of the Riphean top landscapes (the city and the mountains as the world of the living) and low landscapes (the world of gems, the underground space which includes apartments as an urban storage of gems); the "ghostly" feature of the city due to its origin; and the Riphean's 'insect' mentality that explains their pursuit of verticality and desire to climb the real existing Toadstool.



"Дело здесь не в прирожденной храбрости рифейцев и не в подспудной тяге к суициду: просто наше обитаемое пространство в принципе негоризонтально, и вертикаль служит направлением движения просто потому, что она существует. В каком-то смысле мир рифейца похож на мир насекомого. Так или иначе, ни в одном другом городе, кроме родного Екатеринбурга, мне не приходилось наблюдать в качестве обыденной бытовой картинке мужика [...], лезущего по соседским балконам к себе на пятый или седьмой этаж только потому, что где-то потерялся ключ" (Славникова, *Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга*).

In the same article, Slavnikova raises the question of why Yekaterinburg and the Urals are never given real names, and only in her interview with Oleg Proskurin does she explain:

"- Действие разворачивается именно на Урале?

- Ну, условно это у меня называется Рифейские горы. Но совершенно понятно, что это Урал. И совершенно понятно, что город, в котором происходит действие, - это новый Екатеринбург, в котором четыре миллиона жителей (против нынешних двух). Огромный мегаполис, а вокруг - "терра инкогнита"... Понимаете, на Урале terra incognita может расположиться между трех берез.

-Почему?

-А потому, что там может золото лежать" (Славникова, *Интервью с Олегом Проскуриным*).

Further on, Slavnikova ironically speaks about a famous Ural poet who, according to her unofficial source, has ordered "качественный надгробный памятник с проставленной датой рождения и пустотой после золоченого прочерка - так сказать, с открытой визой в *нижний пейзаж*" (Славникова, Верхние и нижние пейзажи Екатеринбурга). This phenomenon explains the origin of Tamara's project "Dome" in "2017".

Olga Slavnikova's novel is also postmodern in terms of its genre blending, hyperreality and the technoculture reflected within it, all creating an illusion of "mirroring" past and present, and producing an impression of the modern Riphean world being "a culture of copies with no originals".

In this thesis I have analyzed the complex semantics of the regional space of the Urals and the city of Yekaterinburg with their inner spaces, as presented in the novel "2017". The study of the temporal-spatial organisation of Slavnikova's novel is a very new area of research and has not been analyzed before. This topic is profound and important for further investigation. It opens a whole new area of study for a researcher: How does Slavnikova develop the mythological theme of death in her novel? How is Slavnikova's Yekaterinburg urban space different from the way it is depicted by other Ural writers? How is the peripheral literature of the Urals different from its central counterpart? What is the author's view on contemporary life there and how does she express these different and conflicting spaces and realities in the rest of her novels? These and many other aspects of Slavnikova's works and Ural literature in general have yet to be explored and introduced to the North-American reader.

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