

CHAPTER III

OBLAKO V SHTANAKH

In *Oblako v shtanakh* (1914–15), his ‘second tragedy’ as he called it (I, 347), Maiakovskii explores his role and place in the world through and in love.¹ In his autobiography ‘Ia sam’ (1922, 1928), however, he describes the genesis of the poem as follows: ‘Чувствую мастерство. Могу овладеть темой. Вплотную. Ставлю вопрос о теме. О революционной. Думаю над “Облаком в штанах”’ (I, 22); while earlier, in his preface to the second edition (1918), he had described the poem in terms of ‘four cries’: “Долой вашу любовь”, “долой ваше искусство”, “долой ваш строй”, “долой вашу религию” — четыре крика четырех частей’ (XII, 7). The ‘revolutionary’ element in this definition lies in the repeated ‘долой’ rather than in any particular one of the themes, but, as analysis of the poem shows, the crucial theme is in fact that of love; it is this theme that is described in the Prologue to *Pro eto*, about which Maiakovskii was already thinking at the time of first writing ‘Ia sam’ in 1922 (see I, 374), as universal and, in effect, revolutionary.

Metrical Composition

The sense of ‘mastery’ is evident not only in the handling of theme but also in the form of the verse. The exploratory metrical polyphony of the *Tragedy* is dissolved, and the Poet’s accentual voices come together with the Old Man’s *dol’nik* voices in the broad church of Maiakovskii’s accentual verse. *Oblako v shtanakh* is for the most part a monometric poem, written in accentual verse, but with one polymetric section, the first half of Part IV, where accentual verse alternates with hexametral verse and a quatrain of amphibrachic tetrameter. Two stanzas in this section (a quatrain and a six-line stanza) are metrically heterogeneous, involving accentual and hexametral verse, but otherwise the alternation of measures occurs only between stanzas. Both the hexametral verse and the amphibrachic tetrameter are adopted as poetical voices, and it is possible to suggest a similar use of syllabo-tonic measures in a further four lines in two separate metrically heterogeneous stanzas, one in Part II and one in Part III. The measures involved are alternating iambic hexameter and tetrameter, amphibrachic tetrameter, and amphibrachic dimeter; their use is occasional and does not constitute polymetric composition proper, but in view of their suggested function they are classified separately. Elsewhere it may be

possible to suggest a rhythmical echo of some other measure within the accentual verse, but such lines are not classified separately. Although the distinction between the occasional adoption of a syllabo-tonic measure and a rhythmical echo is a fine one, the interpretations adopted seem to make sense in context. The number of lines is anyway very small, and an alternative interpretation would not significantly affect the rhythmical profiles in the accentual verse.

A feature of the poem is the use, locally quite extensive, of extraneous segments which may stand inside or outside the stanza fabric of the verse; these usually consist of a word or two but are sometimes longer. The poem is organized in Maiakovskii's standard abab quatrains, but in the first half of Part IV there are two six-line stanzas (cababc and cabacb) formed by the incorporation, through rhyme, of extraneous lines (one of them hexametral) in the standard abab quatrain; these lines, since they are rhymed, are naturally included in the classification. Elsewhere, however, there may be a problem in deciding whether a segment is extraneous or a part of the adjacent, or surrounding, metrical line (or even transitional in status). The graphical lay-out can assist in interpretation, although it varies in different editions and cannot be taken as an absolute indication of metrical status; the lay-out adopted in the latest *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, however, is probably the most authoritative and discerning in its reflection of that status. In practice, the status of the segments generally becomes clear in context and each case will be considered in the commentary, but for the purposes of classification there are considered to be eight extraneous, 'prose' segments that stand outside the fabric of the verse and so are not counted as metrical lines. There are also a further ten lines (one in Part I and the rest in the first half of Part IV) which can be interpreted as complicated by the initial addition or inclusion of extraneous segments that are akin and often parallel to the 'prose'; these lines are given a metrical classification according to the form of the main body of the line. A full rhythmical description and a breakdown of the metrical segments are given in Appendix II.

The five metrical forms or measures employed in the poem are accentual verse, alternating iambic hexameter and tetrameter, amphibrachic tetrameter, amphibrachic dimeter, and hexametral verse. The distribution of the poem's 452 lines among these five forms in the Prologue and four parts (the two halves of Part IV, as subsequently, are taken separately) and also overall is given, in percentages of the relevant total, in Table 1; the 'prose' segments are shown as in the preceding chapter.²

The table shows very clearly the predominantly monometric (accentual) composition of the poem generally and the contrasting polymetricity, principally involving accentual and hexametral verse, of the first half of Part IV before a return to accentual verse in conclusion. It is evident that there is a break in the poem's movement after Part III, and the first half of Part IV, which

TABLE 1. Metrical Composition

	Prologue	Part I	Part II	Part III	Part IVa	Part IVb	Total	Lines
Ac	100.0	100.0	97.1	99.1	47.9	100.0	93.6	423
I64	—	—	1.9	—	—	—	0.4	2
Am4	—	—	1.0	—	8.3	—	1.1	5
Am2	—	—	—	0.9	—	—	0.2	1
Hx	—	—	—	—	43.7	—	4.6	21
'Prose'	—	1	—	—	6	1	—	—
Lines	24	108	104	112	48	56	—	452

is the great emotional climax of the poem, is already highlighted; it contains nearly all the extraneous, 'prose' segments too, while the first emotional climax, in Part I, is marked by the first such breakdown into 'prose'. It is also notable how nearly equal the four parts are in length, and likewise the two halves of Part IV; this suggests a concern for compositional balance and symmetry.

1. Accentual Verse

The accentual verse of *Oblako v shtanakh*, and of Maiakovskii's early work generally (after the *Tragedy*), embodies a comprehensive range of rhythmical variation and metrical tendencies; as such, it can serve as a broad model of existence, while continuing (here) in a largely tragic mode.

There are four lines of accentual verse which can be interpreted as complicated by the addition of extraneous segments; for the purposes of the classification here these segments are discounted. The distribution of the resultant 423 lines of accentual verse according to line length (measured in stresses) in the Prologue and four parts and also overall is given, in percentages, in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Line Length

	9	7	5	4	3	2	1	Lines
Prologue	—	—	16.7	54.2	29.2	—	—	24
Part I	—	—	3.7	51.9	37.0	2.8	4.6	108
Part II	1.0	—	3.0	58.4	33.7	2.0	2.0	101
Part III	—	—	0.9	56.8	37.8	3.6	0.9	111
Part IVa	—	4.3	4.3	52.2	34.8	4.3	—	23
Part IVb	—	—	—	64.3	32.1	3.6	—	56
Total	0.2	0.2	3.1	56.5	35.2	2.8	1.9	423

The table shows a distribution which is broadly characteristic of Maiakovskii's early accentual verse generally:³ four-stress lines play the leading role and three-stress lines the major subsidiary role; five-stress and short (two- and one-stress) lines play a minor role, but there are only two longer lines. This minimal presence of long lines in the accentual verse helps to highlight the appearance of hexametral verse. The table also reveals further details of the poem's compositional outline. The Prologue establishes the leading role of the four-stress form, but is distinguished by the unusual prominence of five-stress lines and the absence of short lines. In the main body of the poem there is a general rise in the percentage of four-stress lines from Part I through to the end of the poem, but with a slight reversal of the trend in Part III (and again in the first half of Part IV). This rise is accompanied by a fall in the percentage of three-stress and short (particularly one-stress) lines from Part I through to the end of the poem, though again with a certain reversal of the trend in Part III; its profile, especially in the percentage of four-stress lines, is close to that of the poem as a whole.

The number of different types of stress scheme and the distribution of the 102 homogeneous accentual quatrains among them in the Prologue and four parts and also overall are given in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Stress Scheme

	4444	4343	4443	4433	4333	3333	Others	Types	Total
Prologue	1	1	—	—	1	—	3	6	6
Part I	2	1	6	3	1	2	12	17	27
Part II	4	5	3	3	1	2	7	13	25
Part III	6	7	2	—	2	1	9	13	27
Part IVa	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	3
Part IVb	3	2	1	2	1	—	5	10	14
Total	17	16	12	8	6	5	38	35	102
%	16.7	15.7	13.7	7.8	5.9	4.9	37.3		

This table complements the preceding one: the great diversity of types (thirty-five in all) demonstrates the fluidity of Maiakovskii's accentual verse, while the five most frequent types, and especially the two most frequent ones (4444 and 4343) which account for nearly a third of all accentual quatrains, emphasize and reinforce the leading role of four-stress lines. None of these schemes involves the promotion of a three-stress (or shorter) line to the leading positions (first and third) ahead of a four-stress line; such anomalous schemes, however, are to be found among the great variety of minor types. The leading (4444 and 4343) schemes correspond to the two fixed-ictus accentual measures in the *Tragedy*, and the former is consistently the leading type in Maiakovskii's

accentual verse; these schemes would also be familiar, and hence perceived as regular, in the context of the ictus schemes of Russian verse generally. The 3333 scheme, on the other hand, though also very common in Russian verse, is infrequent in accordance with the subsidiary role of three-stress lines; it is interesting that all the quatrains of this type occur at transitions because this adumbrates a compositional function of three-ictus verse in later poems precisely as a break or transitional form. The variations from part to part also complement the trends in the line length itself. Over the first three parts there is an even rise in the number of four-stress stanzas, while the 4443 form gives way to the 4343 form as the leading type in the individual parts; there is also less overall diversity in the number of types after Part I. In the second half of Part IV, however, there is more diversity again, perhaps in compensation (a common verse phenomenon) for the greater prominence of four-stress lines there (64.3%).⁴

The distribution of the 423 lines of accentual verse according to rhythmical form in the Prologue and four parts and also overall is given, in percentages, in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Rhythm

	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	By	Short	Lines
Prologue	33.3	25.0	41.7	16.7	4.2	—	24
Part I	14.8	25.9	51.9	14.8	5.6	7.4	108
Part II	25.7	30.7	39.6	9.9	5.9	4.0	101
Part III	18.9	29.7	46.8	18.0	4.5	4.5	111
Part IVa	26.1	21.7	47.8	13.0	8.7	4.3	23
Part IVb	16.1	33.9	46.4	10.7	3.6	3.6	56
Total	20.3	28.8	46.1	13.9	5.2	4.7	423

The table shows the leading role of *dol'nik* rhythm: *dol'nik* lines are almost as common overall as *taktovik* and accentual lines together, but are still less prominent than four-stress lines; this confirms that line length is a more powerful factor of organization than rhythm. Ternary rhythm accounts for nearly a third of *dol'nik* lines (locally more), but binary rhythm is rare. The rhythmical profile of the verse varies quite notably from part to part. If the first half of Part IV — with a relatively small number of lines in a special, polymetric context — is ignored, then these rhythmical variations are more marked in the *dol'nik* and accentual forms than in the intermediate, apparently more neutral, *taktovik* form; this is significant, because the combination or alternation of these contrasting rhythmical types plays an important role in the poem's composition. The variations in rhythm provide an interesting counterpoint to the variations in the line length and stress scheme. The Prologue provides a relatively irregular rhythmical introduction to the poem. Part I, where the line

length organization is less strong, is now rhythmically the most regular (in terms of the percentage of *dol'nik* lines), while Part II, where the line length organization is stronger, is rhythmically less regular; this again shows the factor of compensation at work, but the contrast between the two parts is much more marked here than in the line length. Part III then resolves these contrasting tendencies and, as in the line length, has a profile which is very close to that of the poem overall; a similar profile is also found in the second half of Part IV in conclusion. It is interesting to note the higher percentage of ternary lines in Part III, matching (and in fact often accompanying) the high proportion of 4444 and 4343 stanzas there.

The distribution of the 423 lines of accentual verse according to anacrusis in the Prologue and four parts and also overall is given, in percentages, in Table 5.

TABLE 5. Anacrusis

	0	1	2	3	Lines
Prologue	29.2	37.5	33.3	—	24
Part I	38.9	52.8	6.5	1.9	108
Part II	43.6	38.6	15.8	2.0	101
Part III	36.0	48.6	11.7	3.6	111
Part IVa	26.1	60.9	8.7	4.3	23
Part IVb	32.1	44.6	19.6	3.6	56
Total	37.1	46.8	13.5	2.6	423

The table shows a distribution which is broadly characteristic of Maiakovskii's early accentual verse generally:⁵ monosyllabic and zero anacruses are the leading forms, disyllabic anacruses play a minor role, and trisyllabic anacruses are rare. As one would expect, since rhythmical form and anacrusis are closely related, the variations from part to part largely follow the variations in rhythm. Disyllabic anacruses are unusually prominent in the Prologue, while the variations in Parts I, II, and III match very closely the rhythmical movement (from greater through lesser regularity to synthesis) noted above. The high proportion of monosyllabic anacruses in the first half of Part IV would help to distinguish the accentual verse more clearly from the hexametral verse, where zero anacruses predominate; the second half of Part IV again returns towards the overall profile of the poem, though not as closely as in the rhythm.

The distribution of the 423 lines of accentual verse according to clausula in the Prologue and four parts and also overall is given, in percentages, in Table 6.

The table shows the greater length of clausula characteristic of Maiakovskii's early accentual verse (after the *Tragedy*): feminine clausulae are the leading form, with masculine and dactylic clausulae almost level as major secondary forms, and there are nine hyperdactylic clausulae as well; the percentage of

TABLE 6. Clausula

	m	f	d	h	Lines
Prologue	16.7	45.8	29.2	8.3	24
Part I	22.2	50.0	25.9	1.9	108
Part II	19.8	55.4	24.8	—	101
Part III	33.3	36.0	26.1	4.5	111
Part IVa	26.1	43.5	30.4	—	23
Part IVb	39.3	42.9	17.9	—	56
Total	26.7	46.1	25.1	2.1	423

dactylic clausulae has risen quite dramatically from the *Tragedy* where it was 12.0% in the three accentual measures and just 5.3% overall. Twenty-four rhymes (11.6%) in the homogeneous accentual stanzas are heterosyllabic, but there is no example of a hypermetrical stress in the clausula. In accordance with the marginal metrical role of clausula, the variations from part to part are less significant than elsewhere. Parts I and II, which are so clearly differentiated in all other respects, are not so here. The only clear trend is a rise in the proportion of masculine clausulae in Part III (at the expense of feminine clausulae) and again in the second half of Part IV (at the expense of dactylic clausulae).

The number of different types of clausula pattern and the distribution of the 102 homogeneous accentual quatrains among them in the Prologue and four parts and also overall are given in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Clausula Pattern

	fmfm	mfmf	dfdf	ffff	fdfd	mmmm	Others	Types	Total
Prologue	—	1	2	—	1	—	2	5	6
Part I	2	5	3	4	3	—	10	13	27
Part II	3	4	1	5	3	—	9	13	25
Part III	7	3	4	—	3	2	8	12	27
Part IVa	1	—	1	—	—	—	1	3	3
Part IVb	2	1	2	3	—	3	3	8	14
Total	15	14	13	12	10	5	33	25	102
%	14.7	13.7	12.7	11.8	9.8	4.9	32.4		

Feminine clausulae, as the leading form, are involved in all the five main patterns, four of which are alternating; the two most frequent types correspond to traditionally the most common (fmfm) and second most common (mfmf) alternating rhyme schemes in Russian verse. This table too shows little significant difference between the first two parts, but in Part III there is a high

proportion of the fmfm type, just as there is a high proportion of the 4343 stress scheme; in fact, in three stanzas they go together. This correspondence is quite loose, but it is not unexpected because within literary tradition rhyme schemes and clausula patterns can become associated with metrico-stanzaic types.

2. Hexametral Verse

Hexametral verse is adopted in the first half of Part IV as the classical, respectable voice of the poet, and so, as in the *Tragedy*, it is essentially used as a *dol'nik* measure.

Six hexametral lines are complicated by the addition or even inclusion of extraneous segments, which for the purposes of the classification here are discounted. The distribution of the resultant twenty-one lines of hexametral verse according to line length (measured in ictuses) and rhythmical form is given in Tables 8 and 9; rhythmical form is classified as in the preceding chapter.

TABLE 8. Line Length

10	9	8	7	6	5
1	1	1	4	12	2

TABLE 9. Rhythm

Ct	Inct	Ty	Lines
17	4	3	21

Table 8 shows that the six-ictus scheme of the traditional hexameter is maintained in rather over half the lines, while Table 9 shows that a correct *dol'nik* rhythm is maintained in all but four lines. Most lines have a more or less central caesura; there are no examples of a zero interval over the caesura, but in one of the incorrect lines the irregular interval occurs there. Four lines in fact feature stress omission, which was not found in the hexametral verse in the *Tragedy*.

The distribution of the twenty-one lines of hexametral verse according to anacrusis and clausula is given in Tables 10 and 11.

TABLE 10. Anacrusis

0	1	2	3
16	1	1	3

TABLE 11. Clausula

m	f	Lines
10	11	21

Zero anacrusis, in accordance with the hexameter base, are the leading form, and the three trisyllabic anacrusis, where the first stress is omitted, are also consistent with the hexameter; in theory the same could apply to the line with a disyllabic anacrusis, but in context such an interpretation is unlikely. Three of the four homogeneous hexametral quatrains have the fmfm clausula pattern which was also associated with hexametral verse in the *Tragedy*.

3. Alternating Iambic Hexameter and Tetrameter, Amphibrachic Tetrameter, and Amphibrachic Dimeter

These measures are adopted, like hexametral verse, as poetical voices, but their use is occasional and the particular associations relevant in each case will be considered, in context, in the commentary.

Apart from the one quatrain of amphibrachic tetrameter in the first half of Part IV, these measures are found in two heterogeneous stanzas with accentual verse. The first such stanza involves the iambic couplet and a line of amphibrachic tetrameter, while the second involves the line of amphibrachic dimeter (although this interpretation is less certain). The only omission of stress in any of these lines (given the measures) occurs in the iambic hexameter: the stress omitted is the fifth, which is the stress most characteristically omitted in this measure.⁶

The distribution of the eight lines of these measures according to clausula is given in Table 12.

TABLE 12. Clausula

	m	f	d	Lines
I64	1	—	1	2
Am4	1	2	2	5
Am2	—	1	—	1

The iambic tetrameter ends in the only clausula in the poem which involves a (heavy) hypermetrical stress.

The predominantly monometric, accentual composition of *Oblako v shtanakh* is characteristic of Maiakovskii's early period of 'mastery' after the *Tragedy*, while the use of hexametral verse as the only other extended metrical theme maintains and develops this minor yet distinctive line in his early verse. But the function of hexametral verse and the other syllabo-tonic measures as adopted voices is a feature that still looks back to the *Tragedy*, rather than forward to the integrated polymetric composition of later works. The broad outline of the poem's metrical composition indicated a break in its movement after Part III and highlighted the first half of Part IV (the great emotional climax) before a return to the main metrical theme in conclusion. This compositional outline has now been reinforced and clarified, particularly in respect of the first three parts, by the broad rhythmical trends noted in the accentual verse. The first three parts in fact form a classical tripartite composition: Parts I and II are contrasted, and Part III then brings these contrasting tendencies together in a preliminary conclusion which sums up the poem's movement so far. After the break into polymetric composition in the first half of Part IV, this preliminary

conclusion is then taken up again, in revised form, in the poem's finale in the second half of Part IV. Thus the four parts with their 'four cries' (xii, 7) are not discrete and separate but together form an integrated, complex composition.

Commentary

Within the broad compositional outline already established the most striking feature of the poem is, by contrast, its sudden transitions. This feature has often been noted, but has not been explained; the transitions are regarded as unmotivated and the poem's movement, partially or throughout, is considered to lack logic: 'вместо последовательного осмысленного раскрытия темы вступали сложные ассоциативные связи субъективных представлений, ломалась логика'.⁷ The poem is held together by and in the poet hero's persona, and the primary model of his perception and experience of the world is, as stated in 'Kak delat' stikhi', the form of the verse. It is through and in the form of the verse that the logic of the poem's movement, sudden transitions included, becomes apparent.

The poem divides quite readily into eighteen more or less discrete passages, each with its own rhythmical or metrical theme or movement. The eighteen passages vary in length from twelve to forty-eight lines with exactly half in the middle range of twenty to twenty-eight lines. The text also divides into twenty-three homogeneous metrical segments, ranging in length from one to 122 lines, and eight 'prose' segments. The description of each passage, divided into rhythmical as well as metrical segments, follows the pattern established in the preceding chapter. Those lines which can be interpreted as complicated by the addition or inclusion of extraneous segments are now classified as they stand, so that the full line is accounted for, but when quoted (and in Appendix II) an additional description excluding these extraneous segments is given in brackets following the description of the line as a whole.

Prologue (ll. 1–30)

TABLE 13

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
1)	—	4	13	7	—	8	6	10	4	Ac	24

The Prologue opens with a provocative harangue of the poet's audience delivered in an appropriately rough metrical and rhythmical voice (compare the use of the respectable hexameter in the opening lines of the *Tragedy*):

01162m Вашу мысль,
мечтающую на размягченном мозгу,

1423f как выжиревший лакей на засаленной кушетке,
 02322m буду дразнить об окровавленный сердца лоскут,
 0522f досыта изъяздеваюсь, нахальный и едкий.

(1, 175, 1. 1)⁸

This accentual verse would unsettle the ear attuned to syllabo-tonic or *dol'nik* rhythms and would frustrate attempts to discern metrical structure: the rhythm is very irregular and the leading role of four-stress lines is not immediately apparent because of the greater (five-stress) length of the odd lines, although in retrospect the greater length could be considered to lie in an extra, lighter stress at the head of the line. This kind of anomalous rhythmical or even metrical opening, in contrast to the more usual normative role of opening lines (at least in lyric verse),⁹ is a recurring feature in Maiakovskii's long poems. Another recurring feature, however, is the prologue's role as metrical and rhythmical overture.¹⁰ Here, despite the irregular opening, the Prologue overall provides a surprisingly comprehensive introduction to the poem's rhythmical variations: the intervals cover the full range, from zero to six syllables, found in the poem, and all the main rhythmical types (including binary) are represented.

In the second stanza, which has a 5343 stress scheme, the poet goes on to introduce himself as young, loud, and beautiful. Then in the third stanza, which opens with another (probable) five-stress line, he introduces the main theme of the poem, love:

02111/ Нежные!
 0411d Вы любовь на скрипки ложите.
 1211f Любовь на литавры ложит грубый.
 2103d А себя, как я, вывернуть не можете,
 2211f чтобы были одни сплошные губы!

(1. 11)

The use of musical imagery (as in the very title *Fleita-pozvonochnik*) focuses on the formal treatment of the theme, and it is indicative of the crucial role of love that art is raised in relation to it (rather than one of the other 'cries').¹¹ Maiakovskii compares other treatments of the theme with his own ability to turn himself inside out and play, as it were, on his externalized heart and nerves; this is inversion or 'opened form',¹² and as a mode of expression it overtly engages the affective function of rhythm as an embodiment of emotional and mental conditions.¹³ After three consecutive four-stress lines in this stanza, the leading role of the four-stress form is firmly established in the next stanza, the fourth:

2232h Приходите учиться —
 из гостиной батистовая,
 0322f чинная чиновница ангельской лиги.
 2223h И которая губы спокойно перелистывает,
 2222f как кухарка страницы поваренной книги.

(1. 16)

This stanza introduces hyperdactylic clausulae but otherwise has a consolidatory role which is reinforced by the comparative rhythmical uniformity (with three disyllabic anacruses as well).

The next stanza, which introduces the key compositional device of sudden transition, returns to a more diverse rhythmical profile:

1121d	Хотите —
	буду от мяса бешеный
222m	— и, как небо, меняя тона —
1142f	хотите —
	буду безукоризненно нежный,
223m	не мужчина, а — облако в штанах!

(1. 21)

This stanza confirms the subsidiary role of the three-stress form; there is by now a discernible trend, a cadence, towards shorter line length in preparation for the move into the poem proper. Here the three-stress lines occupy the even positions (as in the second stanza), but in the final stanza they take over after a single four-stress line:

1212f	Не верю, что есть цветочная Ницца!
022d	Мною опять славословятся
125f	мужчины, залежанные, как больница,
135d	и женщины, истрепанные, как пословица.

(1. 27)

This final stanza of the Prologue highlights and juxtaposes the contrasting tendencies of *dol'nik* and accentual rhythm.

Part I (ll. 31–84)

TABLE 14

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
31)	—	—	9	2	1	1	1	9	1	Ac	12
51)	—	1	6	5	—	1	1	10	2		12
69)	—	—	2	9	1	—	4	7	2		12

The first half of Part I builds up to the poet hero's meeting with his beloved, Maria, and culminates in her rejection of his love. The hero is made to wait for hours beyond the appointed time of four, and as he becomes increasingly distraught his surroundings, his body, his emotions, and the verse become more and more deformed.

In this opening passage, after a less regular first line:

1313f	Вы думаете, это бредит малярия?
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(1. 31)

the poem proper gets under way in predominantly *dol'nik* rhythm, but with relatively few ternary lines (overall the ratio of ternary to *dol'nik* lines is nearly 1:3). The most striking rhythmical effect is created in two short lines which adumbrate the extreme deformation to come in the account of the actual meeting. The first short line is found at the end of the second stanza:

0222m 2f	В дряхлую спину хохочут и ржут канделябры.	(1. 43)
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This line marks the first stage in the deformation of reality with the animation of the material surroundings.

Towards the end of the passage the rhythm becomes rather less regular and the second short line, placed third, breaks the expected cadence of the stanza as well (three-stress and shorter lines normally occupy second and fourth positions) and so creates an even more striking effect to emphasize the key, emotionally charged, word of the passage:

1212m	Еще и еще,	(1. 69)
	уткнувшись дождю	
131/1111f	лицом в его лицо рябое,	
0m	жду,	
1232f	обрызганный громом городского прибоя.	

As the tension rises through the passage there is also a general shortening in the line length and the next two stanzas (the last) both consist entirely of three-stress lines.

Part I (ll. 85–112)

TABLE 15

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
85)	—	—	6	2	—	—	4	4	—	Ac	8
100)	—	1	4	3	—	5	3	—	—		8

After the two successive stanzas of three-stress lines there is a break when the hero turns on the still absent Maria and cries 'enough':

1223f	Проклятая!
	Что же, и этого не хватит?
0131m	Скоро криком издерется рот.
0131f	Слышу:
	тихо,
	как больной с кровати,

011m спрыгнул нерв.
И вот, —
(1. 85)

Following 'вот' there is an enjambement between stanzas, and the hero's nerves soon begin to run wild as the process of deformation continues, now internally as well as externally. The reassertion of the leading role of four-stress lines provides a certain metrical consolidation at the start of the passage, but the internal organization of the verse breaks down into *taktovik* and then accentual rhythm:

0413m Рухнула штукатурка в нижнем этаже.
0213d Нервы —
 большие,
 маленькие,
 многие! —
015m скачут бешеные,
 и уже
124f у нервов подкашиваются ноги!
(1. 100)

At the very end of the passage Maria's approach, at last, is heralded by a longer, five stress line:

01123d Двери вдруг заляскали,
 будто у гостиницы
310f не попадает зуб на зуб.
(1. 110)

Part I (ll. 113–34)

TABLE 16

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
113)	—	—	—	2	2	—	1	1	—	Ac	4
119)	—	—	1	—	3	—	1	—	—		4
125)	—	1	1	2	—	2	—	2	2		4
134)										'Prose'	

The break between this passage and the preceding one is not very marked as the poem now moves into the emotional climax of the actual meeting with Maria and her rejection of the hero's love. The process of deformation also reaches an extreme: first, within the metrical bounds of verse form, in a breakdown into short lines, and then, ultimately, in a breakdown into 'prose'.

The opening stanza has a 3322 (or 3323) stress scheme:

113f Вошла ты,
 резкая, как "нате!",

021m	муча перчатки замш,
11d	сказала:
	“Знаете —
30/020f	я выхожу замуж”.

(l. 113)

The theme of the passage may also be echoed in the heterosyllabic rhymes, especially the second which is one of only two such rhymes combining masculine and feminine clausulae. In the next stanza the breakdown into short lines becomes more extreme:

0232m	Что ж, выходите.
	Ничего.
	Покреплюсь.
03d	Видите — спокоен как!
1m	Как пульс
1d	покойника.

(l. 119)

The first line here is a standard four-stress line but the second line has only two stresses and the last two lines just one stress each; the constraint of internal rhythmical organization is breaking down. The rhymes hold the verse together but even this hold is loosened by the enjambement between the third and fourth lines which involves the rhyme as well (*‘спокоен как’* — *‘пульс //покойника’*). On the surface this stanza records the hero’s calm face, while the theme of breakdown is conveyed through the form of the verse; this contrast between a calm exterior and turbulence underneath, which will be made explicit in the volcano image later, is also described in *‘Poslushaite’* (1914): *‘А после / ходит тревожный, / но спокойный наружно’* (l, 60). More generally, this kind of inverted correspondence between levels is a characteristic feature of Maiakovskii’s poetry.

In the third and final stanza, which refers back to the past, there is a certain consolidation in a 4353 stress scheme:

0222f	Помните?
	Вы говорили:
	“Джек Лондон,
020m	деньги,
	любовь,
	страсть”, —
11012f	а я одно видел:
	вы — Джиоконда,
122m	которую надо украсть!

(l. 125)

The rhythm of the stanza, however, reveals a tension: the opening line sets a ternary rhythm, the expression of order and inertia (a calm face), but then in the middle two lines there are zero intervals before a return to ternary rhythm in the last line.

When the hero finally acknowledges the rejection of his love the form of the verse breaks down altogether into 'prose' in a line which stands outside the stanza fabric of the verse:

2 И украли.
(l. 134)

The emotional breakdown induced by rejection is conveyed through the formal breakdown, and the loss of the poet hero's love, his *Gioconda*, stolen into the institution of marriage, is also the loss of his art, his ability to make verse. The breakdown of verse form into 'prose' is for the poet's persona the recognition of a reality that cannot be subsumed or is now beyond control, raising the possibility of madness to follow. This is a moment when the conflict between 'I' and 'not-I' (philistine *byt*), which Jakobson proposes as the philosophical axis of Maiakovskii's poetic world, defines itself.¹⁴

Part I (ll. 135–75)

TABLE 17

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
135)	—	—	5	3	—	1	3	4	2	Ac	8
146)	—	1	3	3	1	2	1	4	1		8
166)	—	—	4	4	—	3	1	4	1		8

In the first half of Part I the poem has followed a logical thread, both of narrative and in the form of the verse, which leads to the meeting with Maria and her rejection of the poet hero's love. From now on, however, the logic of the poem's movement derives from this rejection and its formulation in the 'prose' line: the poem is now moved by the poet hero's need to reassert himself, to find fulfilment and to make verse, and the tension between this need and the reality of rejection, between versification and prose, determines the sudden transitions.

It is love that sets the poem in motion again:

1111f Опять влюбленный выйду в игры,
1220f огнем озаряя бровей загиб.
0221d Что же!
 И в доме, который выгорел,
2113f иногда живут бездомные бродяги!
(l. 135)

Through the image of 'games', at once the games of life and art,¹⁵ the opening line announces the return to verse form as the hero goes onto the streets to experience the homelessness of rejected love. But the form of the verse still

bears traces of the breakdown: the maintenance of a four-stress scheme throughout the stanza establishes a metrical consolidation, but after the binary rhythmical form of the first line there is a zero interval in the second. The next stanza has a 4333 stress scheme and combines *taktovik* and ternary rhythm with intervals of two and three syllables only:

0233f	Дразните?
	“Меньше, чем у нищего копеек,
122f	у вас изумрудов безумий”.
032f	Помните!
	Погибла Помпея,
122f	когда раздражали Везувий!

(l. 140)

Out of this warning against the taunt of feigned madness a more assertive tone develops in the stanza following, and three-stress lines and *dol'nik* rhythm continue the build-up to a proclamation of the hero's terrible volcanic calm:

021d	Эй!
	Господа!
	Любители
221f	святотатств,
	преступлений,
	боев, —
122d	а самое страшное
	видели —
13022/ 111022f	лицо мое,
	когда
	я
	абсолютно спокоен?

(l. 146)

The regular rhythm finally breaks down in the longer last line at the zero interval caused by the emphatic stressing of ‘я’, which is set apart in a graphical line of its own; as earlier, during the meeting with Maria, this happens just as the words draw attention to his calmness. Recognition of the breakdown and of its precise cause (‘я’) comes in the first two lines of the next stanza:

1211m	И чувствую —
	“я”
	для меня малю.
0323f	Кто-то из меня вырывается упрямо.

(l. 158)

According to Pasternak, Maiakovskii's sister Olia recited the first of these lines over her brother's dead body, and his own poetic reaction to Maiakovskii's suicide in ‘Smert' poeta' also echoes this passage: ‘Твой выстрел был подобен Этне’.¹⁶ Within the context of the poem Maiakovskii's geological image of the volcano expresses perfectly the process of alternate

consolidation and deformation, arising out of the structural fault of the breakdown into 'prose', that now moves the verse.

The breakdown is not immediately overcome, and, as he will do in similar circumstances of homelessness in *Pro eto*, the hero turns to his family:

1m Алло!
0201f Кто говорит?
 Мама?
 Мама!
(1. 162)

There is an immediate short line, with a zero interval in the final line of the stanza. A more regular, initially binary rhythm in the next stanza is broken in the second line by another zero interval:

111f Ваш сын прекрасно болен!
0310f Мама!
 У него пожар сердца.
1112f Скажите сестрам, Люде и Оле, —
122f ему уже некуда деться.
(1. 166)

The zero interval is the rhythmical effect which is associated with the expression of pain, as here by implication, in *Pro eto*. In the stanza following, the last stanza of this passage, the poet hero goes on to tell of the expression of words from a heart on fire:

0211f Каждое слово,
 даже шутка,
1432f которые изрыгает обгорающим ртом он,
154f выбрасывается, как голая проститутка
232f из горящего публичного дома.
(1. 171)

On the one hand the verse has reverted to a more normal stress scheme (4433 compared with the anomalous 3443 of the preceding stanza), but on the other hand to a much less regular rhythm, though without any zero intervals.

Part I (ll. 176–208)

TABLE 18

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
176)	—	1	14	5	—	1	8	11	4	Ac	20

In the finale of Part I the poet tries to express and make art of his pain, elaborating on the theme of 'Ваш сын прекрасно болен' (l. 166) in the famous realized metaphor of a heart on fire. The four-stress form is well re-established

in its leading role and the verse remains almost entirely within the bounds of four-stress and three-stress lines and the *taktovik* rhythmical range, but its inherent instability has not been overcome.

In the first stanza the rhythm soon consolidates into a very regular form, ternary even in two lines, but this is followed by a near-breakdown into 'prose' at the start of the second stanza:

0131d	Люди нюхают —
	запахло жареным!
1222f	Нагнали каких-то.
	Блестящие!
	В касках!
1222f	Нельзя сапожища!
	Скажите пожарным:
1221f	на сердце горящее лезут в ласках.
11222d	Я сам.
(1222)	Глаза наслезнённые бочками выкачу.
023f	Дайте о ребра опереться.
0222d	Выскочу! Выскочу! Выскочу! Выскочу!
033f	Рухнули.
	Не выскочишь из сердца!

(l. 176)

'Я сам' — highlighted again — is not properly part of the main body of its line, which has the standard four stresses and an amphibrachic rhythm, but, because of its close link with the rest of the stanza (and bearing in mind the absence of any graphical break), it can be tenuously incorporated in the verse. It serves, nevertheless, to remind of the original breakdown and in the next stanza the poet, despairing of being able to poeticize his pain, turns to his mother again:

2232m	На лице обгорающем
	из трещины губ
1422f	обугленный поцелуишко броситься вырос.
012m	Мама!
	Петь не могу.
2132f	У церковки сердца занимается клирос!

(l. 190)

The rhythm has become less regular and the second line provides the only example of an accentual interval in the passage, while the 4434 stress scheme, with a three-stress line preceding a four-stress line in the second half of the stanza, reverses the more normal arrangement. Over the last two stanzas a more regular rhythm returns as the last charred words escape the poet's burnt-out frame and a final cry is formulated:

1222f	Трясущимся людям
	в квартирное тихо
1221d	стоглазое зарево рвется с пристани.

011f Крик последний, —
ты хоть
1212d о том, что горю, в столетия выстони!
(l. 203)

In this final stanza (with a 4434 stress scheme) a *dol'nik* rhythm is maintained throughout, but this in itself anticipates a deformation to come.

Part II (ll. 209–77)

TABLE 19

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
209)	—	—	3	—	1	—	1	2	—	Ac	4
217)	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	I64	2
221)	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	Am4	1
222)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	Ac	1
223)	—	—	5	3	—	3	5	—	—		8
232)	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	4	1		4
238)	1	2	10	2	1	6	4	5	—		16
262)	—	—	4	—	—	1	1	2	1		4
269)	—	—	—	4	—	—	4	—	—		4

After Part I has burnt itself out in a 'final cry' there cannot be a straightforward continuation into Part II, but there is a necessary logic in the direction that the poem now takes. In the finale of Part I the poet hero tried to express and make art of his pain, but without overcoming the structural fault of the breakdown into 'prose' arising out of the rejection in love. The breakdown into 'prose' undermines the legitimacy of the poet's art, and so the way forward is necessarily through a reassertion of that legitimacy. The viewpoint changes from that of the poet hero to that of the poet artist, and the corresponding shift from narrative to discourse is reflected, compositionally, in a breakdown into rhythmical and even metrical diversity in this opening passage of the part.

The poet begins negatively, asserting himself through a rejection of all that has been done before:

0223m Славьте меня!
Я великим не чета.
2121f Я над всем, что сделано,
ставлю "nihil".
2221m Никогда
ничего не хочу читать.
02f Книги?
Что книги!

(l. 209)

There is a certain rhythmical continuity from the end of Part I, but the last line is already a shorter, two-stress line. The poet's assertion has an ironical reference within the text because the breakdown into 'prose' did reduce the verse to 'nothing', but at the same time it could pretend to have a certain objective validity inasmuch as Maiakovskii's accentual versification, as Jakobson put it, liberates the word 'от Прокрустова ложа ритмической инерции силлабо-тонического стиха'.¹⁷

In the second stanza the poet moves on to reject the traditional notion of poetic inspiration as an extension of his rejection of the poetry which it has made:

11113m	Я раньше думал —
	книги делаются так:
1111(1)d	пришел поэт,
	легко разжал уста,
1222m	и сразу запел вдохновенный проstack —
1d	пожалуйста!

(l. 217)

This stanza can be interpreted as a metrical medley of syllabo-tonic measures and accentual verse. The first two lines can be interpreted as a couplet of alternating iambic hexameter and tetrameter (were the stress on 'уста' not hypermetrical, it would be a couplet of alternating hexameter and pentameter).¹⁸ This alternating measure has close links with the iambic hexameter itself, the Russian alexandrine, and flourished especially in the period of Classicism in the eighteenth century (the alternating hexameter and pentameter likewise); it is therefore associated with the high style and is an entirely appropriate metrical embodiment for the traditional, classical notion of poetic inspiration. The fulfilment of all but one ictus supports the metrical interpretation, and so does the sole omission of stress because, as has already been pointed out, the fifth stress is the one most commonly omitted in the iambic hexameter; this omission of stress also reinforces the effect of the key word 'делается' which undermines the theory of inspiration. In the third line, as the inspired poet breaks into song, the verse shifts into the form of the amphibrachic tetrameter; there are lines of accentual verse with the same rhythmical form, but in context the interpretation of an adopted voice seems to make sense, especially as it will be adopted as a poetical voice (that of Severianin) later in the poem too. The syllabo-tonic interpretation of these three lines can also make fuller sense of the opening words 'Я раньше думал', since Maiakovskii's earliest poems were all written in the iambic and amphibrachic metres. Finally, after three lines of syllabo-tonic verse the breakdown into the short last line of accentual verse reinforces the rejection of the traditional notion of inspiration. This rejection is further reinforced by the rhyme, for 'пожалуйста' devalues the poetic word 'уста' by rendering its stress hypermetrical.

The short lines in Part I adumbrated the breakdown of verse form and the intrusion of a reality beyond the poet hero's control; here the poet artist has made use of the same device to reject the artificial notion of poetic inspiration. In the next two stanzas he then goes on to establish two aspects of reality, the reality of poetic creation and the contrasting reality of the street's mute condition:

2430f	А оказывается —
	прежде чем начнет петься,
0133d	долго ходят, размозлев от брожения,
1231f	и тихо барахтается в тине сердца
024d	глупая вобла воображения.
1233d	Пока выкипчивают, рифмами пиликая,
2312d	из любвей и соловьев какое-то варево,
024d	улица корчится безъязыкая —
123d	ей нечем кричать и разговаривать.

(1. 223)

In these two stanzas (with standard 4443 and 4433 stress schemes) the poet uses a very irregular rhythm, *taktovik* or accentual in every line, in order to achieve the greatest contrast with the rhythm of syllabo-tonic metre.

Having been rejected in love the poet hero has found himself homeless and out on the streets, and it is on the streets, both literally and metaphorically, that the poem unfolds until he returns to Maria at the beginning of Part IV with the cry 'Я не могу на улицах' (l. 536). The street symbolizes the poet hero's rejection in love and also the resultant loss of his art in the breakdown into 'prose'. The condition of the street is the poet's own condition, but its aesthetic potential, if realized, could offer him the means to reassert himself. So he now formally aligns himself with the street in a rhetorical 'we':

222f	Городов вавилонские башни,
211f	возгордясь, возносим снова,
121f	а бог
	города на пашни
021f	рушит,
	мешая слово.

(1. 232)

This stanza has a transitional and introductory role: it moves the poem from the discourse of the opening stanzas into the rhetoric and narrative which alternate through most of Parts II and III, and it restates the key compositional device of alternate consolidation and deformation in terms of the street as alternate elevation of the city and divine frustration of its tongue. This device, however, is more stated than demonstrated, for there is no rhythmical or metrical deformation, only a break-up on the graphical level in the second half of the stanza and a certain enjambement between the last two lines; there is also a contrast in the anacrusis between the first two and the last two lines. The

introductory scope and reference of the stanza are not just local and immediate but more extensive and anticipatory. The rhetorical ‘we’, for example, is not reasserted immediately but returns in the central passage of this part, while God, although he does figure in the stanzas immediately following, only fully emerges as the ultimate opposition in the second half of Part IV. The stanza’s role is reflected in the form of the verse; it is clearly differentiated from the surrounding verse by the maintenance of both a three-stress scheme (already an example of the compositional role of this form as a break) and a regular, *dol'nik* rhythm.

The next four stanzas record the history of the street’s attempt to find a tongue, at first unsuccessfully:

0211f	Улица мўку молча пёрла.
0111f	Крик торчком стоял из глотки.
1340f	Топорзились, застрявшие поперек горла,
0323f	пухлые тахі и костяные пролетки.
0421f	Грудь испешеходили.
	Чохотки плоче.
0211f	Город дорогу мраком запер.

(1. 238)

A certain binary rhythmical tendency in the first two lines could express the constraint of the anthropomorphized street’s tongue, and the same rhythmical form (0211) returns in the second line of the stanza following in association with the related restriction of movement (note also the enclosed, palindromic phonetic construction in ‘город дорогу’).¹⁹ In the intermediate lines, which describe the nature of the congestion, there is a contrasting, irregular (accentual and *taktovik*) rhythm. Nevertheless the street does finally manage to throw off its oppressors:

20232f	И когда — все-таки! — выхаркнула давку на площадь,
1231f	спихнув наступившую на горло паперть,
0224f	думалось: в хорах архангелова хорала
0131m	бог, ограбленный, идет карать!
134f	А улица присела и заорала:
11m	“Идемте жрать!”

(1. 245)

The expulsion of the congestion, recalling the volcanic eruption of the poet hero himself, is heralded by a longer, five-stress line (the third line in its stanza), in which the exclamation ‘все-таки!’ disrupts the rhythmical and syntactic flow. Following an enjambement between stanzas, an irregular rhythm continues into the next stanza. Despite the threat of divine retribution the street is only concerned to stuff itself with food, and in its utterance the

form of the verse breaks down into a short, two-stress line. The record of the street's attempt to articulate now comes into the present with its grotesque arraignment and linguistic devastation in the war:

2122d	Гримируют городу Круппы и Круппики
120m	грозящих бровей морщь,
21122d	а во рту
	умерших слов разлагаются трупики,
011113122m	только два живут, жирея —
	“сволочь”
	и еще какое-то,
	кажется — “борщ”.

(1. 254)

After a regular rhythm has been maintained up to the last (zero) interval of the second line and then on into the five-stress third line, the aesthetic devastation of the street is conveyed in the long last line: this is the only line of more than five stresses outside the first half of Part IV and it is so long that the sense of rhythmical organization is almost lost.

The street cannot offer the poet the means to reassert himself, and other poets, the ‘poets’, flee from its meagre aesthetic potential:

1222f	Поэты,
	размокшие в плаче и всхлипе,
0331f	бросились от улицы, ероша космы:
0111f	“Как двумя такими выпеть
1422d	и барышню,
	и любовь,
	и цветочек под росами?”

(1. 262)

The return to the poets is accompanied by an amphibrachic rhythm in the first line which echoes the amphibrachic tetrameter earlier, but the second line reverts to a less regular rhythm as the poets flee the street. The opening line has been interpreted as a rhythmical echo rather than as an adopted syllabo-tonic voice because the stanza as a whole cannot readily be interpreted as a metrical medley, even though the poets themselves speak in the third and fourth lines. The third line has a regular, binary rhythm, but the last line again reverts to an irregular rhythm as the poets reject the street's words as inappropriate for their use; to interpret the third line as a trochaic tetrameter, another adopted voice, seems forced.

This diverse and long opening passage now ends in another rejection when the street follows the other poets:

323f	А за поэтами —
	уличные тыщи:
132d	студенты,
	проститутки,
	подрядчики.

association with civic genres and a positive intonation in support of the general thrust of the rhetoric,²⁰ while the use of internal rhyme gives the passage a striking opening and emphasizes the key motifs of vigour and long striding. The third line of this stanza prepares for the move into the longer intervals of *taktovik* and accentual rhythm in the middle of the passage, and then the dactylic inertia itself is broken in the second stanza:

0222f	Их ли смиренно просить: “Помоги мне!”
114d	Молить о гимне, об оратории!
1211f	Мы сами творцы в горящем гимне —
016d	шуме фабрики и лаборатории.

(1. 284)

After the initial dactylic line the juxtaposition of long and short intervals in the even lines breaks the rhythmical inertia and prepares for the change of rhythm to come.

In the four central stanzas themselves the four-stress form takes over almost completely and the verse extends its rhythmical stride:

0233m	Что мне до Фауста, феерией ракет
1432f	скользящего с Мефистофелем в небесном паркете!
1122m	Я знаю — гвоздь у меня в сапоге
133f	кошмарней, чем фантазия у Гете!
0232f	Я, златоустейший, чье каждое слово
0421f	душу новородит, именинит тело,
2232f	говорю вам: мельчайшая пылинка живого
0323f	ценнее всего, что я сделаю и сделал!

(1. 290)

The *taktovik* and accentual rhythm in these two stanzas and the two following displays a significant degree and kind of organization: intervals of two and three syllables predominate (accounting for thirty-three of the forty-three intervals), there are no zero intervals, and intervals of one syllable are few (just five) and no more frequent than those of four and five syllables (four and one respectively). Bearing in mind Maiakovskii's manner of creation, this extension of the rhythmical stride expresses the long striding and hence command of space proclaimed in the very first line of the passage; bearing in mind also the heroic and high associations of long lines for him, the extra syllabic length would continue the positive note introduced by the dactylic rhythm and

reinforce the use of high, rhetorical vocabulary ('творцы' (l. 288); 'златоустейший' (l. 297); 'омытого' (l. 315)). In the other two stanzas of this middle section the juxtaposition of long and short intervals again prepares for an extension of the rhythmical stride, only now on a higher metrical level as the rhythmical period is extended from one stanza into the next:

0432m	Слушайте!
	Проповедует,
	мечась и стена,
1323f	сегодняшнего дня крикогубый Заратустра!
0115m	Мы
	с лицом, как заspanная простыня,
123f	с губами, обвисшими, как люстра,
0214d	мы,
	каторжане города-лепрозория,
1313f	где золото и грязь изъязвили проказу, —
143f	мы чище венецианского лазорья,
1232f	морями и солнцами омытого сразу!

(l. 304)

The break caused by the juxtaposition of long and short intervals in the third line of the first of these stanzas, and also to a lesser extent in the first line of the second stanza, skilfully keeps the rhythmical expectation in suspense, thereby facilitating the extension from one stanza into the next.

In the passage as a whole there are no less than five heterosyllabic rhymes, three of them in the last two stanzas:

1123d	Плевать, что нет
	у Гомеров и Овидиев
1112f	людей, как мы,
	от копоти в оспе.
1122f	Я знаю —
	солнце померкло б, увидев
0121d	наших душ золотые россыпи!
0231m	Жилы и мускулы — молитв верней.
0222d	Нам ли вымаливать милостей времени!
00122m	Мы —
	каждый —
	держим в своей пятерне
121f	миров приводные ремни!

(l. 323)

This use of heterosyllabic rhyme can probably be related to the passage's rhythmical theme of extension (and now contraction) of the length of intervals. In these last two stanzas a more regular (*dol'nik* and *taktovik*) rhythm returns, and in the final stanza dactylic rhythm too. The emphatic 'каждый' in the third line of the final stanza creates an extra stress and a zero interval to mark the climax of the passage, but in its rhythmical effect it is akin, in context, to a

hypermetrical stress and the underlying rhythmical form of the line could be dactylic. The return to this more regular, even dactylic, rhythm rounds the passage off in compositional symmetry.

Part II (ll. 329–68)

TABLE 21

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
329)	—	—	7	4	1	5	2	4	—	Ac	12
348)	—	—	5	7	—	—	—	12	4		12
360)	—	—	2	2	—	2	2	—	—		4

In the final passage of Part II the poet moves back into narrative and relates his rhetoric to reality, the reality of rejection at the Futurists' public appearances:²¹

0224f Это взвело на Голгофы аудиторий
 2211d Петрограда, Москвы, Одессы, Киева,
 151f и не было ни одного,
 который
 221d не кричал бы:
 "Распни,
 распни его!"

(l. 329)

The opening line begins in the dactylic rhythm of the preceding rhetoric but this inertia already breaks down at the final, longer interval; there is then another long interval in the third line and an enjambement between the last two lines. This is followed by a much more striking deformation of the verse and a far less grandiose image of rejection in the next stanza:

1022d Но мне —
 люди,
 и те, что обидели —
 0212f вы мне всего дороже и ближе.
 0d Видели,
 2121f как собака бьющую руку лижет?!

(l. 336)

The juxtaposition of 'мне' and 'люди' creates a zero interval in the first line, and the breakdown into a short, one-stress third line heralds a remarkable bathetic degradation of the poet hero to the level of a dog licking the hand that beats it.

This image of the dog (a very important one in Maiakovskii's work) nevertheless preserves, in travestied form, something of the Christ figure, and

in the following stanza the poet reasserts himself in his role as prophet, but more as a John the Baptist than a Christ:

0143d	Я,
	обсемянный у сегодняшнего племени,
123m	как длинный
	скабрэзный анекдот,
0241d	вижу идущего через горы времени,
132m	которого не видит никто.

(1. 342)

This stanza sets in motion a new burst of revolutionary rhetoric in which the poet seeks to overcome the rejection of his Zarathustran sermon by the street through the affirmation of a revolution to come that will realize his heroic words. The thrust of the rhetoric appears to last through to the end of the part, but the form of the verse reveals a different picture of consolidation followed by deformation which is indicative of the instability beneath the rhetoric. In this stanza the metrical consolidation provided by the 4343 stress scheme is off-set by a loose rhythm, but in the next three stanzas a *dol'nik* rhythm is maintained throughout:

1122f	Где глаз людей обрывается куцый,
111m	главой голодных орд,
122f	в терновом венце революций
112m	грядет шестнадцатый год.
1111f	А я у вас — его предтеча;
011m	я — где боль, везде;
1112f	на каждой капле слёзовой течи
022m	растянул себя на кресте.
1211m	Уже ничего простить нельзя.
1122f	Я выжиг души, где нежность растила.
022m	Это труднее, чем взять
022f	тысячу тысяч Бастилий!

(1. 348)

The poet's proclamation of revolution is conveyed in verse which is regular and even traditional in form. The stress scheme varies from stanza to stanza but remains standard throughout, and the regular, *dol'nik* rhythm is accompanied by traditional clausula patterns and a traditional graphical lay-out. In the first half of this section, and especially in the first two lines of the second stanza, a binary rhythmical tendency emerges within the *dol'nik* rhythm, but there is no corresponding motif of constraint on the verbal level; conversely, the rhetoric moves into cliché ('голодных орд'), sweeping generality ('я — где боль, везде'), and, in the original 'который-то год' (I, 408), vague assertion (this was only replaced by an anticipatory date after the Revolution). In the rest of this section the verse gradually returns to ternary rhythm (dactylic again) and at the same time the words, while not diminishing the thrust of the rhetoric, become

more concrete and pertinent. This is especially so in the second line of the last stanza, because, in the logic of the poem's movement, it is precisely the burning out of the poet's emotions and inner world which has led him to seek alternative fulfilment in revolutionary prophecy.

The final stanza of the part appears to round off the poet's vision of revolution in triumph:

2142f	И когда, приход его мятежом оглашая,
032f	выйдете к спасителю — вам я
0142f	душу вытащу, растопчу, чтоб большая! —
331f	и окровавленную дам, как знамя.

(l. 360)

But, as the poet hero (not for the first time) sacrifices his soul as a banner for the new age, the rhythmical regularity breaks down: while the stress scheme remains standard (4343), the *dol'nik* rhythm of the preceding stanzas has given way to *taktovik* and accentual rhythm; the traditional graphical lay-out has also broken up, and there is an enjambement between the second and third lines. Thus, while the rhetoric is maintained on the verbal level, the form of the verse indicates a change and the apparent continuity is undermined. This breakdown accompanies envisaged violence to the poet's soul and adumbrates, as ever, the intrusion of reality at the beginning of Part III.

Part III (ll. 369–403)

TABLE 22

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
369)	—	—	2	2	—	1	3	—	—	Ac	4
376)	—	1	3	4	—	1	3	4	2		8
390)	—	—	6	2	—	1	1	6	4		8

The break between parts serves to insulate, on the verbal level, the apparently triumphant conclusion of Part II. But on the level of verse form, both in the 4343 stress scheme and in the irregular rhythm, there is a direct continuity from the final stanza of the preceding part into the opening stanza of this one:

2332d	Ах, зачем это, откуда это в светлое весело
031m	грязных кулачищ замах!

1135d Пришла
и голову отчаянием занавесила
032m мысль о сумасшедших домах.
(l. 369)

‘Светлое весело’ refers back to the preceding rhetoric, while ‘это’ refers to the intrusion of reality accompanying the breakdown in the form of the verse; the present reality of the street, which intrudes into the poet’s bright vision of future revolution, is grimy and threatening, not pure and healthy as he had asserted. Although on the verbal level the breakdown is apparently unmotivated, it arises out of the inherent instability both of the poet’s form and of his hold over reality, and brings with it the thought of madness. This re-emergence of the theme of madness is indicative of a change in tone and import in this part, differentiating it from the ‘светлое весело’ of much of Part II. As the poem approaches a preliminary crisis and resolution, both the process of alternate consolidation and deformation and its significance come into sharper focus.

Now, as after previous breakdowns, the poet turns to art, but already more as a defence than in attack. He sees a way out in the ability of his fellow Futurist David Burliuk — showman, master of the shocking effect, the chief organizer of the Futurists’ public image — to overcome the deformity of a blind eye:

01232m И —
как в гибель дредноута
от душащих спазм
132m бросаются в разинутый люк —
1122m сквозь свой
до крика разодранный глаз
022m лез, обезумев, Бурлюк.
1232f Почти окровавив исслезенные веки,
011m вылез,
встал,
пошел
1423f и с нежностью, неожиданной в жирном человеке,
022m взял и сказал:
“Хорошо!”

(l. 376)

The turn to Burliuk, by way of another ‘opened form’ image of escape from inside to outside, is marked by the extra stressing of ‘и’ at the beginning of the first stanza, while the dreadnought simile recalls the simile of the hero himself and the burning Lusitania at the end of Part I. Burliuk shows off the Futurist trick of inversion by crawling painfully out through his own eye, his one hatch opening onto the world; he approves the feat and, as the inner world is externalized in show, the form of the verse in these two stanzas becomes more regular again with a partial return to *dol'nik* (even dactylic) rhythm.

Burliuk’s diversionary example leads the poet into an appreciation of his own Futurist costume, the famous yellow blouse, as a defence:

- 222f Хорошо, когда в желтую кофту
 122d душа от осмотров укутана!
 2223f Хорошо,
 когда брошенный в зубы эшафоту,
 0122d крикнуть:
 “Пейте какао Ван-Гутена!”

(1. 390)

The form of the verse has consolidated into a largely regular rhythm, ternary even in the first two lines, which serves as the yellow blouse covering over the inherent instability of the poet hero's verse (as of his persona) just three stanzas after this has been laid bare. There is, however, a certain tension between the rhythm and the anomalous (3344) stress scheme with three-stress lines preceding four-stress ones, and the rhythm itself is not quite uniformly regular. The yellow blouse may be a brave front, like advertizing cocoa on the scaffold, but the meretricious emptiness of art that is entirely bound up in its external image becomes apparent in the last stanza of this passage:

- 1222d И эту секунду,
 бенгальскую
 громкую,
 0212d я ни на что б не выменял,
 я ни на . . .
 3222f А из сигарного дыма
 ликерною рюмкой
 1522d вытягивалось пропитое лицо Северянина.

(1. 396)

The Ego-Futurist Severianin took part, briefly and rather incongruously, in the Futurist tour, and was generally a favourite with the public, especially with the ladies; but for Maiakovskii, as already noted in relation to the Poet's dance in the *Tragedy*, he can be the epitome of the superficial salon poet, and his appearance through a smoky reflection in a liqueur glass (liqueurs feature in his poetry) suggests a poets' café setting, such as the 'Brodiachaia sobaka'.²² Severianin also appears as a parodied alter ego out of one rhyme ('я ни на' — 'Северянина'), while through the form of the verse he appears out of the ternary rhythmical tendency, for ternary (amphibrachic) metre has already been associated with the melodic 'poets' and will be explicitly associated with Severianin in the first half of Part IV and implicitly in the next stanza but one. The heterosyllabic form and, more particularly, dissonance of the other rhyme ('громкую' — 'рюмкой') could also identify Severianin, who developed both these types (and compound rhyme), whereas dissonance rhyme is rare in Maiakovskii; in addition this rhyme may be intended to reproduce the metathesis typical of a drunken voice, just as the first interval in the last line is drawn out in accordance with the sense of 'вытягивалось', distorting the rhythm.

Part III (ll. 404–41)

TABLE 23

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
404)	—	—	—	4	—	1	1	2	—	Ac	4
410)	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—		1
412)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	Am2	1
413)	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	Ac	2
417)	—	—	3	1	—	—	3	1	—		4
424)	—	—	10	1	1	3	5	3	1		12

The appearance of Severianin out of the ternary rhythmical tendency (and rhymes) forces the poet hero to reassert himself and his identity. This cannot be through a consolidation of the form of the verse but must be through some other kind of reformation or deformation, or at least through a departure from ternary rhythm. In a significant clarification which has its roots in the independence of the Old Man's amphibrachic voice from the Poet in the *Tragedy*, ternary rhythm is now identified as, ultimately, the expression of an external order ('not-I').

The initial break is again made in a transitional stanza of three-stress verse:

242f Как вы смеее называться поэтом
 132d и, sereneький, чирикать, как перепел!
 112f Сегодня
 надо
 кастетом
 111d кроитьсья миру в черепе!

(l. 404)

Whereas the attack on Severianin occasions a return to a less regular rhythm, and thus a reassertion of the poet's separate identity, the affirmation of the poet's alternative is conveyed in a *dol'nik* rhythm, although a ternary tendency is clearly avoided. This shows how the initial impulse for reassertion is a departure from the ternary rhythm of the external order personified in Severianin. The next two stanzas start, and depart, in similar fashion:

0332m Вы,
 обеспокоенные мыслью одной —
 12f "изящно пляшу ли", —
 1412m смотрите, как развлекаюсь
 я —
 площадной
 212f сутенер и карточный шулер!
 1132f От вас,
 которые влюбленностью мокали,

2231m от которых
 в столетия слеза лилась,
 112f уйду я,
 солнце моноклем
 0322m вставляю в широко растопыренный глаз.
 (l. 410)

Severianin has been multiplied into a general opposition but the shorter second line in the first of these stanzas echoes Maiakovskii's characterization of him, already quoted in relation to the Poet's dance in the *Tragedy*, in the article 'Poezovecher Igoria Severianina' (1914): 'Да в самом деле, не балерина ли это, ведь он так изящен' (l. 339). A dancing lilt in Severianin's verse derives from his favoured device of symmetrical division into half-lines, a feature reproduced in the stanza of amphibrachic tetrameter imitating Severianin in the first half of Part IV. It is therefore possible to interpret this line, which adopts a Severianin voice, as an amphibrachic tetrameter broken off half-way through in metrical rejection of the Severianins (the line is classified as amphibrachic dimeter). In the rest of this stanza the departure from ternary rhythm is advanced outside the transitional three-stress form, and there is an enjambement between the third and fourth lines. A corresponding deformation is evident in the assertion of an anti-heroic and anti-poetic identity as street pimp and card-sharper, inverted forms of the lover, revolutionary prophet, and indeed, in view of the parallel between games and art, poet too. Then in the second stanza a more consistent *taktovik* rhythm is developed in a 4434 stress scheme as the poet hero asserts that he will place the sun in his eye as a monocle (Burluk wore a monocle); this feat would involve concentration of the sun and magnification of the eye and symbolizes control over the physical world.

The stanza following leaves the antithetical composition of the three preceding stanzas behind but continues in the future tense as the poet hero concentrates historical time to take Napoleon, great man and symbol of (past) worldly power, on a tour of the earth like a pug-dog:²³

322m Невероятно себя нарядив,
 1213f пойду по земле,
 чтоб нравился и жегся,
 3m а впереди
 2431f на цепочке Наполеона поведу, как мопса.
 (l. 424)

In accordance with the 'improbability' of the poet's envisaged costume the form of the verse in this stanza is a model of anomaly: the stanza combines ternary, *taktovik*, and accentual rhythm (and a short line), while its 3414 stress scheme relegates the four-stress form to the subsidiary, even positions and places a three-stress line at the head of the stanza and the short, one-stress line third; there are also two trisyllabic anacruses. The theme of reformation

(reassertion) through deformation reaches an extreme here. But the next stanza, which envisages the arousal of the earth and the animation of things, returns to a 4444 (or possibly 3444) stress scheme:

0111/211d Вся земля поляжет женщиной,
1231f заерзает мясами, хотя отжаться;
0301d вещи оживут —
 губы вещины
2211f засюсюкают:
 “цаца, цаца, цаца!”

(1. 429)

Then, in the final stanza of the passage, the poem returns to reality in the narrative past when a thunderstorm builds up in the sky:

0123d Вдруг
 и тучи
 и облачное прочее
0342f подняло на небе невероятную качку,
1223d как будто расходятся белые рабочие,
0313f небу объявив озлобленную стачку.

(1. 435)

The poet hero, himself a ‘cloud in trousers’, transposes his envisaged overthrow of existing order into the clouds, which raise an ‘improbable’ disturbance, and a consistently irregular (*taktovik* and accentual) rhythm is established in a four-stress scheme.

Part III (ll. 441–55)

TABLE 24

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
441)	—	—	8	4	—	—	1	11	7	Ac	12

When the storm actually breaks, the ‘improbable’ disturbance perceived by the poet in the clouds is suddenly subverted by the natural order of the world, and *dol'nik* and then ternary rhythm is reimposed:

0221f Гром из-за тучи, зверея, вылез,
1221d громадные ноздри задорно высморкал,
1212f и небе лицо секунду кривилось
1222d суровой гримасой железного Бисмарка.

(1. 441)

The form of external order is now personified in the political figure of Bismarck, and its imposition on the poet hero’s perception of the world illuminates the introduction of the device of sudden transition in the Prologue:

‘и, как небо, меняя тона’ (l. 23). The poet’s struggle to assert himself is now a struggle in and through his form against the ternary rhythmical expression of an external order (a struggle that only reaches its conclusion in *Pro eto*). In the next stanza the verse switches into the 4343 stress scheme and a ternary rhythm, amphibrachic in three lines, is maintained throughout:

1222f	И кто-то,	
	запутавшись в облачных путях,	
022m	вытянул руки к кафе —	
1222f	и будто по-женски,	
	и нежный как будто,	
122m	и будто бы пушки лафет.	(l. 445)

This almost has the ring of parody. The 4343 stress scheme continues in the third and last stanza of the passage and the alternative images of tenderness and violence are now resolved:

1311d	Вы думаете —	
	это солнце нежненько	
022m	треплет по щечке кафе?	
0221d	Это опять расстрелять мятежников	
122m	грядет генерал Галифе!	(l. 451)

The rhythmical break in the first line serves to underline the regularity of the surrounding verse, and the poet’s earlier appropriation of high, rhetorical vocabulary is subverted when the same word (‘грядет’) is used for the march of Gallifet, the suppressor of the Parisian Communards, as was used for the march of the coming revolution in Part II.

Part III (ll. 456–75)

TABLE 25

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
456)	—	—	7	9	—	1	7	8	3	Ac	16

Once again the poet is forced to reassert himself and he launches into a new burst of rhetoric, inciting the street to anarchic rebellion:

0222m	Выньте, гулящие, руки из брюк —	
1112f	берите камень, нож или бомбу,	
1321m	а если у которого нету рук —	
121f	пришел чтоб и бился лбом бы!	(l. 456)

This appeal echoes the major passage of rhetoric in Part II, but already the mood is hortative and imperative rather than indicative; despite the strident tone, the verse in this opening stanza is not immediately free of the ternary inertia of external order and only leaves *dol'nik* rhythm in the third line. In the passage as a whole only a relative rhythmical reformation is achieved through a limited extension into *taktovik* rhythm, while *dol'nik* rhythm remains in half of the lines and ternary rhythm in three. This relative rhythmical reformation is accompanied by a certain contraction in the length of the lines, compared with the fuller extension of the rhythmical stride and the development and maintenance of a strong four-stress inertia in the major passage of rhetoric in Part II. The stress schemes, while varying, remain standard throughout, but four-stress lines are outnumbered by three-stress ones, especially in the middle two stanzas:

1234h	Идите, голоденькие, потненькие, покорненькие,
131d	закисшие в блохастом грязеньке!
133d	Идите! Понедельники и вторники
111d	окрасим кровью в праздники!
1122d	Пускай земле под ножами припомнится,
112f	кого хотела опошлить!
123d	Земле, обжиревшей, как любовница,
122f	которую вылюбил Ротшильд!

(1. 460)

In the first of these stanzas, in association with a call into motion, the verse extends into accentual rhythm for the only time in the passage and *dol'nik* rhythm is avoided until the last line, which has a binary rhythm; there is also a heterosyllabic rhyme, the first for eleven stanzas, combining hyperdactylic and dactylic clausulae. The poet here only aligns himself formally with the street in one first person plural imperative ('окрасим') and no longer asserts its power and purity; instead, he addresses himself to the hungry and humble, perhaps echoing Christ's Sermon on the Mount. In the second of these two stanzas he calls for an assault on the earth, with an implication of sexual retribution, but *dol'nik* and ternary rhythm returns in all but one of the lines. Then, in the final stanza of the passage, the poet repeats his call for a festival of blood (compare the festival of beggars in the *Tragedy*):

1222m	Чтоб флаги трепались в горячке пальбы,
233d	как у каждого порядочного праздника —
0223m	выше вздымайте, фонарные столбы,
232d	окровавленные туши лабазников.

(1. 472)

A *taktovik* rhythm is reasserted in the last three lines, but the ternary rhythm of the opening line confirms that this reassertion is still no more than relative.

Part III (ll. 476–505)

TABLE 26

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
476)	—	—	12	6	2	6	5	7	1	Ac	20

The original rejection by Maria and the accompanying breakdown into ‘prose’ signified the recognition of a reality which the poet hero could not subsume or which was beyond his control. His subsequent attempts to overcome that rejection by finding fulfilment and acceptance elsewhere have culminated, after a series of consolidations and deformations, in a failure to preserve a distinct identity in verse, an identity independent of a form that derives from an external order. The poet hero can no longer properly distinguish between ‘I’ and ‘not-I’ in the form of the verse, and the inevitable breakdown now occurs:

143f	Изругивался, вымаливался, резал,
0122m	лез за кем-то вгрызаться в бока.
114f 052m	На небе, красный, как марсельеза, вздрагивал, околевая, закат.

(l. 476)

The rhetoric of this and the preceding part is now referred to in disparaging terms in the first two lines, and the verse breaks down into an anomalous, 3433 stress scheme with accentual rhythm in three of the four lines. More significantly, the very division into metrical lines is threatened, because the first rhyme could be considered to overlap from the end of the first line into the beginning of the second (*‘резал, // лез за’ — ‘марсельеза’*).

Failure and also madness, which was first intimated after the initial breakdown and then again at the beginning of this part, are admitted in the opening line of the next stanza:

1241f	Уже сумасшествие. Ничего не будет.
0122m	Ночь придет, перекусит и съест.

- 0221f Видите —
 небо опять иудит
 0332m пригоршню обрызганных предательством звезд?
 (1. 483)

Since in the poem so far a graphical break has generally been placed between stanzas (in accordance with traditional usage) or occasionally within a stanza between metrical lines, the graphical separation of ‘Уже сумасшествие’, which is found in other editions too, could be taken to indicate a breakdown into ‘prose’ to herald the arrival of madness. But on the metrical level ‘Уже сумасшествие’ can form part of a four-stress line, the standard Maiakovskian opening line, in which case the lay-out can still be taken as a breakdown of the metrical line’s graphical integrity, close to a breakdown into ‘prose’. The stanza has a four-stress scheme but is rhythmically diverse, and for the rest of the part, in this passage and the concluding one, diversity and uncertainty prevail as the breakdown remains unresolved.

In the third stanza night has arrived and the theme of betrayal continues in the figure of the provocateur Azef:

- 112f Пришла.
 Пирует Мамаем,
 022m задом на город насев.
 0114f Эту ночь глазами не проломаем,
 04m черную, как Азеф!
 (1. 491)

The verse has shifted from the four-stress scheme to a 3342 scheme, but the rhythm remains diverse. The two-stress form of the final line here and of three more in the rest of the part (out of a total of just twelve in the accentual verse of the poem as a whole) may be related to the theme of uncertainty which, though not articulated here, comes to the fore in the concluding passage of the part; this is because the two-stress form may, in context, be interpreted as having an uncertain status, since it has a minimum internal structure but cannot by itself develop a rhythm in the stem (see Chapter I, p. 20). Some details of a concrete setting have gradually become apparent earlier in this part and now, with the intrusion of reality that accompanies the breakdown, the poem is firmly located in time and place for the first time since the first half of Part I. In the next stanza, which reverts to a four-stress scheme, the poet hero is found to have moved from a café to drown his sorrows in a tavern:

- 0323m Ежусь, зашвырнувшись в трактирные углы,
 1212f вином обливаю душу и скатерть
 1211m и вижу:
 в углу — глаза круглы, —
 1113f глазами в сердце вьелась богоматерь.
 (1. 496)

The icon of the Mother of God prompts the hero to a consideration of his fate in terms of his role as a Christ figure (compare the turn to his mother following the initial breakdown in Part I):

1143h	Чего одаривать по шаблону намалеванному
133f	сиянием трактирную ораву!
0213h	Видишь — опять
	гогофнику оплеванному
32f	предпочитают Варавву?

(l. 501)

The shift from narrative towards interpretation and assertion in this final stanza of the passage is accompanied by a more consistently irregular rhythm, with another two-stress final line.

Part III (ll. 506–33)

TABLE 27

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
506)	—	—	10	8	2	6	3	9	2	Ac	20

In the final passage of the part, which follows on closely from the preceding passage, the poet hero rounds off the poem's movement over the first three parts with a reassessment of his role as a possible Christ figure. The key to this reassessment is found in the very first words of the opening stanza, 'Может быть', which in all occur four times in the passage. In the form of the verse this theme of uncertainty shows in a juxtaposition and combination of contrasting rhythmical types, *dol'nik* and accentual rhythm, which in the context of the poem's composition represent the opposing principles of consolidation and deformation. This rhythmical uncertainty is immediately expressed in the opening stanza:

0342f	Может быть, нарочно я
	в человечесем месйве
122m	лицом никого не новей.
0022/0202f	Я,
	может быть,
	самый красивый
112m	из всех твоих сыновей.

(l. 506)

The uncertainty in the poet hero's persona is highlighted in the contrast between the unremarkable, unstressed 'я' in the first line and the outstanding, stressed 'Я' at the head of the third line in which 'может быть' itself, wherever the stress falls, creates a zero interval. The same combination of four-stress

lines of accentual rhythm and three-stress lines of *dol'nik* rhythm is repeated in the second stanza, but in a different, anomalous 3344 scheme:

022d	Дай им,
	заплесневшим в радости,
011d	скорой смерти времени,
1114m	чтоб стали дети, должные подрасти,
0304h	мальчики — отцы,
	девочки — забеременели.

(1. 513)

In this stanza uncertainty even extends to the structure of the first rhyme ('радости' — 'подрасти'), which is heterotonic; this is the only example in the poem of a type rarely found in Maiakovskii's verse, while the other rhyme is heterosyllabic ('времени' — 'забеременели').

In the third stanza the poet hero grows more assured, envisaging a future role for his verses in the christening of children:

1212m	И новым рожденным дай обрасти
131m	пыливой сединой волхвов,
2321m	и придут они —
	и будут детей крестить
221m	именами моих стихов.

(1. 519)

Dol'nik rhythm is here combined with *taktovik*, rather than accentual rhythm, and the heterotonic rhyme has been resolved ('обрасти' — 'крестить'). In the fourth stanza, however, a return to the present brings with it a renewed uncertainty which is explicitly recognized in another 'может быть':

0232d	Я, воспевающий машину и Англию,
02f	может быть, просто,
042h	в самом обыкновенном евангелии
13f	тринадцатый апостол.

(1. 524)

The uncertainty is expressed in the ambiguous resolution of the poet hero's religious significance as a 'thirteenth apostle' (the original title of the poem), while the two-stress form is found in both even lines.

The part ends with a return to the original expression of uncertainty in a combination, now unequal, of *dol'nik* and accentual rhythm:

2121d	И когда мой голос
	похабно ухает —
1112f	от часа к часу,
	целые сутки,
0410d	может быть, Иисус Христос нюхает
112f	моей души незабудки.

(1. 528)

The 'forget-me-nots', which are perhaps scented by Christ beneath the rude noise of the poet's voice,²⁴ signify the tenderness of his soul and by extension his capacity and need for love (compare: "“Как двумя такими выпеть // и барышню, / и любовь, / и цветочек под росами?”" (l. 265)). This prepares for the return to love (and the young lady) in the next part, while the uncertainty, verbal and rhythmical, arises in the third line over the objective recognition of that tenderness by God, the ultimate symbol of universal order, and man in the figure of Christ.

Part IV (ll. 534–641)

TABLE 28

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
534)	1	—	2	3	—	3	1	2	1	Ac	6
549)	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	Hx	2
555)	—	1	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	Ac	2
557)	6	2	—	—	—	1	—	7	2	Hx	8
574)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	Hx	1
576)	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	1	1	Ac	2
580)	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	Hx	1
583)	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	Ac	1
584)	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	Hx	1
586)										'Prose'	
587)	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	Ac	2
589)										'Prose'	
591)	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	Ac	2
593)										'Prose'	
594)	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	4	1	Hx	4
601)	—	—	4	—	—	1	2	1	1	Ac	4
608)										'Prose'	
609)	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	4	4	Am4	4
615)	—	1	3	—	—	1	1	2	—	Ac	4
624)										'Prose'	
625)	3	1	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	Hx	4
638)										'Prose'	

The poet hero's attempt to find fulfilment outside love on the street has ended in failure and uncertainty, and the structural fault in the verse has not been overcome. In order to overcome this uncertainty he must return to its root cause in the original rejection by Maria and the breakdown into 'prose', and so now, in the first half of Part IV, he makes a sustained attempt to be received in love by Maria and to move from 'prose' back into 'verse', thereby restoring the integrity of his persona and verse.

The opening stanza of the part defines the situation:

1222141d	Мария! Мария! Мария! Пусти, Мария! Я не могу на улицах!
11122d (0122)	Не хочешь? Ждешь, как щеки провалятся ямкою,
131f	попробованный всеми, пресный,
222d	я приду и беззубо прошамкаю,
242f	что сегодня я “удивительно честный”.
1142/11122d	Мария, видишь — я уже начал сутулиться.

(l. 534)

The first line, in which the poet hero acknowledges his failure on the street and asks that he may be let in to make love (and verse), stands, accordingly, outside the basic abab quatrain (the ‘verse’) of the next four lines which are inhabited by Maria. The last line then returns to the hero outside, but by rhyming at a distance with the first line (‘улицах’ — ‘сутулиться’) it defines, and underlines, his need to be accepted. The basic quatrain, inhabited by Maria, refines the situation. The initial question ‘Не хочешь?’ will be repeated at the end of the passage in conclusive and unequivocal ‘prose’, but here it can be interpreted as having a transitional status because it is precisely through Maria’s acceptance that the poet hero can achieve fulfilment. The rest of the basic quatrain, a single sentence, may then echo the three-ictus anapaestic *dol’nik* which in Maiakovskii’s verse, as already in the *Tragedy*, can be associated with spiritual, romantic love. Since only the odd lines have a rhythmical form consistent with this measure (both in fact are anapaestic, but the first would have a hypermetrical stress in the anacrusis), it is only possible to suggest a rhythmical echo within accentual verse and even this is not altogether certain; the other two lines both have three stresses but are *taktovik* and accentual in rhythm, although the anacrusis and graphical division of the last line tend to support an anapaestic rhythm. In view of Maria’s character and the kind of love she might offer (‘маленький, / смиренный любёночек’ (l. 65)) the associations of such a rhythmical echo, albeit not certain, would be quite appropriate. If the echo is discounted, however, the predominance of the three-stress form still distinguishes this basic quatrain, inhabited by Maria, from the four-stress mainstream of the poet’s verse.

The poet hero finds himself forced to serenade his beloved from the street, but in order to make verse in his situation he must adopt a ready-made metrical

voice. This he now does, adopting the respectable, classical voice of hexametal verse in accordance with Maria's expectation:

0212222/ 021252m	В улицах люди жир продырявят в четырёхэтажных зобах,
022221/ 02251f 361m	высунут глазки, потертые в сорокогодовой таске, — перехихикиваться, что у меня в зубах
10221f (0221)	— опять! — черствая булка вчерашней ласки.

(l. 549)

The description of the inhospitable street in this and the next two stanzas of hexametal verse is no doubt intended to evoke Maria's sympathy, but it reads most incongruously in the respectable, hexametal voice. In this first stanza, however, the hexametal voice is only maintained for two lines: the first line is a regular seven-ictus line and the second a regular six-ictus line (the secondary stresses in the unusually formed compound numeral adjectives have been counted); the association of hexametal verse with number, which appears for the first time in these lines, will be a recurrent motif in Maiakovskii's work. But in the last two lines the only explicit mention of the poet hero himself in these three stanzas accompanies a dissolution of the grand, hexametal voice. The bathetic third line has only three stresses, while the last line has five, but the interjected 'опять!' creates a zero interval at the head of the line in preparation for an even more powerful use of interjections to come.

In the second stanza the poet's control of his adopted voice is more assured, and the alternation of clausulae switches to the fmfm scheme which is typically associated with hexametal verse:

022121f	Дождь обрыдал тротуары, лужами сжатый жулик,
011222m 311222f (31322)	мокрый, лижет улиц забитый булыжником труп а на седых ресницах — да! —
0202221m (022221)	на ресницах морозных сосулеч слезы из глаз — да! — из опущенных глаз водосточных труб.

(l. 557)

The first two lines are both regular six-ictus lines, but in the second half of the stanza the two interjected exclamations, which carry the poet hero's suppressed feelings, disrupt the metrical structure of the hexameter. In the third line the disruption is less striking because the underlying hexameter itself involves the omission of the first stress and a longer interval over the caesura, but in the last line the interjection disrupts what would otherwise be a regular Maiakovskian hexameter (see the interpretations in brackets).

Finally, in the third stanza, the poet's persona is excluded altogether, and, although the strict measure is no longer observed, the verse approaches ternary rhythm on the hexameter's *dol'nik* base:

02122f	Всех пешеходов морда дождя обсосала,
32222m	а в экипажах лощился за жирным атлетом атлет:
0222222f	лопались люди,
	проеввшись насквозь,
	и сочилось сквозь трещины сало,
0222122222m	мутной рекой с экипажей стекала вместе с иссосанной булкой животина старых котлет.

(1. 566)

Only the second line can be interpreted as a hexameter, while the first line is a shorter, five-ictus line and the last two lines are longer, seven-ictus and ten-ictus lines respectively (both divided into three); but in context this extra length, allied to the ever more regular rhythm, can be interpreted as an intensification, not a relaxation, of the adopted voice in an extreme demonstration of respectability.

At the beginning of the next stanza, having perhaps won a more sympathetic ear through the adoption of a respectable voice, the poet hero once more appeals to Maria directly:

1122122f	Мария!
(022122)	Как в зажиревшее ухо втиснуть им тихое слово?
032f	Птица
	побирается песней,
122m	поет,
	голодна и звонка,
1212042121f	а я человек, Мария,
(042121)	простой,
	выхарканный чахоточной ночью в грязную
	руку Пресни.
112f	Мария, хочешь такого?
11132222m	Пусти, Мария!
(032222)	Судорогой пальцев зажму я железное
	горло звонка!

(1. 574)

The complexity of this stanza reflects the situation in which the poet hero finds himself, caught between the need to express his own feelings and the need not to hurt Maria's. It has an embedded cabacb rhyme scheme and involves three voices, the hexameter, a three-stress form, and a form that has a transitional status between verse and 'prose'. The basic quatrain — the second, third, fourth, and sixth lines — consists of two three-stress lines and two hexameters with additional segments, while the first and fifth lines are another hexameter, also with an additional segment, and another three-stress line. The stanza

opens with the direct appeal to Maria which echoes the opening words of the part and hence reminds of the poet's situation out on the street. The appeal precedes a regular hexameter, but metrically does not form part of it; the hexameter refers back to the previous three stanzas and points out the inappropriateness of the hexametral voice ('тихое слово') on the street. The next two lines, beginning the basic quatrain, are inhabited by the hypothetical natural poet, the bird, who can get by on singing alone. In their three-stress form, as 'verse', these lines link with the basic quatrain of the opening stanza which was inhabited by Maria. But in the first half of the fourth line, in another transitional segment which precedes a narrative hexameter, the hero is again able to address Maria directly in order to contrast himself, as man, with the bird; this segment has a four-stress form but is not a metrical line, while its conjunction with the hexametral voice is marked by a zero interval. The special status of this segment, which is central to the stanza's embedded, polyphonic structure, both highlights the poet hero's statement and distinguishes his 'simple', human voice: his voice is neither naturally poetic (the bird) nor conventionally poetic (the hexameter), but is inescapably accommodated in verse form. In the hexameter itself the irregular first interval reinforces the sense and emotional charge of 'выхарканный'. After a graphical break the poet hero addresses Maria again in the pivotal line of the stanza which, though not part of the basic quatrain, is embedded in it: it rhymes with the opening, hexametral line, in its three-stress form it links with the second and third lines, while in all other respects it links with the transitional 'prose' segments. The pivotal role of this line emphasizes once more the crucial need for Maria's acceptance which alone can bring the poet hero fulfilment. This need is then immediately articulated in the final line of the stanza, both in the cry 'Пусти, Мария!' and in the narrative hexameter following in which the doorbell is rung; another irregular first interval in the hexameter again reinforces the sense and emotional charge of 'судорогой'.

The very complexity of the poet hero's situation demands a clarification and resolution. So he follows up his ringing of the bell, politely rendered in a hexameter, with more strident calls for admittance and an attempt to force entry, as it were, into the four-stress form of his verse:

1	Мария!
111d	Звереют улиц выгоны.
1121f	На шее ссадиной пальцы давки.
1	Открой!
0	Больно!
02d	Видишь — натыканы
1111f	в глаза из дамских шляп булавки!

(1. 586)

the words, and for the first time in this part a heterosyllabic rhyme is used ('ненастье' — 'династия').

At the end of these two stanzas, however, there is a renewed breakdown into 'prose':

11 Мария, ближе!
(1. 608)

This call for Maria to come closer suggests that the poet hero's change of voice to his own four-stress, accentual form may not have advanced his cause. So in the next stanza he moderates his voice into the rhythm of the amphibrachic tetrameter, a measure described by Maiakovskii in 'Kak delat' stikhi' as 'придуманый для шопотка' (XII, 84):

1222d В раздетом бесстыдстве,
 в боящейся дрожи ли,
1222f но дай твоих губ неисцветшую прелесть:
1222d я с сердцем ни разу до мая не дожили,
1222f а в прожитой жизни
 лишь сотый апрель есть.
(1. 609)

In fact, as indicated in the stanza following ('Поэт сонеты поет Тиане' (1. 616)), the poet has adopted the voice of Severianin from his poem 'Tiana', a typical Severianin serenade written in this measure.²⁵ Severianin has already been associated with ternary rhythm and perhaps amphibrachic metre, but although 'flowering', for example, is a familiar motif in his poetry, the language is unmistakably that of Maiakovskii. As ever, the assumption of a voice primarily takes metrico-rhythmical form, extending here even to the reproduction of Severianin's characteristic symmetrical line structure and the compound rhyme ('дрожи ли' — 'дожили'; 'прелесть' — 'апрель есть') which he favoured and out of which he appeared in Part III.

From what we know of Maria's (the Marias') character and taste in the poem she would be likely to respond favourably to Severianin's voice: 'Она шарахается автомобильных гудков. // Любит звоночки коночек' (1. 67). But although the absence of a 'prose' segment before the next stanza suggests that she has drawn closer again, the assumption of Severianin's voice is now rejected because it does not express what the poet hero is and wishes to be accepted as:

12121f Мария!
 (1121) Поэт сонеты поет Тиане,
1230/10130m а я —
 весь из мяса,
 человек весь —
03213/ тело твое просто прошу,
 020213f как просят христиане —

0211m

“хлеб наш насущный
даждь нам днесь”.

(l. 615)

This rejection of Severianin’s voice is phrased very similarly to the earlier contrast with the bird (compare ‘Птица / побирается песней, //... а я человек, Мария, / простой’ (l. 576)), but it is expressed in a different formal context. After the initial apostrophe, which would seem to have a transitional status once more, the main body of the first line, referring back to Severianin, and the last line, taken from the Lord’s prayer, frame the stanza in the four-stress form and *dol’nik* rhythm (it is just possible that the rhythmical form of the main body of the first line may be intended to recall the iambic tetrameter with feminine caesura, which served as Severianin’s voice in the *Tragedy*). The second line is a four-stress or perhaps five-stress line with one or two zero intervals, but the third line, which states the poet hero’s ‘simple’, human need in love cannot be placed in the four-stress frame: it is a five-stress or six-stress line with or without a zero interval depending on the stressing, or not, of ‘твое’. This stanza, therefore, would seem to refine the earlier statement of the human condition (ll. 574–85): it suggests that the ‘simple’, human voice in love cannot be sublimated metrically in any set form or scheme.

The poet hero now restates his ‘simple’ need in ‘prose’:

11

Мария — дай!

(l. 624)

The breakdown into ‘prose’ indicates a distance still from Maria but at the same time the tone and import of what is said promise imminent gratification, and the final stanza suggests that she has indeed given herself:

11221212m

Мария!

(0221212)

Имя твое я боюсь забыть,
как поэт боится забыть

12212222f

какое-то
в муках ночей рожденное слово,
величием равное богу.

02122m

Тело твое

21322233/

я буду беречь и любить,
как солдат,

213222113f

обрубленный войною,
ненужный,
ничей,

бережет свою единственную ногу.

(l. 625)

Although Maria may have given her body, the poet hero’s need has extended beyond casual gratification to love. But his retreat into the hexametral voice indicates that he is now no nearer to Maria, no nearer to acceptance as himself,

- 0212f сердце возьму,
слезами окапав,
1223f нести,
как собака,
которая в конуру
1232f несет
переехannую поездом лапу.
(l. 642)

The verse has returned to the four-stress form, in *dol'nik* and then *taktovik* rhythm, but the structural fault arising out of the breakdown into 'prose' has not been overcome. So the verse will be moved once more by the process of alternate consolidation and deformation towards a manifestation of its inherent instability; now, however, as the poem approaches its conclusion, the process is accelerated and compressed, with shifts occurring from stanza to stanza or even within stanzas. At the same time the poet hero turns to the focal point of much of the poem's imagery, the figure of God (love, social revolution, and language have all been presented in religious terms), for he can only overcome his rejection at its possible first cause in a divine, or universal, order.

In a pattern which recurs in both *Chelovek* and *Pro eto* the poet hero now projects into the future through a thousand repetitions of what has already happened:

- 0121d Кровью сердца дорогу радую,
0221d липнет цветами у пыли кителя.
0214f Тысячу раз опляшет Иродиадой
0113d солнце землю —
голову Крестителя.
(l. 651)

In this and the next two stanzas the verse gradually becomes less regular, with a decrease in the number of four-stress lines and the appearance of accentual rhythm and heterosyllabic rhyme, until the poet hero arrives alongside God:

- 140m — Послушайте, господин бог!
(l. 665)

This jocular tone adopted towards the symbol of higher order is continued into the fifth stanza in which the movement towards irregularity reaches a rhythmical extreme, with accentual rhythm in three of the four lines:

- 0213m Как вам не скушно
в облачный кисель
2243m ежедневно обмакивать раздобревшие глаза?
1134m Давайте — знаете —
устройте карусель
1431m на дереве изучения добра и зла!
(l. 666)

In the next stanza, however, a sudden rhythmical consolidation occurs and the verse shifts into *dol'nik* rhythm in three of the four lines:

2212m	Вездесущий, ты будешь в каждом шкапу,
1221d	и вина такие расставим по столу,
322m	чтоб захотелось пройтись в ки-ка-пу
031d	змурому Петру Апостолу.

(l. 672)

Beneath the jocular tone there is still a positive intent, so in the final stanza of this penultimate passage divine acceptance, like Maria's, is at last put to the test over the crucial matter of sexual relations:

1211/1220d	А в рае опять поселим Евочек:
211f	прикажи, —
	сегодня ночью ж
1122d	со всех бульваров красивейших девочек
322/0222f	я наташу тебе.
	Хочешь?
	Не хочешь?

(l. 676)

Dol'nik rhythm is now maintained throughout the stanza, given the more likely, colloquial stressing 'поселим', but on the other hand the graphical integrity of the metrical line is broken (in this edition, though not in all others) for only the second time in the poem — the first occasion was at the breakdown into madness in Part III. The second, negative question has previously been put both within and without the stanza fabric of the verse, while here the repeated rhyme ('ночью ж' — 'Хочешь' — 'Не хочешь'), in conjunction with the graphical lay-out, would seem to give it a peripheral status, almost outside the verse; this infers a negative response in preparation for the poem's finale.

Part IV (ll. 683–724)

TABLE 30

	Long	5	4	3	Short	Ac	Tk	Dk	Ty	Form	Lines
683)	—	—	4	4	—	—	6	2	—	Ac	8
693)	—	—	5	3	—	1	2	5	1		8
704)	—	—	3	—	1	1	2	—	—		4
709)										'Prose'	
710)	—	—	2	2	—	—	2	2	1	Ac	4
717)	—	—	3	1	—	2	—	2	—		4

The final passage of the poem follows on directly from the one before, but, with a negative divine response inferred, the tone is now potentially hostile

rather than co-operative. Following the near-breakdown into ‘prose’ at the end of the preceding passage there is a return towards the middle ground of *taktovik* rhythm in the first two stanzas of this passage, but in 3343 and 3444 stress schemes:

132f	Мотаешь головою, кудластый?
021m	Супишь седую бровь?
1232f	Ты думаешь — этот, за тобою, крыластый, 032m знает, что такое любовь?
112f	Я тоже ангел, я был им —
0322m	сахарным барашком выглядывал в глаз,
1311f	но больше не хочу дарить кобылам
1131m	из севрской мўки изваянных ваз.

(l. 683)

The exhaustion of the poet hero’s capacity for endless replay heralds the poem’s finale, and an accusatory tone in the third stanza gives way to open hostility in the fourth as he turns to the negative fulfilment of revenge:

2221m	Всемогущий, ты выдумал пару рук,
0322m	сделал, что у каждого есть голова, —
2232m	отчего ты не выдумал, чтоб было без мук
222m	целовать, целовать, целовать?!
1112f	Я думал — ты всеильный божище,
1212f	а ты недоучка, крохотный божик.
045/0125f	Видишь, я нагибаюсь, из-за голенища
211f	достаю сапожный ножик.

(l. 693)

The shift towards *dol'nik* rhythm in the third stanza (within a more regular stress scheme) continues in the fourth, but at the same time the third line of this stanza is accentual in rhythm. In the fifth stanza the hostility reaches a climax and the verse reverts to a more consistent irregularity in *taktovik* and accentual rhythm:

1312m	Крыластые прохвосты!
	Жмитесь в раю!
1132f	Ерошьте перышки в испуганной тряске!
2124m	Я тебя, пропавшего ладаном, раскрою
13f	отсюда до Аляски!

(l. 704)

This short, two-stress final line is followed by a breakdown into ‘prose’ as the poet hero, having taken himself into opposition to divine order, calls for admission:

