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Edmund Heier

Comparative Literary Studies: Lermontov, Turgenev, Goncharov, Tolstoj, Blok - Lavater, Lessing, Schiller, Grillparzer

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PREFACE

The bulk of this publication appeared earlier in somewhat different format as articles in various books and periodicals. I am most grateful to the copyright holders (editors and publishers) for kindly granting permission to reproduce in this collection the following studies:

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2. "Lavater's System of Physiognomy as a Mode of Characterization in Lermontov's Prose," *Arcadia*, VI (Bonn, 1971), pp. 267-282 (Walter de Gruyter GMBH+CO.KG).

3. "The Second *Hero of Our Time*," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, XI, No. 1 (Madison, 1967), pp. 35-43 (AATSEEL).

4. "Principles of Lessing's *Laokoon* and some of its Exponents in Russia," *Festschrift für Erwin Wedel* (München, 1991), 93-110 (Hieronymus Buchreproduktion GmbH).

5. "Zu I. A. Gončarovs Humanitätsideal in Hinsicht auf die Gesellschaftsprobleme Russlands," *Ivan A. Gončarov - Leben, Werk, Wirkung*, Hrsg. Peter Thiergen. Bausteine zur Slavischen Philologie... Reihe A: Slavische Forschungen. Neue Folge Band 12 (72). Böhlau Verlag, Köln, 1994, pp. 45-71 (Böhlau Verlag GmbH+Cie).

6. "Duty and Inclination in Turgenev's 'Faust'," *Crisis and Commitment: Studies in Honour of J. W. Dyck*. Ed. J. Whiton and H. Loewen. Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1983, pp. 78-86 (U. of Waterloo Press).

7. "The Function of Music in Turgenev's Aesthetics," *Anzeiger für Slavische Philologie*, XIX (1989), 109-26 (Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz).

8. "Principles of Impressionism in the Aesthetics of I. S. Turgenev," *Poetica*

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9. "Schiller's *Die Räuber* in the Light of Tolstoj's Concept of Art," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (Dec. 1986), 585-599 (Canadian Comparative Literature Association).

10. "Tolstoj and the Evangelical Revival among Russian Aristocracy," *Russian Literature*, 1 (The Hague, 1971), pp. 28-48 (Subsidiary Rights Dpt. Elsevier Science, Oxford).

11. "Grillparzers 'Ahnfrau' in Rußland: A. Blok," *Comparative Literature*, XXXIII, No. 3 (Oregon, 1971), pp. 193-208 (American Comparative Literature Association).

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Edmund Heier

Waterloo
November 2000

I. The Literary Portrait as a Mode of Characterization

The term "literary portrait" or "portrait littéraire" has come to mean different things to different people. Indeed, it has assumed such a variety of meanings, dependent upon fluctuating literary orientations and styles, that it is practically impossible to justify all the concepts which it has come to embody. The essence of portraiture is to point out the major features which characterize a personality as is indicated from its derivation: Latin "protrahere" and old French "pourtraire" -- to draw forth. The realization, however, of the drawing forth of the characteristic features of a literary figure can be accomplished in a variety of manners. Small wonder then, that the lack of a well-defined formal concept of the literary portrait as a device of characterization has frequently led to misconceptions.

Although the literary portrait aimed at delineating character has been employed as early as Homer, the cultivation of the literary portrait in modern times is customarily ascribed to seventeenth-century France. It suffices to refer to the collection of the *Divers Portraits* (1659), G. de Scudery's *Le grand Cyrus* (1649-1653) featuring an entire gallery of portraits. Here each portrait encompasses a full-length biography. This form of the literary portrait was so assiduously cultivated that it emerged as a literary genre in itself.[1] Apart from these full-length biographies, the term "literary portrait" is used to denote a character's psychological entity, a practice which has triumphed in modern times. Henry James' novel *The portrait of a Lady* (1884) and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) are two striking examples. Also the term "literary portrait" is applied to collections of literary critical essays on various writers as we find them in Gorkij's *Literaturnye portrety* or in Saint-Beuve's *Portraits littéraires* (1862-64). Consequently one ought not to be surprised when one looks for a definition of the "literary portrait" in a dictionary of literary terms to encounter instead simply a reference to Saint-Beuve's *Portraits littéraires*.[2] A comparable incompleteness and confusion is the identification of the literary portrait with the Theophrastian or the La Bruyèrian character-sketch so popular in sixteenth and seventeenth century France and England.[3]

The literary portrait of our concern is a device of characterization within a literary work the function of which is to delineate character via external appearance. It is a portrait drawn in words -- one in which the writer consciously introduces his characters by way of exterior description in order to suggest or reveal inner qualities. The presentation of the bodily appearance of a character, particularly if it is accompanied by an interpretation, becomes

then the application of physiognomy, the art of revealing character traits via the physical features. As in a successful portrait painting, the physical features in the literary portrait must reveal definite character traits for otherwise what is the purpose of the exterior description? Since the countenance is that part of man's appearance by which he reveals himself to others and most clearly shows his character traits, the face receives particular attention in the portrait. By isolating a personality and so to say framing him momentarily within a novel, a writer allows his reader to obtain a clearer picture of the object portrayed. The definite impression which is thereby created, aided possibly by commentary of interpretation, leads the reader to envision the character as he, the author, wishes him to be conceived. Goethe's words on this point are memorable: "the important person whom we otherwise conceive in the midst of his environ presents himself here [in the portrait] singularly or as detached as before a mirror."[4]

Because of the great affinity of the literary portrait and portrait painting one should theoretically be able to establish a parallel evolution. In practice, however, this is neither possible nor is it the aim of this brief discourse. The problem of parallels lies in the fact that the historical style-concept, the categories of portraiture in painting and literature have not always evolved with the same speed and at the same time.[5] Moreover, strictly speaking one can not speak of a historical development of the literary portrait. Already in Homer we encounter the great variety of portraiture, the detailed physiognomic description down to meagre suggestion, types all of which subsequently reoccurred in European literatures of every epoch. Thus one should speak of a fluctuation of the various types of literary portraiture rather than of its historical development. Nonetheless a comparison in general terms may reveal how the aesthetic norms of portrait painting were upheld in the literary portrait and how at a given period one type was more fashionable than the other. For example, the gradual transition from primitive presentation in painting and the plastic arts of the Middle Ages to highly sophisticated portraiture with distinct features during the Renaissance can be observed also in the literary portraiture of that time. Similarly the comparable flowering of the realistic portrait painting of the nineteenth century found its parallel in the "votaries of realism, the grandsons of Balzac", to use a Henry James expression.[6] And when the technique of abstraction finally became fashionable among modern painters this kind of portraiture (although skilfully drawn with only a characteristic line or two) also became the fad in literature. But with this method the literary portrait as a direct meaningful device of characterization loses its function.

Since the advent of the novel, the literary portrait, as a device of characterization has manifested itself in a variety of forms which in turn gave rise to many differing definitions of its essential nature. These various manifestations depended not only on the currently popular literary genres, literary movements, and styles, but even more so on the writer's intention, his power of observation, his art of literary expression, and the relative popularity of physiognomy in his time. Consequently, one finds highly sophisticated detailed descriptions running to several pages in the works of Balzac and Dickens or simply meagre suggestions as in the works of the symbolists and other modernists.[7]

But when we reach the stage of mere signals and meagre suggestions by which the portrait is to take shape, the reader depends on his own aesthetic sensitivities; he is left with his own imagination to complete the full portrait. Although this manner may initiate a highly sophisticated aesthetic process in the reader's mind, one no longer is dealing with the portrait created by the author. If the literary portrait is a meaningful art of the presentation of men then as such it demands the full attention and concentration both of its creator and perceiver and should not be left to a possible felicitous accidental completion by the reader. True, the reader, as well as the author, has full freedom in the creation of the character. But in the case of limited presentation where the author's contribution is but a suggestion, the portrait is basically derived from the reader's own personal idea. Under these conditions at any rate the author cannot claim the portrait as his own; it is neither a measure of his descriptive powers nor can he expect uniform reactions. But this is the author's choice and depends on his intention, the merits of which he attaches to the aesthetic reading in relation to full and partial portrayal of character, i.e. whether he wishes to create a specific image of a figure or leave this creation to the reader's imagination.

In contrast to the direct overt portrait which aims to create a specific visual impression, one may speak of the literary portrait produced by indirect means. These may involve the delineation of character through action, exposition, confession, dialogue, contrast, opinion of others, dramatic situations, elements which are essential in creating psychological verisimilitude in the character portrayed. Although this depiction may be highly artistic and, indeed, quite successful in exposing the psychological and moral traits of a character -- the ultimate goal of any characterization -- this method once again leaves specific inference to the reader. Strictly speaking, the literary portrait requires the depiction of both moral and physical traits; it is, so to say, a portrait produced in one sitting. If one were not to accept this principle, one would encounter

the literary portrait in any form of literature which involves human beings. From the various elements of characterization any reader could and, indeed, does compose his own mosaic-like portrait of the character. This may be what the author, after all, desires. But then again, the portrait is not a conscious stylistic creation of the writer and as such does not constitute a literary portrait as a direct device of characterization.

Those who readily apply the term literary portrait to such indirect devices of characterization have failed to consider that literary portraiture has a tradition: that writers in the past have viewed themselves as painters with words; and that the original designation "portrait" in painting was applied to exterior portrayal. The primary aim of external depiction both in painting and in literature was to capture permanent characteristics which tell us something of the inner qualities of the person portrayed. As such the portrait was simultaneously the reproduction of the external physical appearance and a character sketch. Whatever the manner of presentation one ought not to forget that the literary portrait with its visual imagery should not become an aim in itself; it is only a means of character depiction whereby the external description is only of secondary importance.[8]

The portrait becomes meaningless at the moment the external presentation is devoid of any hints as to the inner qualities of the subject. The moment the description of a figure lacks the essential ingredient, the elements of physiognomy, it ceases to function as a portrait in the true sense of the word. The expository device for the presentation of character was systematically and effectively used in their historical narratives by Tacitus and Plutarch, and especially by Suetonius in his *De Vita Caesarum*. These writers no doubt had a lasting impact on the continuous cultivation of the literary portrait in subsequent epochs. In antiquity the literary portrait was clearly defined and demanded the depiction of physical and moral traits to be executed in the manner of a set piece. To avoid the stereotyped static portrait, Plutarch, for example, employed in his description pathognomy: mimicry, gesture, speech and voice of the characters. He defended the physiognomic concept of the constant interaction of the inner and the outer man and held that the outer features reflect inner qualities: "It is the souls which fabricates its body". This principle of the total unity of man's existence is also to be observed in Suetonius' description of his emperors when by emphasizing certain aspects of physique both the virtues and the vices of a character were revealed. The numerous allusions to physiognomy among the classical authors and the widely circulated handbooks of physiognomy, regular manuals containing laws of interpretations of character from physical appearance, are testimony that

physiognomy enjoyed a far greater appeal within the Roman Empire than has popularly been granted to it.[9]

Although the portrait in the historical narrative retained its link with physiognomy, the use of physiognomy as an essential component of portraiture in "belles-lettres" fluctuated greatly. The application of physiognomic principles which by and large determined content and form of the literary portrait was no doubt the result of the prevailing concept of man as a harmonious unity. The belief in the constant interaction between the physical and the spiritual and that the physical is capable of revealing inner disposition was one of the major causes for the us of it in the description of character. It stand to reason that in a period when the tenets of physiognomy were in vogue writers are more inclined to use it. This proclivity may be observed when the physiognomic theories of Aristotle, Dalla Porta[10] and J. C. Lavater were most fashionable. Of special interest are the efforts of the Swiss physiognomist Lavater who set forth his view in his four volumes of *Physiognomische Fragmente...* (1775-1778). He not only reversed the declining interest in physiognomy but exerted a definite influence on the manner of character portrayal in the writings of such authors as M. G. Lewis, Dickens, Lermontov, G. Sand, Stendhal, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Balzac, Goncharov, Tolstoj, Turgenev, to mention only a few.[11] Along with M. G. Lewis and Balzac, Senancour defends Lavater's system as "the only true science for recognizing character".[12] Physiognomy provided the novelists with a device which enabled them to create distinctive realistic personalities and not merely types. Indeed, in physiognomy the novelists found a tangible support for their realistic art.

Conversely, whenever physiognomy became suspect the presentation of man through physical description declined and with it the literary portrait in its traditional use. Ultimately the use of physiognomy is a matter of the individual writer's conviction and of his idea of the trustworthiness of this science. Two writers of the same period, when physiognomy was much in vogue, Lermontov and Pushkin, may be contrasted. Lermontov used direct physiognomic descriptions in presenting his heroes, Vadim and Pechorin.[13] Pushkin, who owned two French editions of Lavater's physiognomic studies, rejected direct descriptions and employed instead the indirect means of characterization. The versatile Voltaire was not only suspicious of physiognomy but questioned any writer's ability to describe directly so complicated a manner as a man's character, a position the very opposite of Saint-Simon's who in his *Mémoires* had revived the physiognomic portrayal of the Roman historians. Like William Hogarth in the *Analysis of Beauty*

(1753) so Fielding in his 'Essay on the Knowledge of the Character of Men' (1743) accepted the theory that the human face is capable of revealing character, yet he cautioned his readers lest they judge a person solely on appearance. Owing chiefly to a lack of skill in the observer, Fielding asserts: "the truth of the matter is, nature doth really imprint sufficient marks in the countenance, to inform an accurate and discerning eye: but as such is the property of few...." Accordingly Fielding does not require his readers excessively to search for the correct physiognomic and pathognomic meaning in his characters as does for example his contemporary Tobias Smollett. To Fielding the more reliable guide to the knowledge of men is action: "By their fruits you shall know them is a saying of great wisdom...."[14]

Since physiognomy is intimately linked with traditional portraiture, the problem of tracing its use is present with every writer who indulges in the method of characterization by description. Who can deny that Chaucer's pilgrims, especially the miller and the wife of Bath are not drawn with a conscious use of physiognomy?[15] But even if one encounters a detailed physical account one cannot state with certainty that a writer has been influenced by a specific physiognomic theory. Though a writer may be acquainted with a particular theory, it is unlikely that he would ever adhere strictly to the stereotype formulae in a physiognomic handbook. Since physiognomy is based on observation, keen as it may have been, there is nothing to prevent the creative writer from adding his own physiognomic data. And if a writer does select from physiognomic stock that which fits his purpose he seldom gives his reader a chance to peek into his laboratory.

Although traditional physiognomy has fallen into ill repute and has become part of the study of physiology, practical physiognomy and its use in portraiture is as much in vogue today as ever. It suffices to note that upon meeting a stranger we are immediately impressed either favourably or unfavourably by what we conjecture his temper and talents to be. In fact, practical physiognomy, born of natural principles long before a specific term for it was coined,[16] is man's common property and when coupled with an author's power of keen observation, provides him with sufficient knowledge to produce a literary portrait full of physiognomic tags. Unscientific as this procedure may be, we nonetheless are led to judge character by bodily appearance. Indeed, just how scientific is Shakespeare when he uses some two thousand animal comparisons in the portrayal of his characters?[17] Though "unscientific", animal physiognomy has been popular among men since the time of the ancients and has been a fruitful device for revealing human character. Whatever the origin of physiognomy in literary portraiture may be,

it is meaningful only if it is based on the principle of constant interaction between the inner and the outer man; only if there is a correlation between the action and behaviour and the inner qualities revealed or suggested by the external appearance. As such it is a conscious effort on the part of the writer to reveal psychological disposition via exterior features. It is possible, however, that the writer employs intentionally the inverse method of characterization in which our first opinion of a character is soon radically altered; here then there is no harmony between appearance and subsequent behaviour.

Although physiognomy is viewed here as a major factor in the shaping of the literary portrait, one should make at least a cursory reference to other significant aspects which determined the function, form and content of literary portraiture. In a comparative survey of the literary portrait from the ancients to the modern, one may distinguish basically two types: the idealized and the realistic portrait. In either case the scheme consisted of the physical appearance, one in idealized — the other in realistic — individualized form. Moreover both aim at disclosing disposition and aptitudes of character. The success and verisimilitude of such presentations of disposition in the portrait are determined by the concept of the human being as a harmonious entity, by the credibility of physiognomy, by contemporary taste and by the cult of a specific ideal of beauty. In seventeenth century France, for example, the literary portrait reflected the idealized moral concept of beauty of the new society. Hyperbolic metaphors and comparisons predominated. Individualism and the personal aspects of a person were neglected in favour of the pattern of "perfections", in favour of the typified portrait of the "honnête homme" which was postulated by the new code of the "société polie".[18] But even in this idealized portrayal there is an attempt to correlate appearance with the subsequent ideal behaviour of the character; once again the principle of the harmonious union of man is upheld.

The transfer of the techniques of painting to the literary medium or, rather, the attempt to achieve the effects of paintings in words initiated a lasting debate over the process of metamorphosis among the fine arts. Although Horace's formula "ut pictura poesis" continued to enjoy considerable measure of success and caused Diderot to proclaim "in every painter one can discover a poet and in every poet a painter", some critics periodically questioned the validity of word painting. Word painting and extensive descriptions, the very essence of the literary portrait, were the object of attacks by Vasari, L. da Vinci, Pope and especially Lessing. Lessing defined the boundaries of painting and poetry in his famous *Laokoon* (1766), which can be read as a

discussion of the aesthetic principles governing full detailed portrayal as opposed to mere suggestions.[19]

In outlining the province of painting, Lessing asserts that the painter's task is to create a visual image, a picture in which everything is said simultaneously. The poet on the other hand has to contend with time; each descriptive element has to follow another. In order to achieve an effect similar to that achieved by the painter, the poet must attempt to say everything at once. This total instantaneous impact can be approximated only by avoiding successive description and concentrating on one striking quality, one significant aspect of a character. The selection of this all-important aspect suffices to trigger our fantasy which in turn completes the suggested image. "The elements of fantasy for which the poet is to create do not need exact and detailed descriptions."[20] Lessing refutes the application of the principle of word painting and cites the lengthy description of the enchanting Alcine from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* in order to show the visual ineffectiveness of the enumerative description of the literary portrait. Conversely he refers us to Homer's beautiful Helen, whose beauty is actually never directly described, least of all did he attempt to present her in portrait form. Homer, instead, relates the effect which her beauty had upon the Trojan men at the moment she stepped into their midst. It is this kind of portrayal, portrayal through effects, through psychological reflex, which is, in the opinion of Lessing, the proper domain of literature. A similar idea is expressed by George Meredith when he has Diana say in *Diana of the Crossways*: "The art of the pen (we write in darkness) is to rouse the inward vision instead of labouring with the drop-scene brush, as if it were to the eye; because our flying minds cannot contain a protracted description. That is why the poets, who spring imagination with a word or a phrase, paint lasting pictures." Although Meredith attempted to adhere to his theory, in actual practice he resorted to the drawing of lengthy portraits with the most minute particulars.

Although Lessing's protest against excessively detailed description in European literature provoked a re-examination of poetic practices, a strict adherence to his principles would have meant the deathblow to any direct literary portraiture. In outlining the sphere of poetry and painting as rigidly as he did he unwittingly imposed certain restrictions upon the creative process. Lessing who had formulated his theory on the practice of Homer could have pointed out that Homer employed also a variety of other modes of depiction. The method employed by Homer in presenting Helen was to him at the moment, and for his purpose, the most effective. On other occasions he must have felt that the descriptive method, the portrayal of external

appearance, was more effective as in the case of Thersites whose physical characteristics are described in detail. Indeed, a close reading reveals also that Homer employed here a physiognomic description, that there is a definite correlation between the ugly physical appearance and the evil behaviour of the Greek soldier. Thus, the choice of method of presentation should remain a matter for the poet to decide. In the words of Victor Hugo "in literature we recognize no rules and no models, or to be more correct, there are no rules other than the laws of nature which alone govern the arts."[21]

While Lessing's treatise questioned the literal interpretation of Horace's formula, for many writers word painting remained a favourite device. The works of the great novelists of the nineteenth century like Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Dickens, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Turgenev and Tolstoj amply illustrate that the great experiment of borrowing from the other arts remained a continuous process particularly when they sought to create the effect of visualization. Among many writers, especially those who were also talented in painting, the boundaries between the two arts had become so vague that William Hogarth, the painter poet of the previous century with his visualized literary themes on canvas could have served as a model.

The creation of a picture easily comprehended by the eye was and remained the primary concern in the representation of men. The value of the sense of sight continued to receive proper recognition as a major source of imagination and aesthetic appreciation. In the words of G. C. Lichtenberg "where there is no clear image there can be no imagination" or "only ignorant people do not judge from exterior appearance; the real mystery of life is to be found in the things we see and not in the unseen."[22] In principles of this kind we find the reason why the emphasis is placed on the visual image. To create, however, a picture in clear perceptual form, one easily comprehended by the eye, the artist not only has to apply the principle of framing but he also has to select the most propitious moment. Neither the painter nor the writer can exhaustively present a body in all its minute details. The craftsman has to sift and sort from masses of material — he has to choose features and present them in such a manner so as to establish identity by visual means without smothering the reader's imagination. Thus the detailed portrayal is abandoned for the sake of a depiction of characteristic elements which are typical and readily observable. A case in point in an extreme form is the symbol which leads to the recognition of the general via the specific. In the selection and presentation of symbolic minutiae we encounter the basic creative process of any art, and with it the major principle of portraiture. Within this framework the writer, like the painter, may emphasize

characteristic features and thus produce the specific which he wishes his character to display. What varies, however, is the manner of execution, the means to achieve the effect of painting which in turn accounts in part for the great diversity as to content and form within literary portraiture.

With the flourishing of the novel form, and the desire to portray man in his totality in a realistic individualized way, the descriptive method was indeed the most suitable one. Description in novelistic character portraiture of the nineteenth century was, however, not a perpetuation of the conventional methods of the previous centuries. It is true that in both styles we find the enumeration of exterior parts; however, there is a major difference. The mere enumeration of exterior details does not necessarily create a more concrete image of a personality. It suffices to cite the beginning of the portrait of Joseph Andrews as an example of non-individualized portraiture: "He was of the highest degree of middle stature. His limbs were put together with great elegance and no less strength ... His hair was of a nut brown colour, and was displayed in wanton ringlets down his back. His forehead was high, his eyes dark, and as full of sweetness as of fire. His nose a little inclined to the Roman. His teeth white and even. His lips full, red, and soft. His beard was only rough on his chin and upper lip ...". It matters little whether this type of portrait is satiric or not. The fact remains that it is a stereotyped description which tells us nothing of the character.

This type of conventional idealized portrayal can be encountered in most European literatures. It is created according to a codified pattern and suits many a personage. It is pictorial indeed, but hardly individualized and without any characteristics of a realistic appearance, at least not in comparison to later developments. The visual ineffectiveness of this type of static portraiture the content of which is but a catalogue of human parts is aptly summarized by the painter Delacroix. In speaking of the limitation of the writer's medium in relation to that of the painter, he stated that to write the word "hand" is not the same as to see a hand either in painted or sculpted form. To convey, however, the image of the hand of the painter, the writer had no other choice but to resort to the description of colour, shape and form and the effect these exert. But even then his creation cannot evoke the same response as the painter's.[23]

The literary portraits of writers like Balzac, Dickens and Tolstoj do not only contain distinctive visual qualities but also the elements of effect which the features of the character produce, an interpretation and commentary which differentiate them from the stereotyped descriptions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Tolstoj, one of the great masters of the literary portrait

which contains both physical and psychological traits of his characters revealed his own approach when he stated that "it seems to me that one should not only describe a person's appearance but also the effect it has upon us."[24] The effect, however, is the result of a physiognomic analysis of the physical appearance of the literary figure.

The ultimate achievement of word painting is to be found in the literary portrait by Balzac. In his attempt to achieve the effect of the painter, Balzac sought the most visual and plastic words possible for the presentation of his characters. Balzac recognized the advantage of the portrait painter who can convey the totality instantaneously while he, the writer, is forced to present his portrait in a temporally isolated succession of details. "The painter has colours for his portraits, colours which cannot be conveyed by any words. The essence of the face, its expression — this in itself is a mystery which can only be fully apprehended by the eye."[25] Thus it is the desire to create a visual image which accounts for the long description of his portraits. The lengthy descriptions, however, are constantly interspersed with commentaries, with explanations of why a certain expression prevails on a given face, and why the particular effect. His are physiognomic portraits, in that he reveals inner qualities via the physical parts. An example from *The Blind Clarinet Player* may illustrate Balzac's method as contrasted to that of Fielding:

> Imagine a plaster mask of Dante, lit up by the red glow of the *quinquet* lamp and crowned with a forest of silverwhite hair. The bitter, sorrowful expression of this magnificent head was intensified by blindness, for thought gave a new life to the dead eyes; it was as if a scorching light came forth from them, the product of one single, incessant desire, itself inscribed in vigorous lines upon a prominent brow, scored with wrinkles, like the courses of stone in an old wall .... There was something great and despotic in this old Homer keeping within himself an Odyssey doomed to oblivion. It was such real greatness that it still triumphed over its abject condition, a despotism so full of life that it dominated his poverty.
>
> None of the violent passions which lead a man to good as well as evil, and make of him a convict or a hero, were wanting in that grandly hewn, lividly Italian face. The whole was overshadowed by grizzled eyebrows which cast into shade the deep hollows beneath; one trembled lest one should see the light of thought reappear in them, as one fears to see brigands armed with torches

> and daggers come to the mouth of a cave. A lion dwelt within that cage of flesh, a lion whose rage was exhausted in vain against the iron of its bars. The flame of despair had sunk quenched into its ashes, the lava had grown cold; but its channels, its destructions, a little smoke, bore evidence to the violence of the eruption and the ravages of the fire. *These ideas revealed in the man's appearance were as burning in his soul as they were cold upon his face*. [ital. mine].

Reacting against Lessing's idea with regard to the limitation of word painting in literature, Balzac in his attempt to rival the painter has indeed gone to the other extreme. Whether the lengthy portrait descriptions add aesthetically to his work is another question. The fact remains, however, that he had a lasting impact on the literary portrait of subsequent novelists. It has to be noted, however, that few imitated slavishly his lengthy description. What emerged in European literature was rather a portrait which oscillated between the two extremes of Lessing's concept and that of Balzac. In the final analysis what emerged was a portrait in moderate form. But no matter what method prevailed, the overall concern was the visual presentation; to create a concrete visual image in clear perceptual form. Here then we have again the application of the principles of the visual arts to the literary medium.

This principle of specific personal portrayal of an individual with all his virtues and faults reached its zenith in the novel of the nineteenth century. By reintroducing the portrayal from a physiognomic point of view as practised among the ancients the literary portrait changed its content in that it moved from the idealized sketch of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to a more realistic objective presentation. The great masters of the realistic period no longer adhered to an ideal but rather endeavoured to depict distinct personal physical traits with an obvious psychological concomitant. And should one not look for the acme of the literary portrait among the recognized masters of this device: Dickens, Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, Tolstoj, and even more so for a possible definition of the literary portrait?

Guy de Maupassant's observation on the art of literary portraiture is based on the achievements of the great masters of his time. His concept coincides with that of the ancients as he demands that appearance be described and the inner man either suggested through external traits or by direct expository statement. He says of Flaubert's teaching in the prefatory essay to *Pierre et Jean*: "Show me that grocer or that door-keeper, their pose, their entire

physical appearance together with their facial expression and moral nature in such a manner that I could not possible mistake them for another grocer or another door-keeper." Only in this spirit — the spirit of organic unity of inner and outer man — can the literary portrait function as a meaningful device of characterization. And there is no reason to deviate from the original concept of the ancients. Plato has Socrates say at the end of *Phaedrus*, "Beloved Pan ... give me beauty in the inward soul", but he also adds "and may the outward and inward man be at one."[26]

NOTES

1. P Ganter, *Das literarische Porträt in Frankreich im 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1939); G. Lanson, *L'Art de la Prose* (Paris, 1909); A. Le Breton, *Le roman au 17e siècle* (Paris, 1890); A. Franz, *Das literarische Porträt in Frankreich im Zeitalter Richelieus und Mazarins* (Leipzig, 1905); V. Cousin, *La Société française au 17e siècle* (Paris, 1905).

2. With the exception of the Russian *Literaturnaja Entsiklopedija* (Moskva, 1935), XI, pp. 152-155, no dictionary of literary terms defines the literary portrait as a device of characterization. They either omit it or link it with the character-sketch — but even the Russian definition fails to mention the essential elements in the portrait.

3. B. Boyce, *The Theophrastian Character in England* (Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); La Bruyère, *Les Caractères* (Paris, 1894); E. Ch. Baldwin, "La Bruyère's Influence upon Addison," *PMLA* XIX (1904), 479-495.

4. E. Werner, *Das Literarische Porträt in Frankreich im 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1935), p. 11; Compare also A. Franz, "Die literarische Porträtzeichnung in Goethes Dichtung und Wahrheit und in Rousseau's Confessions", *Deutsche Vierteljahr. f. Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 6. Jahrgang (1928), IV, pp. 492-512.

5. R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York, 1949), pp. 125-134. L. Hautecoeur, *La littérature et peinture en France du XVII au XX siècle* (Paris, 1963); K. Pigarev, *Russkaja literatura i izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo*

(Moskva, 1966); M. Kircheisen, *Die Geschichte des literarischen Porträts in Deutschland*, vol. I (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 3-6.

6. H. James, *Partial Portraits* (Westpoint, 1970), pp. 300-306.

7. A. Maurois, *Prometheus: The Life of Balzac* (London, 1965), pp. 103-105; Ph. Bertault, *The Human Comedy* (New York, 1963), pp. 33-130; St. J. Gendzier, "L'Interprétation de la Figure Humaine chez Diderot et chez Balzac", *L'Année Balzacienne* (Paris, 1962), pp. 181-193; J. H. Hunt, "Portraits in 'La Comédie Humaine'," *The Romanic Review*, XLIX (1958), pp. 112-124; W. Dibelius, *Charles Dickens* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 336-387.

8. V. Galanov, *Iskusstvo portreta* (Moskva, 1967), pp. 10-40; M. O. Gabel, "Izobrazhenie vneshnosti lits," in A. I. Beletskij's *Izbrannye trudy po teorii literatury* (Moskva, 1964), pp. 149-169.

9. I. Bruns, *Das literarische Porträt der Griechen, im fünften und vierten Jahrhundert vor Christi Geburt* (Berlin, 1896); E. C. Evans, "Roman Descriptions of Personal Appearance in History and Biography", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, XLVI, pp. 63-74; J. Fürst, *Die literarische Porträtmanier im Bereich des griechisch-römischen Schrifttums* (Leipzig, 1903); B. Bates, *Literary Portraiture in the Historical Narrative of the French Renaissance* (New York, 1945), pp. 1-31.

10. Aristotle, *Physiognomics in Minor Works* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), pp. 83-137; G. P. Dalla Porta, *De humana physiognomonia* (1591).

11. J. Graham, "Lavater's Physiognomy in England", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXII (1961), pp. 561-572; F. Baldensperger, "Les théories de Lavater dans la littérature française", *Étude d'histoire littéraire* (Paris, 1910), pp. 51-91; H. Kindermann, *Goethes Menschengestaltung* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 274-276; N. Gudzij, "Elementy fiziognomiki v tvorchestve L'va Tolstogo", *Problemy sravnitel'noj filologii* (Moskva, 1964), pp. 354-362; E. Heier, "Lavater's System of Physiognomy as a Mode of Characterization in Lermontov's Prose", *Arcadia*, VI (1971), Heft 3, pp. 267-282; J. Graham, "Character Description and Meaning in the Romantic Novel", *Studies in Romanticism*, V (1966), pp.208-218.

12. H. Balzac, *Physiologie du mariage*, "Méditation", p. XV; Graham, "Character Description ..., pp. 213-216; Senancour, *Obermann* (Paris, 1931), II, Lettre 51, p. 41.

13. Heier, pp. 267-282.

14. H. Fielding, "An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men", *The Work of Henry Fielding* (London, 1882), pp. 332-337; S. S. Hesgreen, *Literary Portraits in the Novels of H. Fielding* (Northern Illinois University Press, 1972), pp. 3-44.

15. Compare L. Haselmeyer, *Chaucer and Medieval Verse Portraiture*, unp. diss. (Yale, 1937); J. Graham, *The Development of the Use of Physiognomy in the Novel*, unp. diss. (John Hopkins University, 1960), pp. 33-34.

16. P. Mantegazza, *Physiognomy and Expression* (London, 1890), pp. 1-3.

17. A. Yoder, *Animal Analogy in Shakespeare's Character Portrayal* (New York, 1947), pp. 27-29.

18. Ganter, pp. 23-43; Cousine, p. 366ff; Le Breton, p. 182; G. Lanson, *L'Art de la Prose* (Paris, 1908), pp. 113-133.

19. Compare also Irving Babbitt's *The New Laokoon: An Essay on the Confusion of the Arts* (New York, 1910).

20. R. Gottschall, *Poetik* (Breslau, 1858), pp. 36-48; Wellek, pp. 125-126.

21. Compare also W. M. Myers' *The Later Realism: A Study of Characterization in the British Novel* (Chicago, 1927), pp. 94-121.

22. A. Langen, *Anschauungsformen in der deutschen Dichtung des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt, 1965), p. 11.

23. N. Dmitrieva, *Izobrazhenie i slovo* (Moskva, 1962), p. 49.

24. Dmitrieva, pp. 39-40.

25. O. Bal'zak, *Sobranie sochinenij* (Moskva, 1952), p. 218.

26. Since the publication of this paper in the *Neophilologus*, 60 (1976), additional information on the subject has been published in my book *Literary Portraiture in Nineteenth-Century Russian Prose*. Bausteine zur Slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. Editor K. Gutschmidt, H.-B. Harder, H. Rothe. Böhlau Verlag (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1993).

II. Physiognomy in Lermontov's Prose

It is generally asserted that Lermontov's literary portrait evolved from that of Pushkin: "he developed and perfected Pushkin's devices, his realistic method in the delineation of his own characters."[1] While it is true that Lermontov could not have avoided Pushkin's influence, it is equally true that the full portrait executed by Lermontov, in which he systematically reveals character traits through physical features is in direct opposition to Pushkin's practice. Not a single physical feature of Lermontov's literary figures remains without interpretation. In doing so, Lermontov was able to create both a concrete visual image and a character sketch of his heroes. Pushkin neither desired a physical account of his literary figures, nor did he employ physiognomy as a device to reveal their psychological disposition. Thus, Lermontov's psycho-physiological portraits must have had an origin other than Pushkin.[2]

When reviewing Lermontov's prose works, *Vadim* (1834), *Princess Ligovskaja* (1837) and *A Hero of Our Time* (1840)[3] we are faced repeatedly with different methods of delineating character. In depicting the personality of his heroes he uses characterization by action, contrast, dialogue, opinion of others, thoughts, exposition, self-confession, and direct observation by the author and narrator. The employment of a variety of modes of characterization was, no doubt, an experiment for Lermontov, just as he had to experiment with the entire structure of the novel. Russian literature at the time could not yet provide the novelistic form or the manner of characterization which would have enabled the author to lay bare the innermost psychological and moral nature of his characters.[4]

Of all the methods of characterization utilized by Lermontov, one of the most intriguing is that based on a system of physiognomy. It involves an initial detailed description of the physical side of the hero, followed by a judgement and interpretation of the facial and bodily appearance from which the character traits, the moral and psychological make-up, are deduced. The careful reader will have taken notice of the author's extraordinary powers of observation and the detailed description of the countenance of his main characters. This in itself does not yet arouse the reader's curiosity. But what follows the outward description — namely, a display of the art of judging character on the part of the author and of his penetrating insight into human

nature, long before the character has been given a chance to reveal himself through his actions and behaviour in the course of the novel — is, indeed, a device which was unique in Russian literature at the time. The use of physiognomy in Lermontov's literary portrait was so assiduously cultivated that the portrait assumed a function far beyond anything hitherto encountered in Russian fiction. Indeed, Lermontov elevated it to a regular mode of characterization, similar to that encountered in the works of Balzac.

In Lermontov's prose we may trace a definite progression of characterization which culminates in the sophisticated practice of predictive physiognomy. Character traits are judged not only by facial expressions, but by hands, the manner of walking, and even the hair. Lermontov had recourse to the physiognomic method of characterization in his first prose work, the historical novel *Vadim* (1834). It has been demonstrated by several Lermontov critics that the main character of the novel had a long line of literary ancestors; among them are Byron's Arnold in *The Deformed Transformed* (1824), Quasimodo in Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), and Elshie in Walter Scott's *The Black Dwarf* (1818).[5] While it is difficult to ascertain to what degree Lermontov was imitative in creating his own deformed hero Vadim, it is apparent that Vadim's literary ancestors were all endowed with a grotesque physical deformity which had a striking correlation with their demonic, frequently unrestrained evil and vengeful behaviour.

Lermontov introduces his hunchback Vadim as early as the third paragraph of the novel. We meet him in front of a gate leading to a monastery, in the midst of a group of beggars of whom Lermontov says: "Their clothes were a reflection of their soul: black and ragged ... on the face of every one there was stamped with everlasting letters — misery! — if there were only a minute sign, a minute remnant of pride in their eyes or in their smile!" From this general account which emphasizes the interpretive physiognomic approach, Lermontov proceeds with a delineation of his hero:

> Among the group of beggars was one who was hunchbacked and bowlegged, but his limbs seemed to have been strong and accustomed to bearing the burden of his miserable condition; his face was long and dark-complexioned, he had a straight nose and curly hair; his wide forehead was yellow like the forehead of a learned person; it was gloomy like the cloud covering the sun on a stormy day; a blue vein crossed its irregular wrinkles; his thin pale lips were being stretched and condensed through a kind of convulsive movement and in his eyes there glittered an entire

> future; his companions did not know who he was; but the power of the soul is reflected everywhere; they were afraid of his voice and glare ... he was ugly and repulsive, but of this they were not afraid; in his eyes there was so much fire and wisdom, so many demonic qualities that they were afraid to believe in them. ... On his face he displayed a constant bitter sneer;
> ... the beggar stood with folded arms and observed the image of the devil on the gates of the monastery; he thought, if I were the devil I would not torture the people — I would despise them; is mankind worthy of being tempted by the one who was exiled from paradise, the rival of God! ... his eyes glittered under the restless brows, and his cheeks began to be covered with red spots. In his face everything was in accord: one passion dominated his heart, or better, he was the master of only one passion. ...[6]

In depicting Vadim, Lermontov unquestionably subscribes to a system of physiognomy, i.e., he not only describes in detail his hero's facial expression and body, but also discloses from the very start the disposition of his mind. True, it is not a systematic interpretation, but it is rather sporadic. Although Lermontov does not yet reveal the nature of this single passion which dominates his hero, the reader can strongly surmise that it is not a pleasant one. The gloomy countenance which is likened to a stormy day, the thin pale lips and his unpleasant glare, the constant bitter sneer and the author's direct statement, "he was ugly and repulsive," are sufficient indications of Vadim's hatred and potential evil behaviour.

The primary aim of Lermontov's hero is to revenge himself upon the landlord Palitsyn, who was the cause of his family's impoverishment and his father's death. This passion to avenge his family by killing Palitsyn dominates Vadim's mind, and causes him to scheme and obtain a position in Palitsyn's household. Whether Vadim's cause for avenging his family is justified or not is another matter — he emerges at the end as the arch villain, and thus lives up to the reader's expectation. Admittedly, Lermontov makes him in actuality a greater agent of evil than expected, i.e., than indicated through his physical account at the beginning. Later he also has him display incestuous interests toward his sister. Vadim allies himself with the peasant revolt only to accomplish his vengeance, while, in his soul, he despises the people around him. Persecuted by destiny and insulted by men, he breaks the barrier of human norms; he kills and encourages killing. To paraphrase Kotljarevskij's words — his ugly appearance corresponds to his ugly feelings and

behaviour.[7] While delineating Vadim's physical appearance, Lermontov makes an interesting statement which seems to confirm further that he wilfully aimed at presenting his hero in such a manner that there is a correlation between his emotion and his countenance. More important that this is the conclusion that the author firmly believed in a correlation of the inner with the outer, i.e., that the outer make-up is the extension of the inner self, for Lermontov says: "The power of the soul is reflected everywhere." Even the garments of the beggars are a semi-symbolic representation of their "black and ragged" souls. This is also the basis of Lavater's system, namely that the soul, the symbol of one's moral and psychological condition, is reflected in one's physical appearance.

While there is no doubt that Lermontov employed here a device of characterization based on physiognomy, an interesting question arises as to the source of this method. To begin with, we ought to consider Lermontov the writer, painter, and minute observer, and, in turn, his power of presentation whether with the brush or the written word. Painting and drawing are intrinsically linked with his literary creativity. He left us eleven oil paintings, fifty-one water-colours, and some three hundred drawings, among which are many portrait sketches. His numerous drawings of human heads may be looked upon as physiognomic sketches; they reflect definite character traits. To have a portrait mirror a definite personality, especially the one desired by the artist, is indeed a mark of excellence. This manner of drawing we find also in his literary works, i.e., he was not content with a mere physical description of his characters, but also endowed them with a mark of life and feeling by interpreting their appearance. In this respect one may notice in Lermontov's creative process a definite parallel progression between his painting, drawing and writing. It was the same spirit which created both his literary "drawings" and those found on the canvas. Indeed, certain sketches, drawings and paintings served at times as models for his literary works. Most striking are the drawings on the margins or between the lines of a manuscript, a testimony to simultaneous creation.[8] Lermontov was at once painter and writer; he knew how to see and not merely glance at things. Equipped with this talent and a deep psychological insight into human character, Lermontov could have independently derived his system of presenting literary characters in the physiognomic manner. However, there were other possible external influences.

Apart from Lermontov's own inclination toward physiognomy, it was the fashion of his era, especially among the upper classes of European society. The source of this fascination dates back to the second half of the eighteenth

century, when the interest in physiognomy was actually at its lowest ebb. It was then, in the 1770's, that the Swiss poet, mystic, theologian and physiognomist Lavater set forth his system of physiognomy, first in a two volume edition *J. C. Lavater von der Physiognomik* (1772), and later in a four volume work entitled *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* (1775-1778). Lavater devoted considerable space to the defense of physiognomy. He postulated a series of premises stating: (a) that all things have an inner and an outer side, a surface and a content; (b) that there is a constant interrelation between the physical and the spiritual side in us; (c) that each segment of our physical make-up, even the individual hair, is an intrinsic link in an organic whole. Consequently, one should be able to discriminate character even by the mere observance of a single physical feature. In spite of all opposition, Lavater's physiognomy became the topic of the day. His work was reprinted, pirated, imitated and edited in abbreviated form, so that by 1810 there existed some sixteen German, fifteen French and twenty English editions. In Russia itself the ideas of Lavater were not only transplanted by these foreign publications, but also by three Russian editions 1781, 1809 and 1817, albeit in fragmentary and distorted form which hardly resembled the original Lavater.[9]

Like Pushkin, Lermontov was educated in a society in which physiognomy had become the fashion of the time. Lermontov's interests in physiognomy were further intensified within the military circles and especially through his association with Dr. N. V. Majer in Pjatigorsk. Lermontov's biographer P. A. Viskovatyj maintains that not all officers in the military unit of Vel'jaminov whiled away the time in drinking-bouts and card games. There were also those who were intellectually active, and it was no rarity to find an officer with a book by Lavater or Gall. Apparently, a Russian translation *Lafater damskij...* (Moscow, 1982) from French entitled *Le Lavater des dames ou l'art de connaître les femmes sur leur physiognomie* (5th edition; Paris, 1827) was very popular among the officers.[10]

Moreover, by the time Lermontov appeared on the literary scene, he was exposed to a type of literature, mainly French novels, which manifested the physiognomic mode in two ways. In the first instance, the author visibly practised physiognomy, whereby the physical description is interspersed with the author's interpretation of the meaning of certain expressions; he diagnoses character traits by outward appearance. This type of depiction is primarily to be encountered by novelists like Balzac. In the second instance, the author introduces his main characters via a detailed physical description. The physical description remains without interpretation, i.e., he does not yet

disclose the disposition of his hero on the basis of the lineament of the body and facial expression. However, the reader feels that the writer created within the framework of the concept of organic unity, i.e., that there is a correlation between the inner and the outer. As an example of this mode one may cite Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), in which the author is not much concerned with an account of his characters' emotions. His main characters, though vivid and striking, are drawn primarily from the outside. There is, on the whole, no attempt at a psychological explanation, explicit or implied, of their behaviour or thought.[11] Yet, there are indications that Victor Hugo was conscious of physiognomy in the process of creating his characters. Only rarely do we find some interpretation of physical appearance. Even in describing in great detail, though in exaggerated proportions, that "ideal ugliness," the grotesque figure of Quasimodo, the author tells us only that the overall impression of his hero yields "de ce mélange de malice, d'étonnement et de tristesse ... et, avec toute cette difformité, je ne sais quelle allure redoutable de vigueur, d'agilité et de courage; étrange exception à la règle éternelle qui veut que la force, comme la beauté, résulte de l'harmonie." This physiognomic judgement is followed by comments of minor figures, when the bell-ringer's grimace beams through the broken rose-window, such as: "Oh! le villain singe," or "Aussie méchant que laid."

But apart from this conjectural evidence, and the fact that Lermontov was the first Russian writer who seriously adopted the physiognomic mode of characterization, we possess more specific evidence as to his knowledge of Lavater. He not only makes direct references in his literary works to Lavater and Gall, but confirms his interest in these men in a letter to a friend in 1841, saying: I am buying Lavater and Gall and many other books for our mutual use.[12] True, this was said after the novels had been written, but he also mentions Lavater in 1837 in the physiognomic description of the main character in *Princess Ligovskaja*, and in his drama *The Strange Man* (1831) when the character of the hero, Arbenin, is being discussed.[13]

While it is difficult to ascertain to what extent Lermontov became acquainted with Lavater's ideas by reading him directly, it is fairly certain that the impulse to use physiognomy as a literary device was derived from the French novels which dominated the Russian literary scene during the 1830s. On the basis of similarities and parallels in certain passages, characters, settings, narrative motives and even stylistic devices, critics have attempted to link Lermontov's prose to Sénancour's *Obermann* (1803), Chateaubriand's *René* (1805), Constant's *Adolphe* (1816), Vigny's *Servitude et grandeur militaires* (1835), Musset's *La Confession d'un enfant du siècle* (1835) and

Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*.[14] Although Lermontov is indebted to these writers in various ways, not to mention his English and Russian models, it is unlikely that he acquired from them this particular manner of characterization. Admittedly, these writers employed physiognomy, and Sénancour in his *Obermann* even defends Lavater's system as the only true science for recognizing character,[15] but the model for physiognomic characterization could have been provided mainly by Balzac and his pupil Charles de Bernard.

At the time when Lermontov began his prose-writing, Balzac and the analytical novel were at the centre of his creation. Balzac figures in the pages of Lermontov's prose; there are indirect references to *La Femme de trente ans* (1831-34), *Le Contrat de mariage* (1835) and various thematic and textual similarities to *Les Chouans* (1829) and *La Peau de chagrin* (1831).[16] It is hardly necessary to cite any specific work in order to demonstrate Balzac's physiognomic method of characterization, for he applied it systematically to all of his characters. Thus the reading of only one single work would have sufficed for Lermontov to become familiar with Balzac's method. Balzac not only used physiognomy but repeatedly defended the system in his works. In *Physiologie du mariage* (1829), for example, he says that one must have made a:

> deep study of Lavater's book and have trained his eyes and his mind to judge and grasp, with surprising rapidity, the slightest physical indications by which a man discloses his thoughts. ... Lavater's physiognomy has created a genuine science. ... since then the famous Dr. Gall has completed the scientific system. ... all those who are the disciples of these two celebrated men have often had the opportunity to note a great many evident signs by which human thought may be recognized.[17]

Charles de Bernard was no less adamant in employing physiognomy. He even has Lavater appear in one of his plays, in which the master of physiognomy triumphantly displays his art of character reading. But it was his novel *Gerfaut* (1838) which seemingly left its deepest traces on Lermontov's work.[18]

In Lermontov's second novel, *Princess Ligovskaja*, the use of Lavater's physiognomy in the Balzacian manner is too vivid to deny. The unfinished novel is a typical society tale and has as its protagonists two contrasting

characters; the aristocrat Pechorin, a sarcastic, coldly calculating dandy; and an impoverished nobleman, the proud civil servant Krasinskij, who seeks justice from Pechorin for having run him down in the street. Lermontov even begins his novel in the fashion of Balzac: "At four o'clock on the afternoon of December 21, 1833, a throng of people was moving as usual along Vosnesenskaja Street in St. Petersburg. Among them was a young government clerk." Having singled out the clerk Krasinskij, the author, in accordance with physiognomic characterization, describes his appearance; but soon we are told that the picture has to remain incomplete, for "his features were difficult to make out — the reason for this being the bill of his cap, the collar of his coat, and the semi-darkness." Only much later does the reader learn from the narrator that he is a young man, tall, blond, and astonishingly good-looking. His large, languid eyes, straight nose, oval Greek face, and his beautiful, naturally curly hair are enough to attract the attention of anyone: "Only his lips, which were too thin and pale in contrast to the colour in his cheeks, might have been found wanting." But face to face with his enemy, Pechorin, the clerk's hands and voice tremble with rage: "The veins in his temples were swollen, and his lips had lost their colour. ... At this moment, his flushed face had all the beauty of a tempest." The facial expression of the clerk is self-evident, and thus remains without interpretation. Lermontov employs pathognomy whenever he wishes to convey a certain momentary state in the character. In attempting to portray the feelings of his character (anxiety, excitement, impatience, longing and fear, anger), he resorts to an account of gestures, movements, mimicry, tone of voice, change of facial colour, or any other visible features that are self-explanatory.[19]

Throughout the novel there is great concern with the art of reading thought or character, for we find repeated references to this skill. These are made by the narrator himself and by Pechorin, who seems to be versed in physiognomy. In such cases, the essential element for physiognomic characterization is the face. Only the main characters whom the author intends to endow with a distinctive description of their countenance, and then only of those features like the eyes, the nose, and the mouth which most clearly reflect character traits. Thus in describing Vera Ligovskaja (at certain moments), Lermontov employs such statements as "mute suffering was expressed in her mobile features," or "one could tell from the expression on her face that her moment of agony had come." But there were also moments when her facial expression could not be interpreted: "Vera gave him [Pechorin] a meaningless smile — the kind of smile one sees on the face of a ballerina who has just completed a pirouette. ... It is strange, he [Pechorin]

thought. ... There was a time when I could read all of her thoughts on her face, just as clearly as my own handwriting." On another occasion we read, "George Pechorin watched her closely, trying in vain to surmise her innermost thoughts."

These comments, reflecting a seemingly changing personality in Vera Ligovskaja, are in reality only fleeting moments which disclose her feelings at a given time.[20] As such, they form part of her total character and are in keeping with Lermontov's account of her when we first meet her:

> She was a woman of twenty-two ... of medium height and blonde, with dark eyes, which lent her an unusual kind of charm and set her distinctly apart from other women. ... She was not a beautiful woman, although her features were regular. ... The constant mobility of her physiognomy, apparently incompatible with her rather sharply defined contours, was such that she did not at all times appear attractive to everyone. And yet a person accustomed to following these rapid changes of expression could have discerned in them an unusually spirited temperament and a constant nervous excitability, promising much pleasure to a perceptive lover. Her figure was supple, her movements unhurried and graceful. Seeing her for the first time you would have said, if you were an experienced observer, that she was a woman of firm, and resolute character, rather cold, who had the strength of her own conviction. ... But if you would have seen her in a moment of passion or excitement you would have said something different. Or perhaps, you would not have known at all what to say.[21]

The constant references to facial expression and the ensuing interpretation reveal a conscious effort by Lermontov to read character traits via the physical expression. Indeed, the face is the major source of characterization in the novel, for whenever the author is unable to observe the face he is at a loss. The picture of the clerk is incomplete due to the inability to see his countenance clearly. When Pechorin sits down in his armchair and covers his face with his hands, the author comments: "It is precisely for this that I cannot tell you anything at all about his thought, although I am very good at reading in people's faces what is happening in their souls."[22]

Lermontov's use of physiognomy as a mode of characterization is most vividly demonstrated in the portrayal of his main hero. Again the author has

to see him fully. Thus the description starts with:

> Now, that he has taken of his overcoat ... and gone into his study, we are free to follow him and describe his appearance, which unfortunately was not at all attractive. He was short, broad in the shoulders, and in general rather ungainly. He seemed to have a powerful constitution, incapable of sensitivity or irritation. His gait was rather cautious for a cavalryman. His gestures were abrupt, although they sometimes displayed that indolence and indifference which are now modish and in the spirit of the times. ... But the man's real nature frequently broke through this cold exterior. It was evident that he did not follow the general fashion, but kept his thoughts and feelings tightly closed within himself, either from mistrustfulness or from pride. His voice was sometimes deep, sometimes sharp, depending upon the influence of the moment. When he wanted to say something pleasant, he would begin to stammer, and then break off abruptly with an acid witticism in order to hide his own embarrassment. ... His face was swarthy, with irregular features, but very expressive.

Having described Pechorin, Lermontov makes direct reference to Lavater and thereby confirms his knowledge of Lavater's theory of physiognomy: "It would have been very interesting to Lavater and his followers, who would have found in it deep traces of the past and marvellous promise for the future. But most people merely said that in his smile and in his strangely glittering eyes, there was something indefinable.[23]

In accordance with the physiognomic manner of characterization of Balzac, Lermontov places his protagonist in surroundings corresponding to his personality. Pechorin's character is thus drawn in harmony with his living room and study. The detailed description, which is in itself revealing, is interspersed with interpretive comments like "the gleaming oak doors with their fashionable knobs, and the oak window frames, showed that the owner was a respectable and orderly person;" or "the sharp contrast of colours in the room indicated a certain love for the unusual and originality." Pechorin's belongings in the room thus reveal further features of his rather complex personality.[24] As such they become part of Pechorin's character, confirming and adding to what the reader already knows from the physiognomic portrait. Like Balzac, and before him Lavater, Lermontov seems to have embraced the concept of constant interaction between the physical and the spiritual, between

the outer and the inner. Thus the world of matter surrounding the personality, from the hand to the decoration of one's room, constitutes part of the total unity of a character.

In his last novel, *A Hero of Our Time* (1840), Lermontov's use of physiognomy becomes one of the basic techniques of characterization. In its structure, i.e., five independent narratives joined by a single dominant character, the novel is reminiscent of Balzac's *La Femme de trente ans* among others.[25] All events in the novel, all characters, and all devices of characterization are skilfully manipulated in pursuing the ultimate aim, to present a detailed character analysis of his hero, Pechorin, or, to use Lermontov's own words, to draw "a portrait composed of all the vices of our generation in the fullness of their development."[26] Thus, as the ordeals of the principle character unfold, we meet a strong talented young man, yet one who is full of disharmony, misunderstood and doomed to lead an aimless existence and who, by his own admission, brings only tragedy to others.

Although we learn much of Pechorin's "strange character" in the first narrative *Bela*, none of it is based on the interpretation of his physical appearance. The reason for this is that the professional soldier, the army captain Maksim Maksimych, is telling the exterior narrator the story while travelling through the Caucasus. It would have been unrealistic to endow the simple army captain with the art of character reading from the delineations of the body.[27] Maksim Maksimych expresses only amazement at the strange behaviour of this young aristocrat. He only hints at the dichotomy in Pechorin's character, but cannot explain it when he says: "He might spend, for instance, the whole day hunting in the rain, in the cold; everybody would get chilled through and exhausted but not he; and some other time he'd be sitting in his room and just a gust of wind would come, and there he would be, insisting that he had caught a cold; or if the shutter banged, he'd start and grow pale; yet I had seen him take on a wild boar all by himself. ... Yes, sir, there were many odd things about him. ..."[28]

Having aroused the reader's interest in Pechorin, the narrator draws a detailed physiognomic portrait of the hero in the second narrative, *Maksim Maksimych*. But this is possible only after the narrator accidentally meets Pechorin who is travelling on the same road. In fact, the second tale seems to have as its major function the task of bringing the narrator face to face with Pechorin in order to observe him.[29] Pechorin's portrait reveals a complex character which is not easily deciphered. The inconsistencies and oddities hinted at by Maksim Maksimych find their reflection in his physical appearance. He is of medium height and his slender waist and broad shoulders

are proof of a sturdy constitution which is capable of bearing the hardship of a roving life, the depraved city life and, no less, the tempest of his soul. His half-opened jacket permits one to see his clean linen which testifies to the habits of a gentleman. The narrator points out his small, aristocratic hands, but he is surprised when Pechorin takes off his glove to notice how thin his pale fingers are. "His gait was loose and indolent, but I observed," the narrator continues, "that he did not swing his arms — a sure sign of a certain reticence in his character." Aware that these interpretations may be questioned, he addresses the reader: "However, these are my private notes based on my own observations, and by no means do I expect you to believe in them blindly." To complete the account of Pechorin's general appearance, he adds: "... the attitude of the whole body expressed a kind of nervous debility; he sat there as a thirty-year-old coquette of Balzac's would sit after a fatiguing ball, in her armchair stuffed with down." The allusion here is to Balzac's *La Femme de trente ans*.

From general observations the narrator passes on to a more detailed description of Pechorin's countenance:

> There was something childish about his smile. His skin had a kind of feminine tenderness of texture, his fair hair, wavy by nature, framed, so picturesquely, his pale, noble brow, upon which only prolonged observation could make out the traces of intersecting wrinkles, which probably became much more clearly marked in moments of wrath or spiritual restlessness. In contrast to the light shade of his hair, his mustache and eyebrows were black — a sign of breeding in a man, as are a black mane and a black tail in a white horse. To complete this portrait, let me say that he had a slightly bobbed nose, dazzlingly white teeth, and brown eyes. ...

The inconsistencies we notice in Pechorin's description, i.e., the sturdy constitution and then the nervous debility and feminine features, seem to reflect on Lermontov's ability to draw a portrait with definite character traits. But it is precisely the disharmony, the unusual — elegance and brutality, delicacy and ruthlessness — of Pechorin's character which the reader discovers in his facial expression. This account, then, is in keeping with Lermontov's intention — to reveal the inner dichotomy in the appearance of his hero. Even more revealing are Pechorin's eyes. As always the eyes receive special attention, for they reflect the feelings of the soul and Pechorin's disharmonious personality:[30]

> In the first place, they never laughed when he was laughing! — Have you observed this bizarre trait in some people? This is either a sign of a wicked nature or of a deep and constant melancholy. From behind half-lowered lashes, they shone with a kind of phosphorescent glitter, if I can put it thus. It was not the reflection of the soul's glow or of an effervescent imagination; this was a gleam akin to the gleam of smooth steel, dazzling but cold; his glance, while not lingering, was penetrating and oppressive, it left the disagreeable impression of an indiscreet question and might have appeared insolent had it not been indifferently serene. ... I shall say, in conclusion, that on the whole, he was rather handsome and had one of those original physiognomies which especially appeal to high society women.[31]

With this depiction of Pechorin's personality, the travelling author and physiognomist has completed his task. The remainder of the novel constitutes Pechorin's own journal which merely further confirms and accents, by means of self-confession, what had already been made known of his character traits. Now it is Pechorin, as the author of the journal, who displays skill in delineating character on the basis of the physical aspect. Indeed, not a single character escapes his judgement. Here are only a few examples. In *Taman'*, the third story of the novel, Pechorin relates how on his travels he was forced to seek lodging in a miserable hut, the inhabitants of which were engaged in smuggling. Upon entering he met a boy:

> I lit a sulphur match and brought it close to the lad's very nose; it illuminated two white eyes. He was blind, totally blind from birth. ... I began to examine his features. I confess, I have a strong prejudice against those who are blind, one-eyed, deaf-mute, legless, armless, hunchbacked, and so forth. I have observed that there always exists some strange relationship between the appearance of a man and his soul, as if with the loss of a limb, the soul lost one of its senses. And so I began to examine the blind lad's face, but what can one read in a face that lacks eyes.[32]

While this passage is self-explanatory, it is interesting to note that the narrator expresses here Lermontov's conviction and seems to advance the hypothesis of organic unity which is the basis of Lavater's and Balzac's physiognomy. Pechorin's prejudice against those who have lost a limb echoes the

physiognomic theory "that nothing can be added or removed from an organic unity without causing deformity and disharmony."[33]

Another lengthy physiognomic description is devoted to the buoyant and mermaid-like young maiden in *Taman'*. But more intriguing in this connection is the narrator's reference to "Young France," a French literary school of young writers of the 1830's: "Really, I had never seen such a woman! She was far from beautiful, but I have my preconceptions in regard to beauty, too. She revealed a good deal of breeding ... and breeding in women, as in horses, is a great thing; this discovery was made by Young France. It [i.e., breeding] ... is most visible in the gait, in the hands and feet; the nose is especially significant."[34]

In the subsequent story, *Princess Mary*, Pechorin not only figures as the physiognomist, but uses his skill in character reading to manipulate others. Only Dr. Werner, who "has studied all the live strings of the human heart," emerges as an equal to Pechorin. Werner is of small stature, thin and frail like a child. One of his legs is shorter than the other. In proportion to his body, his head seems enormous, "the bumps of his skull ... would have amazed a phrenologist by their bizarre interplay of contradictory inclinations." In spite of these physical contradictions, there is a correlation with his psychological portrayal. He is a materialist and poet, who possesses enormous knowledge but cannot use it to his advantage; he has a sharp tongue and pokes fun at his patients, yet he can cry at the bedside of a dying soldier. In describing Werner, Pechorin admits that appearance may be deceitful, for he says of him: "His appearance was of the kind that, at first glance, impresses one unfavourably but attracts one later, when the eye has learned to decipher in irregular features the imprint of a dependable and lofty soul.[35]

In adhering to the cult of physiognomy, the physiognomist invariably also accepts a measure of determinism or fatalism. As such, Pechorin, the physiognomist, is able to go beyond ordinary character reading and enters the realm of predicting the destiny of others. In the *Fatalist*, Pechorin relates an episode in which the problem of determinism is discussed. He seems to notice the imprint of an early death in the facial expression of a young officer. Here is how Pechorin saw him: "Lieutenant Vulich's appearance corresponded perfectly to his character. A tall stature, a swarthy complexion, black hair, black penetrating eyes, a large but regular nose ... and a sad chill smile perpetually wandering on his lips. ...: Having depicted his personality by description, Pechorin comments: "I looked fixedly in his eyes; but he met my glare with a calm and steady gaze while his pale lips smiled. But despite his coldbloodedness, I seemed to decipher the sign of death on his pale face; I

had observed, and many a seasoned soldier had confirmed my observation, that often the face of a man who is to die within a few hours bears the strange imprint of his inescapable fate, so that experienced eyes can hardly mistake it."[36]

Although Pechorin's observations proved to be correct, since on the same day Vulich is killed by a drunken cossack, the entire problem of predetermination remains unsolved.[37] It is interesting to note, however, that the problem of fatalism emanated primarily from France at the beginning of the nineteenth century and that Pechorin's ideas on predetermination are reminiscent of those of Balzac, when the latter says: "la fatalité met sa marque au visage de ceux qui doivent mourir d'une mort violente quelqonque."[38] It would be presumptuous to speak here of Balzac's direct influence, for the idea of fatalism was a widely discussed topic of the time. But fatalism in our context is intimately connected with the physiognomic concept of Pechorin, and it is no accident that Lermontov had his hero, after a physiognomic diagnosis of the young officer, recognize the imprints of death on his face.

The use of physiognomy as a mode of characterization enabled Lermontov to create more life-like characters. His keen sense of observation and, in turn, the detailed description resulted in regular portraits with distinct individual character traits. In this manner Lermontov introduced greater verisimilitude and bridged the transition from Romanticism to Realism.[39] Moreover, the physiognomic device of characterization enabled him to reveal stock character traits within a minimum narrative time, especially since he selected the shorter novelistic form. As a consequence, Lermontov's literary portraits either disclose further who the literary characters are or confirm what the reader is led to expect of them.[40]

Whether Lermontov's use of physiognomy and the ensuing detailed description, which resulted in full portraits, is aesthetically less pleasing than Pushkin's laconic portrayal is a matter of individual taste. Although Lermontov was definitely admired by the novelists of the next generation, there exists no evidence that he had a specific influence on their use of the physiognomic mode of characterization. By the end of the 1840's, this practice of character portrayal was widely spread and had become a standard device for the depiction of their protagonists in verbal portraits as we find them in the works of Turgenev, Dostoevskij, Goncharov and Tolstoj. It was ultimately Balzac who became the greatest disseminator of Lavater's ideas and in so doing provided the European novelists with a distinct method of portrayal.[41]

NOTES

1. N. Nikitin, "Portret u Lermontova," *Literatura v shkole*, 7-8 (1941), 40.

2. Compare B. V. Nejman, "Portret v tvorchestve Lermontova," *Uchenye zapiski MGU* (Moscow, 1948), II, 73-90; R. I. Al'betkova, "Izobrazhenie kharaktera v proizvedenijakh Lermontova," *Moskovskij obl. ped. inst. im. N. K. Krupskoj*, LXXXV (1960), 13-42; "Portret," *Lermontovskaja entsiklopedija*, ed. V. A. Manuilov (Moscow, 1981), 427-28.

3. M. Ju. Lermontov, *Sobranie sochinenij* in 4 vols. (Moscow: ANSSSR, 1962), IV, 7-474.

4. J. Mersereau, *Mikhail Lermontov* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), 76-80.

5. B. Tomashevskij, "Proza Lermontova i zapadno-evropejskaja literaturnaja traditsija," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo 43-44* (Moscow, 1941), 468-84; S. I. Rodzevich, *Lermontov kak romanist* (Kiev, 1914), 1-37; Mersereau, 39-46.

6. Lermontov, IV, 8-9.

7. N. Kotljarevskij, *Mikhail Lermontov* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 108; E. M. Mikhailova, *Proza Lermontova* (Moscow, 1957), 91-128.

8. N. Pakhomova, "Zhivopisnoe nasledstvo Lermontova," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo 45-46* (Moscow, 1948), 55-222.

9. For references as to the physiognomic awareness in Russia see footnote 41.

10. M. Gershenzon, "Doktor Verner," *Obrazy proshlogo* (Moscow, 1950), 310-20; V. A. Manujlov, *Roman M. Ju. Lermontova 'Geroj nashego vremeni.' Kommentarii* (Moscow, 1966), 185-87; M. M. Umanskaja, "Iz istorii literaturnykh otnoshenij Lermontova i Martinova," *Stranitsy istorii russkoj literatury* (Moscow, 1971), 408.

11. V. Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (New York, 1971), see the criticism and interpretation of the novel, 9-20.

12. See the letter to A. I. Bibikov in Lermontov, IV, 626; and in the references to Bibikov and Lavater in *Lermontovskaja entsiklopedija* (Moscow, 1981), 59, 240.

13. It is interesting to note that in the drama *Maskarad* (1835) Lermontov has his two main characters, Arbenin and Kazarin, emerge as physiognomists. Whenever a stranger appeared in the hall the two would combine their physiognomic knowledge and compose his portrait. In this manner a gallery of lesser characters is introduced, all of whom confirm subsequently through their action the earlier analysis by Arbenin and Kazarin. See V. V. Osnovin, "O nekotorykh osobennostjakh psikhologicheskogo analiza v dramakh L. N. Tolstogo i M. Ju. Lermontova," *Arzamasskij gos. ped. inst. im. A. P. Gaidara. Uchenye zapiski*, 77 (Gor'kij, 1967), 10-15. *Dramaticheskoe iskusstvo L'va Tolstogo* (Jaroslavl', 1972), 140-41.

14. Rodzevich, 37-97; Tomashevskij, 496-516; J. Mersereau, "Lermontov and Balzac," *American Contribution to the Fifth International Congress of Slavists* (The Hague, 1963), 234-56.

15. E. P. de Sénancour, *Obermann* (Paris, 1931), II. Lettre 51, 41.

16. Lermontov, IV, 646, 654; Tomashevskij, 471-80; A. V. Fedorov, *Lermontov i literatura ego vremeni* (Leningrad, 1967), 336-56.

17. H. Balzac, *Physiologie du mariage*, "Méditation," XV.

18. Tomashevskij, 507-09, 516 — note 24; V. Vinogradov, "Stil' prozy Lermontova," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo 43-44* (Moscow, 1941), 522-23; F. Baldensperger, "Les Théories de Lavater dans la litt. franç.," *Et. d'hist. litt.* (Paris, 1910), 51-91.

19. Compare Vinogradov, 554-61; Mikhailova, 1957.

20. Mikhailova, 180-81.

21. Lermontov, IV, 203-04.

22. Lermontov, IV, 169.

23. Lermontov, IV, 166ff.

24. Compare Mersereau, 56-57.

25. J. Lavrin, *Lermontov* (London, 1959), 81; Tomashevskij, 508.

26. Lermontov, IV, 276,

27. Compare Tomashevskij, 509.

28. See N. Nabokov's translation of M. Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time* (New York, 1958), 10-11; Lermontov, IV, 284-85.

29. Mikhailova, 272.

30. Compare N. Kotljarevskij, 204-05; Vinogradov, 586-87; Mikhailova, 272-73; S. V. Ivanov, *M. Ju. Lermontov, Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* (Moscow, 1964), 306-307. Although Ch. de Bernard's *Gerfaut* (1838) reveals certain passages which are identical to some in *A Hero of our Time* and Pechorin's physiognomic description is reminiscent of Gerfaut, the character, it is highly unlikely that Lermontov's mode of physiognomic characterization dates back to *Gerfaut*. We have seen that Lermontov was aware of and used this method as early as 1834 in *Vadim*. For details see Tomashevskij, note 24, 516.

31. Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time*, 56-57; Lermontov, IV, 331-33; Mersereau, 97-98.

32. Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time*, 66-67; Lermontov, IV, 342.

33. Baldensperger, 72.

34. Lermontov, IV, 349.

35. Vinogradov, 606-07; Lermontov, IV, 367.

36. Lermontov, IV, 465.

37. Vinogradov, 620-22; Mersereau, 132-43.

38. Baldensperger, 77.

39. Lermontov remained consistent in his manner of depiction as one encounters several portraits in the unfinished prose work *Shtoss* (1841), Lermontov, IV, 480, 482-83, 485-86, 490.

40. Neither of the critics who dealt with Lermontov's literary portraiture makes any reference to his use of physiognomic principles, aspects which are essential to an understanding of this type of depiction.

41. Since the publication of this article in *Arcadia* (1971) the following works related to the present subject have appeared in print: Helen Goscillo, "Lermontov's Debt to Lavater and Gall," *Slavic and East European Review*, 59, No. 4 (1981), 500-515; E. Heier, *Studies on Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801) in Russia*. Slavica Helvetica (Bern, 1991); "The Literary Portrait as a Device of Characterization," *Neophilologus*, 60 (1976), 321-331; *Literary Portraiture in Nineteenth-Century Russian Prose*. Bausteine Zur Slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. Edited by K. Gutschmidt, H.-B. Harder, H. Rothe (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1993).

III. The Second *Hero of Our Time*

The unanimity with which we recognize the artistic accomplishments in Lermontov's novel *A Hero of Our Time* was not always shared by the readers and critics — least of all at the time it made its appearance (1840) on the Russian literary scene.[1] A great controversy developed over the literary merits of the novel, and even more so over the interpretation of its hero, Pechorin. Although the object of the discussion was a literary work and thus presupposed an argument of literary-aesthetic nature, in reality it developed into a dispute between two camps diametrically opposed to each other in their social, religious and political concepts.[2] However, in their analysis of Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* both the liberal Westerners and the conservative Slavophiles employed the same socio-moral approach to literature. They demanded from literature a didactic function, neglecting thereby to evaluate the work of art on its own literary merits.

Belinskij reviewed the novel enthusiastically as a realistic presentation of contemporary society.[3] Although he admits that Lermontov was not yet fully capable of detaching himself from the central hero of the novel and of depicting him objectively, he nonetheless considers Pechorin a true image of the disenchanted generation of his age.[4] In a letter to Botkin (1840), Belinskij once more passes judgment on Pechorin when he says of him: "Ego kharakter — ili reshitel'noe bezdejstvie, ili pustaja dejatel'nost'." As to Lermontov he adds, "Lermontov velikij poet: on ob"ektiroval sovremennoe obshchestvo i ego predstavitelej."[5]

Lermontov's novel and Belinskij's favourable reviews were met with strong opposition by the critics of the conservative faction, S. P. Shevyrev, F. V. Bulgarin, N. I. Grech, S. I. Senkovskij, and particularly S. A. Burachek. Little known today in the history of literary criticism, in the 1840's these critics dominated the literary-critical journals and thus shared in the moulding of nineteenth-century Russian intellectual thought. Unlike Belinskij, they denounced Lermontov's novel and viewed its hero, Pechorin, "as completely unreal, un-Russian, or even ... as a libelous portrait of the contemporary man."[6]

While it is not the task here to outline in detail the controversy between Belinskij and these critics, as is sufficiently discussed by N. Mordovchenko and E. Najdich,[7] it is essential to point out some of the man objections to Lermontov's novel by the critic Stepan Anisimovich Burachek. This is a prerequisite for the understanding of the appearance of the second *Hero of Our Time* in Russian literature. The novel, written by Lermontov's severest

critic, Burachek, bears the title *Geroi nashego vremeni*. Burachek published his novel in volumes nineteen and twenty of the journal *Majak* (1845),[8] an instrument of the extreme, religiously oriented wing of the Slavophiles.[9] The novel is not a parody or a satire but the exact antithesis of that of Lermontov, indeed a unique phenomenon in Russian literature. This work is hardly known and, if known, is mentioned by critics only in passing without relating it further to its namesake, or expounding the nature of this new positive hero, a hero who in the final analysis was meant to replace that of Lermontov.[10] And so, as late as 1954, after restating Burachek's negative criticism of Lermontov's novel, S. A. Andreev-Krivich merely mentions but confirms the above assertion: "Malo izvesten sledujushchij ljubopytnyj fakt. Cherez neskol'ko let Burachok [Burachek] napisal roman, kotoryj on protivopostavil lermontovskomu *Geroju nashego vremeni*."[11]

As professor of science at the Nerval Academy in St. Petersburg and as the author of several scientific books, Burachek was highly respected. But as the editor of the *Majak*, in which he vigorously defended extreme nationalism, orthodoxy, autocracy, and even serfdom, he was as much criticized as praised.[12] In his critical articles on Russian literature he has praise only for A. A. Bestuzhev-Marlinskij. All other writers, from Karamzin to Lermontov, he simply dismisses as "corruption."[13] Gogol', who otherwise publicly endorsed the views of Burachek, by 1847 took issue with him over his extreme negative attitude toward Russian literature.[14] In a letter dated 9 May 1847, to his father confessor, the monk Matvej, Gogol' writes: "... sudja po stat'jam ego [v *Majake*] on [Burachek] dolzhen byt' istinno pochtennyj i verujushchij chelovek, no kotoryj, odnako, slishkom gorjacho i bez razbora napal na vsekh nashikh pisatelej, utverzhdaja, chto oni bezbozhniki i deisty potomu tol'ko, chto te ne brali v predmet khristianskikh sjuzhetov."[15]

With such pronounced convictions Burachek greeted Lermontov's *Hero of Our Time*. He considered the novel a product of Western decadent thought and viewed all characters save Maksim Maksimych as cast in the image of the author himself. Only those, he maintained, in whom the religious spirit is extinct will enjoy this immoral hero of our time, despite the fact that he represents a mere aesthetic and psychological absurdity. The essence of his objections to Lermontov's work is summarized in his words: "... ideja lozhnaja, napravlenie krivoe. ... Ves' roman — epigrama, sostavlennaja iz bespreryvnykh sofizmov, tak chto filosofii, religioznosti, Russkoj narodnosti i sledov net."[16]

In reply to such accusations Lermontov added a preface to the second edition (1841) of his novel; to those who rejected the egoistic Pechorin as the

hero of his time, and particularly to those who saw in him but a portrait of the author himself, Lermontov emphatically states: "*A Hero of Our Time*, Gentlemen, is indeed a portrait, but not of a single individual; it is a portrait composed of all the vices of our generation in the fullness of their development."[17] Truly, time has shown that Lermontov had other, more valid reasons to justify and defend his hero. Pechorin is true to himself within the novel and does not have to be defended on the basis of "exterior circumstances."[18] Lermontov returns, however, to his true artistic concept when he excludes himself from the circle of moralizers and states that he merely found it amusing to draw modern man as he understood him and as he met him. More significant yet is the pronouncement at the end of the preface which Nabokov rendered into English: "Suffice that the disease has been pointed out; goodness knows how to cure it."[19] As if in direct response to Lermontov's statement, Burachek proceeds to outline the cure of this disease, first in a series of articles in *Majak* between 1840 and 1845, and finally in his own novel. He emphatically demanded from literature the treatment of Russian national and religious themes as a preventative measure against the emergence of such monstrous, useless, morally deficient, irreligious Western creations as Pechorin and, before him, Onegin.[20]

The polemics over Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* reached their climax in 1845, when Burachek produced a new version of a hero of the time in his novel *Geroi nashego vremeni*, created in opposition to Lermontov's novel. The 307-page novel was to portray the true heroes of contemporary society, to show in poetic form the evils of free-thinking, and above all how to counteract these views with a Russian Christian education. It is difficult to ascertain how the novel was received at the time. Belinskij, who refers critically to *Majak* and its editor Burachek more than fifty times in his collected writings, does not mention the work, let alone discuss it. He apparently refrained from giving it free advertisement.

Unlike Lermontov's novel, which is composed of five separate stories, Burachek's work is a unit divided into three parts. Its moralistic didacticism is clearly indicated in the subtitles: I, Perversion, II, Moral degradation, III, Good and Evil, and no less in the conclusion (under a separate heading), where the author propounds his final moral message. Although the action revolves around the aristocratic family of Vasilij Ivanovich Panskij, the author introduces a cross section of their friends and acquaintances and thus is able to draw a panorama of Russian society of the 1830's and 1840's.[21] In so doing, Burachek employs a variety of narrative devices. The story, written in the third person, is interspersed with soliloquies and dialogues: these, in turn,

alternate with the diary and the epistolary form. The exchange of letters and the form of the diary are employed for the purpose of revealing the psychological state of the characters, a device to which Lermontov had recourse in Pechorin's diary.

Burachek's novel involves a deep psychological conflict in the main characters. This conflict, caused by embracing temporarily a non-Russian, non-religious, European way of life, leads to the aimless, empty existence we find typified in Lermontov's hero. But while Lermontov exerts no effort to lead Pechorin out of his disillusionment, Burachek provides a cure for his characters and leads them out of deterioration back to a useful, Russian religious life. These purified young Russians, particularly Petr Vel'min, then become the active positive heroes of their time.

At the very outset of the novel, the reader is introduced to two basically different groups of characters, each defending its own concept when discussing such topics as literature, education, religion, Russian nationalism, or the emancipation of women. Although Burachek does not label the two intellectual factions, it is obvious that they reflect the views of the Westernizers and Slavophiles of the 1840's. As an extreme right-wing Slavophile himself, the author presents a gloomy picture of the Westerners; they emerge in the novel as the villains who induce the destruction of the peaceful religious Russian life by importing poisonous Western thoughts. Western ideas have taught Russian youth to laugh at religion and at everything else which is Russian; free thinking has generated many aimless creatures with no purpose in life. It is hardly necessary to point out that the author alludes to no one else but Onegin and Pechorin, whose creators are repeatedly exposed to mockery by the Slavophile characters. The latter, serving as Burachek's mouthpiece, lament the disunity among Russian intellectuals, the lack of interest in writers such as A. A. Shakhovskoj, M. N. Zagoskin, A. F. Vel'tman, A. S. Khomjakov, M. A. Dmitriev and F. N. Glinka.[22]

The chief instigators of this fashionable liberal spirit are characters like Gololec, Cveifir and Medved'ka. Medved'ka, the leader of this clique, a journalist and expert on aesthetics and literary criticism, is of special interest, for he unmistakably represents Belinskij, Burachek's arch enemy, portrayed in a distorted manner.[23] It is Medved'ka who presides at literary evenings and proclaims the greatness of writers such as Batjushkov, Pushkin and Lermontov. But this praise never remains unchallenged or without ridicule. One of the characters, or the author himself, always points out the corruption and the harm which *Evgenij Onegin* and Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* supposedly have caused among Russian youth. Here is one example

illustrating the evil effects which Lermontov's novel evoked; when speaking of the sudden disappearance of a certain young female in Moscow, one of Medved'ka's opponents states: "Ona vljubilas' v priezzhego ofitserika: tot obmanul ee i uekhal; ona stala chitat' *Geroja nashego vremeni* i soshla s uma; da ... ee svezli."[24]

Burachek has Medved'ka and his associates triumph temporarily. Indeed, with the exception of the old nurse, a "true daughter of Russia," and the priest, the symbols of preservation of the old order, all characters become infatuated to some degree with the liberal spirit. They begin to attend masquerade balls, theatres, read Pushkin and Lermontov, begin to lead the life of Byronic heroes, and neglect thereby their real duty as Christians. The acme of irresponsibility and selfishness is embodied in Prince Boris who, like Lermontov's Pechorin, is guided only by the lure of passion. Medved'ka was able to instill in all of the "fallen characters" a false image of their ego, namely, that of an independent supreme, personal "I," a psychological state which, according to Burachek could lead only to moral deterioration. Medved'ka has to pay dearly, however, for his fraudulent teaching: his murder at the hand of Viktor Dverin, once his closest pupil, is accompanied by the words: "sobake sobach'ja i smert'!"[25]

Following the symbolic death of the "irredeemable" Medved'ka, a new phase in the novel begins, the gradual purification of the misled characters. Even Viktor Dverin, the murderer of Medved'ka, is rescued from his futile existence by accepting the spiritual guidance of the church. Prior to this salvation, however, Burachek devotes considerable space to an exposition on the nature of God-given free will and the difficulty in choosing between good and evil if the individual is devoid of a thorough Christian education.[26] Here, no doubt, he follows up the recurring theme of fate in Lermontov's novel and more specifically the problem of free will and predestination discussed in the story of "The Fatalist."[27] As an advocate of a Christian education, Burachek repudiates predestination and defends the existence of free will. Burachek believes in free will, as in essence does Pechorin, even though Lermontov's novel contains many indications which may lead us to conclude that its hero is an agent of fate. In reality Pechorin's "occasional recourse to a belief in the power of fate is an act of self-deception, a convenient way to blame an exterior power for the tragic results of the exercise of his will."[28] But while Lermontov's hero relies solely on his own superior ego for judgment and guidance, Burachek argues that men with free will cannot choose wisely between good and evil and are bound to follow the path of destruction unless they are endowed with a Christian education and with a belief in God.

Pechorin, however, believes neither in God nor in the Devil. He feels an enormous force in himself, but continually wastes his energy and potentialities. He asks, "Why was I born? What was the aim of my life."

In contrast to this enigmatic, disenchanted character delineated by Lermontov, Burachek develops his virtuous, exemplary heroes. Burachek devotes particular attention to a young university student, Petr Vel'min. Vel'min, with a firm belief in God, is momentarily distracted from his deep devotion to Christianity while attending the University of Moscow. But he realizes in time that to follow the fashionable free-thinkers would lead him to the abyss of nothingness. It is through the wise counselling of Father Daniil that Petr Vel'min becomes the permanent servant of the "Tsar on earth and the Tsar in heaven" and thus contributes to the welfare of the Russian nation. Upon graduation from the university, Vel'min devotes his time and effort to the construction and development of a foundry which is to produce the materials for future construction of railroads in Russia. Vel'min recruits the manpower for his project from among the peasants for whom he is building new houses and schools. The remainder of the surplus profits is not wasted on social extravagances, as was the custom among Russian aristocracy, but is donated to the church which is to supervise and disseminate a true Russian national, orthodox education among Russia's youth. Ascetic in his devotion to religion and no less to social service, Petr Vel'min becomes the respected, ideal young man of his time. This, then, is the active, positive hero, indeed the first one of his kind in Russian literature, whose practical endeavour was devoted to the improvement of Russian life.[29]

Burachek has indeed succeeded in producing a novel which is, both in content and form, the direct opposite to that of Lermontov. In neglecting form, with its various stylistic devices, for the sake of content in his novel, Burachek indirectly imposes a limit on the study of his work from of purely artistic point of view. The novel reveals hardly any unifying principle or specific artistic style which might have been employed for the sake of performing an aesthetic function. Yet it is the stylistic analysis of the various devices in constant interaction which is the most profitable in the study of Lermontov's novel, as illustrated by V. Vinogradov's admirable stylistic investigation.[30] Burachek's work discloses a notable absence of detailed physical descriptions, both of the characters and of the setting. The application of various poetic devices, the manipulation of details in order to create greater verisimilitude, assume a definite secondary position. In contrasting the decadent existence in St. Petersburg and Moscow to the Russian countryside with its simple, natural way of life, as Burachek terms

it, the author fails to produce the magnificent descriptions of nature, an artistic element so prominently featured in Lermontov's novel.

One of the most disturbing features in the novel is the frequent evaluation of the action by the author, rather than allowing the reader to form his own opinion. In other instances the action is not recorded and the reader learns of it only through the author's biased account. While Burachek uses the simplest form of characterization, i.e., names like Vel'min (from *vel'mozha*) and Medved'ka (*medved'*) to contrast personalities, he pays no attention to such an important feature as style of speech, even though the characters represent different classes. Nor does the author spare the reader long expositions on the nature of psychology,[31] on good and evil, or on the merits of a Christian education. It is in these passages in which the overemphasis of an idea, by a run of modifiers or by repetition of both adjectives and nouns, for the sake of persuasion is most vividly exemplified. Indeed, they read like one of Burachek's earlier critical articles. Here is one example, from many, describing the evil caused by the acquisition of worldly knowledge:[32]

> ... znanie stalo ego idolom. Serdtse junoshi ne zametno otstupilo ot Gospoda Boga; serdtse ego sgoraet etim zemnym ognem, ot kotorogo svet — malyj, kratkovremennyj, kholodnyj, a dym i kopot', — obil,ny, edki, ubijstvenny dlja dykhanija dukha. T'ma gordosti, samoljubija, samonadejanija — vot eta kopot' i dym, razstilajushchiesja po vsemu sushchestvu cheloveka, strastno uvlekshegosja k idolu zemnogo znanija. Eta t'ma oslepila bednogo junoshu; dumaja videt' vse, — on ne videt svoego krajnego okhlozhdenija i otdalenija ot Boga, o Kotorom ostalis' v nem tol'ko mertvykh znanija, i pochti bezdykhannaja, bezplodnaja pamjat'.

Burachek's novel could scarcely be linked with the general development of Russian novelistic prose. For him the central problem was content, the utilitarianism of a work, a theory, however, advocated and employed by most critics of the time.[33] Like Chernyshevskij's utilitarian novel *What Is to Be Done?*, Burachek's novel is artistically weak and unimaginatively written. The exaggerated and mechanical application of certain stylistic devices, such as comparisons or metaphors, produced a bombastic, polemical style. It is the style of a journalist and critic turned novelist. From all the indications we can assume that Burachek's main concern was not craftsmanship, but rather the

employment of the novel form as a means of averting the reappearance in Russian society of such useless elements as those portrayed by Lermontov.

There is no doubt that Burachek has failed to obliterate Lermontov's creation with his hero. No matter how positive, how virtuous, or how benevolent Petr Vel'min is, one can hardly sympathize with him or his cause, since the author does not succeed in presenting him convincingly. Petr Vel'min, at the end of the novel, leaves one unmoved as he retreats into a protective shelter, lets himself be guided by another force, and practically divests himself of his own personality. In contrast, Pechorin, the restless searcher for the meaning of life in a stormy world, emerges as a human being who, in spite of his flaws, arouses fear and concern. In the characterization of his hero, Burachek overemphasized the angelic devotion to religion at the expense of other vital aspects belonging to actual life. He thus presented us with an ideal hero and an ideal existence, which were the fruits of his own vision. But even an ideal has to remain within the realm of the probable. And if we admit that Pechorin is representative of the exception rather than the norm of the 1830's, then Petr Vel'min is a pure fabrication of fantasy. Burachek's novel is but another example of what happens frequently when the literary medium is utilized to propagandize a specific moral message. Lermontov's novel does not suffer from these defects; and it is precisely for its literary craftsmanship and the absence of moralization that Lermontov's, and not Burachek's, novel has survived.

While Burachek's novel, as an antithesis of that of Lermontov, is an interesting and rare phenomenon, the views expressed in it were, however, those of many conservative intellectuals of the time. We only have to recall Gogol's *Selected Passages from a Correspondence with Friends* (1847), which shocked even the extreme Slavophiles and provoked Belinskij's famous letter of reproach to its author. Indeed, it is in this letter that Belinskij twice castigated Gogol' as a follower of Burachek and company.[34] Nonetheless, Burachek's work deserves to be known for the sake of proper historic perspective, as the novel and its central idea constitute a component of the Russian literary and intellectual currents of the 1840's.

NOTES

1. See N. Mordovchenko, "Lermontov i russkaja kritika 40-kh godov," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, vol. 43/44, pp. 745-796.

2. For an excellent characterization of the intellectual atmosphere of the 1830's and 1840's in Russia, see N. L. Brodskij, "Poeticheskaja ispoved' russkogo intelligenta 30-40-kh godov," *Venok M. Ju. Lermontova: Jubilejnyj sbornik* (Moskva, 1914), 56-68.

3. V. G. Belinskij, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij*, 13 vols. (Moskva: 1953-1959), IV, 145-147, 173-175, 193-269.

4. Belinskij, IV, 265-266.

5. Belinskij, XI, 527.

6. J. Mersereau, *Mikhail Lermontov* (Carbondale, Ill., 1962), 153-154.

7. Mordovchenko, 745-796; E. E. Najdich, "*Geroj nashego vremeni* v russkoj kritike," in *M. Ju. Lermontov; Geroj nashego vremeni*, red. B. M. Ejkhenbaum i E. E. Najdich (Moskva, 1962), 163-197.

8. A. S. Burachek, *Geroi nashego vremeni*, *Majak: zhurnal sovremennogo prosveshchenija, iskusstva i obrazovannosti v dukhe narodnosti*, XIX (1845), 1-207; XX, 1-90. A complete set of the *Majak* is in the Yale University Library.

9. Belinskij, X, 225.

10. Critics who mention Burachek's novel are Najdich, 166; S. A. Andreev-Krivich, *Lermontov: Voprosy tvorchestva i biografii* (Moskva: 1954), 9; L. I. Ginzburg, *Tvorcheskij put' Lermontova* (Leningrad, 1940), 212. All of the above critics obtained their information from S. Andreev, "Lermontov i reaktsija," *30 dnej* (1938), 88-90, who was the first to point out in our time the existence of Burachek's novel.

11. Andreev-Krivich, 9.

12. *Russkij biograficheskij slovar'* (St. Petersburg, 1908), III, 493-495; see also Ja. E. Chernjak, "Pis'mo Belinskogo k Gogolju: Komentarij," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 56 (1950), Part II, 600-602.

13. *Russkij biograficheskij slovar'*, III, 494; Chernjak, 601.

14. Chernjak, 601; Like Burachek, Gogol' advocated blind submissiveness to the existing norms, i.e., Russian nationalism and orthodoxy, in his *Selected Passages from a Correspondence with Friends* (1847).

15. N. V. Gogol's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij*, 14 vols. (Moskva, 1937-1952), XIII, 304.

16. See Burachek's review of Lermontov's novel in *Majak*, IV (1840), Kritika, 210-211; Mordovchenko, 767-768; Andreev-Krivich, 8-9. Two other conservative journals, *Syn otechestvo* and *Biblioteka dlja chtenija*, printed negative reviews of Lermontov's novel. These reviews at first seemed to have had an effect on the sale of the novel. According to one source, Lermontov's grandmother Arsen'eva, without informing the author, paid the critic F. V. Bulgarin 500 rubles for a favourable review of the novel in his popular journal *Severnaja pchela*. For details, see Mordovchenko, 777, and note 70 on pp. 795-796.

17. *A Hero of Our Time; A Novel by Mikhail Lermontov*, tr. V. Nabokov in collaboration with D. Nabokov (New York, 1958); M. Ju. Lermontov, *Sobranie sochinenij v chetyrekh tomakh*, (Moskva/Leningrad: ANSSSR, 1959), IV, 275-277.

18. See Mersereau, 75-76, 150-154, for a detailed characterization of Pechorin.

19. Lermontov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, IV, 277; Nabokov's translation of *A Hero of Our Time*, 2.

20. Compare Belinskij, IV, 313, 638; IX, 69-70.

21. Inasmuch as the action of Burachek's story takes place in the drawing rooms of St. Petersburg and Moscow and reveals the life of the aristocracy with all its intrigues, it resembles in its framework the Russian society tale of the 1830's.

22. Ironic as it may seem, these were the writers, indeed popular in their own time, whom Burachek placed above Zhukovskij, Pushkin and Lermontov. The patriotic feelings expressed in their dramas, novels and poems corresponded to Burachek's own advocacy of Russian nationalism and orthodoxy.

23. Andreev-Krivich, 9.

24. Burachek, XIX, 121-122.

25. Burachek, XX, 32. Similar words (*sobake — sobach'ja smert'*) are attributed to Nicholas I upon hearing of Lermontov's death in 1841. *M. Ju. Lermontov v vospominanijakh sovremennikov* (Pensa, 1960), 172, 207, 338 and footnote 142.

26. Burachek, XX, 1-16.

27. Compare Mersereau, 134-142.

28. Mersereau, 141.

29. One cannot help noticing a certain parallel between Burachek's novel (1845) and Chernyshevskij's *What Is to Be Done?* (1862). Both present heroes who are active, virtuous and fanatic in their endeavour to improve the conditions of human life. But while both pursue the same goal, they differ vastly in their approaches; one advocates a religious, the other a social revolutionary method. It was *What Is to Be Done?* which became the gospel of the young generation in the second half of the nineteenth century.

30. V. Vinogradov, "Stil' prozy Lermontova," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 43-44 (1941), 517-628.

31. Burachek, XX, 4-20.

32. Burachek, XIX, 178.

33. L. Radoyce, "Die Probleme des Stils in der russischen Literaturkritik 1850-1880," *Stil- und Formprobleme in der Literatur* (Heidelberg, 1959), IV, 366-371.

34. For details, see Belinskij, X, 216; Chernjak, 591-592.

IV. Principles of Lessing's *Laokoon* and Some of its Exponents in Russian Literature

The diffusion of the boundaries in the arts had led to many discussions and treatises throughout the centuries, but while this prompted many intriguing theoretical conclusions, in actual practice the issue remains a recurring problem. The aim here is to single out some Russian writers who were not spared to deal with this problem and who in the course of their creativity were forced to take a stand vis-à-vis that ancient dictum, which had been explicitly expressed in the statement of Simonides and recorded by Plutarch as: "Poema pictura loquens, pictura poema silens." The idea of Simonides that "poetry is a speaking picture, painting mute poetry" had been further reinforced by various poetics down to the eighteenth century. What came to dominate aesthetic thinking and art theories was the Horatian formula "ut pictora poesis" — "as is painting, so is poetry." This simile, likening poetry to painting, was so assiduously cultivated that by the time of the Renaissance it became an accepted doctrine that the most famous writers of antiquity and the Renaissance were also the most eminent of verbal painting, and this because of the pictorial quality of their landscapes and the protracted detailed description of their verbal portraits.

Although some lone voices, like that of Leonardo da Vinci and later Shaftesbury and Abbe Dubos, expressed some caution, the notion that poetry and painting are alike continued unchallenged to guide artistic endeavour way into the second half of the eighteenth century and, indeed, beyond. While some elevated the Horatian formula "ut pictura poesis" to a regular system,[1] Count Caylus in France went further and measured the degree of aesthetic quality of a writer according to verbal monuments he created in his work. In the words of Lessing, Caylus postulated "die Brauchbarkeit für den Maler zum Probierstein der Dichter ... und ihre Rangordnung nach der Brauchbarkeit der Gemälde, die sie dem Artisten darbieten...."[2]

By the mid 1750s a new phase regarding the relation of the arts was initiated largely by Winckelmann's work *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1754). It is this work which in turn provoked Lessing to produce one of the most potent books of the century, namely *Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Mahlerei und Poesie* (1766). At the centre of this treatise was among others an attack against the literal interpretation of Horace's "ut pictura poesis," which had been rampant in European literature and was responsible for the excessive description encountered in poetic practice.

Lessing demonstrates convincingly the aesthetic disadvantage, when a poet attempts to rival a painter in presenting that instantaneous image, which forces him to describe a succession of parts in order to derive at the whole:

> Gesetzt nun also auch, der Dichter führe uns in der schönsten Ordnung von einem Teil des Gegenstandes zu dem anderen; gesetzt, er wisse uns die Verbindung dieser Teile auch noch so klar zu machen; wie viel Zeit gebraucht er dazu? Was das Auge mit einmal übersieht, zählt er uns merklich langsam nach und nach zu, und oft geschieht es, daß wir bei dem letzten Zuge den ersten schon wiederum vergessen haben.[3]

Lessing cites several examples from descriptive poetry to demonstrate the visual ineffectiveness of excessive detailed description. He singles out the enumerative description in *Orlando Furioso*, in which Ariosto attempts to describe the beauty and charm of Alcina. In spite of the minute, long description of her bodily features, the reader fails to form a definite picture from the various elements laboriously brought together. It is ineffective because the total impression is not conveyed instantaneously, but only in succession.[4] What Lessing rejects is word painting, the attempt to achieve the visual effect of painting, through the cataloguing of the physical properties of a character. While categorically denying the direct description in literature as a means to create an illusion of reality, Lessing asserts that the image of a body can be described, but only indirectly through suggestion, through action and change, but most of all by describing the effect, and the general impression, which the particular object is producing upon others. It is this part of *Laokoon*, Chapters XX and XXI, in which Lessing illustrates his position from the practice of Homer, that is the most interesting and certainly the most important exposition which had a lasting value.

Great writers like Homer are not fond of drawing elaborate detailed pictures. Like the painter who selects "the most fruitful," "the most pregnant moment" which allows free play of imagination to see what was before and what was to come, in like manner, Homer selects only one or two appropriate epithets, or a characteristic quality for the sake of illuminating that sensual image of the body, which is most desired at that particular moment. It is to arouse through imagination an illusion of a vivid picture of reality.

In contrast to the visual ineffectiveness of the enumerative description of Alcina, Lessing refers the reader to the beautiful Helen in the *Iliad*, over whose beauty a war had started and yet, she is never fully described, least of

all in portrait form. Homer instead simply tells us that she is lovely, i.e., he conveys the general impression and relates only that she has white arms and fair hair. But most of all Homer relates the effect which her appearance had among the elders of Troy at the moment she stepped into their midst. Indeed a sophisticated manner of depiction, as it gives free play to the reader's imagination.

When Helen appears before the Trojan elders, they say softly to one another: "Small wonder that Trojans and Achaeans should endure so much and so long, for the sake of a woman so marvellously and divinely lovely."[5] To this Lessing reacts with the question — What could produce a more vivid idea of beauty than making cold old age confess that it is well worth a war which costs so much blood and so many tears? This alone sufficed to evoke the lovely image of Helen. While some admire the skilful description of Ariosto, Lessing demands the description of the effect, or as he says: "... ich aber sehe bloß auf die Wirkung, welche diese Kenntnisse, in Worte ausgedrückt auf meine Einbildungskraft haben können."[6] Lessing concludes by asserting that, what Homer could not describe in detail, he makes the reader perceive through the effect, "Wirkung," and pleads: "Malet uns Dichter, das Wohlgefallen, die Zuneigung, die Liebe, das Entzücken, welches die Schönheit verursacht, und ihr habt die Schönheit selbst gemalt."[7] What Lessing says about the description of physical beauty is equally true for any description. By selecting then, that all important dominant feature and describing its effect or impression, this alone suffices to trigger our fantasy, which in turn completes the suggested image. The elements of fantasy which the poet is to create do not need exact and detailed descriptions.

The importance of Lessing's publication of *Laokoon* in 1766 and its impact on German aesthetic thinking and art theories cannot be overestimated. The impression which this work produced upon Goethe and his contemporaries is recorded in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: "Man muß Jüngling sein, um sich zu vergegenwärtigen, welche Wirkung Lessings *Laokoon* auf uns ausübte.... Das so lange mißverstandene *ut pictura poesis* war auf einmal beseitigt...."[8] While the Lessingian principles no doubt had an influence on German letters and discredited descriptive poetry, the extent to which this was actually the case can hardly be measured. It is certainly true when F. Vischer notes in his *Aesthetik* that: "Seit wir Lessings *Laokoon* besitzen, gehört der Satz, daß der Dichter nicht malen soll, in das ABC der Poesie."[9] But it is impossible to assert that with the publication of the *Laokoon* "war der damaligen 'Schilderungssucht' in der Poesie der Todesstreich versetzt und das alte Horazische Verwerfungsurteil über alle beschreibende Poesie erneuert."[10]

Although Lessing's doctrine provoked a reexamination of the poetic practice in Germany in reality the fondness of drawing elaborate pictures, especially direct literary portrayals, remained a characteristic feature among many French and English writers at the close of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. We only need to recall the protracted descriptions of the characters of Balzac and Walter Scott, or the portrait of Lermontov's Pechorin in *A Hero of Our Time*, to note that this old practice of drawing in words was not only in vogue among the lesser talented writers, but also among those of prominent,[11] not to mention the votaries of Russian Realism.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that notwithstanding Lessing's enormous fame in Germany, abroad his *Laokoon* found no immediate response either from the critics or in imaginative literature. But then the *Laokoon* was rather belatedly translated into English in 1837 and into Russian as late as 1859. Judging, however, from various comments related to Lessing's thought by Russian writers, one must assume a definite awareness of his work especially among writers of the second half of the nineteenth century. But by that time various forces were at work and Lessing's ideas became interwoven with the thought of the age which accelerated the tendency toward a laconic depiction, turning away from the traditional detailed description of the physical properties of characters in portrait format. Thus also the difficulties in pinpointing direct evidence, as to Lessing's specific impact. And then there is always the talented writer, who may have arrived at the same conclusion. One should also not exclude the indirect influence by great German works which reflected the Lessingian doctrines. In fact, the ideas in a work like *Laokoon* are apt to be transmitted more through imitation than directly. In the absence, however, of concrete evidence, it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of conjectural evidence, "Verwandtschaft der Gedanken," which one discovers between the ideas of Lessing and those expressed or implemented by some Russian writers.

The reception of Lessing in Russia dealt hitherto mainly with the translations of his plays, fables, critical works and studies on Lessing produced by Russian scholars,[12] i.e., largely with the physical aspect. But the actual absorption of Lessing's ideas, the effect, if any, on the progress of Russian letters and the arts, especially with regard to *Laokoon* had been neglected. We are dealing here with the problems of reception in general, as it was posed recently with regard to Lessing: "Fragt man sich nach der Wirkungsgeschichte Lessings im internationalen Rahmen, so kommt man zu einem uneinheitlichen Bild. Die Frage ist wohl nicht, ob Lessing von den Fachgelehrten in aller Welt geschätzt aufgenommen und verarbeitet wird,

sondern: Wie weit ist er tatsächlich in das kulturelle Leben anderer Nationen eingegangen?"[13] And one might add, to what extent he was influential in the creative process and Russian critical thinking? Professor R. Lauer is thus fully justified in suggesting that the book dealing with a full account of Lessing in Russia, especially the "Wirkungsgeschichte," has yet to be written.[14]

The only noteworthy study hitherto produced by Russian scholars is that by R. Ju. Danilevskij, a specialist in Russo-German literary relations. However thorough, his effort was limited to the eighteenth century, a period in Russia when the popularity of a Gellert or a Wieland by far overshadowed that of Lessing. Moreover, Lessing the critic and theoretician remained unmentioned, for neither the *Laokoon* nor *Die Hamburgische Dramaturgie* were rendered into Russian during that century. The fact that there were no traces of Lessing's idea in Russian literary criticism of the second half of the eighteenth century was only indicative of its embryonic stage. Theoretically, Russian literature was still heavily dominated by the poetics of Boileau, Batteux, Eschenburg and Sulzer.

Yet, Lessing's aesthetic thinking was certainly known within the intellectual circles at the time, among the Masons and especially in that of Karamzin and his mentor A. A. Petrov, who placed Lessing even above Shakespeare.[15] Then there were the former Russian students at the universities of Kiel, Strasbourg, Jena and the Karlsschule at Stuttgart and even more important, the large scale of German and Swiss intellectuals, civil servants and tutors and especially writers like Lenz, Klinger, L. H. v. Nicolay, Willamow and Elise von der Recke, all of whom were actively disseminating Lessing's new aesthetic ideas within the Russian Empire.

Even though we encounter no reference to Lessing's *Laokoon* by Russia's greatest admirer of Lessing, it is unthinkable that Karamzin was not aware of its aesthetic pronouncements, so beneficial for a budding poet. Yet, in the *Letters of a Russian Traveller 1789-1790* he describes in detail the statue of Laokoon which he encountered at the Art Academy in Mannheim. True, we are faced with detailed protracted physiognomic descriptions in both the *Letters* and in his *History of the Russian State* — here he is dealing with historical and real people whom he met. But in his fiction he decidedly refrained from the descriptive technique as a mode of characterization and delineates character through action as is suggested by Lessing. Here he appeals to imagination and the characters are endowed with only salient features and facial expression, albeit in a sentimental poetic language. In *Natal'ja, the Bojar's Daughter* (1792), Karamzin expounds on his method and assures the reader "that the description of the daily activities of man is the

truest representation of his heart." But before doing so the reader is told that Natal'ja is the most beautiful maiden of ancient Moscow. She is likened to a rose in the midst of a meadow of flowers. As to her specific features, we only learn that she has a white face, dark brown hair and dark eyes, and crimson cheeks: "Let the reader imagine the whiteness of Italian marble and the snows of the Caucasus. He still would not be able to imagine the whiteness of her face — and fancying the colours of Zephyr's mistress, he still could not fully conceive the crimson of Natal'ja's cheeks." But realizing that any further "comparisons from the old stock of poetic similes" would bore the reader and still not yield a complete image of Natal'ja's beauty and charm, the narrator resorts to the sophisticated manner of drawing beauty by relating the effect Natal'ja has upon others: "It suffices, however, to know that most devout elders, seeing the Bojar's daughter at mass, forgot their low bows while praying and the mot biased mothers granted her preference over their own daughters."[16] In what more powerful manner could one relate Natal'ja's charm and beauty than through the effect she had upon the elders and the envious mothers? It is through the portrayal of the effect, the psychological reflexes, practised by Homer and advocated by Lessing. The similarity is too great as not to preclude an awareness of the Lessingian principles.

Like Karamzin, Pushkin describes in detail only his historical figures like Pugachev, Ermolov and Catherine II, but in all other fictional characters he categorically rejects descriptions in literary portraiture. His main protagonist Onegin is never visually presented, yet there emerges a concrete image on the strength of indirect portrayal. The portrait of Ol'ga which Pushkin started out to draw, was soon abandoned, as he found the enumeration of her features superfluous and contrary to his aesthetic concept. He tells the reader that her full portrait can be found in any novel.[17]

Not only prolonged description in portraiture, but any long account was contrary to Pushkin's inclination, as can be seen from the narrator's comment in *The Undertaker* (1831). Here he declares: "I will not attempt to describe the Russian kaftan of Adrian Prokhorov, nor the European attire of Akulina and Darja, thereby deviating in this respect from the approved custom of modern novelists." In other instances Pushkin relies on the power of a single word or a phrase to evoke an entire image. Of young Dubrovskij, the reader learns only from the narrator that he is pleasant and that he has a "majestic" appearance, and that Masha Troekurova is a "beauty." In both cases the suggestion is so meagre that the reader is free to imagine his own beautiful Masha or the majestic Dubrovskij. Pushkin demonstrates once more in *Dubrovskij* his dislike of the components demanded in a literary portrait. At

a dinner party of the Troekurovs, when the guest wanted to know something of Dubrovskij's appearance, Pushkin had an excellent opportunity to draw a portrait of his elusive brigand. But all that Pushkin presented were a few stereotyped facts, as related by Dubrovskij's former servants: "He is twenty-three years old, of medium height, clean face, shaves the beard, has brown eyes, brown hair, a straight nose. Distinguishing marks: such are not apparent." It is a meaningless enumeration of anatomical data which tell us little of the visual image of Dubrovskij and even less of his character. And indeed, Pushkin had Troekurov ironically exclaim: "— with such distinguished marks it will not be easy to find Dubrovskij. And who is not of middle height, and does not have brown hair, a straight nose and brown eyes!"[18]

By avoiding Horace's formula "ut pictura poesis" or Diderot's credo that in every poet is a painter, Pushkin was seemingly adhering to Lessing's principles as set forth in his *Laokoon*, a work which initiated a lasting debate about the aesthetic principles governing full detailed portrayal as opposed to mere suggestion. As such Pushkin occupies a unique position among the writers of the 1830's, when the protracted description of a Walter Scott and especially that of Balzac dominated the Russian literary scene. Through his laconic presentation and by avoiding word painting, and by selecting only one all-important feature which triggers our imagination, and by relying on mimic and gesture, on hints and suggestions, impressions conveyed through a single word, he was able to arouse inward vision and lasting impressions. Features of this kind made him the initiator of an impressionistic undercurrent in Russian Realism which reached its full expression in the works of Turgenev and Chekhov.

As an ingenious artist, Pushkin may have arrived at such concepts on his own, but then all had been formulated before. When Pushkin advocated that the Russian drama should follow the tradition of Shakespeare — was this done under the impact of Lessing? Or when he said that: "Since the time of Lessing's aesthetic theories had been so widely and clearly expounded ... while we are still clinging to the concept of a pedant like Gottsched."[19] — how well did he know Lessing's theories? He could have read the essence of the tragedy in Lessing's letter to Nicolai, which was published in 1816 and some excerpts of *Die Hamburgische Dramaturgie* in 1833.[20] He may even have been acquainted with Lessing's refutation of word painting, the ineffectiveness of description and Homer's exemplary depiction through the effect, for the periodical *Litsej* (1806) had published excerpts from chapters XX and XXI from the *Laokoon*.[21]

Considering the overwhelming prevalence of the descriptive methods of the

Natural School which has to be traced back to Balzac's influence and which lasted beyond the 1850s, it is not surprising that Lessing in those decades exerted hardly any effect either on the creative process, or on the literary aesthetic theories. However, a new phase of the Lessing reception and with it a more serious preoccupation with the *Laokoon* was initiated with the publication of Chernyshevskij's *Lessing, his Time, his Life and Work*, first published serially in *The Contemporary* (1856-57) and in 1857 in book form. It was also republished in Geneva in 1873.[22] This interest was no doubt caused by the publication of Lessing's collected works by Lachmann and the critical studies of Danzel and Guhrauer in Germany, all of which coincided with the urge to establish a systematic school of Russian criticism by Chernyshevskij and Dobroljubov, the two "socialist Lessings," as F. Engels had labelled them.[23]

However interesting this entire phenomenon, the attention which Lessing received from the progressive camp of the social democrats, the reverence accorded to him as a kindred spirit and great enlightener, Chernyshevskij found foremost in Lessing his literary guide and critical model.[24] He places Lessing above Schiller and Goethe, for they have only completed what Lessing had started. Much space is devoted to Lessing's critical works and how he initiated with his *Laokoon* a new direction by correcting the prevailing Horatian theory of "ut pictura poesis." Chernyshevskij is the first Russian critic to outline the essence of this work and confirming thereby its lasting importance, namely provoking the reexamination of poetic practices by each new generation, as to the validity of aesthetic principles governing full detailed portrayal as opposed to mere suggestions. He stresses the essence of chapters XX and XXI of the *Laokoon* and the effect it had on Schiller and Goethe who were totally imbued with Lessing's idea of depicting through the description of the effect. Thus he proclaimed: "There are no literary portraits in Goethe's work, there are only accounts of impressions created by the characters,"[25] rejecting thereby the prevailing practice among Russian novelists at the time. But while Goethe, the creative genius, would have arrived at the same conclusion as Lessing, Chernyshevskij took this principle particularly to heart. In his own creative work *What is to be done* (1863), he literally adhered to Lessing's credo and consciously avoided protracted descriptions of characters. Indeed, there is a striking absence of any portraiture of his protagonists.

Two years after Chernyshevskij's laudatory account of Lessing, the *Laokoon* appeared fully on the Russian literary scene. The translation undertake by the critic E. Edel'son[26] is praised as a monumental work and

as a welcome supplement to Chernyshevskij's study of Lessing. Dobroljubov in his review (1859) concentrates once again on the central idea and admonishes the poet not to describe the object, "but relate the impression and then we are enabled to imagine the object which had created that impression." He predicted the usefulness of the *Laokoon* in the literary education of the Russian reader.[27]

The publication of Edel'son's translation provoked a lengthy review article of the *Laokoon* by P. L. Lavrov, a literary critic in his younger years and later a follower of Chernyshevskij and theoretician of the "to the people movement." In some forty-eight pages Lavrov reviews faithfully, in a scholarly fashion, the content of the *Laokoon*,[28] adding profusely explanations, critical comments and illustrations both from contemporary Russian painting and literature. It is the most elaborate discussion of the *Laokoon* by any Russian scholar. Viewing literature as purely aesthetic enjoyment provided by the beauty of form, Lavrov was elated to discover in this work a confirmation of his own views.

The *Laokoon* is admired as a catalyst which forces each generation to reexamine similar problems, which Lessing faced and as such its esteem will forever increase as time passes. But Lavrov takes issue with Lessing's rigidity of the boundaries, which he draws between painting and literature especially with regard to poetic painting of landscapes and the verbal portraiture. Indeed, a strict adherence to the Lessingian principles would have meant the death blow to any poetic description in literature and would have curtailed artistic freedom. In effect, Lavrov maintains, and echoes Diderot's dictum, that in art we recognize no prescribed laws. The fact that protracted descriptions prevailed long after the appearance of the *Laokoon* seems to support Lavrov's argument that poetic painting both of landscapes and literary portraits are not only possible, but are real and do exist, in fact "they are just as characteristic and even more complete than any plastic image."[29]

In support of his argument that one cannot only draw in colour, but also in words, Lavrov provides examples from Lermontov, Fet, Gogol, Majkov, Goncharov and Turgenev. He refers to the landscape passage of Haller's *Alpen*, which Lessing had cited as ineffectual and compares it to a protracted verbal landscape by Gogol and concludes that the passage in the *Alpen* is, indeed, ineffective, but not because it constitutes a successive description, but because it is unpoetic and created by a poor poet. Gogol's, on the other hand, is no less detailed than Haller's, but it is poetic and is created by a superior talent and therefore poetically effective and could rival any existing landscape painting. Likewise, Lavrov defends word painting in the literary portrait. He

refers to the vivid portraits created by Turgenev in *The Hunter's Sketches* and argues that if these portraits were put on canvas by the best master, they would not be more complete in our recollection.[30] What is left in our memory from both the painted portraits and the verbal portraits are only characteristic features, and thus those painters and writers who limit themselves to depicting only salient features do justice to their art. But this modified form of portraiture, which falls between the practice of Balzac and Homer, i.e., depicting only salient features, would have most likely been tolerated by Lessing, had he lived long enough to witness the new manner among the talented writers. He even goes so far as to say "that Lessing actually was not against description in general, but against bad descriptions."

Lavrov concludes his account by appealing to caution and moderation, when we are dealing with the judgement of art, for much depends on talent, fashion of ideals, cultivated taste, imagination, aesthetic concepts, psychological reflexes, all of which vary in degree from person to person and epoch to epoch. They, as art itself, are ephemeral and part of a continuous process of change. Therefore, Lavrov maintains, the time has not yet arrived to write the definitive book on aesthetics, hinting thereby at the categorical conviction expressed in the *Laokoon*.[31]

The writer who comes closest to Lessing's ideas in actual practice and pronouncements is Turgenev. Already in 1844, in *Andrej Kolosov*, when attempting to draw the portrait of the protagonist, he noted the aesthetic limitation of protracted enumeration. It is easy, the narrator noted, to enumerate the physical features of a character, but how does one convey the essence of a particular face the impression or effect it produces?[32] Turgenev achieved this by depicting only salient features and the effect of the total impression. The reader is, so to say, constantly invited to decipher that impressionistic texture and to complete the picture. The same is true of his nature description: "Two, three lines and all is alive," as Tolstoj once remarked.[33] What Turgenev uttered about the best books, may equally refer to his art: "The best people and the best books are those where one can read between the lines."[34] Similar aesthetic pronouncements are repeatedly encountered in his letters and reviews. Here are only a few examples where he criticizes the overabundance of details and concludes: "The task of art is not to reproduce life, and in all of those endless small details one looses the specificity, the conciseness of a picture which is essential in arousing the aesthetic feeling in the reader...."[35] Remaining consistent in his views he rejected in 1882 the descriptive manner of the naturalists: "In painting and the same is true of literature, indeed, of all art: he who transmits all details is

doomed to perish; one ought to capture only characteristic features."[36]

One could dismiss Turgenev's aesthetic perception as that of great talent, were it not for the fact that they bear striking resemblance to those of Lessing, not to mention the reverence he displayed for him as a critic. The *Laokoon* he read and reread as late as 1873.[37] While he found his dramas too pedagogical, he praised his critical work and stated in a letter to Jakob Caro: "Aber die *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* — und der *Laokoon* ... da hab' ich es mit einem Riesen zu tun, der mich packt, da singt er nicht mit der Fistel.... Da ist Leidenschaft und Leben."[38] But apart from various other references to Lessing, Turgenev was asked in 1852 by the editor A. A. Krajevskij to check for him an anonymous translation of the *Laokoon*. Although Turgenev recommended publication, it never appeared in print,[39] unless it was that by Edel'son. Turgenev was thus fully aware of Lessing's aesthetic norms already at the threshold of his literary career, if not through this translation, then certainly through his literary studies in Berlin, where he hardly could have by-passed the *Laokoon*.

The problem of detailed description versus the depiction of impression and the effect, the very issue treated in the *Laokoon* is nowhere more apparent than in the literary portrayal of L. N. Tolstoj's protagonists. It suffices to juxtapose the early literary attempts, particularly the protracted experimental portraits of the 1850's which were meant for his *Trilogy* and no less those encountered in the Caucasian tales and the *Sevastopol Sketches*, with his later portraits encountered especially in *Anna Karenina*. Not that the issue was totally resolved in favour of a laconic depiction, but there was a decisive difference. Here, as well as in *War and Peace*, Tolstoj never depicts his major characters in one single detailed portrait, as was the practice among most novelists at the time. We encounter rather four to six sketches of the characters; these are partial portraits, conveying only salient features and the impression made upon others at that particular moment.

Already during his "period of experimentation" Tolstoj dealt with the problem of description, generalization, as opposed to minute details in the depiction of his characters in portrait form.[40] From the practice of Dickens, Sterne and others and from the reading of F. R. Weis, Tolstoj came to the conclusion that the "detailed and fullness of exposition" was not in the least offensive.[41] Yet, in the midst, when he had been creating protracted portraits, he made, as early as 1851 the startling pronouncement "that to *describe* [ital. Tolstoj] a person is actually impossible" and that "one ought rather to describe, how he affected me." "Description in words," he continues, "will not create greater understanding about a person, but will add

to the confusion."[42] The same idea is uttered by Tolstoj on nature description when he entered in his diary in 1851: "I shall go and describe whatever I see. But how to write it down.... Letters will compose words, words — phrases; but how to convey feelings ... upon beholding nature? *Description is not adequate* [ital. Tolstoj].[43]

These are Lessingian pronouncements based on the practice of Homer, which one encounters throughout Tolstoj's literary career. Yet, by 1851 he had neither read Homer's *Iliad*, nor Lessing's *Laokoon*, but one must assume a certain awareness of their ideas. The *Iliad* he read only in 1857; a more Lessingian idea, as to the intermingling of the arts, was expressed in *Anna Karenina*, when Levin and Pestsov discuss the Wagnerian orientation in music:

> Levin maintained that the mistake of Wagner and his followers lay in trying to make music enter the domain of another art, *just as poetry goes wrong when it tries to depict the features of a face* [ital. mine], which is the function of painting. As an example of this kind of error, he refers to the sculptor who conceived the idea of carving into marble shades (phantasms) of poetic images rising around the statue of a poet on a pedestal.[44]

This passage clearly outlines the boundaries of poetry and the plastic arts not only in pointing out that it is wrong "when poetry tries to depict the features of a face" but also when the plastic arts attempt to *rival poetry*. It is in a nutshell Lessing's refutation of the art critics Spence and Caylus who advocated "poetische Malerei" and "poetische Gemälde" as the subject matter for the artist, which is expounded in great detail in Chapters IX-XV of the *Laokoon*. Assuming that Levin is the spokesman for Tolstoj, we can conclude that he, like Lessing, recognized the limitations of the plastic arts: what the poet can achieve through a single word, the artist can achieve only by resorting to symbols or allegorical figures.

Lessing is mentioned by Tolstoj on many occasions, but mainly toward the end of the century, when he collected "wise thoughts" by prominent thinkers. It is known also that he bought and ordered some books by Lessing, however, no other specifics are recorded. He had noted also Lessing's importance as an "educated authority" in initiating a new direction in German literature. And although he was delighted with Lessing's dramas already in his youth, later only *Nathan der Weise* is singled out for its lofty humanity and religious tolerance; he also treasured *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* as it

reflected profound thoughts.[45] Tolstoj obviously also read about Lessing's aesthetic theories in various critical works when he was preparing his treatise *What is Art?* But the direct references to the object of our major concern, the *Laokoon*, is rather sparse, even though Tolstoj was in possession of Edel'son's translation, which is still preserved in the library at Jasnaja Poljana.

The first reference to Lessing's *Laokoon* was made by Tolstoj in his notebook of 1870. Here he laments that the artists are not well acquainted with the theoretical works in their field, adding: "... not even with that by Lessing. The reason for this criticism is the painting by N. N. Ge (1831-1894) entitled "Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane" (1869) of which Tolstoj says further: "Ge painted very well a picture of a secular [grazhdanskogo] Christ. But this is one subject of all secular events which cannot be the topic for a picture. And this would have become clear, even from Lessing's *Laokoon*."[46]

When Tolstoj rejects the depiction of Christ with a head raised to heaven and with a sorrowful expression in the midst of his disciples, as a subject not fit for the painter, then he voices the limitation of painting as being incapable of characterizing the complexity of Christ and the situation in which he found himself. It is the same issue that Tolstoj had Levin express in *Anna Karenina* seven years later when he pointed out the wrongs of the sculptor who had entered the realm of the poet.

Tolstoj is, however, critical of Lessing with regard to at least two aspects. He totally rejects, as could be expected, Lessing's insistence that the ultimate goal and function of art is to depict beauty, the highest form of which is to be encountered in the human body, indeed, an idea that permeated the entire *Laokoon*. At the height of his nihilistic outlook (1906) on great universal art, Tolstoj rejects the actual statue of Laokoon along with Goethe's *Faust* and Shakespeare's dramas, all of which had been falsely glorified as great and important art.[47] Indeed, according to Makovitskij, Tolstoj rejects Lessing's assertion that the Laokoon is correctly depicted at the most propitious moment, when he is not yet screaming, but is merely portrayed in a state of suffering pain. Tolstoj maintained in 1904 that "the portrayal of the Laokoon in a condition of suffering is a mistake. Lessing is of a different opinion, but then, I don't value his opinion."[48]

It is perhaps such negative comments which also account for the absence of any reference to Lessing by critics dealing with Tolstoj and the arts,[49] indeed, a pattern already prevalent during the second half of the nineteenth century. Even though the *Laokoon* was known among Russian critics, the

views on the boundaries of the arts had not become part of their theories. K. Pigarev notes the striking absence of any Lessingian concepts, but a predominance of the sociological aspects in the critical judgement of both artists and critics like Kramskoj, Perov, Nekrasov, Stasov, Mikhailovskij and many others.[50] It is to be hoped that the recent studies on Lessing's aesthetic views by critics like Fridlender, Grib and especially Dmitrieva[51] will initiate a more intensive preoccupation with Lessing's direct impact on Russian criticism and eradicate the materialistic approach to which he had been largely subjugated since the study on him in 1874 by N. V. Shelgunov.[52]

NOTES

1. G. E. Lessing, *Laokoon*. Sämtliche Schriften, vol. IX, Hrsg. K. Lachmann (Stuttgart, 1893), 50-60, 75-81.

2. Lessing, IX, 91.

3. Lessing, IX, 102.

4. Lessing, IX, 129; IX, 120.

5. Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. S. Butler (Toronto, New York, 1942).

6. Lessing, IX, 125.

7. Lessing, IX, 130.

8. H. Althaus, *Laokoon: Stoff und Form* (München, 1968), 31-32.

9. F. Th. Vischer, *Aesthetik: oder Wissenschaft des Schönen* (München, 1860), III, 1100.

10. A. Stahr, *G. E. Lessing: Sein Leben und seine Werke*, 9. Aufl. (Oldenburg, Leipzig, 1863), 231.

11. Compare F. Baldensperger, "Les théories de Lavater dans la littérature française," *Etudes d'histoire littéraire* 2 (Paris, 1910), 51-91; J. Graham, "Character Description and Meaning in the Romantic Novel," *Studies in*

Romanticism, V (1966), 208-218; G. Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel* (Princeton, 1982); E. Heier, "Lavater's System of Physiognomy as a Mode of Characterization in Lermontov's Prose," *Arcadia*, 6 (1971), 267-282.

12. Compare the exhaustive study of R. Ju. Danilevskij, "Lessing v russkoj literature XVIII veka," *Epokha prosveshchenija* (Leningrad, 1967) 208-306; and the well documented study by R. Lauer, "Skizze der Lessing-Rezeption in Rußland," *Nation und Gelehrtenrepublik: Lessing im Europäischen Zusammenhang*, hrsg. W. Berner and A. M. Reh (Detroit, München, 1984), 325-343.

13. A. M. Reh, "Bericht über die Schlußdiskussion: Lessing — der erste deutsche Schriftsteller von europäischem Rang vor Goethe?", *Nation und Gelehrtenrepublik....*, 160.

14. Lauer, 325.

15. A. G. Cross, *N. M. Karamzin. A Study of his Literary Career (1783-1803)*, (Carbondale, 1971), 18-20.

16. N. M. Karamzin, *Izbrannye sochinenija* (Moskva, 1964), I, 625-626.

17. A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij*, 10 vols. (Moskva, 1962-1966), V, 46. Compare also S. Solov'ev, "O nekotorykh osobennostijakh izobrazitel'nosti Pushkina," *V mire Pushkina* (Moskva, 1974), 344-345.

18. Pushkin, VI, 122, 271.

19. *A. S. Pushkin. O literature* (Moskva, 1962), 238.

20. Compare *Vestnik Evropy*, 86 (1816), N:V, 34-40; *Molva*, 5 (1833), Pt. V, 230-232; Danilevskij, 306.

21. Danilevskij, 305.

22. N. G. Chernyshevskij, *Lessing, ego vremja, ego zhizn' i ego dejatel'nost'*, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij* (Moskva, 1945), IV 5-221; E. Bograd, "Chernyshevskij v St. Peterburgskikh vedomostjakh," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 68 (Moskva: 1959), 80.

23. Chernyshevskij, IV, 890.

24. E. Heier, "Chernyshevskij's Lessing," *Studies in Honour of Louis Shein* (Hamilton, 1983), 55-64. Russian critical works on Chernyshevskij consider his study of Lessing as the best hitherto produced.

25. Chernyshevskij, IV, 153; Compare also A. v. Gronicka, "Goethe and N. G. Chernyshevskij," *The Germanic Review*, XLIX (1974), 39-40.

26. *Laokoon, ili o granitsakh zhivopisi i poezii. Soch. Lessinga.* Per. E. Edel'sona. Moskva, tip. Semena, 1859. 214 pp.

27. N. A. Dobroljubov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, IV (Moskva, 1952), 415-416.

28. P. L. Lavrov, "Laokoon, ili o granitsakh zhivopisi i poezii," *Biblioteka dlja chtenija*, 158 (1860), 1-58.

29. Lavrov, 27-30.

30. Lavrov, 30-37.

31. Lavrov's second article, "Diderot i Lessing," *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 176 (1868), N: I, 154-212, written at the time when he had embraced a utilitarian concept of literature, is critical of Lessing's neglect of social issues in his work.

32. I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh* (Moskva, 1960-68), V, 10-11.

33. For details of Turgenev's manner of depiction in the impressionistic style, see: E. Heier, "Principles of Impressionism in the Aesthetics of I. S. Turgenev," *Poetica Slavica. Studies in Honour of Zbigniew Folejewski*, ed. D. Clayton (Ottawa, 1981), 53-69.

34. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, VI, 34.

35. Turgenev, V, 390.

36. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, XIII, pt. II, 37-38.

37. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, X, 140.

38. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, XIII, pt. II, 212; J. Caro, "Ein Brief Turgenieffs über Lessing," *Deutsche Revue über das gesammte nationale Leben der Gegenwart*, IV (1883), 8. Jahrg., 257.

39. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, II, 84, 127, 455.

40. B. Eikhenbaum, *The Young Tolstoj*, transl. by G. Kern (Ann Arbor, 1972), 22-34.

41. E. Kuprejanova, "Prosvetitel'skie istoki filosofii i tvorcheskogo metoda L'va Tolstogo," *Russkaja literatura*, 2 (1964), 40-54.

42. L. N. Tolstoj, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij*, 90 vols. (Moskva, 1935-64), I, 208; XLVI, 67.

43. Tolstoj, XLVI, 65.

44. Tolstoj, XIX, 262-63.

45. Compare Tolstoj, XXVII, 282, 545; XXXV, 574, 558; XLVIII, 118; and other volumes. See also D. P. Makovitskij, *U Tolstogo. Jasnopoljanskie zapiski. Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 4 vols. (Moskva, 1978), I, 250; II, 576.

46. Tolstoj, XLVIII, 118, 507.

47. Tolstoj, XXXV, 367; LV, 248, 562.

48. Makovitskij, II, 576.

49. Compare *L. N. Tolstoj i izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo. Sbornik statej*, ed. M. M. Rakovoj (Moskva, 1981).

50. For details see K. Pigarev, *Russkaja literatura i izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo* (Moskva, 1966), 12.

51. V. F. Grib, "Lessing i ego Laokoon," G. E. Lessing, *Laokoon* (Moskva, 1957); G. Fridlender, "Esteticheskie vzgljady Lessinga," *Voprosy filosofii*, 5 (1954); N. Dmitrieva, *Izobrazhenie i slovo* (Moskva, 1962).

52. *Istorija russkoj kritiki*, ed. B. P. Gorodetskij (Moskva-Leningrad, 1964), II, 240; G. Fridlender, *Lessing* (Moskva, 1957), 234.

V. Zu I. A. Gončarovs Humanitätsideal in Hinsicht auf die Gesellschaftsprobleme Rußlands

Gegen Ende seiner literarischen Tätigkeit und besonders nach einigen negativen Rezensionen seines Romans *Obryv* sah sich Gončarov gezwungen, seine Auffassung der Ästhetik und der Kunst überhaupt, ja sogar die Deutung seiner eigenen Werke in einigen Aufsätzen der Öffentlichkeit darzulegen.[1] Abgesehen von dem aufschlußreichen Kommentar, der zweifellos zum tieferen Verständnis seiner Werke beiträgt, geht aus dem längeren Aufsatz *Lučše pozdno, čem nikogda* (1879) hervor, daß Gončarov mit seinen ästhetischen Anschauungen geradezu eine entgegengesetzte Richtung zur damals in Rußland herrschenden revolutionär-demokratischen Kritik vertritt. In gewisser Hinsicht ist Gončarovs Arbeit auch eine Widerspiegelung der literarischen und sozialen Polemik, die in den 70-80er Jahren das russische Geistesleben bewegte.[2] Gončarovs Artikel ist jedoch bedeutend mehr. Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Gončarov und den Kritikern der radikaldemokratischen Orientierung basierte nicht so sehr auf ästhetischer, als auf sozialpolitischer Ebene. In der Tat ist sie eine polemische Auseinandersetzung mit der Frage: wie soll der gesellschaftliche Fortschritt, die Erleichterung der geistigen und ökonomischen Unterdrückung der russischen Massen sich entfalten; welche Richtung soll eingeschlagen und welche Mittel sollen angewandt werden, um das gewünschte Goldene Zeitalter, den utopischen Zustand, auf der russischen Erde zu verwirklichen. Es geht nicht um das Problem, ob Kunst überhaupt an einer solchen Verwandlung teilnehmen soll, dabei einer Tendenz verfällt und somit ihren reinen künstlerischen Charakter verliert. Es geht um die Idee in der Gestaltung der russischen Kultur und des russischen Lebens schlechthin. Diese Probleme sind im gegenwärtigen Rußland genau so aktuell, wie damals in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Heute steht Rußland wiederum im Streit und ist auf der Suche nach einer idealen Gesellschaftsordnung, nur aber mit dem Unterschied, daß diesmal die gegenwärtige Literatur noch nicht ihre traditionelle Aufgabe wahrnimmt, d.h. aus bekannten Gründen fanden die Literaten noch nicht den Mut, bestimmte geistig-ideologische Entwicklungsprozesse zu verkünden. Wie in keiner anderen Nationalliteratur wurden die russischen Dichter in der Vergangenheit immer wieder aufgerufen, an der Gestaltung der russischen Gesellschaft aktiv mitzuwirken. Daher wurde die russische Literatur auch überwiegend zu einer Tendenzliteratur, wobei die Idee, abgesehen von einigen Ausnahmen, immer eine bedeutendere Rolle spielte, als die rein ästhetische und künstlerische Qualität. Das Ideelle aber

war stets von dem Fortschrittsbewußtsein und dem Glauben an die Erziehbarkeit der Menschen geprägt. In den Worten von Peter Brang: "Die Literatur übernahm die Funktion, die in anderen Ländern der Publizistik zukam; ja, sie wurde recht eigentlich zum Parlament der Russen und ist das virtuell aus einsichtigen Gründen bis heute geblieben."[3] Auch Pisarev bemerkte treffend, daß viele der russischen Intellektuellen den Schriftstellerberuf wählten, weil sie am öffentlichen Gesellschaftsleben nicht teilnehmen konnten. Trotz des starken Ideengehalts wurde die künstlerische Leistung jedoch ein unverkennbares Zeichen von ihren Meisterstücken.

Fragt man nun: wie verhält sich denn das Werk Gončarovs zu all diesen geforderten prophetischen Dienstverpflichtungen mit dem Ziel, die ersehnte menschenwürdige Gesellschaft zu verwirklichen? — so ist die Antwort darauf keineswegs eindeutig, wie aus der zeitgenössischen Kritik seiner Romane sichtbar wird. Gončarov mußte zeitlebens eine Mißdeutung seiner Werke dulden, besonders von den sogenannten demokratischen Kritikern, die immer radikaler wurden und nur Verständnis für sozial engagierte Kunst zeigten. Es war vielleicht nicht so sehr eine Mißinterpretation seiner Romane, als die Tatsache, daß oft gewisse Ideen auf Kosten anderer vernachlässigt wurden. Und obwohl gerade die Oblomovščina — die Oblomoverei, die Apathie und Passivität symbolisiert — ein Wesenszug der Gončarovschen Romane ist und mit Recht auch von der Kritik hervorgehoben wurde, konnte Gončarov mit dieser einseitigen Beurteilung kaum zufrieden sein. So ist auch der oben erwähnte Aufsatz *Lučše pozdno, čem nikogda* letzten Endes geradezu eine Bekundung seiner Unzufriedenheit mit den kritischen Auffassungen seiner Werke. Die Tatsache, daß Gončarov sich in der peinlichen Lage vorfand, sein Kunstwerk durch eine detaillierte, in die Länge gezogene Erläuterung verständlich machen zu müssen, wahrlich eine Seltenheit bei einem Dichter seines Ranges, zeugte allein schon davon, daß der Dichter sowohl mit der Auffassung seines Romans *Obryv*, wie auch mit der Rezeption und Deutung aller seiner Romane unzufrieden war. Nicht so sehr was das Lesepublikum, wohl aber was die radikaldemokratische Kritik angeht, die in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts nicht nur ein ungewöhnliches Ansehen genoß, sondern zu einer wegweisenden Macht heranwuchs. Ja sie begann "eine Art Zensur auszuüben, mit der die Dichter zu rechnen hatten."[4]

Wie bedeutend N. A. Dobroljubovs Rezensionsartikel *Čto takoe oblomovščina?* als Beitrag zum Verständnis eines durch die Leibeigenschaft ins Leben gerufenen russischen Typus auch sein mag, ist doch des Kritikers Bemühen nur einseitig. Nur die Oblomoverei, als Krankheit der russischen Gesellschaft, wird aufs genaueste analysiert mit der Entdeckung, daß Oblomov auch nichts

anderes als ein überflüssiger Mensch ist. Mit außerordentlicher Geschicklichkeit gelingt es Dobroljubov, die Rezension des Romans zu einem sozialpolitischen Pamphlet zu machen. Es gelingt ihm, am Beispiel des *Oblomov* seine politische Einstellung zur russischen Wirklichkeit und besonders seine Ablehnung des aristokratischen Liberalismus darzulegen: "Po svoej idejnomu značeniju ona [stat'ja] imela charakter programmnogo dokumenta, vyražajuščego literaturnye i političeskie pozicii revoljucionnoj demokratii... stat'ja javilas' rešajuščim vystupleniem Dobroljubova protiv dvorjanskogo liberalizma."[5] In seiner Analyse wollte Dobroljubov vor allem betonen, daß Gončarovs objektive Schilderung des russischen Übels, d.h. der Oblomovščina, vollkommen mit der Kritik der Radikaldemokraten übereinstimmt.

Aus bekannten Grüden hat Dobroljubov nur die Oblomovščina im Roman unterstrichen, die Idee aber, die das ganze Werk durchdringt, die Gončarovs Wesen stets bestimmte und die als mögliche Lösung der sozialen und politischen Zerrissenheit Rußlands hätte dienen können — diese Idee wird absichtlich vernachlässigt, ja vollkommen verschwiegen. Und als Gončarov eine mögliche Kur in der Person des unternehmungslustigen, tatkräftigen und energischen Štol'c postulierte, wird dieser unter dem Vorwand, daß er noch nicht zu einem sozialbewußten Ideal herangewachsen sei, abgelehnt. Dobroljubov konnte nicht begreifen, wieso Štol'c in seiner Tätigkeit von all den sozialen Notwendigkeiten und gesellschaftlichem Streben unberührt in Ruhe allein dahinleben kann — wie konnte er mit seiner Lage zufrieden sein, "uspokoit'sja na svoem odinokom, otdel'nom, isključitel'nom sčast'e." Er fragt: "Wer wird endlich das allmächtige Wort 'Vorwärts' aussprechen, auf welches Rußland schon so lange und mühevoll wartet?" — "Do sich por net otveta ... ni v obščestve, ni v literature. Gončarov, umevšij ponjat' i pokazat' nam našu oblomovščinu, ne mog odnako ne zaplatit' dani obščemu zabluždeniju."[6]

Gončarov war nicht weniger als seine Zeitgenossen an dem Wohlergehen seines Volkes und an der ersehnten Transformation interessiert. Dieses Thema wird in allen seinen Romanen behandelt, allerdings nicht in der Form direkter Lehrsätze. Was Gončarov von anderen Dichtern unterschied, waren die Mittel, womit die sozialen und politischen Veränderungen verwirklicht werden könnten. Im Gegensatz zu Dostoevskij und Tolstoj, die die Rettung Rußlands auf religiöser Basis verkündeten, oder Radikalen wie Černyševskij, die drastische Reformen und sogar eine revolutionäre Umwälzung billigten, ist Gončarov als Einzelgänger zu betrachten, insofern er weder den einen noch den anderen Standpunkt vertrat. Bei Gončarov geht es um den Prozeß des

Menschwerdens, um das Streben nach einem Humanitätsideal. Dabei ist zu beachten, daß Gončarov für eine allmähliche Umgestaltung der russischen Verhältnisse eintrat. In dieser Hinsicht war er ein konservativer Liberaler, der genau so wie sein Zeitgenosse, der Historiker Boris Čičerin, eine idealistische Philosophie, das Recht auf Privateigentum und sogar die Prinzipien der Religion vertrat.[7] Das kollektive Denken, die Umwälzung einer ganzen Gesellschaft, die Ausrottung sozialer und politischer Unzulänglichkeiten durch festgelegte Formeln und radikale Mittel auf der einen Seite, auf der anderen Seite Erziehung und Ausbildung des Individuums im Sinne eines Humanitätsideals, wie sie Gončarov vertrat, waren Hauptunterschiede dieser beiden Richtungen. Am wenigsten konnte Gončarov die Ansichten der radikalen Jugend der 1860er Jahre teilen, die vollkommen auf den radikalen Sozialismus eingestellt war; und noch weniger konnte er die gewaltsame radikale Veränderung, wie sie von den Revolutionärdemokraten verkündigt wurde, billigen. Früh schon wurde Gončarov mit allgemeingültigen Wahrheiten vertraut gemacht, nämlich, daß man keine Brüderlichkeit der Menschen einleiten kann, während zur gleichen Zeit der Klassenkampf gefördert wird, und daß durch die Vernichtung der Reichen den Armen nicht geholfen werden kann.

Was die Kritiker am literarischen Schaffen Gončarovs verkannten oder nicht erkennen wollten, war vor allem die bildende und erzieherische Idee des Individuums. Weder Belinskij und Dobroljubov, noch Pisarev und Šelgunov haben je diesen Hauptgedanken Gončarovs erfaßt, oder vielmehr berührt. In seiner im Jahre 1869 verfaßten Einführung in seinen Roman *Obryv* wird von Gončarov behauptet, daß sein Werk nie vollkommen verstanden wurde. Hier heißt es: "Mne grustno i bol'no i to ešče, čto vo vsech trech moich romanach publika i kritika ne uvideli ničego bolee, kak tol'ko odni — kartiny i tipy staroj žizni, drugie — karikatury na novuju — i tol'ko."[8] Von dieser Charakterisierung seiner künstlerischen Begabung, daß er nämlich nur reale Bilder und Typen in lebhaften Farben darzustellen vermochte, konnte Gončarov kaum begeistert sein. Die Enttäuschung bewegte ihn fortzufahren: "Za - čto tut chvalit'? Razve tak trudno ... nagromozdit' v kuču lica provinzial'nych staruch, učitelej ženščin, devic... i.t.p.? Čto za zasluga? Tol'ko kogda ja zakončil svoi raboty, otošel ot nich na nekotoroe rasstojanie i vremja — togda stal ponjaten mne vpolne i skrytyj v nich smysl, ich značenie — ideja. Naprasno ja ždal, čto kto-nibud' i krome menja pročtet meždu strokami i, poljubiv obrazy, svjažet ich v odno celoe i uvidit, čto imenno govorit eto celoe? No etogo ne bylo."[9]

In diesen wenigen Zeilen will Gončarov den zentralen Gehalt seiner Werke

aussprechen. Er will nicht nur als ein Dichter gelten, der mit gewissen Kunstgriffen geschickt die russische Realität zu schildern vermag; er will vielmehr als Dichter von Ideen, deren verborgener Sinn und tiefere Bedeutung zwischen den Zeilen zu lesen ist, vestanden werden. Gončarov hält sich dabei an den wohlerprobten Spruch Turgenevs: "... die besten Bücher sind diejenigen, in denen man zwischen den Zeilen lesen kann."[10] Aber auch indem er uns mitteilt, daß er Ideen verkündet, nimmt er wiederum Abstand, insofern er den Inhalt dieser Ideen nicht direkt offenbart, denn darüber soll ja wiederum zwischen den Zeilen gelesen werden. Er will als Künstler wirken und nicht als Didaktiker. Will man aber die Substanz seiner ethisch-ästhetisch-literarischen Orientierung festlegen und zu bestimmen versuchen, welchen Zweck Gončarov in seinem Werk verfolgt, womit er auf seine Leser wirken will, dann entdeckt man immer wieder, verborgen oder enthüllt, das Streben nach der Wiederbelebung der Prinzipien der Humanität. Das klassische Humanitätsideal wird verkündet als neuer Wegweiser, der zurück zur Menschlichkeit und damit zur Lösung der russischen Lage führen könne.

Es muß an dieser Stelle eine kurze Erläuterung des hier gebrauchten Ausdrucks 'Humanitätsideal' eingefügt werden, zumal die Geschichte der Humanitätsidee in den mannigfaltigen philosophischen, sozialen, politischen und religiösen Strömungen starke Variationen bezüglich der Auffassung des wahrhaft Menschlichen aufweist. Tatsächlich streben auch der utopische Sozialismus, der Marxismus und schließlich der Kommunismus nach einem neuen Menschen im Sinne der humanistischen Idee. Wenn jedoch festgelegte doktrinäre Formeln als Vorschrift zum Erlangen des idealen Menschen dienen sollen, dann werden die eigentlichen Prinzipien und besonders das dem Humanitätsideal innewohnende Element des freien Willens pervertiert. Die Einführung eines humanistischen Ideals durch Gewalt war schon immer ein impertinentes, hyperbolisches Paradoxon par excellence. Dies läßt sich zum Beispiel belegen, wenn man noch bis vor kurzem in offiziellen Quellen lesen konnte: "... nur im Humanismus der sozialistischen Kunst werden die humanistischen Traditionen der Kunst der Vergangenheit fortgesetzt und bereichert."[11]

Die Begriffe 'Humanität' und 'Humanitätsideal' werden hier im Sinne der deutschen Klassik verwendet, genau so wie es Belinskij tat, als er den vorherrschenden Gedanken von Herzens *Kto vinovat?* (1847) hervorheben wollte und betonte: "... eto to, čto nemcy nazyvajut gummanostiju [Humanität] ... Gumannost' est' čelovekoljubie, no razvitoe soznaniem i obrazovaniem"[12], und dabei wird der deutsche Ausdruck 'Humanität' in Klammern angeführt. Wenn ich die deutsche Klassik anführe, dann wird nicht

vom deutschen Aufklärungsklassizismus gesprochen, der eher von einem römisch-französischen Barockheroismus als vom Geist der Antike inspiriert wurde, sondern von der deutschen Hochklassik oder Weimarer Klassik, wie sie vor allem von Goethe und Schiller repräsentiert wird. Das Leitbild für den schönen neuen Menschen war der Anthropos der griechischen Antike, und die Auffassung von dessen schöner Seele beruht auf dem Harmoniebestreben, das bereits bei Shaftesbury und Wieland als Ziel der menschlichen Existenz gegolten hatte. Ausschlaggebend für die weitere Entwicklung war vor allem die Umgestaltung der Fortschrittsgedanken Lessings, das Humanitätsbewußtsein Herders, Kants Sittengesetzt, verkörpert in seinem Kategorischen Imperativ, und Spinozas Lehre von der Weltordnung, der Sittlichkeit und den allgemeingültigen Gesetzen. Über allen diesen Bestrebungen schwebt der Geist Winckelmanns. Dessen Dictum von der *edlen Einfalt und stillen Größe*, womit er die griechische Kunst des Altertums charakterisierte, wurde zum ästhetisch-ethischen Ideal erhoben. Es ist das Schönheitsideal Winckelmanns, das schließlich das Humanitätsideal zum Anspruch auf Allgemeingültigkeit führte. In Winckelmanns *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755) heißt es: "Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist eine *edle Einfalt und stille Größe* in der Stellung, wie in dem Ausdruck. So wie die Tiefe des Meeres allzeit ruhig bleibt, die Oberfläche mag noch so wüten, ebenso zeigt der Ausdruck in den Figuren der Griechen bei aller Leidenschaft eine große Seele."[13]

Der Glaube an den idealen Menschen gipfelt vor allem in Goethes *Westöstlichem Divan*, in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* und besonders in *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. Schillers Humanitätsideal dagegen äußert sich in seinen theoretischen Schriften, wie z.B. in *Über Anmut und Würde* und in den *Briefen über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*. In beiden Fällen ist Harmonie oberstes Gebot: Einheit und Zusammenhang von Geist und Körper - — Kalokagathie, die Vollkommenheit des Menschen, bestehend aus einer ungestörten Harmonie von Neigung und Pflicht, Vernunft und Sinnlichkeit wird zum Kennzeichen des idealen Menschen. Die höchste Vollendung des Menschen sieht man in der Harmonie der schönen Seele, in der weder die eine noch die andere Eigenschaft dominierend wirkt, vielmehr physische Notwendigkeit und moralische Freiheit in ein freies Spiel miteinander treten. Die Verwirklichung dieser Ideale, sich als freier Mensch auszubilden, sah man in der pädagogischen Sendung der Kunst, d.h. als vornehmste Aufgabe der Kunst gilt die Förderung der Humanität. Daher auch die Prägung, wahre Kunst bestehe in der Humanität. Im Geiste Schillers und Goethes hat

insbesondere Humboldt die Kunst als höchstes Mittel zur Erziehung einer vollkommenen, harmonischen Persönlichkeit postuliert. Die Harmonie, die immer wieder in Gefahr gerät, gestört zu werden, bedarf eines immerwährenden Bemühens, d.h. die Menschlichkeit ist stets neu zu erkämpfen.

Obzwar im Rahmen des Strebens nach Erziehung des Menschen zur Humanität die Ausbildung reinster Menschlichkeit im Dienst der gesamten Menschheit und einer harmonischen Übereinstimmung von Gemüt, Verstand und Vernunft verkündet wurde, ging es nicht darum, den Staat politisch umzugestalten. Es gilt vielmehr, Mensch inmitten von Menschen zu sein. Es geht um freie Selbstbestimmung und Selbstvollendung des Individuums. Anstelle der rousseauischen Auflehnung gegen Kultur und Kunst trat eine neue Kunstverklärung: oberste Norm ist das Bekenntnis zu Ehrfurcht, Maß, Ordnung, Gesetz, Menschenliebe und praktischer Tätigkeit; es ist ein Bekenntnis zu dem goldenen Mittelweg, und das ist beispielhaft für menschliches Sein und Dasein schlechthin. Die Wandlung zum Menschenfreund, vom Individuum zum Glied der Gemeinschaft, vollzieht sich dann auf natürliche Weise.[14]

Gončarov gehört zu jenen Dichtern, wie Karamzin und Gogol' vor ihm und später Čechov, welche ihre Hoffnung auf Rußlands Erlösung nicht auf eine radikale Umwälzung, sondern auf einen evolutionären Prozeß der Umgestaltung setzen. Wie jene gleichgesinnten Humanisten erkannte auch Gončarov, daß weder radikale Reformen noch Revolution allein entscheidende Veränderungen einer Gesellschaft hervorbringen können, und daß eine bleibende Wirkung nur durch eine auf die Humanitätsidee gestützte Erziehung erreicht werden kann. Seine Briefe, seine literatur-kritischen Skizzen, seine Romane, ja selbst Gončarovs eigenes Wesen, gekennzeichnet durch Einfalt und Gelassenheit, zeugen reichlich davon, wie sehr Gončarov an der Vervollkommnung der seelischen Empfindung und der Erziehbarkeit des Menschen als Individualität glaubte. An erster Stelle muß der Mensch wieder Mensch werden, und dann werden auch die verschiedenen Institutionen und Staatsbehörden den gewünschten Humanitätsgedanken unvermeidlich widerspiegeln. Wir begegnen hier jener Bewegung des abendländischen Humanismus, die nicht die Gemeinschaft, sondern den Menschen sucht. Dies sind die Ideen, die Gončarovs Anliegen bewegten, denen aber von seiten der damals herrschenden sozialrevolutionären Kritik keine Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wurde.

Auf lange Dauer bestimmte die radikaldemokratische Kritik die Interpretation Gončarovs in der Folgezeit. Glücklicherweise haben sich nicht

alle Forscher an die verhängnisvollen Vorschriften gehalten, wie z.B.: "Izučenie Gončarova možet byt' plodotvornym tol'ko na osnove marksistsko-leninskogo ponimanija iskusstva."[15] Obwohl inzwischen durch einige gewichtige kritische Arbeiten eine neue Richtung in der Gončarovforschung eigeleitet wurde, ist doch festzustellen, daß bisher noch keine kritische Akademie-Ausgabe seiner Werke erschienen ist. Aber trotzdem wurde der dominierenden Idee, dem Gončarovschen Humanitätsgedanken, in Rußland ebenso wie im Ausland die wohlverdiente Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt, so von A. Lyngstad, M. Ehre, V. Sečkarev, V. A. Michelson, L. S. Gejro und besonders von Peter Thiergen und V. I. Mel'nik,[16] um nur einige zu nennen. Jedoch eine allumfassende Arbeit, gestützt auf Spezialarbeiten zu den mannigfaltigen Attributen des Humanitätsideals und zu deren Wirkung in der philosophischen Auffassung Gončarovs, wie sie von Thiergen ud Mel'nik vorgelegt wurden, muß noch geschrieben werden. Wir wissen, mit welchen Humanisten Gončarov vertraut war, wir wissen auch aus den vielen Hinweisen auf Werke und Charaktere, aus direkten Aussagen und nicht minder durch Zeugnisse der Geistesverwandtschaft, daß Gončarov sich intensiv mit der Gedankenwelt der deutschen Hochklassik, der Antike und der jeweiligen Kunst beschäftigte. Dabei darf man nicht vergessen, daß Gončarov einer der wenigen russischen Dichter war, der formell drei Jahre lang (1831-1834) humanistische Fächer wie Literatur, Ästhetik und die schönen Künste an der Moskauer Universität studierte, und daß er von den größten Wegbereitern für Schiller und Goethe unter der Moskauer akademischen Jugend, den Professoren S. P. Ševyrev und N. I. Nadeždin, in die Ideenwelt der Antike und der deutschen Klassik eingeweiht wurde. Besonders der Einfluß Nadeždins bedürfte einer näheren Untersuchung, da er versuchte, die Gedankenwelt Schillers auf die sich damals bekämpfenden klassischen und romantisch-literarischen Strömungen in Rußland anzuwenden, und damit eine neue Richtlinie aufzeigte, die sowohl die Ideale der Klassik als die der Romantik zu einer vollkommenen harmonischen Synthese fügt. Daß Nadeždins literarisch-ästhetische Thesen in seinen Vorlesungen auf fruchtbaren Boden fielen, bezeugen seine drei Schüler Belinskij, N. Stankevič und Gončarov, denn sie haben seine geistigen Richtlinien zu den ihren gemacht, ein Thema, welches hier nicht weiter verfolgt werden kann. Nicht minder einflußreich waren Nadeždins begeisternde Vorlesungen, in denen der Geist der antiken Kunst und Geschichte lebendig dargestellt wurde.[17] Es genügt zu betonen, daß seine literarischen Studien in Moskau ihn zur Quelle der abendländischen Kultur führten und ihm damit zur Formulierung seines Humanitätsideals verhalfen. Gončarov selbst gesteht deren moralisch-ethischen

Einfluß durch die "Ideale des Guten, Wahren und Schönen," die zur Vervollkommnung des Individuums führen sollten.[18] Über sein Studium schreibt er ferner an einen Freund: "Chotja universitetskij kurs teper' dlja menja končen, no vlijanie universiteta ne končitsja nikogda ... ja ne zabyvaju ukazanije našich professorov. I teper' na službe izučaju inostrannye literatury imenno po tomu metodu ... kotorye peredali nam naši ljubimye professora."[19]

Abgesehen von Gončarovs Hinweisen auf Dichter und Denker wie Homer, Sophokles, Aristoteles, Tasso, Voltaire, Rousseau, Wieland und Herder, um nur einige zu nennen, sind seine Bezüge auf die dem Griechentum zugewandten Humanitätsgedanken, gefördert durch Winckelmann, Goethe, Schiller und W. Humboldt, von höchster Bedeutung, um den leitenden Gedanken seines Strebens näherzurücken. Aus Gončarovs biographischen Skizzen geht hervor, daß er Schiller, Goethe und Winckelmann nicht nur gelesen, sondern auch "vieles" von ihrer "Prosa" am Anfang seiner literarischen Tätigkeit übersetzt hat.[20] Und obwohl diese Übersetzungen vernichtet wurden und daher keine spezifischen Quellen herangezogen werden können, ist doch die Ausprägung des Gončarovschen Humanitätsideals eindeutig, unmittelbar oder mittelbar, auf die Humanitätsideale der Weimarer Klassik zurückzuführen. Unmittelbar und mittelbar ist hier bewußt betont, denn Gončarov war auch anderen Vorbildern und eifrigen Verkündern der schönen Menschlichkeit ausgesetzt, die nicht unbedingt in literarischer Form vermittelt wurden. Zunächst ist da Belinskij, der wiederholt Schiller und Goethe geradezu als Herolde der Humanität bewunderte. Seine eigene Humanitätsauffassung beruht auf den Lehren dieser "hohen Priester der ewigen Liebe, Wahrheit und Menschenwürde," um seine Worte zu gebrauchen. Im griechischen Charakter ihrer Dichtung erkennt er die Apotheose des eigentlichen griechischen Geistes, das poetisch-sittliche Urbild von Hellas.[21] Wie sehr diese Ideen und Belinskij selbst von Gončarov geschätzt wurden, braucht nicht weiter erörtert zu werden.[22]

Wesentlich einflußreicher war der aus derselben Stadt (Simbirsk) stammende Historiker und Dichter Karamzin. In seiner Biographie erinnert Gončarov sich mit Begeisterung an seine Studienzeit, als man ihn in die griechische und römische Welt einführte, und wie er damals mit brennendem Herzen, seiner Leidenschaft folgend, dem Lesen ausländischer und russischer Dichter, insbesondere seinem Lieblingsdichter N. M. Karamzin, mit Leib und Seele ergeben war, nicht dem Historiker, sondern dem "größten humanen Dichter aller Zeit" ("no kak gummanejšemu iz pisatelej"[23]). Der Humanitätsgedanke bei Karamzin ist tatsächlich so stark wirksam, daß allein

schon die Hinwendung zu dessen Wirken hinreichend gewesen wäre, um das Gončarovsche humanistische Menschheitsideal zu vollenden. Wie die von Karamzin, so sind auch Gončarovs Werke zutiefst von einem Humanismus durchdrungen, und wie bei jenem, wird auch hier das Groteske und das Scharf-Satirische vermieden; nur das Schöne, Gute und Wahre findet seinen Widerhall, obwohl nicht immer in unmittelbarer Form. Wie später Gončarov, erkannte auch Karamzin die veredelnde Kraft der Kunst und damit die Notwendigkeit einer ästhetisch-ethischen Erziehung, um das Ideal der Menschheit zu erwerben.

Die Parallelen sind noch erstaunlicher, wenn es um das Urteil über Gesellschaftsveränderungen geht. Wie sein Nachfolger, konnte Karamzin nicht an die sprunghaft-gewaltsame Umgestaltung einer Gesellschaft glauben, um so weniger, nachdem er Augenzeuge der Französischen Revolution geworden war. Auch glaubte er nicht an die von den Utopisten verkündete soziale Gleichheit der Menschen: "Ihr mögt das Unterste zuoberst kehren, aber immer wird es ein Unten und Oben, Freiheit und Unfreiheit, Reich und Arm, Zufriedenheit und Leiden geben." Er glaubte jedoch an die Freiheit des Individuums, nicht aber im Sinne einer physischen Freiheit, sondern einer echten inneren, in sich selbst ruhenden Freiheit, die sich rein auf das Wesen des Menschen bezieht: "... diese Freiheit gibt nicht der Herrscher oder das Parlament, sondern jeder aus sich selbst mit Gottes Hilfe."[24] Wie Gončarov, bleibt Karamzin stets unpolitisch und glaubt nur an eine durch Aufklärung und Erziehung erworbene Veränderung. Wiederum geht es hier um eine gemeinsame Begeisterung für die humanistische Erziehung der einzelnen, auf sich selbst gestellten Menschen. Dies sind die Ideen Karamzins, die ihn in den Augen Gončarovs zum größten humanen Dichter erhoben. Im Grunde genommen wird hier ein Wünschen und Streben ausgesprochen, welches an das Ideal der Griechen erinnert, denen allein es vorbehalten blieb, die selbstbewußte Einzelpersönlichkeit zur höchsten Entfaltung zu bringen.

Daß Karamzin auch mit den Idealen der deutschen Klassik aufs tiefste vertraut war, ist selbstverständlich. Jedoch viel früher, schon als Jüngling, wurde Karamzin mit den Vervollkommnungsidealen der Moskauer Freimaurer bekanntgemacht. In deren Mitte wurde er erzogen und gebildet.[25] Die aufklärerisch-ethischen Ideen der Freimaurer fanden sicherlich einen positiven Widerhall, denn er blieb den neuhumanistischen und philanthropischen Ideen zeitlebens treu und vermochte eben dadurch Gončarovs Verehrung zu erwecken. Wie Karamzin, so hatte auch Gončarov in seiner Jugend einen Freimaurer als Mentor, und wie bei jenem fanden die Humanitätsgedanken ihre Vollendung an der Moskauer Universität.[26] Die Moskauer Freimaurer,

ihren westlichen Vorgängern treu, propagierten die Veredelung des Menschen auf dem Boden der Humanität und der religiösen Duldsamkeit. Wesen und Ziel der Freimaurer war in Moskau, wie überall, das Streben nach Wahrheit, Menschenliebe und Sittlichkeit, das zum Ideal edlen Menschentums hinführt. Dieser vorherrschenden humanistischen Geistesrichtung ist es auch zuzuschreiben, daß so viele prominente Männer Mitglieder der Logen waren wie Herder, Wieland und Goethe in Weimar und Intellektuelle wie Novikov, Lopuchin, I. P. Turgenev in Moskau. Die Tatsache, daß die Moskauer Freimaurer persönliche Aufklärung, Selbsterkenntnis ud ethische Selbstvervollkommnung des Individuums durch die schöne Literatur erstrebten und daß jegliche Diskussion politischer und religiös gebundender Ansichten in den Logen verboten war, erklärt auch ihre Toleranz gegenüber den jeweils bestehenden Staatsgesetzen. So behauptet dann auch Lopuchin, wie später sein Zögling Karamzin: "V prirode i v žizni ne možet byt' ravenstva, kak ne možet byt' zolotogo veka."[27] Es muß jedoch betont werden, daß gerade durch die Forderung nach ganzheitlicher Ausbildung der persönlichen Kräfte des Einzelnen, besonders der sittlichen Anlagen, die Freimaurerei nicht nur in den Mittelpunkt des humanistischen Strebens rückt, sondern auch in den des aufgeklärten Christentums. Geteilt werden ethische Gebote ohne Rücksicht auf Dogma und das Göttliche. In diesem Säkularisierungsvorgang der Religion gebrauchten die Moskauer überwiegend christliche Erbauungsschriften aus dem Westen, um die ethisch-aufklärerische Seite ihrer Zöglinge und Mitglieder zu ergänzen.

Diese Freimaurerischen Lehren, in die der junge Gončarov eingeführt wurde, sind insofern wichtig, als sie unmittelbar auf seine Gedankenwelt einen bestimmenden und dauerhaften Einfluß ausübten. Der Vermittler war ein Freund der Familie Gončarov, ein im Ruhestand verweilender Seekapitän in Simbirsk, der reiche Landbesitzer Nikolaj Tregubov. Nachdem Gončarovs Vater gestorben war, übernahm Tregubov die Erziehung des Sohnes, und zwar im Geiste des aufgeklärten Humanismus. Tregubov ging aus derselben Loge hervor, die einst von Ivan Petrovič Turgenev, der dann später Karamzin in den Freimaurerkreis einführte, in Simbirsk gegründet worden war. Mit Ehrfurcht erinnert sich Gončarov an Tregubov, diesen ebenso liebevollen wie gebildeten Aristokraten, und dessen edle Umgangsweise. Er verkörpert in seinen Augen "Rechtschaffenheit, Würde und Adel." Er besaß all die "Eigenschaften, welche das englische Wort 'gentleman' ausdrückt."[28] Sein Idealismus und Benehmen sind dann auch zum Vorbild für Gončarov geworden. Allem Anschein nach ist es Gončarov auch gelungen, zumindest im Äußeren die klassische Ruhe und Zurückhaltung eines gentleman

vorzuleben. Seine Zeitgenossen berichten von seiner Gelassenheit und von der Abwesenheit jeglicher Leidenschaft und Exzentrizität. Er vermied jeden Pomp und war stets bescheiden, wenn es um seine Popularität ging. Als man an ihm ein hohes Maß an Güte, Tugend und Edelmut erkannte, konnte er diese Eigenschaften nur bejahen.[29] Seine dienstlichen Pflichten wurden immer mit strenger, nach Wahrheit strebender Gewissenhaftigkeit erfüllt. Man kannte ihn auch als humanen und aufgeklärten literarischen Zensor, der mehr an der künstlerischen Leistung als an der politischen Orientierung interessiert war. Von dem Triumph der Wahrheit überzeugt, akzeptierte er so manche Arbeit mit sozialistischen und materialistischen Ideen, so widerwillig sie ihm auch waren. In seinem ruhigen und korrekten Umgang will jedoch D. V. Grigorovič eine absichtlich erlernte Qualität erkennen, die ihm half, seine inneren Gefühle zu beherrschen und damit seine wachsende Eigenliebe zu verbergen. Man könnte hier auch hinzufügen, daß er gern im Ausland als Herr Johannes von Gončarov bekannt sein wollte. Aber wie es auch sein mag, ob nun sein Streben zu eigener Harmonie auf den Salon der Künstlerfamilie Majkov zurückzuführen ist, oder ob er auf Schillersche Art darum kämpfen mußte, bleibt dahingestellt — immerhin geht es hier, wie auch in seinen Werken, um ein Ideal, um eine ideale menschliche Haltung. Gerade vielleicht darum, weil er selbst seine Unzulänglichkeiten erkennen konnte, strebte er umso mehr zur Vollkommenheit. Schon Belinskij erkannte, daß die Humanität nur durch "kultiviertes Bewußtsein und Bildung" erzielt werden kann. Es war gerade der von dem humanistischen Geist durchdrungene Tregubov, der dem jungen Gončarov diese Erziehung darbot, indem er dessen Sensibilität entwickelte und ihn zur behutsamen Mäßigkeit erzog. Er wurde dadurch um so besser vorbereitet, den Idealismus der Menschheit in sich aufzunehmen. Tregubov fällt immerhin das Verdienst zu, als Freimaurer der erste gewesen zu sein, der durch sein eigenes Wesen Gončarov dem idealtypischen Menschenbild nahebrachte. Sogar die Gegner der Freimaurer erkannten den ästhetisch-moralischen Wert der Forderung nach Vervollkommnung des inneren Menschen: "Masony nesomnenno prinesli pol'zu, oblagoraživaja nravy i sodejstvuja prosveščeniju. Oni propovedovali ljubov k čeloveku, poznanie samogo sebja, i ukazanie idealov, k kotorym dolžen stremit'sja - čelovek...." Auch religiöse und nationale Toleranz sind in ähnlich edler Gesinnung in der Verfassung der Freimaurer festgelegt: "... my ispoveduem tol'ko vseobščuju religiju, a takže prinadležnost' ko vjsakim narodam."[30]

Aus den erwähnten humanistischen Quellen, abgesehen von seiner eigenen Neigung, kann man schließen, daß Gončarov noch auf andere Weise durch die Humanitätsideen hätte beeinflußt werden können. Anzuführen wären auch

Griboedov und andere, wie etwa Rousseau; bei letzterem finden wir jedoch genau soviele Analogien wie Unterschiede, die bei Gončarov keine Entsprechung haben. Entscheidend für Gončarovs Humanitätsauffassung ist natürlich auch Winckelmanns Einfluß, von dem wir auch nur das wissen, daß er ihn gelesen und übersetzt hat. Kritiker verweisen auf Winckelmanns Hauptwerk *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764); in Wirklichkeit geht es auch um sein erstes bedeutendes Werk *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755), denn hier wird das Leitbild des neuen schönen Menschen der kommenden deutschen Klassik vorweggenommen. Hier entwickelte Winckelmann die Formel von der "edlen Einfalt und stillen Größe," die das Ideal des in sich vollkommenen, harmonischen und vollendeten Menschen zum Ausdruck bringt. Winckelmanns Ideal ist Schönheit, d.h. ein ethischer und zugleich ein ästhetischer Begriff; gemeint ist die höchstmögliche Vollkommenheit in allem, was menschlich ist.[31] Und so will auch Gončarov sein Ideal verstanden haben.

Wiederholt stoßen wir auf Gončarovs Aussagen über sein Ideal, in denen er sein Humanitätsbestreben auf verschiedene Weise ausdrückt. Es ist aber nicht der Zweck, jegliche Aussage nachzuweisen, um dann festzustellen, daß sie aus unterschiedlichen Quellen stammen könnte, obwohl für spezifische Parallelen und Lektüren Beweise erbracht werden können. Viel fruchtbarer scheint mir für unsere Zwecke, die Verwandtschaft der Ideen, den Geist der Humanität, das Idealistische, das über die Gegenwart hinaus in die Zukunft weist, aufzuzeigen. Diese Ideen bewegten Gončarovs Dasein, sein Streben, sie bestimmten die Prinzipien der Darstellung in seinem literarischen Schaffen, u.a. der Mäßigung und der Zügelung.

Schon Merežkovskij vermerkt die Ablehnung der Beschreibungen von tiefer Leidenschaft und sprunghaften Gewalttätigkeiten; er vernimmt vielmehr eine ruhige, erdgebundene Einfalt, ja zum Teil eine an Homer erinnernde Haltung. Trübe dunkle Ecken voll Kälte, Entsetzen und Schrecken, wie sie im Text eines Dostoevskij erscheinen, oder grotesken Humor wie bei Gogol' gibt es bei Gončarov nicht. Ohne Berauschung, mit klassischer Gelassenheit und ruhigem, nüchternen Blick, wie bei den Alten, wird das Leben geschildert. Das Grandiose und Wilde in der Natur möchte er, in den Worten Merežkovskijs, "mit Zügen der menschlichen Zivilization verschönern."[32] Dieser Haltung ist es zuzuschreiben, daß man Gončarov auch einer gewissen Apathie gegenüber seinen Helden beschuldigt. Totale Objektivität ohne Stellungnahme des Dichters, ohne Gefühl und Kommentar des Autors zu verspüren, waren in einem Zeitalter, wo es um die Veränderung der ganzen Gesellschaft ging, nicht gerade anregend. Daher konnten Pisarev und Grigorovič auch

behaupten, daß in Gončarovs Romanen etwas Unausgesprochenes, eine gewisse Zurückhaltung, seine Gedanken mutig auszusprechen ("... umyšlennaja ili nečajannaja nedogovorennost' ... bojas' smelo vyskazat' svoe mnenie"[33]), zu vermerken sei. Tatsächlich sollten seine Ideen, der herrschende Grundgedanke, zwischen den Zeilen gelesen werden, womit er aber nicht immer erfolgreich war. Er konnte eben wirklich nicht immer über die einzelnen Tannenbäume hinwegsehen, um ein russisches Sprichwort zu modifizieren; dadurch wurde auch der gewünschte Effekt des Leitmotivs verringert. Er gesteht, daß es ihm leicht gelinge, einzelne Bilder und Szenen zu malen: "... no provodit' smysl, vyjasnjat' cel' sozdanija, *neobchodimost'*, po kotoroj dolžno deržat'sja vse sozdanie, eto skučno i nevyrazimo trudno ... ja ... stradaju ot bogatstva materiala i ot neumenj'a rasporjadit'sja im." Dies bedeutet aber in keinem Fall, daß er ein Anhänger der "l'art pour l'art" war, im Gegenteil, er ist mitunter sehr tendenziös und glaubt nicht an die kantische Auffassung von der "Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck." Er selbst behauptet" "Iskusstvo dlja iskusstva — bessmyslennaja fraza."[34] Wenn aber der Leser auf die Humanitätsidee eingestellt ist, so ist das Streben nach dem ersehnten Ideal bei Gončarov unverkennbar, nicht durch Predigt, sondern in der rein künstlerischen Gestaltung.

In seiner extensiven und aufschlußreichen Korrespondenz mit Sof'ja Nikitenko in den 1860er Jahren gesteht Gončarov zum ersten Mal, daß seine literarische Tätigkeit stets durch ein Ideal bestimmt sei: "Skažu Vam, vot čto, čego nikomu ne govoril: s toj minuty, kogda načal pisat' dlja pečati ... u menja byl odin artističeskij ideal: eto — izobraženie čestnoj, dobroj, simpatičnoj natury, v vysšej stepeni idealista."[35] Aber auch schon früher, als er an seinem *Oblomov* arbeitete, zweifelte er, ob er nicht allzu viele Ideale darstelle, und dazu unvollendete. Er beruhigt sich aber, indem er auf die Einbildungskraft des Lesers rechnet: "Wozu ist denn der Leser da?" wird gefragt.[36] Aber gerade diese Arbeitsweise hat zu manchen kontroversen Deutungen seiner Helden geführt. Ist das Ideale in Oblomov zu suchen, oder etwa in Štol'c oder gar in Ol'ga? Aber auch Rajskij, Vera und die babuška sind mit gewissen idealen Zügen ausgestattet. Gončarov spricht ferner von dem Ideal der Vervollkommnung (ideal usoveršenstvovanija), vom Schönen und Guten, als einem notwendigen Ziel der Menschheit.[37]

Als man ihn auf seine literarischen Pflichten als Dichter und Erzieher seiner Nation aufmerksam machte, betonte Gončarov wiederum das Streben nach dem Ideal und dessen Verkündung, das ihn allein von den alltäglichen Enttäuschungen gerettet habe; so viele Male habe er ausrufen müssen: "Bože moj! o poezija, o voobraženie, o ideal: kuda oni zavodili menja." Mit der

kantisch-schillerschen Auseinandersetzung über Pflicht und Neigung erläutert Gončarov seine Auffassung des Idealen, indem er eine unaufhebbare Dualität im menschlichen Dasein postuliert. Daher begegnen wir auch immer entgegengesetzten Kräften: das Alte und das Neue, der rationale und der Gefühlsmensch, das Praktische und das Ideale. Den idealen Zustand des Menschen sieht er in der Verschmelzung dieser Kräfte zu einem harmonischen Ganzen. Seiner puritanischen, pflichtbewußten Sof'ja Nikitenko erwidert er, daß eine asketische Betonung der Pflicht den Menschen daran hindere, Mensch zu sein, und etwas anderes auf dieser Erde darf er nicht und soll er nicht sein. Der Mensch hat Gefühle, ein Herz, Verstand und Vernunft, und seine Aufgabe ist zu vermeiden, daß weder das eine noch das andere das Übergewicht gewinnt. Die Hinweise auf Schillers Konzeption von der schönen Seele sind unverkennbar. Aber davon abgesehen, vertritt Gončarov hier die Idee des goldenen Mittelwegs, denn gute wie schlechte Eigenschaften in extremer Form führen zu tragischer Verstrickung. Er beschließt seine Diatribe mit der Warnung, wenn einer die Tränen eines Unglücklichen trocknen wolle, dann sollte es nicht von der Höhe eines messianischen Stolzes geschehen, sondern mit Demut und Liebe: Menschenliebe ist die erste Pflicht.[38]

Als Idealist glaubt Gončarov an den Fortschritt und die Erziehbarkeit des Menschen durch Wissenschaft, Kunst und Religion. Daher ist auch die Erziehung und Bildung seiner Helden ausschlaggebend in dem Streben nach dem Ideal. Noch kurz vor seinem Tode befaßt er sich mit dem Problem der Erziehung, die zur wahren Entfaltung der physischen, intellektuellen und moralischen Kräfte führe, und fragt: "Was für eine edle Hand ist für unsere Kinder im frühen Alter notwendig, damit sie keine unterdrückte und niedergeschlagene Feiglinge, oder gedemütigte, beleidigte, verzagte, falsche Menschen werden, sondern echte, ehrenhafte, mutige Männer und Frauen, die standhaft im Leben und dazu gutherzig und geübt sind in der Erfüllung ihrer menschlichen Pflichten."[39] Die Erziehung zu diesem schönen aufgeklärten Menschen fällt Kunst und Religion zu.

Gončarov konnte sich unmöglich mit der Vorstellung abfinden, daß man die Welt und den Menschen annehmen müsse, wie sie sind: "Možno snizchodit' ko vsemu etomu, požaluj, s christianskoj i gummanoj točki zrenija, daže ljubit' vse-taki, nesmotrja ni na čto, no byt' pokojnym i prinimat', čto eto i dolžno byt', dovol'stvovat'sja ja ne mogu...."[40] Daher, fügt er hinzu, "schreibe er auch seine Romane." Er glaubt an eine allumfassende Liebe, und nur diese Kraft vermag die Welt zu bewegen und den menschlichen Willen zur fruchtbaren Tätigkeit hinzulenken. Die Vollendung der Nächstenliebe sieht er in der Entsagung seiner selbst, wobei sich die Annäherung ans Göttliche

vollzieht. Es ist die höchste erreichbare Schönheit in allem, was menschlich ist, im Winckelmannschen Sinne die volle Harmonie, aber auch nicht minder im Sinne des Christentums. Schönheit und Sittlichkeit gehören zusammen; sie bedingen sich gegenseitig. Die Idee der Sittlichkeit offenbart sich in der Form der Schönheit, oder vielmehr, das Ideal der Kunst harmonisiert mit der Sittlichkeit des Menschen. Gončarov postuliert eine allgemeine Neigung zur sittlichen Vollkommenheit: "My i ljubim soveršenstvo nravstvennoe — na etom i osnovana naša ljubov' k bogu."[41]

Bemerkenswert in Gončarovs Denken und somit auch in seinen Romanen ist die Abwesenheit von religiösen Erlebnissen, wo doch die Religion damals noch eine bedeutende Rolle im kulturellen Leben spielte. Man könnte bei ihm, wie bei den Freimaurern, von einer freien Religiosität sprechen, insofern er sich auf kein Dogma und nicht auf die Gnade Gottes bezieht. Aber sein Humanitätsstreben, die ethisch-moralische Forderungen sind den Geboten der Nächstenliebe sehr nahe. In diesem impliziten Bezug auf die christlichen Gebote, die er auch an mehreren Stellen in seinen Briefen und Aufsätzen erwähnt und die der russischen Jugend der 1860er Jahre empfohlen werden, fand Gončarov einen Ausgleich der Spannung zwischen Antike und Christentum.[42] Schließlich ist auch die Menschlichkeit, die Goethe in seiner Iphigenie verkörpert, letztlich überwiegend christlich und weniger durch die Antike geprägt. Weder Gončarov noch seine Helden suchen je Erlösung im Gebet — nur Vera nach dem Erlebnis in der Schlucht wendet sich der Bibel zu. Menschliche Güte offenbart sich immer in Nächstenliebe, als persönliche moralische Handlung eines liebenden Menschen einem anderen gegenüber. Daher kann Gončarov auch nicht den vielgepriesenen russischen heiligen Mönch billigen. Es ist zwar leichter, in einem isolierten Dasein ein Heiliger zu werden, als im Strome der Welt, aber in dieser Isolierung ist der Mönch ein reiner Egoist, weil er nur an seine eigene Erlösung denkt und an der Verbesserung der anderen Menschen nicht beteiligt ist. In Wirklichkeit ist der Mönch auf diese Art "unfähig, sich selbst zusammen mit anderen zu retten."[43] In dieser Einstellung zeigt sich aufs genaueste Gončarovs Verhältnis zur Religion, insbesondere zur Orthodoxie.

Gončarovs Auffassung von der Kunst im Prozess der Humanisierung trifft sich in vielem mit derjenigen bei anderen Repräsentanten der Humanitätsidee. Kunst ist der höchste Ausdruck der schöpferischen Kräfte des Menschen; sie ist ein Bedürfnis der menschlichen Existenz, des Geistes wie des Sinnlichen. Die wahre Kunst, geschaffen vom Genius, bereitet Wohlgefallen, ist aber auch ein bestimmter Ausdruck des sittlichen Daseins. Der Genius (bei Gončarov "Talent") kann die Wahrheit nicht verzerren, er verrät sein eigenes Sein,

sobald er sich zu einem Moralisten und Propagandisten erniedrigt: "Schildern und nochmals Schildern ist sein Anliegen." Schon früh erkannte Gončarov die Kraft der Kunst und deren Leistung bei der Verwirklichung der höchsten Werte. Darum ist das höchste Ziel der Kunst, durch das Schöne den Menschen zu veredeln. Die Kunst macht dem Menschen die Wahrheit in der Form der Schönheit offenbar. Wie die Wissenschaft, so muß auch die Kunst gefördert werden, um ihre ernsthafte Aufgabe erfüllen und zur Bildung und Vervollkommnung des Menschen verhelfen zu können. Der Künstler kann durch die Wahrhaftigkeit seiner Darstellung eine größere Wirkung erzielen, als dies durch moralische Lehrsätze möglich ist.[44]

Daß Gončarovs Begeisterung für Kunst auch ihren Widerhall in seinen literarischen Helden fand, ist selbstverständlich. Aleksandr Aduev hat sich der Poesie verschrieben, Štol'c und Oblomov, besonders der letztere, sind schon von Jugend auf von der Kunst begeistert, und die Werke von Byron, Rousseau, Schiller und Goethe sind ihnen geläufig. Ol'ga ist der Musik ergeben, und in Rajskij und Kirillov begegnen wir Künstlerpersönlichkeiten, deren Schaffensmethode aufs genaueste analysiert wird. Bedeutsam ist Rajskijs immerwährendes Suchen nach dem Schönen — in Literatur und Musik, in Malerei und endlich in der Bildhauerei. Seine Begeisterung für die griechische Bildhauerei, dann auch die Art und Weise, wie er sich im Geiste als Plastiker im Sinne der griechischen Kunst sieht, der eine neue Venus schafft und dessen Ziel von da an die Verkündung des Sittlichen als menschlicher Lebensform gilt — all das ruft die Welt Winckelmanns herauf. Aber noch bedeutender ist am Ende des Romans seine Flucht nach Rom, wie einst die von Winckelmann, um sein Denken und die Kunst neu zu beflügeln. Es war eine Flucht in das Reich des Ideals, das Zentrum der Kunst der Antike. Aber wir wissen, daß Rajskij auch in Rom als Künstler versagen wird. Obwohl begabt auf mehreren Gebieten, besaß er nicht die Disziplin, sich seinem Ziel vollständig zu widmen, um erfolgreich zu wirken. Gerade seine Unfähigkeit zur Konzentration auf die Sache will Gončarov bloßlegen. Rajskij selbst erkennt seine Schwächen, bezeichnet sich selbst als Mißgeburt und kann daher einem vollkommenen Menschen kaum entsprechen. Besonders seine extreme Besessenheit durch das Schöne widerspricht der Gončarovschen Auffassung von der Harmonie des goldenen Mittelwegs. Und doch verkörpert Rajskij gewisse humanistische Ideen, oder vielmehr, er wird häufig zum Sprecher des Autors erhoben, z.B. als Rajskij sein Romanprojekt den Frauen widmet. Die Verehrung, die Gončarov von seiten der russischen Frauen entgegengebracht wurde gerade wegen der idealen und bildhaften Darstellungen seiner Frauengestalten, die dann auch als Muster für die Bildung der Frauen im

öffentlichen Leben empfohlen wurden, ist bemerkenswert. In jener Widmung, die als Huldigung an die Frauen gelten kann, wird die Frau in ihrer Rolle als Schützerin der idealen menschlichen Werte gesehen: "... a vy, roždaja nas, beregite, kak providenie, naše detstvo i junost', vospityvajte nas čestnymi, učite trudu, čelovečnosti, dobru i toj ljubvi, kakuju tvorec vložil v naši serdca, — i my tverdo vynesem bitvy žizni i pojdem za vami vsled tuda, gde vse soveršenno, gde večnaja krasota."[45]

Obwohl Rajskij gewisse ideale Züge aufweist (Gončarov wollte ihn früher als idealen Helden darstellen), konnte er am Ende seinen Helden nicht billigen, am wenigsten konnte er ihn als Träger des Ideal-Schönen gelten lassen. Auch Gončarov mußte entdecken, daß reine Schönheit nicht alleiniger Gegenstand der Kunst sein kann. Gončarov selbst wollte Rajskij in all seiner Häßlichkeit darstellen — "predstavit' ego vo vsej urodlivosti .. no ne otnošus' ja k nemu odobritel'no, a s ironiej ... i cel' moja imenno čtob predstavit' russkuju darovituju naturu, propadajuščuju darom bez tolku ... Eto svoego roda artističeskaja oblomovščina." Die Tatsache, daß Rajskij gleichwohl zu einer sympathischen Figur wurde, ist darauf zurückzuführen, so betont Gončarov, daß er ihm mit Mitgefühl und nicht mit kalter Bosheit malen konnte.[46] Und so, behauptet Gončarov, behandle er sogar seinen ärgsten Feind: mit Mitgefühl und Mitleid. Wenn Gončarov die Mangelhaftigkeit und negativen Eigenschaften eines "halberwachten" Oblomov, wie Rajskij, erfassen wollte, d.h. dessen "artistische Oblomoverei," dann stellt sich die Frage, welche Kunstgriffe der Autor verwendet, um die Eigenschaften des Urtypus der Oblomoverei, also Oblomov selbst, zu charakterisieren. Die Antwort ist dieselbe — die Mürbheit, Plumpheit, Trägheit, Schlaffheit und liederliche Melancholie Oblomovs[47] wird in hyperbolischer Form dargestellt, denn solch hoffnungslose Gestalten gibt es kaum in der Wirklichkeit. Aber abgesehen von seiner übertriebenen Faulheit und Apathie, ist Oblomov auch Humanist im höchsten Sinne, und er glaubt ein Leben zu führen, nach dem sich jeder Mensch sehnt. Dabei kommt es ihm aber nicht in den Sinn zu fragen, wieso es möglich war, daß er solch eine Lebensart führen konnte. Seine Leibeigenen und das System der Leibeigenschaft werden von diesem "Humanisten" nicht in Frage gestellt.

Und trotzdem erreicht Gončarov sein Ziel, eine Art Ideal eines Menschen darzustellen, nicht direkt, sondern indirekt; nicht im Werk, sondern in dem Leser selbst, der nicht darum herumkommt darüber nachzudenken, wie eine Veränderung erzielt werden könnte. P. Kropotkin hat treffend bemerkt, wie intensiv der Roman *Oblomov* von den gebildeten Russen gelesen und diskutiert wurde: "Everyone recognized something of himself in Oblomoff,

felt the disease of Oblomoff in his own veins."[48] Damit wurde durch das Mittel der Kunst, durch die Betonung des Negativen im Charakter nicht nur die negative Seite bloßgelegt, sondern auch, wie der Charakter sein könnte oder sollte, eine vollkommene Persönlichkeit. In der Debatte über den Charakter Oblomovs ist der Hinweis auf den idealen Menschen unvermeidlich.

Diesen Gogol'schen Kunstgriff, nur das Negative im Übermaß zu betonen, hat Gončarov sich zu eigen gemacht.[49] Schon 1848 schreibt Gogol' über die Funktion der Kunst: "Iskusstvo dolžno vystavit' nam vse durnye naši narodnye kačestva i svojstva takim obrazom, čtoby sledy ich každyj iz nas otyskal prežde v sebe samom i podumal by o tom, kak prežde s samogo sbrosit' vse omračajuščee blagorodstvo prirody našej."[50] Fast genau derselbe Gedanke wurde von Gončarov ausgesprochen, wobei auch noch die Goethesche Polarität — um den Tag zu erkennen, muß die Nacht geschildert werden — eine Rolle spielt. Obwohl die Kunst den Menschen verbessern und veredeln soll, muß sie ihm an erster Stelle seine Dummheiten, Häßlichkeiten und Leidenschaften mit all ihren Folgen vor Augen führen, denn erst durch solches Bewußtmachen wird Heilung möglich.[51] Im Vergleich zu Gogol's satirischer und grotesker Darstellung ist Gončarov jedoch wesentlich empfindsamer. Das extreme Negative erweckt unwillkürlich das Gegenteil und somit wenigstens eine Ahnung vom Idealen. Als Gogol' von seiner Freundin Smirnova beschuldigt wurde, daß er keine Menschenliebe zeige und nur negative Charaktere zeichne, erwiderte er: "V urode vy skol'ko nibud' počuvstvuete ideal togo že, čego karikaturoj stal urod."[52] Genau dasselbe Verfahren beobachten wir auch bei Gončarov: die Andeutung von Ideen und Idealen, ausgedrückt in indirekter Form.

Eine andere Art seiner Charakterdarstellung bezieht sich auf die direkte Betonung positiver Eigenschaften seiner Charaktere, die eventuell als Muster gelten könnten. Es sind kontroverse, idealähnliche Gestalten in seinen drei Romanen: Peter Aduev, Štol'c und Tušin. Es sind sekundäre Figuren, die als Gegenbilder zu den Hauptfiguren angelegt sind. Es sind keine realen Typen, sondern vielmehr Typen der Zukunft, daher sind sie auch nicht vollkommen entwickelt und repräsentieren etwas, was noch im Werden ist. Gončarov selbst gibt zu, daß er Schwierigkeiten hatte, Charaktere wie Štol'c und Tušin vollkommen darzustellen, weil sie sich eben noch nicht zu einem vollen Typus entwickelt hatten, denn ein Typus ist für Gončarov etwas tief Verwurzeltes, das sich jahrelang, über mehrere Generationen festgelegt hat.[53] Peter Aduev, Štol'c und Tušin sind unmittelbar mit Gončarovs Fortschrittsgedanken verbunden und erinnern uns an einen Zukunftstypus, einen tugendhaften und

humanen Kulaken, der sich erst in der Reformzeit Stolypins zur vollen Blüte hätte entfalten können. Im Gegensatz zu den russischen Radikalen seiner Zeit wählte Gončarov diese drei als neue Typen, die notwendig waren, um eine Lösung der sozialen Rückständigkeit des Landes anzudeuten. Hierin sah Gončarov seinen Beitrag zum russischen Fortschritt. Sie erscheinen als Personifikation sozialer Ideale, als Träger der Idee der Zukunft, aber als ideale Menschen erscheinen sie dem russischen Leser zweifelhaft.[54]

Verfolgt man chronologisch die Erscheinung dieser positiven Helden, ohne auf eine nähere detaillierte Untersuchung einzugehen, so entdeckt man im ersten Roman, daß Peter Aduev, einst ein Idealist, vor der Realität des Lebens zu einem rationalistisch gestimmten, positivistischen Geschäftsmann erzogen wurde. Dieser praktische Mann der Tat ist aber auch in kulturellen und wissenschaftlichen Aspekten bewandert. Obwohl die Sympathie des Autors auf der Seite dieses positiven Charakters liegt, konnte er ihn nicht zu einem idealen Menschen erheben — er war am Ende in seiner Lebensauffassung doch zu rationalistisch. Durchweg wird der Grundkonflikt des Lebens — Gefühl und Vernunft, das Ideale und die Praxis vorgeführt. Nur am Ende des Romans, als Peter Aduev selbst zugibt, daß er ein allzu einseitig rationales Leben führte, wobei das Gefühl unkultiviert blieb, wird ideale Menschlichkeit, der harmonische Einklang von Gefühl und Vernunft, im Hinblick auf Schiller indirekt angedeutet.

Gončarov versucht auch in seinem zweiten Roman, *Oblomov*, die Frage der russischen Gesellschaftsentwicklung zu behandeln, indem er der hoffnungslosen Gestalt Oblomovs den Halb-Russen und Halb-Deutschen Štol'c gegenüberstellt. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen wird Štol'c von de Kritikern als Streber und Spießer bezeichnet, in Wirklichkeit aber sind im eigentlichen Text dafür keine Belege zu finden. Ihm werden egozentrische Züge zugeschrieben: in seinem ganzen Wesen sei er nur ein vom Verstand gelenkter Unternehmer. Ohne weiter zu versuchen, diese Anklagen zu widerlegen, sollte man zunächst zwei Frage beantworten. Was wollte Gončarov mit der Gestalt des Štol'c erzielen; und inwiefern ist es ihm gelungen, eine überzeugende Romanfigur zu gestalten? In der Beantwortung der letzten Frage finden wird dann auch die Gründe für die negative Reaktion. Daß Gončarov in der Gestalt des Štol'c eine weitere Entwicklung seines Peter Aduev zeigen wollte, daran wird nicht gezweifelt. Daß er ihm Klugheit, Umsicht, Pflichttreue, Würde und Tüchtigkeit zuschreibt und ihn zum Muster eines harmonischen menschlichen Ideals machen will, daran ist auch nicht zu zweifeln. Wir müssen allerdings zugeben, daß diese Perfektibilität ein Produkt der Gončarovschen Einbildungskraft ist und daß sie auf die Zukunft gerichtet ist. Štol'c ist ein

Ideal der Zukunft, und daher kann Gončarov ihn auch nicht ganz in der eigentlichen Handlung darstellen. In großen Zügen wird Štol'cens Erziehung geschildert im Vergleich zu Oblomovs, und nur durch diese Erziehung kann ein Wesen wie Štol'c existieren und die Harmonie seiner Seele aufrechterhalten. Er war stets Beherrscher seiner Leidenschaften und war sich bewußt, daß diese Harmonie stets erkämpft werden muß. Diese Beherrschung des Unwillkürlichen verweist deutlich auf Schillers Begriff der Würde. Warum machte Gončarov ihn halb zu einem Russen und halb zu einem Deutschen? Warum die große Sorgfalt, die seiner Erziehung gewidmet wird? Nicht nur, um die Oblomoverei zu betonen sondern auch aus höheren sozialpolitischen Gründen. Štol'c wurde bewußt als Gegenspieler zum Streben der damals rein westlich orientierten, radikalen russischen Intellektuellen geschaffen, die für die Europäisierung Rußlands verantwortlich sind, ohne die typisch russischen Eigenschaften in Betracht zu ziehen. Štol'c ist ein Zögling zweier Nationen, verschiedener sozialer Herkunft, Sohn einer russischen adligen Mutter und eines deutschen Bürgers. In ihm wird das östliche und westliche Kulturgut vereint, das Rationale und Gefühlvolle werden zu einer harmonischen Synthese verschmolzen, und daher sah Gončarov in ihm ein soziales, kulturelles und menschliches Ideal. Gončarov selbst deutet auf diese übernationale, universelle Kulturvereinigung am Ende seiner eigenen Besprechung von Štol'c hin: "I samoe slavjanofil'stvo ... budet iskrennee protjagivat' ruku k vseobščej, to est' evropejskoj, kulture ibo esli čuvstva i ubeždenija nacional'ny, to znanie odno dlja vsech i u vsech."[55]

Štol'c besitzt tatsächlich alle Attribute eines Humanitätsideals, aber nur in abstrakter Form. Er verkörpert vielmehr die Idee eines Ideals. Um zu zeigen, daß Gončarov wirklich nur eine Idee darstelle, wird häufig seine eigene Aussage angeführt: "...čto obraz Štol'ca bleden, ne realen, ne živoj, a prosto ideja." Diese Aussage beweist gerade seine Absicht, nämlich die Darstellung der Idee des Ideals, daß Rußland zu der Zeit tatkräftige, humane, unternehmungslustige Menschen brauchte, die nicht nur Fabriken, Eisenbahnen und Seehäfen bauen wollen, sondern auch bestrebt sind, Schulen und Bildung einzuführen. Der Gründe, warum man Štol'c ablehnt, oder warum es Gončarov nicht gelungen ist, ihn als Ideal lebendig gemacht zu haben, sind mehrere. Es genügt zu betonen daß Gončarovs Humanitätsgedanke die Erziehung des Individuums betrifft und daß man damals in Rußland nicht bereit war, den langen Erziehungsprozeß mitzumachen. Der Erfolg sollte auf schnelle Art erzielt werden, denn das Glück des Einzelnen konnten die Russen "auf Kosten der Millionen noch Leidenden nicht annehmen."[56] Außerdem ist Štol'c zu korrekt, zu sehr

vollkommen, er hat keine Fehler und daher eignet er sich nicht so sehr als vorbildliche Romanfigur. Gončarov mußte dasselbe Versagen erleben wie alle, die eine vollkommen schöne Seele darstellen wollen. Und wenn es ihm auch nicht gelang, ein Ideal darzustellen, so wird zumindest der Leser und Kritiker dazu bewogen, darüber nachzudenken. Somit hat er dann auch diesmal sein Ziel erreicht.

Erschüttert durch die negative Rezeption seines Protagonisten Štol'c und nicht minder durch die stets wachsende Linksorientierung der Radikalen der 1860er Jahre, verfolgt Gončarov in seinem letzten Roman umso mehr die Lösung der russischen Zukunft auf seine Art. Seiner Auffassung treu, daß Kunst nur die dunkle Seite des menschlichen Individuums bloßlegen soll und nicht die eines politischen Systems, verlegt er seine Hoffnung in die Erziehung des Einzelnen und damit auch auf die künftigen Reformen. Der Idealismus eines politischen Systems, welches Ideale mit fertigen Formen predigt, ohne sie geprüft oder erlebt zu haben, wird genau so abgelehnt, wie in Dostoevskij's *Zapiski iz podpol'ja*.[57] Wiederum wird ein Ideal postuliert in dem aufrichtigen, ehrlichen, von Natur aus harmonischen Charakter, dem tatkräftigen Gutsbesitzer und Geschäftsmann Tušin. Gončarov vermeidet es, einen zweiten Štol'c zu gestalten, indem er Tušin als reines Produkt der russischen Verhältnisse erscheinen läßt und ihn zudem nicht mit einem ausländischen Namen belastet. Auch bei Tušin müssen wir ein Ideal der Zukunft sehen; außerdem handelt es sich um eine lakonische Darstellung im Vergleich zu der enthusiastischen Beschreibung des Štol'c. Man vermißt auch die übliche Aufmerksamkeit, die sonst der Erziehung der Helden gewidmet wurde. Abgesehen von seinem edlen, hilfreichen Charakter, wird Tušins Tatkraft und seine natürliche Lust zur Arbeit besonders unterstrichen. Im Moment der Krise sucht sogar die babuška bei ihm Vertrauen, Rat und Hilfe. Somit wird er zum Retter in der Notlage der Familie, aber auch zum Retter Rußlands. Er wird zum Symbol der vereinten russischen Kräfte, wie sie von ihm, Vera und der babuška ausgehen. Gončarov selbst versäumt auch nicht, dies in seinem kritischen Kommentar hervorzuheben: "Etogo Tušina, govorju ja, pozvala Babuška na pomošč' — i on soslužit ej službu, kak i vse členy novych pokolenij, vse Tušiny soslužat službu Rossii, razrabotav, doveršiv i upročiv ee preobrazovanie i obnovlenie."[58]

Obwohl die Ich-Bezogenheit des Klassischen Ideals auch in Gončarovs letztem Roman hervortritt, vernimmt man doch hier, wie auch in seinem Denken der letzten Jahre seines Lebens, eine gewisse Neigung zu einer erweiterten Humanitätskonzeption, insofern Mitmenschlichkeit und Gemeinschaftlichkeit, die Familie, die Idee der "Sobornost'," ja die Rettung

Rußlands selbst mit eingeschlossen werden. Bedeutend in dieser Hinsicht ist die Gestalt der Vera, die zwar zeitweilig von den nihilistischen Ideen Volochovs verführt wird, jedoch wieder zu den traditionellen religiösen und moralischen Werten zurückfindet. Diese traditionellen Werte sind vor allem in der Ehrlichkeit, Gerechtigkeit und im starken Charakter der babuška verkörpert. Sie symbolisiert die Idee der Ordnung, das stabile patriarchalische alte System Rußlands. Veras Rückkehr zur patriarchalischen Welt bedeutet aber nicht deren volle Annahme; sie ist nur als transitorisches Stadium zu betrachten, bis das Ideale verwirklicht werden kann. Indem Vera die Welt der babuška wählt und damit auch die Tušins und nicht die der zerstörerischen Radikalen, werden auch die Gedanken und die Gesinnung Gončarovs ausgesprochen.

Das Versagen seiner eigenen Ideale, oder vielmehr die Ablehnung derselben, haben Gončarovs Glauben an das Ideal zeitweilig erschüttert, besonders in einer Übergangsperiode, in der das Alte noch nicht verwittert ist und das Neue noch keine festen Wurzeln geschlagen hat. Daher auch die Darstellung der Idee des Idealen in der Form von Helden der Zukunft. Tatsächlich entdeckt man bei Gončarov eine ambivalente Einstellung dem Idealen und der Idealisierung gegenüber. Einerseits wird das Streben nach dem Idealen betont und andererseits wird es bezweifelt, denn einen idealen Zustand zu erreichen und zu bewahren, verursacht mehr Leiden, als das normale Dasein: "... idealy i idealizacija, to est' neumerennoe i inogda besplodnoe stremlenie k nim vsegda zastavljalo bol'še stradat' ljudej, neželi dejstvitel'nye stradanija."[59] Gončarov erkannte allzuwohl die menschlichen Schwächen und Probleme, die mit dem immer wieder zu erkämpfenden Humanitätsideal verbunden sind. Er erkannte vor allem die Verantwortung, die mit der Entfaltung einer auf sich selbst gestellten, bewußten und freien Einzelpersönlichkeit verbunden ist. Was V. I. Mel'nik so treffend über Herzen sagt, könnte auch Gončarov zugeschrieben werden, ja es hat auch heute noch, gerade im gegenwärtigen Rußland, seine Bedeutung: "ljudi na samom dele bojatsja etoj nezavisimosti, ibo ona svjazana s samostojatel'nym trudom, samostojatel'nymi dejstvijami, s otkazom ot avtoritetov."[60]

Aber trotz allen Zweifeln besteht Gončarov auf seinem Kategorischen Imperativ und verkündet bis ans Ende seines Lebens die Notwendigkeit eines Ideals im menschlichen Leben, denn ohne Ideal sei das Leben ohne wahren Zweck.[61] Das Ideal wird postuliert, nicht so sehr um es zu erreichen, als um danach zu streben. Er zweifelt auch, ob das Ideal erreicht werden soll, denn damit, so wußte er, würde auch das Streben aufhören und somit auch, im Lessingschen und im Goetheschen Sinne, die Existenz des Menschen als

Mensch. Die Geschichte hat uns zu Genüge gezeigt, daß gewisse Systeme den Menschen nicht verändert haben und daß die Möglichkeit dafür nur auf der Erziehung des Menschen, auf der Grundlage des Humanitätsideals, beruhen könnte. Ich sage könnte, denn wir wurden auch Zeugen des Scheiterns aller möglichen Ideale, die im Laufe der Jahrhunderte, besonders in der Literatur, hervorgebracht wurden, um die menschliche Leidenschaft und Entzweiung aufzuheben. Wer weiß aber, und dies können wir nie ermessen, wie viel schlechter es der Menschheit erginge, wenn sie dem erzieherischen Humanitätsgedanken keine Folge geleistet hätte. Uns so können wir nur dem Gedanken Thomas Manns zustimmen, wenn er von der Versöhnung der Menschheit in der Nachkriegszeit spricht und von der großen Botschaft, die das Klassische Humanitätsideal der Nachwelt vermittelte — und die heute noch ihre wahre Gültigkeit bewahrt habe.[62]

NOTES

1. I. A. Gončarov: *Sobranie sočinenij v vos'mi tomach*, Moskva 1955, Bd. VIII, S. 64-113. 141-169, 208-220.

2. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 54.

3. P. Brang, "Von den Rechten und Pflichten der russischen Dichter," *Schweizer Monatshefte*, 49. Jg., Heft 4 (1969), S. 383.

4. Ebd., S. 385.

5. N. A. Dobroljubov, *Sobranie sočinenij v devjati tomach*, Moskva 1982, Bd. IV, S. 473.

6. Ebd., S. 338, 341.

7. D. Tschižewskij, *Zwischen Ost und West. Russische Geistesgeschichte II, 18.- 20. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg 1961, S. 84.

8. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 162.

9. Ebd., S. 67.

10. E. Heier, "Elements of Physiognomy and Pathognomy in the Works of I. S. Turgenev," *Slavistische Beiträge*, Bd. 116, München 1977, S. 51-52.

11. *Kratkij slovar' po estetike*, M. F. Ovsjannikov, Moskva 1963, S. 66-70.

12. V. G. Belinskij, *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, Moskva 1956, Bd. X, S. 323.

13. J. J. Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755), *Sämtliche Werke*, Nachdruck der Ausgabe von 1825, Osnabrück 1965, Bd. I, S. 30.

14. Eine detaillierte Darstellung des klassischen Humanitätsideals ist in folgenden Werken zu verfolgen: A. Raabe, *Schillers Idealistischer Realismus*, Bonn 1962; F. Gundolf, *Goethe*, Berlin 1922; A. Heusler, *Klassik und Klassizismus*, Bern 1952; W. Leifer, *Hellas im Deutschen Geistesleben*, Herrenalb 1963; W. Rehm, *Griechentum und Goethezeit*, München 1952; J. W. Dyck, "Goethes Humanitätsidee und Grillparzers 'Sappho'," *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft*, IV, Wien 1965, S. 65-79.

15. *I. A. Gončarov v russkoj kritike*, Moskva 1958, S. 25.

16. Vgl. hierzu: A. Lyngstad, *Ivan Goncharov*, New York 1971; M. Ehre, *Oblomov and his Creator*, Princeton 1973; V. Setchkarev, *Ivan Goncharov. His Life and his Works*, Würzburg 1974; V. A. Michelson, *Gumanizm I. A. Gončarova: Kolonial'nyj vopros*, Krasnodar 1965; L. S. Gejro, "Kommentar" in I. A. Gončarov, *Oblomov*, Leningrad 1967, S. 527-692; P. Thiergen, "Oblomov als Bruchstück-Mensch: Präliminarien zum Problem 'Gončarov und Schiller'," *I. A. Gončarov. Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*, hrsg. v. P. Thiergen, Köln/Wien 1989, S. 163-191; V. Mel'nik, *Realizm I. A. Gončarova*, Vladivostok 1985.

17. O. Peterson, *Schiller und die russischen Dichter und Denker des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 1805-1881, New York 1945, S. 93-98; Gončarov, Bd. VII, S. 211.

18. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 229, 469-472. Vgl. hierzu auch Thiergen, S. 172.

19. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 223, 435.

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21. Belinskij, Bd. III, S. 385-419; Peterson, S. 21-35.

22. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 41-63, 461-468.

23. Ebd., S. 222.

24. H. Graßhoff, "Parteinahme und gesellschaftlicher Auftrag des Schriftstellers...," *Humanistische Tradition der russischen Aufklärung*, Berlin 1973, S. 63; L. I. Kulakova, *Očerki istorii russkoj estetičeskoj mysli XVIII veka*, Leningrad 1968, S. 207-234.

25. A. G. Cross, *N. M. Karamzin. A Study of His Literary Career 1783-1803*, Carbondale 1971; H. Rothe, *N. M. Karamzins europäische Reise: Der Beginn des russischen Romans*, Bad Homburg v.d.H./Berlin/Zürich 1968; Ju. M. Lotman, *Evoljucija mirovozzrenija Karamzina (1789-1803)*, Uč. zap. Tartuskogo gos. univ., 51, 1957.

26. Gončarov, Bd. VII, S. 233-253; Ehre, S. 11 ff.

27. *Frank-masonstvo, Enciklopdedičeskij slovar'* (1902), XXXVI, S. 513.

28. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 333.

29. Ehre, S. 48-49; *Gončarov v vospominanijach...*, S. 48, 56-57, 70, 243.

30. *Frank-masonstvo*, S. 504.

31. J. J. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, Weimar 1964, S. 364-367, 428-433.

32. D. S. Merežkovskij, *Gončarov, Polnoe sobranie sočinenij*, Hildesheim/New York 1973, Bd. V, Teil 8, S. 34.

33. *Gončarov v russkoj kritike*, S. 124; *Gončarov v vospominanijach...*, S. 57.

34. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 162, 341.

35. Ebd., S. 366; vgl hierzu Mel'nik, S. 54.

36. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 291.

37. Ebd., S. 332-334.

38. Ebd., S. 332-334; 339-340.

39. Zitiert nach Ehre, S. 64.

40. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 354-355.

41. Ebd., S. 362, 364-365.

42. Ebd., S. 156-157, 365.

43. Ehre, S. 43.

44. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 163-164, 166, 170, 211-212, 215-216, 339-340.

45. Gončarov, Bd. VI, S. 420.

46. Gončarov, Bd. VII, S. 365-366.

47. So bezeichnet bei Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen. Gesammelte Werke in Einzelbänden*, Frankfurt 1983, S. 299.

48. P. Kropotkin, *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature*, New York 1919, S. 159.

49. Gončarov, Bd. VII, S. 366.

50. *Russkie pisateli o literature*, ed. S. Baluchatyj, Leningrad 1939, Bd. I, S. 317.

51. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 212.

52. A. A. Elistratova, *Gogol' i problemy zapadnoevropejskogo romana*, Moskva 1972, S. 133-134.

53. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 113; A. G. Cejtlin, *I. A. Gončarov*, Moskva 1950, S. 358-370; M. Russell, *Untersuchungen zur Theorie und Praxis der Typisierung bei I. A. Gončarov*, Slavistische Beiträge, Bd. 118, München 1978, S. 30-33.

54. Vgl. hierzu auch Lyngstad, S. 53-54, 161; Setchkarev, S. 127-161; ders. "Andrej Štol'c in Gončarovs 'Oblomov:' Versuch einer Reinterpretation," *I. A. Gončarov. Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*, S. 154-155.

55. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 82; Lyngstad, S. 100-102.

56. Dyck, S. 78.

57. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 149-152; Ehre, S. 44-49. Vgl. auch R. Neuhäuser, "Gončarovs Roman 'Obryv' und der russische Roman des Realismus," *I. A. Gončarov. Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*, S. 103-104.

58. Gončarov, Bd. VII, S. 103.

59. Gončarov, Bd. VIII, S. 367.

60. Mel'nik, S. 43.

61. Vgl. die Argumente des Professors in *Literaturnyj večer*, Gončarov, Bd. VII, S. 147 ff.

62. Dyck, S. 76-77.

VI. Duty and Inclination in Turgenev's *Faust*

Entbehren sollst du,
sollst entbehren.
Goethe, *Faust*, I.

In spite of Turgenev's thorough knowledge of philosophers like Pascal, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Feuerbach and Schopenhauer, he at no time became the propagator of anyone's specific thoughts. There is, however, one common idea among these philosophers, an idea which permeates most of Turgenev's works, particularly those after the 1850's: that reality is not what one conceives it to be, that man's existence is shrouded in mystery, and that there is no permanency and consequently the tragic recognition that man is unable to achieve lasting happiness. This questioning of man's fleeting existence in this infinite universe and the ensuing pessimism and ephemeral concept of life has frequently been attributed to Schopenhauer.[1] However, the Turgenev scholar A. Batjuto convincingly argues that the Russian novelist's pessimism could have been nourished by most philosophers dating back to Marcus Aurelius, and even to Heraclitus.[2] But whatever the reason for Turgenev's disillusionment, whether it is caused by some philosophical influence, or by his psychological make-up and his own unsettled situation, or the social problems of his native Russia, an underlying tone of disenchantment and gentle frustration is unmistakably apparent in our writer's thinking. In that sense he is not unique, as the whole of Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century was plagued with a pessimistic outlook. It was a transitionary period where the old was beginning to crumble and the new had not yet taken firm roots. Life was conceived as a struggle with destiny and was seen through a veil of resignation. Turgenev with his pessimism resembles many a contemporary Russian and European author of his time, like Thomas Hardy, Theodor Storm and especially Franz Grillparzer, whose ultimate message "trage, dulde und büsse" could serve as the motto to the works of the Russian novelist.

Turgenev's ow philosophical pessimism, his fatalistic tendencies and his feeling of the absurdity of life, especially the recognition of man's insignificance in this infinite universe, his temporary appearance — all this harmonizes with his literary themes. Thus, also the depiction of the fleeting existence of his heroes, who bloom only for a moment, "who appear like a bird from darkness and disappear as quickly into darkness" (*Rudin*). Turgenev's heroes experience only despair and disappointment; from the very

beginning they seem to be doomed to oblivion. The major characters in his novels simply vanish or perish without having accomplished anything or having reached any of their goals — one is killed senselessly, the other dies prematurely, another commits suicide, and the next simply resigns himself to fate by saying: "Welcome lonely old age! Burn out, useless life." There is, of course, periodically escape in his tales of mystery, but it is only a momentary escape. It is this flight into a dream-world, which is a confirmation of Turgenev's disillusionment in reality and of his fear of ever deciphering the endless mysteries of life. It is thus not surprising that the theme of resignation reverberates through the prose of Turgenev, who as a solution can only offer a mode of life which is marked by endurance, tolerance and atonement. If one can speak of a predominance of certain themes in Turgenev then one would have to single out gloom, melancholy, death, loneliness, exhaustion from life and especially love, but most often unrequited love. Love as an exalted feeling is never lasting; most often it is depicted as painful and destructive. That bliss of love and the entailing lasting happiness is hardly ever attained, and if it is, it is only for one fleeting moment, but mostly it remains an illusion. Although the theme of resignation is caused by a variety of factors, it is love, the strongest overwhelming force which is capable of uplift, albeit only momentarily, but ultimately emerges as the core of man's tragic existence. That irrational feeling, that spiritual power of love is forever in conflict with the rational side of man, which guides his duty and obligation. It is the inevitable conflict of duty and inclination that prevents man from attaining lasting fulfilment in love as it is depicted in Turgenev's *Faust* (1856) which shall be elucidated in this paper. Without unduly speculating to what extent Turgenev's love stories are based on biographical aspects, one has to stress, nonetheless, the conditions under which he produced *Faust*, for in many respects the story echoes the author's own psychological state of mind. It is equally reminiscent of Turgenev's relation to Tolstoj's sister with whom Turgenev seemed to have been infatuated at the beginning of the 1850's. It is thus likely that the prototype of the heroine of the story, Vera, has been derived from M. N. Tolstaja. Both display similar characteristics; like Vera, Tolstaja in real life looked upon poetry and novels as sheer factors of imagination, an attitude which caused animated discussions between her and Turgenev.[3]

More important, however, is the spirit in which he produced this story and Turgenev's own confession as to the cause of his pessimistic outlook on life. Soon after the publication of *Faust*, he writes in December of 1856 to M. N. Tolstaja:

> I am very happy that you like *Faust*, and that what you are saying about the duality in me is fully justified, but you may not know the reason for this dichotomy.... You see, I was extremely bitter to grow old and not having experienced full happiness — and not having built yet for myself a peaceful nest. My soul was young, hopeful and longing; but my mind sobered from experience at times triumphed ..., but when the soul in turn asked my mind as to its achievement, whether it guided my life wisely in the right path — it was inclined to be silent ... and then both the mind and the soul began to chase each other.... When you knew me at that time, I still dreamed of happiness and I did not wish to part with my hope; now I have abandoned all that. Everything is quiet and paralysed.... Why all this has come about is a long story.... *Faust* was written during this transition, at the turn of my life — my whole soul flashed with its last fire of memory, hope, youth....[4]

In essence Turgenev relates in this letter the spiritual crisis of his story, namely the inability to achieve happiness in life. A balance between reason and feeling is impossible. From this it would seem that Turgenev did not believe in the realization of the Schillerian concept of the "beautiful soul" in which reason and feeling are in total harmonious interplay. In any case, Turgenev never portrayed such an ideal in any of his works, and if he did, it was but a mere illusion, and at that a fleeting one.

It is, of course, no accident that Turgenev took both the title of his story and its epigraph, "Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren," from Goethe's masterpiece. This is, indeed, an indication that Turgenev fully concurred with the ultimate message set forth in Goethe's *Faust*. What both works depict is the recognition that life is a difficult task, it is a series of sacrifices and renunciations, and that death alone could disperse all problems. While such thoughts and Turgenev's lament on the laws of nature, the individual's limitations, his brief existence in comparison to the infinity of nature, is frequently associated with the novelist's reading of philosophers like Pascal and Schopenhauer, he was actually exposed to such ideas much earlier, namely when he wa a student in Berlin in the 1830's. At the time he was fascinated with Goethe and especially with his *Faust*. To Granovskij he wrote in 1839 that he cannot stop reading Goethe: "What treasures I constantly discover in his works!"[5] In 1844 he translated several scenes from Goethe's work and a year later he produced a lengthy review of Vronchenko's *Faust* translation.[6]

In Goethe's *Faust* Turgenev found the tragic mirroring of human life. As Faust passes through life, it brings home to Goethe's hero the tragedy of his own existence, his inner struggle, the feud of "the two souls in him," and the realization that life is unable to give total fulfilment, and that he is but a dwarf in comparison to the infinity of nature with its incessant mystery and creativity. While in the first part of Goethe's *Faust* the hero is led through a series of scenes reflecting the joy of the senses, the world of personal feelings and aspirations, in the second part of the tragedy Faust devotes his life to the welfare of human society, develops commerce and industry, and plans colonies on the newly acquired land. Yet, looking upon his life's work, he is still not satisfied; total fulfilment was unattainable. Faust's titanic urge to live and his longing for action, all of which caused him to conclude a pact with Mephistopheles, did not bring him to the stage where he could say: "Verweile doch! du bist so schön." That moment never came. And it should not, according to Goethe, for this would mean the end of life itself — desire and longing must exist, as this is the essence of life. And thus, the ultimate message of Goethe is to strive, and whosoever strives, he can be redeemed. But the striving and longing necessarily have to encounter obstacles. Thus also the constant polarity in Goethe's tragedy, a play of power and counterpower, the opposition of light and darkness, spirit and matter, personal desire and the welfare of mankind. No single sphere can be comprehended by itself — polarity must exist; only through the existence of darkness does man become aware of light. Thus, evil has a specific function in human life.[7] However, such a reconciliatory note is absent in Turgenev's *Faust*.

Turgenev's *Faust* is written in the epistolary form, consisting of nine letters. Pavel Aleksandrovich's letters are addressed to a friend in which he relates how after nine years' absence he returns to his estate and discovers that the love of his youth, Vera Nikolaevna, now twenty-eight years old, married and a mother, has become his neighbour. Their renewed acquaintance leads to frequent visits during which Pavel discovers that Vera has been subjugated by her mother El'tsova to a stern one-sided upbringing. Her education consisted of geography and the sciences; novels and poetry, capable of arousing the young woman's sensibilities and possibly an excess of emotions, were to be read only after her marriage, i.e., after having securely established a home and stability. Pavel discovers, however, that even after her marriage and long after her mother's death, Vera displays complete apathy toward literature. Turgenev raises here the problem of aesthetics versus practical usefulness, a topical issue of the Russia of the 1850's and 1860's, which brought forth typical slogans by the "thinking realists," like: "a pair of

boots is worth more than a drama by Shakespeare."

However, Vera's indifference to belles-lettres is in no way caused by any thought current of the time but solely by her mother. Vera says herself: "I am not against poetry; from childhood on I became accustomed not to read these invented works; my mother wished it that way, and I, the longer I live, the more I become convinced that everything my mother had done, everything she said, was the truth, the divine truth."[8] Indeed, El'tsova, Vera's mother, had good reason to shelter her daughter from anything that could inflame her passion. It was the dictate of her feelings that caused her elopement, and also the death of her mother at the hands of a jealous lover. Pavel, the narrator, describes El'tsova as an unusual person, solemn, reserved and guarded; she had suffered a great deal in life but eventually had taught herself to control her feelings to such an extent that she never betrayed the deep love even for her own daughter. In later life she never smiled and never shared her grief with anyone, "as if she had locked herself in and had thrown away the key." The experience of life had brought her to the conviction that "one ought to choose quite early in life — either the useful [*poleznoe*] or the pleasant [*prijatnoe*] and then adhere to it forever." To this El'tsova added: "I too, at one time, wanted to combine the two .... But this is impossible for it either leads to destruction or to debasement."[9]

In the limitation of this choice and the impossibility of combining the "useful" and the "pleasant" Turgenev saw the tragedy of man's existence. Indeed, he looked upon it like a law of nature from which there is no escape. Turgenev demonstrates this view through the relationship between Vera and Pavel, whereby Goethe's *Faust* becomes the moving force of the story. But while Goethe's work constitutes a history of man's cultural and spiritual development, his longing and striving, in short, the whole range of human experience, Turgenev's *Faust* is, in comparison, but a miniature. Turgenev deals only with one problem, the tragic aspect of love, and consequently the inability to achieve lasting personal happiness.

In his attempt to correct Vera's flaw in her upbringing, i.e., the lack of appreciation of literature, Pavel resorts to Goethe's *Faust* as the work most likely to produce the desired effect and convince her of the beauty in literature. Pavel was himself aware that perhaps he should have chosen one of Schiller's works, who was after all the author of *The Aesthetic Education of Man*, but at the time he was so imbued with *Faust* that he could not have read any other work to her. Goethe's *Faust* had its effect, especially the scenes between Faust and Gretchen.

In his usual manner of depiction, Turgenev does not reveal the specific

impact which the work had upon Vera. We learn of her changing disposition and psychological conflict only to the extent that these manifest themselves in Vera's reaction. Thus, Turgenev tells us that, after Pavel's reading of the scenes in which Faust and Gretchen meet for the first time, Vera leans forward with folded hands, remaining motionless in that position. Upon the conclusion of Pavel's reading of *Faust I* Vera was visibly affected. With uncertain steps she left the room, halted for a moment at the door, and slowly walked into the garden. When Pavel caught up with her, she merely asked him to leave the book with her. What specifically had made such an impact on her is not revealed, but of course, Turgenev expected from his readers a thorough knowledge of Goethe's *Faust*, and thus an understanding of Vera's position when the next day she confessed to Pavel that because of *Faust* she could not sleep all night, and she added: "In this book there are things from which I simply cannot escape." Here again the reader is, so to say, invited by the narrator to complete the idea which is merely suggested. Indeed, Vera could easily identify with Gretchens extremeties in character. She is virtuous and religious, yet endowed with a sensuality which eventually becomes aroused when Faust makes his advances. Or was it a premonition that her fate will be similar to that of Gretchen, who was doomed to ruin at the moment she gave vent to her feelings? Vera was aware of that mysterious streak in her character as she constantly sought her mother's protective wings. When Pavel asked her whether she would not wish to be free, she remains silent. But in this enigmatic silence one can read Vera's thoughts, her scepticism as to the achievement of freedom and with it happiness. Indeed, at one time she maintained that there is no point in talking about happiness, for "it will never come; why chase it! It is like one's health — if you don't notice it, it is there." This inability to achieve freedome, from whatever it may be, is another Goethean thought expressed in the words "Der Mensch ist nicht geboren, frei zu sein," a statement to be encountered in Turgenev's letters and an idea which undoubtedly nourished the elements of fatalism in his works.

By contrast, Pavel was pleased with his sources and felt triumphant over El'tsova, who had stifled Vera's development. Like Mephistopheles he promised Vera ever greater enjoyment as he intended to introduce her to other great writers like Shakespeare, Schiller and Pushkin. To his friends he writes: "How many untouched treasures are still hidden in her. She does not know herself." But most of all he was pleasantly surprised to discover behind Vera's hitherto stoic behaviour a sensitive being and he adds "and who can fault me for arousing this soul...." But in the process of this aesthetic reeducation of Vera, Pavel himself becomes the victim of love. For the first

time he discovers what it means to love a woman. In a letter to his friend he accuses himself and is ashamed of his lack of self-control:

> I am ashamed to speak of this.... Love is after all a form of egoism; and at my age of thirty-seven one should not live only for oneself; one should live for the public benefit, with an aim on this earth, to fulfil one's duty, one's task. I had started to do this but again it was dispersed as if by a whirlwind.

Pavel's juxtaposition of satisfying one's personal desires and one's public obligation, and the inability to combine the two is reminiscent of the teachings of Vera's mother, with the difference that Turgenev, through his narrator, emphasizes the element of duty and obligation as the only inevitable way of life if the individual wishes to survive.[10]

In the meantime, under the impact of *Faust* and the ensuing discussions on literature, Vera undergoes a transformation. Pavel speaks of her childlike innocence, of a balance between a healthy common sense and her sensitivity for beauty. The narrator's depiction of Vera approaches the ideal concept of feminine beauty, particularly when he relates her reaction to the beauty in a work of art. Then she displays that "tikhaja, zhenskaja prelest'" — a concept close to the classical ideal of "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" distinguished by Winckelmann. However, this harmonious state of perfect balance of human attributes was but to last for one fleeting moment. Within a month a hitherto unknown sensitivity and passion, a sensuous smile, and a mysterious power began to surface in Vera. The reading of Goethe's *Faust*, and no less the intimacy with Pavel, who in contrast to her husband was able to introduce her to a world of sensitivity and feeling, initiated a final stage in Vera's transformation. Goethe's *Faust* was conceived by Vera primarily as a tragedy of love and as such it aided her in realizing the inadequacy and narrowness of her own life. After having once more asked Pavel to read to her the scene between Faust and Gretchen, in which Faust declares that "feeling is everything," and Gretchen in turn succumbs to her own passion, Vera boldly declares her love for Pavel. Disregarding her duty as a mother and wife, and above all her mother's admonition, and giving vent to her feeling and passion, Vera steps onto the path of her own destruction.

What her mother had feared and against which she had guarded her daughter comes to pass. Feeling triumphs over reason. Vera's mother had at one time metaphorically expressed the character of our heroine when she said to her: "You are like ice; until you don't melt you are strong like a stone, but

if you melt you will dwindle away and no trace will be left of you." And melt she does under that mysterious power of love; but at the moment of her first and final kiss with Pavel, Vera has a vision of her mother. And the dwindling into nothingness comes true as Vera is unable to cope and restrain the ensuing internal chaos and psychological conflict which has arisen in her.

Contrary to Turgenev's usual practice of hinting and suggesting, he now spells out the conclusion to be drawn from this tale. Indeed, if Turgenev was ever didactic, it is here in his *Faust*, for through Pavel, his mouthpiece, he lectures his readers and proposes a specific way of life. In closing the lines of his last letter to his friend, Pavel writes:

> One conviction I have acquired from the experience of these last years: life is not a joke and no amusement, life is ... a difficult task. Resignation, a constant resignation — this is its secret meaning, its riddle: a sequence of unfulfilled thoughts and dreams, no matter how lofty they are; the fulfilment of one's duty — with this man should be concerned. Not having put on the iron chains, the chains of duty, man will be unable to go through life without stumbling. In our youth we think, the freer we are, the better, the more will be achieved. For youth it is permissible to think so, but it is a shame to amuse oneself with a lie when the stern face of truth is finally piercing into your eyes.

The ultimate message expressed here is resignation, resignation from personal dreams and desires, and in reality from freedom which in essence means resignation from being an individual, from being oneself. This tragic concept of man's existence, as expressed by the hero, most certainly coincides with Turgenev's own conviction, a conviction derived from his own pessimism and his own experiences, those of a man who, at the age of thirty-eight, convinced himself of having passed the prime of his life. To E. E. Lambert he expressed the low ebb of his own psychological condition when he wrote at the completion of *Faust*:

> I no longer count on any happiness for myself, i.e., a happiness in a sense of anxiety as it is perceived by younger hearts; it is senseless to think of flowers when the season of blooming has past.... One ought to learn from nature and acquire its correct, balanced, regular course, its humbleness....[11]

In postulating resignation as the only sensible way of life, as a safety net against unhappiness and destruction, Turgenev adheres to the Goethean epigraph, "Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren." But while both authors called for resignation, Turgenev proceeded with a rigidity which goes beyond the Goethean appeal. Goethe's appeal for resignation is within the classical tradition, within the norms of the Golden Mean. It is the call for the practice of restraint, it is to be a voluntary resignation from extremes, so that it becomes part of our behaviour.[12] Goethe grants the possibility at least of a partial fulfilment of man's desires and seemingly strikes a reconciliatory note by postulating striving as a redeeming force: "Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,/ Den können wir erlösen." But in his wisdom he also says: "Es irrt der Mensch, solang er strebt." In his striving, whereby man is bound to err and never to achieve his ultimate goal, lies the solution to man's dilemma. Goethe conceives the act of striving as the essence of life, as a necessity; it is a reward in itself, even though the goal will remain unattainable, a thought expressed poetically by R. Browning in the verse: "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,/ Or what's a heaven for?"

Turgenev's tragic portrayal of man, the impossibility of achieving personal happiness and his emphasis on public duty, did not remain without criticism. In reviewing a biography of N. V. Stankevich in 1858, N. A. Dobroljubov notes that self-denial had become a fad in Russian society and adds:

> Not long ago one of our most gifted writers expressed this thought quite bluntly, saying that the aim of life is not amusement, on the contrary, it is a continuous chore, a continuous sacrifice, and that we constantly have to counteract our desire for the sake of ethical and moral duty. In this there is, on one hand, a praiseworthy element, namely, the appreciation of moral duty. On the other, it is a sorrowful lie, because the desires of human nature are conceived as in direct opposition to the demands of duty; and consequently those who accept such a view actually confess their own extreme corruption and their lack of morality.[13]

But this is not what Turgenev had expressed, nor is it a life style which he had wished. He merely recorded the tragedy of life and how in this situation the adherence to duty is the only way out. In fact, in Turgenev's message there is a pronounced protest, precisely against the nature of man's creation, which does not permit him to be an independent, free individual. But at no time did he propagate the adherence to duty as the ideal way of life; it

becomes the only way of life, because there is no other choice, an aspect which is once more demonstrated in *A Nest of Gentlefolk*.

Dobroljubov concludes his criticism by defining a true moral being and in doing so comes astonishingly close to the Goethean concept of voluntary resignation:

> It seems to me that a person who endures only the dictates of duty like a kind of a heavy torture, like a moral chain, cannot be called a true moral person. A moral being is one who is trying to fuse the demands of duty with one's inner desires, who attempts to incorporate these forces into one's inner process of self-development and self-recognition in such a manner, that they become not only instinctively unavoidable [*instinktivno - neobkhodimymi*], but provide also an inner enjoyment.[14]

Like Goethe, Dobroljubov speaks of the possibility of a voluntary, instinctive behaviour, indeed a recipe for an ideal harmonious interplay of duty and inclination. But this, it would seem, is precisely the problem which Turgenev faced. At what time does a conscious resignation or renunciation become unconscious or voluntary? The dilemma is that in either case, whether forced or voluntary, the call is for resignation and thus the curtailment of one's desires and feelings. This problem of having been endowed with certain attributes and the ensuing problem of giving vent to the same was no less a puzzle for Tolstoj. In any case, at the time of writing his own *Faust*, Turgenev was unable to reconcile the two forces in man and thus opted for the Kantian concept of strict adherence to duty as the only means of survival. In perusing, however, Turgenev's actual life, his disappointments and joys, his relation to his contemporaries and his ever-present fear of death, he seemed to have made the best of a bad situation and emerged as a model of the Goethean concept of renunciation, although he never ceased to consider man's existence as tragic. The laws of nature, from which there was no escape, were simply prejudiced against man.[15]

NOTES

1. A. Walicki, "Turgenev and Schopenhauer," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, X (1962), 1-17.

2. A. Batjuto, *Turgenev-romanist* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972), p. 146-63.

3. Compare I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij i pisem* (Moskva-Leningrad: Akad. nauk, 1960-68), VII, 398-99.

4. Turgenev.... *Pis'ma*, III, 64-65.

5. Ibid., I, 176.

6. Turgenev, I, 214-256; for details see V. Zhirmunskij, *Gete v russkoj literature* (Leningrad: Khudozh. lit., 1937), pp. 357-667; M. K. Kleeman, "Pometki I. S. Turgeneva na perevode *Fausta* M. Vronchenko," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* (1932); K. Schütz, *Das Goethebild Turgenevs*, in *Sprache und Dichtung* (Bern: P. Haupt, 1952); E. Rosenkranz, "Turgenev und Goethe," *Germanoslavica*, 2 (1932-33), 76-91.

7. *Goethes Faust*, Hrsg. E. Trunz (Hamburg: C. Wegner, 1954), pp. 473-77.

8. Turgenev, VII, 20.

9. Ibid., VII, 16.

10. Compare M. Gershenson, *Turgenev* (Moskva; T-vo knigi, 1919), pp. 57-59; D. N. Ovsjaniko-Kulikovskij, *Etjudy o tvorchestve I. S. Turgeneva* (St. Peterburg: Izd. dop. i ispr., 1904), pp. 146-184.

11. Turgenev.... *Pis'ma*, II, 365.

12. Compare Schütz, p. 107; Turgenev, VII, 402.

13. N. A. Dobroljubov, *Sobranie sochinenij* (Moskva: Gos. izd. khud. lit., 1962), II, 387.

14. Ibid., II, 390.

15. When this paper was published in *Crisis and Commitment: Studies in German and Russian Literature in Honour of J. W. Dyck* (Waterloo, 1983), the collection of 15 articles on the topic of the *Faust-Rezeption in Rußland und in der Sowjetunion*, Editor G. Mahal (Knittlingen, 1983), was not available to me.

VII. The Function of Music in I. S. Turgenev's Aesthetics

The extent to which Turgenev was preoccupied with music, both in his private life and in his literary works, is phenomenal,[1] particularly if we keep in mind that he was not exposed to the traditional musical education befitting a young Russian nobleman of his time. One is even more surprised when one discovers that this great lover of music never learned to play a single instrument and that he was incapable of singing a melody. Yet, nature had endowed him with a keen, sensitive ear, a quality which stood him well subsequently in acquiring a fine musical taste and no less in becoming a discerning critic of classical music, and opera in particular.[2]

We need not repeat here that almost all of his works contain some musical scenes or a discussion of music, and that many of his characters are engaged in musical performances. But why the introduction of music, another fine art, in order to amplify his own art, i.e., his own writing? What is music conveying that could not be expressed in words? What are the properties of music? What is its substance and its subject? What does it mean when Turgenev implies that only music can express a particular heightened and intense feeling? And finally, why the recourse to that most intangible art form, music, when he wished to relate a significant emotional experience?

The immediate answer to these questions is simple. Turgenev loved and was a connoisseur of music, it preoccupied him a great deal and thus it is only logical that music, which he ranked first among the fine arts and which played such an important role in his life, should play a considerable role in his literary creation and, even more so, should occupy a primary position in his aesthetics. From this it should follow that music is conceived here as another poetic device which nevertheless more than any other incorporates the essence of Turgenev's aesthetics. Aesthetics is used here not only in the narrow sense, as a theory of taste or as a perception of the beautiful, but rather in a wider sense to include primarily the devices, the poetic means which trigger or initiate the aesthetic response in the reader. In short, aesthetics is here interpreted somewhat as conceived by John Dewey, who stated in his *Art as Experience* (1934) that "To be truly artistic, a work must also be aesthetic."

Turgenev's fascination with — and love for — music ultimately determined his entire destiny. It was music that linked him forever to Pauline Viardot, the famous mezzo-soprano who was the incarnation of music in the eyes of Turgenev, and eventually shaped his future. It was not so much Mme Viardot's passionate personality, and definitely not her beauty, but rather the

grace and beauty of her music which overwhelmed him in 1843 when Turgenev listened to her first performance in St. Petersburg.[3] The magic and spell which Mme Viardot cast upon her listeners never deserted her. In 1879, after attending one of her famous matinees, A. Lukanina notes: "When Mme Viardot sings, she becomes life itself, passion itself, indeed, she becomes the embodiment of art.... Everything creates the impression as if she conveys her own feelings, her own suffering."[4]

In his letters Turgenev repeatedly laments when he has been unable to attend Mme Viardot's performances. Whenever he did attend, he invariably spoke enthusiastically of the profound effect that such an event had upon him. After one performance of excerpts from Gluck's *Alceste*, Turgenev wrote "Mme Viardot was singing in the role of Alceste." Then he simply added, without commentary, "and I cried like a woman" (a ja kak baba plakal).[5] Turgenev's contemporaries and memoirists have left us a protracted and convincing record of the emotional effect which Mme Viardot's music evoked in him.[6] Here is only one example . I. Pavlovskij, an eyewitness of Turgenev's reaction at a concert given by Mme Viardot in 1879, writes this: "Turgenev, having been a spectator of many a triumph of this great artist, seemed as if he was under the spell of his reminiscences. He experienced the most genuine delight. His eyes were sparkling.... He applauded louder and longer than anyone present."[7]

It was, perhaps, a moment like this, of total enrapture and enchantment with music, and no less with the image of the ingenious interpreter of this music, which created the ultimate moment of happiness, fleeting as it may have been, that Turgenev attempted to capture in his prose-poem "Stoj" (1879). It is to such a moment that Turgenev readily exclaimed "stoj" (linger on), a paraphrasing of Faust's words: "Verweile doch! Du bist so schön!" But while Faust was destined never to experience such a moment of total fulfilment to which he could say "linger on," Turgenev, with his gloomy outlook on man's ephemeral existence, found reconciliation and joy in moments which only music was able to conjure up through its magic and beauty.[8]

Turgenev's process of musical education, which started in the salons of N. Viel'gorskij and V. F. Odoevskij back in St. Petersburg, reached its acme in the musical circle of the Viardots. He emerged from this process not only as one totally devoted to good music but with a thorough knowledge of the music of composers like Glinka, Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Bellini, Weber, Gounod, Gluck, Schubert and Schumann and a host of others. That Mme Viardot bears a great responsibility in shaping Turgenev's musical taste

needs not further elaboration. Both appreciated the same kind of music and preferred the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Gluck and Schumann more than that of any other composers. When later in the century, Tchajkovskij had made his mark on the world of music, he too was included in this illustrious group of preferred musicians. It was, however, over Wagner that their sensibilities diverged. While Mme Viardot became an ardent admirer of Wagner in the 1860's, Turgenev remained loyal to his composers of pure and absolute music. To Viardot's new enthusiasm for Wagner Turgenev responded in 1868 in a rather sad note, saying:

> And so Wagner triumphed. But what can one do, I am delighted, and since you discovered in the score great beauty, the public must exclaim bravo! — here we have the beginning of a new art. A similar phenomenon I noticed even in our literature (in L. Tolstoj's last novel there is something Wagneresque). I have a feeling that this could be very beautiful, but it is not at all that, which I loved and still love; and I have to make a considerable effort to tear myself away from my point of view....[9]

And this point of view is made clear by Turgenev through a reference to the Laokoon statue which depicts an old man and two boys being crushed by the serpent. Although their looks and gestures express the agonies of approaching death, they do not scream and their facial features are not distorted. Their suffering is depicted with classical restraint, according to the classical ideal, i.e., "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur." This classical norm characterizes all of Turgenev's works, and prevents him from depicting extremities of any kind, especially violence. In Wagner, however, this classical ideal is absent. Indeed, Turgenev called him the founder of the "school of moaning and groaning" (osnovatel' shkoly stenanija).[10] But apart from this, Wagner was, for Turgenev, the type of artist whose ideas and purposes were frequently too transparent in their creation. To such artists Turgenev always reacted with a Goethean expression: "Man fühlt die Absicht — und man ist verstimmt" (One feels the intention, and one becomes irritated).

Turgenev's attitude toward the musical life of the second half of nineteenth century Russia was also, on the whole, rather negative. He singles out Glinka and Tchajkovskij and has some kind words for Rimskij-Korsakov, but the rest of the composers, those who thought they had initiated a new epoch in Russian music, be believed, would be forgotten within ten to twenty years.[11] Rubinstein's *Demon* and his *Merchant Kalashnikov* were dismissed as operas

devoid of inspiration, poetry and originality, in short, to use Turgenev's expression, as "Kapellmeistermusik." They lacked the Mozartian purity and the lyrical-melodious qualities. However, ironically, he attributes to the composer a thorough knowledge of the "grammar of music."[12] With equal severity, Turgenev attacked Dargomyzhskij's *Kammenyj gost'*, in which he found nothing but colourless, powerless and sluggish recitatives when compared with Mozart's *Don Juan*.[13]

Turgenev's approval and disapproval of Russian culture is most vividly revealed in the correspondence between V. V. Stasov and Turgenev, and in Stasov's reminiscences of Turgenev. From the very beginning of their association, which lasted some fifteen years, they systematically opposed each other in their concepts of art and, especially, regarding the direction which Russian painting and music was to take. In the opinion of Stasov, "Turgenev, in his taste and outlook, was a classicist and idealist." Of himself, Stasov says: "and I was neither this nor that."[14] In the heat of their discussions, Stasov called Turgenev "an enemy of all innovation in music" and "an enemy of realism and verisimilitude in life," who, in the final analysis, was unable to appreciate the new Russian music.[15] Stasov, one of Russia's prominent music critics of the nineteenth century, was an ardent propagator of the new school of Russian national music, which found its expression in a group of composers known as the "Mighty Five" (Moguchaja kuchka). This new movement in music, represented by Balakirev, Mussorgskij, Cui, Rimskij-Korsakov and Borodin, concentrated on Russian folk melodies and strove for novelty in melody, harmonization and orchestral effect. In this new national, realistic movement, Turgenev was unable to find anyone who was equal in talent to Glinka. In 1872, when Stasov lamented the fact that Turgenev showed no patriotic enthusiasm for this emerging art, he retorted by saying that he would be the first to rejoice over the new Russian art, but that he feared the ensuing disappointment. His searching and digging, he was sure, would yield far less than the treasure which he had hoped to find.[16]

According to Stasov, Turgenev was, indeed, anxious to learn about the latest in the field of Russian music, and he recalls how ironically Turgenev reacted to some of the concerts which he attended during the 1870's in St. Petersburg:

> One does not have to go very far to find out what goes on here.... Take tonight's concert. During the first part ... we listen to Dargomyzhskij's *Rogdan* ... what horrible music. The lowest and the most ordinary.... But you have now a new, original Russian

> School.... And then there was *King Lear* by Mr. Balakirev. Balakirev — and Shakespeare: what do they have in common? A colossus of poetry and a pygmy of music.... There was also that chorus of Sennakherib [Porazhenie Sennakhriba] by Mr. Mussorgskij.... What a delusion, what blindness, what ignorance, what a disregard and ignoring of Europe.[17]

Stasov's attempt to convert Turgenev to greater tolerance toward the new Russian music remained without positive results. Turgenev was introduced into the musical society of St. Petersburg where frequently the latest symphony or excerpt from operas were performed. But as Stasov recalls:

> Our composers for a long time refused to perform for Turgenev. They all admired his novels and novellas ... but they were astonished at his contempt for our new musical school; they were convinced that there was no point in enlightening a person who himself by nature was not musically inclined and who in addition was steeped in the old classical prejudice.[18]

Indeed, having lived abroad most of his adult years and having been educated on the music of Mozart, Gluck, Beethoven and Schumann, Turgenev could not fully appreciate the new style and innovation and thus his negative reaction to the new Russian school. By the same criterion one can explain Turgenev's rejection of any modern musical movement, especially that represented by Wagner and Liszt. Stasov appropriately states: "Turgenev did not know them, in fact, he had no desire to know them; he was entranced with Beethoven and Schumann and recognized no others in music."[19] Nonetheless, Stasov was delighted that someone with as much talent as Turgenev was as fascinated with Schumann's music as he himself was along with the entire St. Petersburg musical society. And he added: "It is unlikely that anyone of all our writers knew anything about Schumann at that time [1865], let alone had the ability to understand him."[20]

Whether Turgenev's intolerance toward a certain kind of music was justified or not is, for our purposes, less important than the fact that he had his own musical preferences and that he passed severe judgement upon those who did not measure up to his ideals — Gluck, Beethoven, Mozart and Schumann, i.e., composers who in his opinion produced pure and absolute music. While a survey of his likes and dislikes brings us closer to Turgenev's

understanding of music, or at least to the type of music he liked, it does not give us insight into how he understood music, particularly if one attempts to determine the function of music within the realm of his aesthetics.

While Turgenev repeatedly spoke of the beauty in music, attributing to it an infinite power of association, and using it in relating hitherto unexpressed feelings and emotions, he himself left us no succinct account as to his concept of music. One, so to say, has to deduce his concept from a variety of commentaries and no less from accounts of Turgenev's own musical experiences. This as all the more surprising as he moved within musical circles where the feud between the two prevailing schools of music, the heteronomists and the autonomists, could not have passed unnoticed. In essence, the controversy raged over major problems of musical aesthetics, the aim of music and its intrinsic nature.

The heteronomists with their chief exponent, Wagner, argued that music functions to denote or connote certain ideas, things, emotions and, consequently, is a language similar to any ordinary language. The autonomists, and their chief exponent, Professor E. Hanslick, conceived music as the Russian formalists conceived literariness (literaturnost'). Indeed, they are indebted to Hanslick for many of their basic concepts, as he set them forth in his book *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (1854).[21] The autonomists held that music, a symphony for example, with its basic elements, melody, rhythm and harmony, was a non-imitative art, the models of which were not to be found in nature but had to be invented; it is a self-sufficient realm of organized sound, which expresses nothing but music. As a medium, music is incapable of specific, concrete representation because, to put it simply, it does not possess the means for doing so. There is no fixed relationship between certain things and certain sounds, other than onomatopoeic exceptions.[22]

If one applies these two concepts to Turgenev's musical convictions, one will discover that Turgenev oscillates between these two extremes, or, rather, that he occupies a modified position which contains features of both schools. Although Turgenev is quite specific about his aesthetic experience related to painting, sculpture and literature, he is vague and indecisive when it pertains to his musical experience. He is vague and indefinite because the musical expression in itself yields nothing concrete, because it is subjective and inarticulate, but mainly because, like any other art form, it implies still more than it displays, and in music, indeed, infinitely more. Although Turgenev's comments are sparse, they always convey, however, vague, some hint or suggest something about the effect a particular piece of music has produced. Of his most exalted musical experience he could only say: "Oh God, how

beautiful is this music," "Oh, what a magnificent piece," "I was touched to tears," "My soul is on fire."[23] These vague comments confirm once again that an experience of absolute and pure music is devoid of any preconceived association with any object or idea. Thus it cannot be contained in words. Only music can capture the essence of such an experience. Music has neither specific content nor object. If it did it would admit to a description in words. Its subject is intangible, as it is a succession of sounds which can only be felt, not translated into words. Thus, music cannot be grasped by the intellect or by an aesthetic experience in the manner as we do in all other art forms, which are invariably both definite and recognizable, the prototype of which is connected with an object.

In Turgenev's long musical evolution there emerge inconsistencies and diverse views regarding certain composers and his understanding of music. When Turgenev became acquainted with Schumann's music, he was not fully enraptured with it. In 1862 he wrote to Botkin: "I must admit that his music does not totally correspond to my taste. Sometimes it is brilliant, a great deal of fantasy and mysticism, but it has no form, there is no picture (net risunka) — and at my age this is difficult to endure.... In truth, this is the music of the future; there is no present in it, everything is indefinite and full of hints, etc."[24] Yet, it is precisely that vague and indefinite element in music which he later came to appreciate and which became the principle of his own creation. Although conscious of the popularity of programme music and sound painting, and how through association music could approach an idea or become objectivized, Turgenev was always aware that music speaks only in sounds and nothing but sounds. And so his dissociated himself, at certain times, from those who perceived in the effect of music a specific linguistic feature. A case in point is the critic N. N. Tjutchev, and Turgenev's estate manager, about whom he said in 1852 that he did not grasp the essence of music:

> .... he does not love music very much, or rather, he loves it like many others, not for what it is, i.e., music. There are, for example, painters who equate a musical experience with feelings of colours, harmony of lines, etc. Writers, to a large extent, seek in music only literary impressions; they are, generally speaking, poor listeners and bad judges. Tjutchev, who has no profession, loves in music only that which vaguely arouses in him well-known feelings, well-known thoughts, etc. In reality ... he could do without music and he prefers in it that which he already knows.[25]

In essence, Turgenev tells us that these sentiments were imported into music and that these linguistic features had no part of the beauty of music which consisted entirely of tones in their musical relation. This seems to contradict what he said above about Schumann's music.

From the evidence hitherto cited, it would seem that Turgenev's understanding of music moved from pure music to sound painting and back to pure music. Thus, if one had to draw a general conclusion which best approximates Turgenev's concept of music, one would have to say that, while music cannot represent a specific feeling, like love, for example, it can represent its dynamic element of movement, its waxing and waning character which it has in common with all emotional states. In a limited sense then, music is a language of the dynamic properties of emotion. And it is because of its dynamic element of movement, its waxing character, however indecisive, which it shares with the human emotional state, that Turgenev was able to use music to intensify any feeling or emotional experience of his characters and thus have it function as another poetic device in his aesthetics.

Whereas language could present but a verbal account, a description or an impression of the effect of a given emotional state, music by its very nature could become a vehicle for embodying inward feelings. Because of its mathematical relation which determines the intensity of vibration and creates melody, rhythm and harmony, it permits the composer to impose a specific character upon his music, which can approximate human passion and emotions like joy and sorrow. In this respect music approaches the poetic language and, even more so, the emotional exclamation of the human voice, the human cry, and its singing quality.[26]

It is also in this interrelation of music and human emotions that one must seek the answer to why Turgenev valued vocal music above instrumental music. While he could appreciate the technical perfection produced mechanically by the instrument, it was the human voice with its imperfection which alone could express the depth of the soul's feeling.[27] Such convictions resulted also in comments like: "She has a beautiful voice, but she cannot sing." To be able to feel music, to interpret it as if one expresses one's own emotions, was to Turgenev the epitome of achievement. On one occasion, when defining beauty for Mme Viardot in the 1850's, he said: "But as far as I am concerned I will always prefer the enormous musical power of an imperfect voice to a beautiful voice which is silly, the beauty of which is in its mere material substance."[28]

On numerous occasions Turgenev outlines his aesthetic principles in which he repeatedly emphasizes that the essence of a work of art is not the details,

but the hints, the suggestions, the effect and the impression, which do not smother imagination. In adhering to these principles in his own work, he produced not only an impressionistic texture but, at the same time, granted freedom to his readers in their aesthetic experience.[29] Total freedom in every respect was to him the essence of life. Indeed, together with Schiller who equated freedom with beauty, Turgenev could have exclaimed: "Schone fremde Freiheit" (Spare the freedom of others). In 1875 he declared to M. A. Miljutina that he believed in no absolutes and no systems and that most of all he loved freedom beyond anything.[30] His adamant adherence to artistic freedom, freedom in the creative process, accounts for the absence of a unique, distinct aesthetic system. A system in itself would have placed limitations upon him and would have violated his own principle of freedom.[31] "True artistic freedom" (nastojashchaja khudozhnicheskaja svoboda) and a "feeling of inner freedom" are essential to Turgenev in both appreciating and creating beauty.[32] Turgenev expressed these sentiments in a letter to Stasov in 1875 when the latter accused him of not being free from authoritative opinions in his judgement of art and of not following his own convictions and feelings. In a rather irritated manner, Turgenev retorted by saying:

> Why the devil, I, an old man who all his life treasured his own personal independence, would bow or hesitate to speak my opinion??! ... Perhaps, in my life time I have sent more of those famous authorities of yours through the yellow gate (zheltye vorota) than you can imagine.... But that very feeling of inner freedom, of which I am always conscious — every moment ... does not permit me to call something beautiful which does not appeal to my heart (ne po serdtsu).... In short, believe me, when I consider Mozart's *Don Juan* as an ingenious work — and Dargomyzhskij's *Don Juan* clumsy rubbish — then it is not because Mozart is an authority and because others think so ... but simply because I like Mozart and dislike Dargomyzhskij.[33]

Thus if one were to reduce Turgenev's aesthetics to a single designation, it would have to be freedom. And what other art form is better suited than music to grant almost absolute freedom in an aesthetic experience? Being devoid of any subject and not specific in its expression, the musical idiom is the most subjective and also the artistic medium which allows for the greatest

freedom of interpretation. In the plastic arts we are guided by a specific optical image; in the verbal arts we are placed between the plastic arts and music, because of the vagueness of the word; but when we are confronted with the sound of music the possibilities are unlimited: music gives wings to the imagination and can elevate us into the sphere of infinity.[34] Precisely because of this Turgenev resorted to music when he tried to express a feeling which, seemingly, he could not express in words because of the poverty of language.

In 1858, after roaming among the ruins of his beloved classical antiquity, he wrote from Rome to Countess Lambert that he had been overcome by "a kind of epic feeling; this immortal beauty all around, and then the insignificance of all earthly things, and in this very insignificance there is a grandeur — a kind of profound sadness which both conciliates and uplifts the soul." Having given a kind of vague, indefinite, impressionistic account of his feelings to start with, he paused, as if not satisfied with what he had conveyed, and added: "This cannot be rendered in words.... These impressions are musical and could best be conveyed by music."[35] In short, one impressionistic description is amplified by just one single word, "music," which is even more indefinite. In evoking music Turgenev does not confront the reader with just another image but with a symbol of an entire new art form, that of tone and sound, which offers unlimited associations.

In this passage, Turgenev at least attempts to spell out the kind of feeling he experienced — epic grandeur and profound sadness — uplifting and conciliatory, and thus indicates the kind of feeling music is supposed to express and intensify. But in his literary fiction, at times, he lets only music speak. The reference her is neither to *The Singers* (1852) nor to *The Song of Triumphant Love* (1881) or *Klara Milich* (1883), for here the entire theme is based on music and the magic power of music reverberates throughout these stories. However, in *Spring Torrents* (1871), the narrator, like Turgenev in his letter to Countess Lambert seems incapable of expressing in words the feeling experienced by Sanin while reading a letter from the love of his youth. Here is what the narrator tells us: "We will not attempt to describe Sanin's emotions which he experienced while reading this letter. There are not satisfactory words for the expression of such emotions; they are deeper, stronger, and more indefinite than any word. Only music is capable of rendering them."[36] Although the reader receives no hint as to the feelings experienced by Sanin, he knows from the events of the story that some twenty years ago Sanin deceived Gemma; he also knows that she is happily married and that Sanin is still in love with her. And when the reader is told that words

are incapable of expressing his emotion, he knows that it is an emotion full of sorrow and despair. The introduction of music, as the only medium which could express the ultimate degree of sorrow, further intensifies the emotions experienced by Sanin. Music, then, becomes another vehicle for stimulating the imagination. It initiates the aesthetic process whereby the reader is invited to augment, quite subjectively, freely and independently, the artistic form with a new reality, guided only by his concept of music and his power of imagination.

In avoiding a verbal account of Sanin's feelings, and by not even attempting to do so, and then simply referring to music, it seems, on the surface at least, as if Turgenev has failed to communicate emotion and feeling in an intelligible artistic form. And indeed, for the most part, whenever an intense emotional feeling has to be conveyed, it is supplemented through a reference to music. However, this is not evidence of the "impotence of the word,"[37] nor of a "cop-out," and least of all is it a lack of talent on Turgenev's part. If he had spelled out Sanin's pain and suffering in words, he would have destroyed at once the uniqueness of the imagination and he would have violated the principles of his own aesthetics. The limitation usually inherent in a verbal description of emotions in particular was removed through the evocation of music. The old axiom is still valid: To be able to express how much one loves or suffers is to say how little one loves or suffers.

The varied use of music in Turgenev's fiction, be it an entire theme, a musical performance and the reaction of the characters to it, or a mere reference to music, is always performing a specific purpose; it is never there just for the sake of decor. Though Turgenev is classified under the category of pictorial writers, rather than their dramatic counterparts,[38] music is always there to convey, never to depict. It is there like an ever-present undercurrent to the main text, forever creating a mood through skilful suggestion; it is there to serve the plot of the story, to convey thought and feelings, to support the introduction to a scene, to intensify the degree of despair or happiness, to characterize the setting or the background of an epoch, to sharpen the image of a literary character and to function as a mode of characterization. Invariably, those characters who display a superficial attitude towards music are of the negative variety. Turgenev's sympathetic characters love classical music and Turgenev does not fail to refer to or describe performances by his own favourite composers. The aesthetic value of "serious classical music" as an ennobling factor is always present. But most of all, music is there to supplement that meagre verbal suggestion of an emotional state in which a character finds himself. In the case of Lavretskij (*A Nest of Gentlefolk*, 1859)

and Bersenev (*On the Eve*, 1860) music functions like in an opera, or like Turgenev's extensive, lyrical nature descriptions, paralleling the emotional state of his characters. In both instances, music is used as a metaphor to convey and intensify diametrically opposed feelings already present in the psychological make-up of the individual of which the reader is aware. One is despair caused by an unrequited love, the other is joy from fulfilled love. With the premonition that the beautiful evening which he, Bersenev, had spent in the company of Elena, was but a fleeting incident and would never return again and the thought that she might have made a fool of him deeply saddened Bersenev and provoked him to find consolation in music. Turgenev does not describe the details of Bersenev's suffering — the reader learns that Bersenev started to play the piano, repeated the same piece several times and was touched to tears. All this suffices to trigger the reader's imagination to complement Turgenev's hints and suggestions, provided, of course, that the reader is capable of such an aesthetic experience. But then, Turgenev was writing for an enlightened reader. Here is the passage:

> Bersenev set down to it [the piano], began to strike some chords. Like all Russian noblemen he studied music in his youth, and like almost all Russian noblemen, he played very badly. Strictly speaking, in it [music] he did not love its art, its forms, in which music is expressed (symphonies and sonatas, even operas wearied him), but he loved the spontaneity, the basic elements in it: he loved those vague, sweet and all-embracing emotions which are without a subject and which are aroused in the soul by the combinations and successions of sounds. For more than an hour he did not move from the piano; he repeated many times the same accords, awkwardly picking out new ones, pausing and melting.... His heart ached, and his eyes more than once were filled with tears. He was not ashamed of them; he let them flow in the darkness.[39]

On the basis of this musical passage alone, introduced by Turgenev at the moment of profound crisis, one could illustrate his varied use of music. But apart from this, it is reminiscent of Turgenev's letter of 1852 in which he speaks of Tjutchev's attitude toward music. There, as here, Turgenev allows for a dual concept of music, music for music's sake and music as an awakener of feelings.

In *A Nest of Gentlefolk* music permeates the entire work, indeed, it is its

leitmotif, and in the words of A. I. Beletskij, "it is more musical than any other work of Turgenev."[40] It is also the only work which portrays a professional musician. Lemm was destined to become a music teacher in the provinces of Russia where his talent was appreciated only by a few, but especially by his loyal pupil Liza. He is depicted in a most sympathetic manner. Indeed, he is a symbol of Turgenev's favourite art form and emerges as the personification of music itself. Apart from Lemm, music occupies a major aspect in the cultural life of several of the characters and accordingly aids in the delineation of their personalities.

Although musical performances occur at every major turning point of the novel, we shall focus only on one. It is the rare moment of inspiration, when Lemm is playing his own composition while, during the same hour, Lavretskij experiences the ultimate moment of happiness, assured that his beloved Liza will be his. If this moment is the culmination of love and happiness, and if Lemm's melodious music is the reflection of Liza's and Lavretskij's feelings, then Turgenev's poetic description of the power of music and its emotional impact must be seen as a glorification, as a triumph of good music. One is reminded her of V. F. Odoevskij's novellas about music (*Beethoven's Last Quartet*, 1831 and *Sebastian Bach*, 1834) in which not the composers but the music emerges as the hero.

Here is what the elated Lavretskij could hear as he approached Lemm's house half an hour after having been reassured of Liza's love:

> Suddenly ... he heard a stream of marvellous, triumphant sound ... the sounds pealed out still more magnificently; they poured forth in a powerful flood of melody — and he thought that all this happiness spoke and sang in them.... As Lavretskij entered the room the old man said in poor Russian: "Sit and hear" — he himself sat down at the piano, threw a stern, proud glance all around and began to play. It was long since Lavretskij had heard anything like this: the sweet, sensual melody took the heart captive from the first note; it was radiant and languorous with the inspiration of happiness and beauty; it swelled up and died away; it touched on all that is dear, mysterious and sacred on earth; it evoked immortal sadness and it died away among the stars. Lavretskij rose and stood cold and pale with rapture. This music pierced his very soul, so recently shaken with the happiness of love; the music, too, was singing of love.[41]

Consenting to Lavretskij's request, Lemm "played his wonderful composition once more." However, he did not respond to Lavretskij's embrace, in fact, he pushed him away with his elbow and "for a long time without moving a muscle, he sat with the same fixed, stern, almost harsh gaze." In reply to Lavretskij's fervent praise, "he first smiled a little and then burst into tears, feebly whimpering like a child."

The passage cited above is traditionally interpreted as a hymn to life and love. Indeed, Turgenev tells us this through Lavretskij's perception of the beauty of music; being in love, he believed music was singing of his love and happiness and in this sense it parallelled his feelings. This and similar comments are to be found in most studies on this novel.

But what was a hymn to love and happiness for Lavretskij, was for Lemm, the composer, an expression of his miserable, tragic existence as a musician. It is a lament over his wasted talent, of what might have been under different circumstances. Of his own composition, he says to Lavretskij: "I did this, for I am a great musician." But such moments of inspiration were a rarity and this one was, apparently, the last one. Lemm's composition was, of course, an expression of love, but it is also a lament for a lost love, a cry for love. Although advanced in age, he is not indifferent to Liza, his only source of inspiration. And now he will be deprived even of that. All this is skilfully interwoven into Turgenev's description of Lemm's music. After playing his composition he sat there for a long time in silence. What was going on in his mind? Lavretskij embraced him -he responded by pushing him away with his elbow. Why? In reply to Lavretskij's praise he smiled and then burst into tears. Because he was so enraptured with his own music? And finally Lemm spoke and said to Lavretskij: "It is wonderful ... that you came just at this moment," adding "but I know, I know everything." And when Lavretskij was astonished at this, Lemm retorted: "You heard me ... and surely you must have understood that I know everything." What Lemm knew was that the two loved each other. His piano sings to them their hymn of love, but also of the absence of such happiness in his own life. How else would he break down and "whimper like a child"?

Thus, whatever else this musical passage may reflect, it is also Turgenev's most passionate and dramatic presentation. Not aware of Turgenev's categorical imperative "of not telling it all," Stasov, in one of their discussions, asked Turgenev, why he, the author of numerous love scenes, is always so gentle and reserved that he never reaches the point of portraying real dramatic passion. Turgenev simply answered in his modest manner: "Everyone does what he can.... But why should we talk about this. Let us talk

about Pushkin. Here there was a real great man ... but I did what I could.... What is there is there."[42] And what was there was, indeed, not a verbal account of dramatic, passionate scenes, but music, music which Turgenev skilfully employed whenever he desired a dramatic scene. Nowhere is this more vividly demonstrated than in the *Song of Triumphant Love* where the powerful passionate melody of a love song overwhelms the listeners and ultimately leads to tragic violence. Turgenev's attempt to employ music to create a specific emotional atmosphere and, in particular, a dramatic situation resembles the use of music in a musical drama. We are reminded here of the composer and music critic A. N. Serov who said: "What a great device is the musical sound in creating or emphasizing a dramatic impression. With its mysterious power music inspires the soul and reveals its feelings and mood in such a manner that neither words nor any depiction can express it. Music gives birth to ... poetic thoughts hitherto unknown."[43]

In resorting to music to express extreme emotions, both sorrow and exaltation, and to amplify his verbal accounts of the psychological disposition of his characters, Turgenev remained loyal to his aesthetic norms which rested in hints and suggestion and most of all in freedom. Moreover, he was able to employ his favourite art form not only as a literary device, as an art of suggestion, but also to present music as the ennobling factor in the education of humanity. Lastly, if literature is for Turgenev the domain of imagination, and if the elements of fantasy which the poet is to create do not need exact and detailed descriptions,[44] then music provides the ultimate device in achieving this goal. Moreover, the very nature of a piece of music, which really comes into existence at the moment it is being performed, and then leaves but an impression of fluctuating thoughts and feelings, corresponds fully to Turgenev's concept of the transience and the ephemerality of life. Man in his fleeting existence "must live in the moment and for the moment."[45]

NOTES

1. The most comprehensive study on the topic of Turgenev and music was written by A. K. Krjukov, *Turgenev i muzyka* (Leningrad, 1963), 136 pp. Others are: M. P. Alekseev, *Turgenev i muzyka* (Kiev, 1918), 22 pp; B. V. Asaf'ev, "Turgenev i muzyka," *Izbrannye trudy* (Moskva, 1955), IV, 157-58; N. D. Bernstejn, *I. S. Turgenev i muzyka* (Leningrad, 1933), 16 pp; "I.S. Turgenev — muzykal'nyj dramaturg," in: I. S. T., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij*

i pisem v tridtsati tomakh, 12 (Moskva, 1986), 583-632; See also numerous smaller articles in *Bibliografija literatury o I. S. Turgeneve* (1918-1967) (Leningrad, 1970) under the topic "Turgenev i muzyka," p. 188. Compare also M. Ledkovsky, *The Other Turgenev: From Romanticism to Symbolism* (Würzburg, 1973), pp. 46-52.

2. Turgenev characterized the attributes of his own voice when he describes how he was deprived of music while confined to Spasskoe in 1853 and how occasionally playing by Mme Tjutcheva provoked him to both directing and singing: "During moments of enthusiasm I cannot control myself, and under the pretext of singing I exert a kind of sound full of horror and falsity, which produces a nervous convulsion in all of those present." One might add here, also, that in spite of his musical inability, Turgenev dared even to compose several songs, one of which he presented to Pauline Viardot with the following comments: "How much labour I have put into this, how much sweat ... cannot be described. The motif I have found rather quickly.... With great difficulties I had to gather all my musical knowledge.... My head aches from all this.... Is it really that difficult to compose music." For details see: I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij i pisem v dvadtsati tomakh* (Moskva-Leningrad, 1960-1968), *Pis'ma*, II, 155, 324.

3. G. A. Bjalyj and A. B. Muratov, *Turgenev i Peterburg* (Leningrad, 1970), pp. 68-70.

4. *I. S. Turgenev v vospominanijakh sovremennikov* (Moskva, 1969), p. 222.

5. Krjukov, p. 84.

6. For details see the two volume edition of *I. S. Turgenev v vospominanijakh sovremennikov* (Moskva, 1969).

7. Turgenev, XIII, 669.

8. Ibid., XIII, 195-96, 669.

9. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, VII, 170-71. Turgenev heard Wagner's *Meistersinger* for the first time in 1869 in Karlsruhe. Compare also *Pis'ma*, VIII, 78-79, 215.

10. Ibid., VII, 170, 391.

11. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, IX, 245.

12. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, XI, 57; Krjukov, 102.

13. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, IX, 245, 285.

14. *Turgenev v vospominanijakh....*, p. 98.

15. Ibid., pp. 494-95.

16. Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, 285-86.

17. *Turgenev v vospominanijakh....*, p. 102.

18. Ibid., pp. 108-09.

19. Ibid., p. 104.

20. Ibid., p. 99.

21. V. Erlich, *Russian Formalism* (S-Gravenhage, 1955), pp. 40. 241.

22. For details of the controversy between the schools of the heteronomists and autonomists see E. Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, trans. G. Cohen (1957).

23. *Turgenev v vospominanijakh....*, p. 99; Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, I, 448; *Pis'ma*, II, 400.

24. *Pis'ma*, IV, 375; Krjukov, 96.

25. *Pis'ma*, II, 82-83.

26. H. Taine, *Philosophie der Kunst* (Jena, 1907), pp. 39-41. 80-82.

27. Cf. Krjukov, pp. 80-81.

28. *Pis'ma*, I, 389.

29. E. Heier, "Principles of Impressionism in the Aesthetics of I. S. Turgenev," *Poetica Slavica: Studies in Honour of Zbigniew Folejewski*

(Ottawa, 1981), pp. 53-70.

30. *Pis'ma*, XI, 31.

31. S. I. Rodzevich, *Turgenev* (Kiev, 1918), p. 74.

32. *Pis'ma*, XI, 10-11; 57. One is reminded here of Schiller's definition of beauty: "Schönheit ist die Freiheit in der Erscheinung" (Beauty is freedom in the phenomenon), i.e., since freedom is an abstraction, it can only be presented through beauty.

33. *Pis'ma*, XI, 10-11.

34. M. Dessoir, "Anschauung und Beschreibung," *Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, X (1904), Bd. 1, p. 47f.

35. *Pis'ma*, III, 180.

36. Turgenev, XI, 156.

37. Ledkovsky, p. 47.

38. P. Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (London, 1960), pp. 119-123.

39. Turgenev, VIII, 31-32.

40. Turgenev, VII, 486.

41. Turgenev, VII, 237-38.

42. *Turgenev v vospominanijakh....*, p. 111.

43. Compare R. Gottschall, *Poetik* (Breslau, 1858), pp. 34-48; R. Wellek & A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York, 3rd edition, pp. 125-28.

44. A. Glumov, *Muzyka v russkom dramaticheskom teatre* (Moskva, 1955), p. 8.

45. Turgenev, IX, 121.

VIII. Impressionism in the Aesthetics of I. S. Turgenev

To deal with literary impressionism is no easy task, since critics seem to have no clear idea what literary impressionism was. Was it a school, an orientation, or merely a transient style or technique?[1] In the first place, we are dealing with a concept which was transferred to literature from painting. There there was no confusion, for it was the name given to the most important artistic phenomenon of the nineteenth century, the first of the modern movements to oppose the stale principles of the classical tradition and its academic dogma. The common purpose was to go to nature directly and capture the fleeting impression of the moment on canvas, and thus involve the beholder in recreating the experience of the artist. Rather than precisely and explicitly reproducing the objective characteristics of an object, the impressionist artist was interested in relating the impression or effect received from the object. The impressionist painters, with their new method of expression, with their pure spectral colours, where blurs and dabs took the place of lines, sought to achieve a greater realism and naturalism. It is here that problems arise when the term is applied to literature, particularly since some viewed impressionism as a reaction to naturalism, while others looked upon it as a direct outgrowth of realism and naturalism. The boundaries became vague and ill-defined. In particular, German writers like Holz, Schlaf and Hauptmann who made the transition fro naturalism to impressionism, viewed impressionism as a refined form of naturalism. Hermann Bahr even spoke of impressionism as a subjective naturalism.[2]

The matter is further complicated if impressionism is perceived as a mere technique, for in the poetry of Symbolism and Imagism impressionist technique is continually present. Indeed, if we are dealing here only with an artistic technique, then we encounter these features even in the most realistic, objective representation that can exist in literature, for since once cannot say everything about anything, any detailed description, objective as it may appear, remains but impressionistic.[3] It is a truism that impressionistic devices are to be encountered at any time and in any literature.[4] Even Homer avoided, whenever aesthetically necessary, the detailed description, and presented to us only the effect. In literary criticism we can find ample theoretical pronouncements in favour of impressionistic technique. Thus Tolstoj, discussing character portrayal, concludes by saying: "It seems to me that one should not only describe a person's appearance, but also the effect it has upon us."[5] Although Tolstoj here speaks as a realist, he clearly looks upon impressionism as a legitimate realist technique.[6]

If we compare this "historical" concept of impressionism, as a device to be encountered in all epochs, with impressionism as a phenomenon in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century European literature, then we discover that both types of impressionism have the same characteristic features. The artist aims at creating a vague, blurred, ephemeral image. At the centre of impressionist aesthetics is observation. Whereas the realist and naturalist have as their goal the exact, direct, *impersonal reproduction of an object*, impressionist painters aim at *presenting their material as it is perceived and felt in a single fleeting moment*. While it is true that both the realist and the impressionist attain their truth by observation, the realist observes *longer and objectively*, while the impressionist's observation is *shorter and subjective*. The impressionist's flash perception is free of extraneous forces and the contemplation of cause and effect.[7]

At the end of the nineteenth century a host of European writes began to use impressionist techniques. On the basis of various aesthetic criteria, centred around visual perception and stylistic devices, critics have classified a number of them as impressionists. Although literary impressionism has not yet been defined exactly as a system with unique and characteristic features, one has come to regard as impressionists the following writers: in France — the Goncourt brothers, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Valery; in Germany and Austria, where literary impressionism was more pronounced than anywhere else, such writers as Holz, Schlaf, Liliencron, George, Schnitzler, Hoffmannsthal, Rilke and Altenberg; in the English speaking world — Oscar Wilde and Virginia Wolf; and the Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun.

Like any artistic innovation, it became a source of controversy. Not satisfied with the explanation that the sudden upsurge of impressionism was an attempt to emulate the impressionist painters, or simply an expression of the aesthetic urge to create in a new manner, critics and the impressionist writers themselves began to search for deeper causes, and in particular a philosophical basis, or *Weltanschauung*, and with it a firmer legitimacy. Having been accused of superficiality and lack of depth, like the impressionist painters before them, the writers found a philosophical foundation to be essential, and sought the ultimate source of impressionism in a sceptical and disillusioned reaction to positivism. Positivistic thought, which dates back to antiquity, had rejected all metaphysical speculations in its search for absolute truth and recognized only objective perceptual experience. However, while yielding marvellous results in the natural sciences, when positivism was applied to the problem of change in the human personality, and the relation of matter and mind, it was found that most fundamental assumptions were

either wholly erroneous or only partially true. The consequence was the emergence of a new concept of reality, most strongly expounded in the thought of the Austrian physicist Ernst Mach, the chief representative of phenomenalistic positivism, which accepts appearance as final. He denied all permanence to the world of reality and defined matter as a complex of sensations in perpetual flux. What is conceived as stable in appearance and permanent is in reality constantly changing. Nothing is fixed, least of all the human personality.[8]

The acceptance of this view was reflected in a new moral behaviour, in tasting the fleeting pleasure of life, in giving free reign to one's impulses — living, so to say, on the surface — as it manifested itself among the decadents, both in Western Europe and in Russia. The scepticism and pessimism derived from the belief that everything is in flux were bound to determine also the aesthetic concept of impressionism. If there was no coherent unity and permanency in this world and one could perceive an object only as a succession of sensations, then art could never describe life objectively and truthfully, at least not as the traditional realist saw it. Hence the controversy surrounding Chekhov's impressionism. Was it merely aestheticism or was it the expression of a philosophical scepticism rooted in the view that nothing is permanent? Critics have stressed that impressionism, as a lasting technique and device, must be distinct from the subjective, impressionistic idealism which denies objective truth, since the objective presentation of life implies a belief in the permanency of the external world.[9] The adherents of impressionism, in their attempt to describe reality, could at best pick out only momentary aspects of existence, i.e., the fleeting moment as conceived by the artist at one particular instant of perception. The practical consequence of this artistic approach was the presentation of series of snapshots — momentary impressions of reality.

It is only against this philosophical background coupled with the proclamations of Verlaine, Rimbaud and Mallarmé that suggestion and implication are superior to statement, that one can fully understand the spirit of the Russian decadent movement after the 1880's and its impressionistic undercurrent. Only in this context can one comprehend the exaltation of the fleeting moment, the "mig," by such symbolists as Bal'mont. The origins of such views are to be found not only in Mach, but also in the philosophical scepticism of Plato, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and even in the mysticism of V. Solovev.[10]

In Russia, impressionism, as a literary phenomenon and as a general life style, did not reach the intensity attained in Western Europe. Unlike Western

Europe, Russia could not count on the rich experience of the impressionist school in painting, since impressionism in the works of painters like K. Korovin, Grabar, Somov and Kuindzhi was a much later manifestation. In the 1890's Benois tells us that he did not mention the impressionists in his *History of Russian Art* simply because he did not know about them. And Grabar states: "In the 1890's neither I nor any of my colleagues and acquaintances had any notion of impressionism and had not even heard the word."[11] True, Levitan had painted in the impressionistic manner as early as the 1880's, but here we are dealing with an inspiration that derived from French landscape painting of the Barbizon School, represented by such precursors of impressionism as Corot, Rousseau, Diaz and Courbet, whose works were exhibited as early as 1850 in St. Petersburg.[12] When impressionism did begin to manifest itself in Russian art, it was obscured by such trends as symbolism and neo-romanticism. Although this period in Russian literary history has variously been named the Age of Modernism, Decadence, the Silver Age, the Age of Aestheticism or the Age of the Great Experiment, such movements as Symbolism, Acmeism, Futurism, Imagism, etc., were all effected by impressionism. Impressionism was, so to say, the starting point for the various new styles to come.

It is now generally acknowledged by critics that impressionism was an essential feature of the poetry of Annenskij, Bal'mont, Blok and the prose of Garshin, B. Zaitsev, Belyj and especially Chekhov, and to a lesser degree Korolenko. Critics speak further of two main categories of impressionism: 1) Impressionism as a natural development of Realism; this category includes Chekhov, Garshin and Korolenko; 2) impressionism in its purest form as encountered in the poetry of the decadents. As a life style characterized by the relishing of the fleeting moment, it is represented by writers like Annenskij, Bal'mont, young Blok and the prose writers Zaitsev, Dymov and Belyj.[13]

Russian impressionism, more so than its Western counterpart, was born out of the 1880's, a period of stagnation and social, political and cultural discontent marked by pessimism and scepticism, despair and uncertainty.[14] Chukovskij, a literary critic and himself "a typical impressionist," to use the words of Miliukov, characterizes this period in the following manner: "Gone is the old pathos .... there is none of that authority, will, force or that mode of life which could unite and bind all together.... At the present time literature had nothing to rely upon." (The reference seems to be to writers like Turgenev and Dostoevskij who were no longer among the living, and to Tolstoj who had been silent for some time). Chukovskij concludes that during this period "literature grew urbane and consequently became imbued with the

impressionism of ephemeral sensations."[15]

Out of this ideological interregnum, new forces emerged not only political, but also religious in nature, and a new aestheticism. Merezhkovskij in his famous pamphlet *On the Causes of the Decline, and on the New Trends in Russian Literature* (1892) heralded this new creative force, this new literary trend in modern art and characterized it by three principle elements: mystical content, symbolism and the development of artistic susceptibility. But most of all Merezhkovskij turned to Russia's literary past, and in particular to Turgenev, to demonstrate the existence of a tradition behind the new aesthetic principles: "We cannot be content with the crude photographic exactness of experimental pictures. We demand and feel by hint and suggestions ... of Turgenev ... new, hitherto undiscovered measures of sensibility (vpechatlitel'nost).... French critics have rather cleverly called this feature — impressionism."[16]

Although Merezhkovskij acknowledged the pioneering work of the French, he maintains that it would be an "unforgivable mistake" to consider them the initiators of this new artistic idealism and asserts that all this had been visible in Russian literature before the coming of the French. He now singles out Turgenev, who along with Fet, Tjutchev, Polonskij and Majkov "has widened our Russian understanding of beauty, has conquered hitherto unknown areas of sensibility and most clearly displays the requisites of modern art, mysticism, symbolism and the development of artistic apprehension [which in essence is impressionism]."[17]

To test Merezhkovskij's thesis that there were elements of this new aestheticism in the Parnassians, one need look only at Fet and Tjutchev. A little masterpiece of Russian impressionistic poetry was produced by Fet as early as 1850, in which he relates a series of audial and visual impressions, like snapshots, without using verbs, a feature totally in harmony with the spirit of impressionism of the later decades.

Whispering, a timid sigh,
The warble of a nightingale,
Silver and a lullaby,
From a sleepy stream,

The light of night, nightly shadows,
Shadows without an end,
A series of enchanting changes,

On a dear face,

The purple of a rose in smoky cloudlets,
The gleam of amber,
And kisses and tears, —
And dawn, dawn!...

To his contemporaries Fet was a poet "who lived for the moment," of which he was able to create a startling picture with a few images.[18]

In Tjutchev on can single out his famous poem "Silentium," written as early as 1833, the first stanza of which reads: "Be silent, hide yourself, and conceal your feelings and your dreams. Let them rise and set in the depths of your soul, silently, like stars in the night; contemplate them with admiration and be silent." The idea "be silent" is repeatedly stressed in each stanza and is most forcefully expressed in the line: "Mysl' izrechennaja est' lozh" — "A thought that is spoken is falsehood." This poem of Tjutchev is not impressionistic in technique, but rather it expresses the basic philosophical thought of impressionism — "a thought that is spoken is falsehood." It is a falsehood because the objective truth in a world of continuous flux cannot be expressed or understood. These two poems may be considered typical of the spirit of writers of the 1850's and 1860's like Majkov, Polonskij, Annenskij, Fet and Tjutchev. As advocates of pure art, they foreshadow the new trend with its symbolism, mysticism and new form of expression, impressionism.

While Merezhkovskij does not analyze the elements of impressionism in these writers, he is somewhat more explicit as to Turgenev's artistic achievements, but again does not refer specifically to impressionism. He notes the contradictory views of critics and attributes them to a basic misunderstanding of the writer. Merezhkovskij admits that Turgenev's psychological analysis is not profound, but declares that he is "the most fascinating magician of the world." He tells us that Turgenev has been mistakenly labelled a realist and refers his readers to "the true, original Turgenev," the author of *Zhivye moshchi* (*The Living Relic*, 1874), *Bezhin Lug* (*Bezhin Meadow*, 1851), *Dovol'no* (*Enough*, 1865), *Prizraki* (*Phantoms*, 1864), *Sobaka* (*The Dog*, 1866), *Pesnja torzhestvujushchej ljubvi* (*The Song of Triumphant Love*, 1881) and *Stikhotvorenija v proze* (*Poems in Prose*, 1882). Then, Merezhkovskij boldly declares: "Turgenev — velikij russkij khudozhnik — impressionist" [Turgenev, the great Russian artist, is an impressionist]. And on the strength of this all-important and unconscious feature of his work ... he is a true precursor of the new idealistic art which

is emerging in Russia in place of utilitarian, vulgar realism."[19]

The tales which Merezhkovskij selected from Turgenev's works are all imbued with an irrational, mystic streak and an element of the supernatural. To them one could add *Faust* (1855), *Knock-Knock-Knock* (1871), *The Dream* (1877) and *Klara Milich* (1883). These stories undoubtedly illustrate best that "other Turgenev," in whom fantasy, mysticism, symbolism and aspects of that new idealism, of which Merezhkovskij speaks, are most clearly visible.[20] In them we encounter the typical requisites of impressionism, in both the themes and devices. We find a subjective feeling of scepticism and disillusionment, pessimism and the sense of man's insignificance, his limitations in this infinite universe. We also find here a parallel to Mach's theory of lack of permanency, which characterized Western impressionism, especially in *Phantoms* (1864) and in *Enough* (1865), stories narrated in the first person, where the focus is on the idea of the transitoriness of beauty and of man's existence. In *Enough* the artist laments: "Each of us comprehends more or less his own insignificance, everyone feels that he was born for greater things, something eternal, and yet he lives, nay must live, in the moment and for the moment."[21]

However, Turgenev's disillusionment with reality, his sense of the ephemerality of life, and his doubt are a feature not only of his mystical tales. We encounter them also as an underlying thought in such objective, realistic works as the novel *Smoke* (1867). Here he employs the image of smoke and steam to express symbolically Litvinov's disenchantment with life as he rides in the train back to Russia. In this passage Turgenev used a favourite image of the impressionist, the clouds of smoke, incessantly swirling, rising and falling, unceasingly changed by the wind, and thus suggesting in the mind of Litvinov the idea of the transience of all things: "'Smoke, smoke,' he repeated several times; and abruptly everything seemed to be smoke — everything, his own life, Russian life, everything human, but especially everything Russian. 'It is all smoke and vapour,' he thought. 'Everything seems to be incessantly changing, everywhere there are new pictures, phenomena speed after phenomena, but in essence everything is the same and still the same everything is hurrying, hastening somewhere — and everything vanishes without a trace, without achieving anything; another wind blows — and everything is flung to the opposite side, and there too the same incessant, anxious and unnecessary game goes on.' He recalled much that had been accomplished before his eyes, with thunders and tumults, of recent years ... 'smoke,' he whispered, 'smoke.'"[22]

Turgenev's pessimism and fatalism, his doubts and his feeling of the

ephemerality of life were not a "passing phase" ("vzlet").[23] This mood took on ever greater proportions in his later life culminating in his *Poems in Prose* (1883).[24] One critic even characterized these poems as a commentary to Schopenhauer's philosophy.[25] A. Batjuto convincingly shows that Turgenev's pessimism was not necessarily derived from Schopenhauer's philosophy. At great length Batjuto shows how the idea of the moving, shifting, restless, transitory character of phenomena had been prevalent at all times and how this "subjective-impressionistic approach to reality" by Turgenev, Pascal, Schopenhauer and Marcus Aurelius is but a rephrasing of Heraclit's famous statement: "You cannot step into the same river twice, for fresh waters are forever flowing in upon you."[26] With this Batjuto admits the existence of an "impressionistic outlook" in Turgenev's philosophy, even though he denies its systematic application.

This philosophic conviction that reality is not what one conceives it to be, that man's existence is shrouded in mystery, that there is no stability and permanency and that, consequently, the ultimate truth will remain forever an illusion, was bound to tinge Turgenev's realism with a quality clearly reminiscent of impressionism, and is the source of his great affinity to Chekhov.[27] Perhaps such a philosophic conviction explains the fragmentary existence of his heroes and their inability to achieve their goals and lasting happiness. How could they, if their own creator questioned the attainment of lasting knowledge and fulfilment? It is also the cause of the hints and suggestions, vague rather than authoritative, which characterize Turgenev's narrative. Turgenev's narrator, unlike Dostoevskij's, does not know everything about his character. Instead of a detailed psychological description, Turgenev, true to nature, contents himself with revealing the bare minimum of his characters' disposition and motivation, as they are reflected in external signs only, and as they are perceived by the narrator. Such a subjective-impressionistic approach to reality was not a matter of poetic inability, as Shatalov suggests.[28] Rather, it was determined, apparently, by Turgenev's philosophic outlook, his concept of man, and also by his aesthetic norms. Combined, these factors explain the decisive undercurrent of impressionism in the realism of Turgenev. It is also this artistic approach which provoked the wrath of Tolstoj when in 1885 he accused Turgenev of vagueness, lack of decisiveness, absence of real life and tendency toward pure art. His best work Tolstoj considered to be *The Hunter's Notes*, since "here there was an aim." The rest he viewed as trifles.[29]

Aware of the aesthetic limitations of protracted descriptions, Turgenev preferred to hint and suggest, sort and select only the typical and important

from masses of material, so as not to smother the reader's imagination. The reader is, so to say, constantly invited to take up the hint, decipher that impressionistic texture and complete the picture. What was thereby created was impressionistic in nature, yet true to life. Turgenev himself described this effect quite succinctly when he said: "The best people and the best books are those where one can read a great deal between the lines."[30] Such aesthetic pronouncements are repeatedly to be encountered in his letters and reviews. As early as 1852, in a review of Ostrovskij's *The Poor Bride*, Turgenev outlined his aesthetic principles, when he criticized the author for an overabundance of details and concluded that "the task of art is not to reproduce life, and that in all of these endless small details that specificity, that conciseness of a picture is lost, which is essential for arousing the aesthetic feeling in the reader, even in one with a playful and daring fantasy."[31] Turgenev could have read a typically impressionist view of art in 1852, when Kraevskij asked him to check a translation of Lessing's *Laokoon*, if he had not known this work before.[32] In it Lessing refutes the principle of word painting in literature and demands portrayal through the effect. "The elements of fantasy which the poet is to create," he asserts, "do not need exact and detailed description." Turgenev remained consistent in his concept of art, for in 1882, in a letter to Ja. P. Polonskij, he once more rejected naturalistic representations as vulgar, adding: "In painting, and the same is true of literature, indeed, of all art: he who transmits all details is doomed to perish; one ought to capture characteristic features. This is what is called talent and even what is called art."[33]

If we look in Turgenev's work for the stock of devices which are usually associated with impressionism,[34] we are not surprised to find them, but rather at the frequency of their recurrence. In doing so, however, one ought to keep in mind several points. Ever since the romantic period, most writers aimed at reproducing life truthfully, and in that sense they were realists, the impressionists not excluded. Clearly, the concept of reality varied from one writer to another, making it difficult to find a common denominator. In addition, the variety of modes of depiction at a writer's disposal, ranging from a single word, a hint or a symbol, to a minute detailed description, resulted in a multiplicity of styles. The impressionistic device was but another link in this chain of depiction; the manner in which it was put to use was bound to colour a writer's style.

It is dangerous to claim that certain devices are typical in a writer like Turgenev, as one can always find an equal number of opposite examples. Nevertheless one may cite as characteristic of both impressionism and

Turgenev's art such features as the use of miniature forms, such as the tale and sketch; the snapshot, slice-of-life approach; the rapidly changing scenes in the larger works; an openness of form which corresponds to the unattained goals of the heroes; the absence or the dissolution of plot; the prevalence of a pictorial mode and lack of dramatic action; avoidance of profound psychological conflicts; frequent recurrence of non-verbal communication — the meaningful silence or long pause; the avoidance of didacticism, utilitarianism, and moral judgment of the characters; the absence of detailed descriptions of both characters and objects; the emphasis on aura, impression and sensory quality of an object, rather than the object itself; a predominance of images suggesting rapid change; recollections of past impressions; the use of the first-person narration, the active voice and the imperfect verb to convey the idea of immediate impression; the creation of a mood through nature descriptions and music, and the deployment of sonorous words, especially adjectives and adverbs, and rhythmic prose to create a lyrical quality. At the centre of all is the subjective, visual perception of the narrator who relates only what he sees. Mimic and gesture are favourite devices, as they best convey momentary changes of character. The following analysis will examine Turgenev's character portrayal and his sketches of landscapes in the light of impressionism.

Turgenev was very much aware that the stereotyped portrayal and the enumeration of individual physical features of a character could, indeed, evoke a visual image, but he was equally conscious of the fact that such a portrait could never produce the same effect or impression as a painting. In painting everything is said simultaneously; the totality is perceived, even at one glance. In literature, this instantaneous impact can be approximated only by avoiding lengthy description and concentrating on striking qualities to relate the total impression. This principle guided Turgenev in creating his close to one hundred major characters, which are all depicted through their exterior.

As early as 1844 in *Andrej Kolosov* Turgenev raises the aesthetic problem of detailed portrayal as opposed to mere suggestion. Kolosov, the protagonist, is described by the narrator as an unusual person: "tall, well-proportioned, adroit, and quite handsome." But when he attempts to relate to his friends the impression his face provoked, the narrator encounters difficulties. He begins: "His face..." and then he pauses and adds: "I find it extremely difficult, gentlemen, to describe someone's face. It is easy to sort out the individual features one by one, but by what means should one convey the distinguishing property, the essence of a particular face? What Byron calls 'the music of the

face.' Therefore, I limit myself to one statement: that something in Kolosov's face revealed itself in the light-hearted, gay and daring expression of his face, and also in his very charming smile." It is this indefinite something (impressionistic in itself), this "chto-to," the portrayal of the effect of a face, which became an indispensable element in his portraiture. Rather than drawing a character's facial features in minute detail, the narrator depicts only the most salient features and the effect the total appearance produces. The reference to the expression of a face is never omitted in Turgenev's portrayal; indeed, it is always the major feature of his portraits and provides that total, instantaneous effect. In relating the expression of a face, the narrator in actuality conveys the subjective impression which he had received.

Turgenev's major character, Bazarov in *Fathers and Sons*, is portrayed with similar economy: "Bazarov ... throwing back the collar of his coat showed his full face to Nikolaj Petrovich. It was a long thin face with a broad forehead, a nose flat at the top but tapering sharply, large greenish eyes and drooping sandy whiskers — the whole was animated by a tranquil smile betokening self-assurance and intelligence." By combining in this way realistic features with the effect they produce on the narrator, Turgenev created memorable portraits which are masterpieces of impressionistic realism. Not only the "tranquil smile betokening self-assurance and intelligence," but also the very process of selecting the most characteristic features is impressionistic.

One is particularly struck by Turgenev's use of non-verbal communication. A psychological change is suggested through external physical changes in a person's behaviour, through gesture, through a pause in the dialogue or incomplete sentence. In fact, Turgenev's works are saturated with pauses concealing an unexpressed thought. In *A Nest of Gentlefolk*, when Lavretskij visits his beloved Liza for the last time in her refuge, the monastery, she walks silently next to him with clenched fists only moving her eyelids gently when she glances at him. And the narrator asks: "What were they thinking? What were their feelings? Who knows? Who can tell?" and then he adds: "There are such moments in life, such feelings.... One can only point to them — and pass them by." Even without the narrator's comment the reader's understanding of the scene would be the result of conjecture.

It is gesture, however, which conveys best the momentary changes in a character, and which is a favourite device of the impressionists. In employing this device, Turgenev is able, with a minimum narrative time, to present love, pain and disappointment without ever referring to inner feelings, simply through external phenomena, through gestures and facial expressions. In *Rudin*, Pandalevskij offers Alexandra a lovely wild flower as a love token as

they walk through the fields. She takes the flower, walks a few steps, then lets it drop on the path. The symbolic gesture is understood by both without a word being uttered. Pandalevskij's reaction to the fate of the flower, his pain, hurt pride and disappointment is again revealed only externally, through his behaviour and facial expression. Upon parting from Alexandra, "Pandalevskij sighed and dropped his eyes expressively. 'Good-bye Aleksandra Pavlovna!' he said after a slight pause; then he bowed and turned ... homewards. All softness had vanished at once from his face; a self-confident, almost hard expression came into it. Even his walk was changed; his steps were longer and he trod more heavily." This is all that is related, because this i all the narrator can observe. The reader is left with hints and suggestions to complete the picture of that internal struggle which takes place in the rejected lover.

In contrast to Dostoevskij and Tolstoj, Turgenev does not probe the soul of his characters. In fact, he asks, how does Dostoevskij know so much about the psychological suffering of his characters? In overstating their sadism and laying bare the minds of his young men, Dostoevskij was for Turgenev just another Marquis de Sade.[35] Turgenev rejected the overt presentation of psychological detail in the novel and maintained that "the poet must be a psychologist, but a secret one." He ought to know and feel the problems but must present only their manifestation.[36] His simple portraits are almost fragile in comparison to the heavy dialectic psychological manner of Dostoevskij. They are admirable not so much for what they contain, but rather for what they suggest.

Linked to Turgenev's laconic portrayal of his characters is his desire to portray types. To do this, Turgenev had to abandon the technique of minute detailing and resort to impressionism, for types, if described in detail, cease to exist as types. This is probably why Turgenev disliked Balzac, whose characters were described in minute detail. About them he said: "None of them ever lived, and none ever will."[37]

Turgenev's impressionism is most vividly apparent in his landscape sketches, which invariably evoke the paintings of the impressionists. In letters to his painter-friends, he insisted that they should avoid detail and capture that first impression, painting broadly and only with blobs. He defended the impressionistic technique of painting by stating that even if one steps away from a tree for some seventy five steps, one will see no distinct outlines of leaves, but only masses and blobs.[38] However, he neither referred to any of the famous impressionist painters as models, nor did he ever own any of their paintings. His favourite painters were those of the Barbizon school, the

forerunners of the impressionists, which he proposed as a model for improving technique.[39] In his advice Turgenev foreshadows what later Levitan was to teach his pupils, namely to capture a blurred impression with an emphasis on colours, avoiding lines and details.[40] Turgenev in his own collection in Paris had no less than two dozen paintings of the Barbizon school, of which several were landscapes by Corot and Rousseau. An unfinished painting by Rousseau was his favourite, because in its incompleteness one could still feel "that poetic freshness and the vigour of that first impression."[41]

Critics have found two kinds of nature descriptions in Turgenev: the detailed description, which is most often encountered in his earlier works, and the laconic descriptions in his later works which obviously aim to capture the impression of that first glance.[42] The latter are the only feature which Tolstoj found praiseworthy in Turgenev's *Virgin Soil*: "The only aspect in which he is such a master that one does not dare to touch the subject is nature. Two, three lines and all is alive."[43]

From a functional point of view most of Turgenev's landscapes are in the tradition of Pushkin, i.e., the sketch complements the action of the story. Nature reflects human emotion or creates a certain mood for the action to come.[44] In this sense nature performs the same function as music, paralleling the feeling experienced by the heroes. Like nature, music consistently recurs in Turgenev whenever a significant emotional experience is being related. When incapable of rendering emotions in words, he resorts to the impressionism of music. After wandering among the ruins of ancient Rome, he writes to Countess Lambert in 1858: "I was inspired ... by that immortal beauty as opposed to the triviality of earthly things.... This cannot be conveyed in words.... Those impressions are musical and are best conveyed by music."[45] Years later, in *Spring Torrents* the narrator is likewise incapable of expressing verbally the feelings which had overcome Sanin after receiving a letter from the love of his youth: "We will not attempt to describe the feelings experienced by Sanin while reading this letter. For such feelings there is no satisfactory expression; they are deeper, stronger and more infinite than any word. Only music could transmit them."[46]

Turgenev's nature descriptions do not always form the background of events. In *Bezhin Meadow* the depiction of a beautiful July day at the beginning of the story has no bearing on the action of the story; it performs no function other than to be beautiful, and as such it reminds the hunter-narrator of past events. This type of lyrical, pictorial digression is an innovation and a luxury of the time. Like Monet in his "Poplars" or

"Haystacks," Turgenev draws a series of pictures of one subject under various conditions and at different times of the day. With a painter's skill he varies his colours depending on the shade and the changing light and attempts to capture that endless change, the gentle dynamics of nature as perceived at morning, noon and evening. Here are some fragmentary passages which emphasize Turgenev's use of adjectives and the ever present movement in the heavens: *The morning* sky is described as clear, "the sunrise does not glow with fire," it is "suffused with a soft roseate flush." The sun itself is not "red-hot" nor is it "dull purple," but with a "bright and genial radiance" it rises behind a narrow cloud and "shines out freshly," and plunges again into "lilac mist." The delicate upper edge of the cloud "flashes in little gleaming snakes; their brilliance is like polished silver." Moments later as the mighty orb rises, the "dancing rays flash forth again." *The midday* is depicted in two layers — there appear high up in the sky a multitude of "golden-grey," rounded clouds "with soft edges" bathing in the "riches of deep transparent blue;" farther down the heavens the clouds are packing closer; now there is "no blue between them," but they are "themselves as blue as the sky, filled with light and heat." The colour of the horizon, "a faint pale lilac," is the same all around. Only in some places do "rays of bluish colour" stretch down from the sky. *In the evening* these clouds disappear; the last of them "blackish and undefined as smoke," like a ball, "lie streaked with pink facing the setting sun." A "crimson glow" lingers long over the "darkening earth; and, softly flashing like a candle carried carelessly, the evening star flickers in the sky."

Turgenev concludes his picture by telling his readers that on such days "all the colours are softened, bright but not glaring; everything is suffused with a kind of touching tenderness." Indeed, it is not only his reminder that everything is "soft" and "tender" but the very use of epithets conveying the fines nuances of shades of colours like "tusklo-bagrovyj," "zolotisto-seryj," "bledno-lilovatyj," "golubovatyj" and "chernovatyj," which ultimately produce a subdued impressionistic, pictorial quality. Turgenev employs only two specific images: the sun, the cause of all light and shading of colours, and the ever-present cloud, forever wandering and gliding, a favourite impressionistic image because of its ephemeral quality. These images recede and become wrapped in light and colour and air to evoke a total effect, a mood, a series of impressions of the times of the day. This sensuousness and softly glowing lyrical quality create an emotion comparable to that evoked by the pre-impressionist water-colourists. While George Moore, who knew Turgenev in Paris, is able to state that his execution is "light, facile, and yet certain, even as that of a landscape by Corot," R. Muther, the art critic and historian of the

nineteenth century, likens Turgenev's art to that of Rousseau.[47] Like them, he does not impose ideas and details on the reader, but creates a mood by skilful suggestion, and like them he repeatedly asserts that an object suggested has far greater charm and fascination than a complete painting or a detailed account can ever achieve. Most of all, in applying these aesthetic principles in his work, Turgenev avoided the violation of his readers' freedom, an essential ingredient in any aesthetic experience.

Since Turgenev selected suggestions as the basis of his aesthetics, everything in his art came to be determined by this principle. Thus, his narrator's knowledge is in most cases limited to his visual perception, and consequently whatever he relates is bound to remain incomplete and impressionistic. Coupled with this is the artistic recognition that everything cannot be related, that selection is inevitable. In the case of Turgenev's realism, critics have noted his unique concept of reality, the absence of utilitarianism, a strong dose of mysterious fatalism and no less the soft subjective lyrical mood in his prose, particularly in his later period. Ultimately, the unique quality of Turgenev's realism, which may be regarded as a new phase of critical realism and has affinities with Chekhov, is to be found in the impressionistic texture.[48] The use of artistic devices typical of impressionism enabled him to recreate reality, or an illusion thereof, so skilfully that his illusion becomes credible and complete, like life itself.

NOTES

1. For the various definitions of Impressionism see: R. Moser, *L'Impressionnisme français...* (Geneva, 1951); B. J. Gibbs, "Impressionism as a Literary Movement," *Modern Language Journal*, 36 (1952), 175-83; H. Sommerhalder, *Zum Begriff des literarischen Impressionismus* (Zürich, 1961); W. Nehring, "Hoffmannsthal und der Wiener Impressionismus," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 94 (1975), 481-98; M. Diersch, *Empiriokritizismus und Impressionismus: Über Beziehungen zwischen Philosophie, Ästhetik und Literatur um 1900 in Wien* (Berlin, 1973); "Impressionismus," *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, I (1958); "Impressionizm," *Literaturnaja entsiklopedija* (Moskva, 1930), IV, 466-90; R. Hamann/J. Hermann, *Impressionismus* (Berlin, 1960) — the latter being a reworking of Hamann's book *Der Impressionismus in Leben und Kunst* (1907); and M. E. Kronegger, *Literary Impressionism* (New Haven, 1973).

2. H. Bahr, *Die Überwindung des Naturalismus* (Stuttgart, 1968); M. Picard, *Das Ende des Impressionismus* (Zürich, 1920); M. Diertsch, op. cit.

3. See D. Chizhevskij, *History of Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature*, trans. R. N. Porter (Nashville, 1974), II, 11.

4. O. Val'tsel, *Impressionizm i ekspressionizm v sovremennoj Germanii*, trans. and introd. V. Zhirmunskij (Petrograd, 1922).

5. N. Dmitrieva, *Izobrazhenie i slovo* (Moskva, 1962), p. 49.

6. For Tolstoj's observations on Chekhov's impressionist technique, see A. Gol'denveizer, *Vblizi Tolstogo* (Moskva, 1959), p. 68; S. Sendrovich, "Chekhov and Impressionism," in *Chekhov's Art of Writing*, ed. Debreczeny and Th. Eekman (Columbus, 1947), pp. 148-49; and *Russkie pisateli o literature* (Leningrad, 1939), II, p. 138. Tolstoj once again compares Chekhov to the impressionistic painters: "Chekhov has his own particular form, like impressionists. You watch how the man indiscriminately spreads his paints, whichever comes into his hands, and it seems as if these paints have no interrelation whatsoever. But if you stand back at some distance and look, a whole harmonious union open up before you" (ibid., p. 153).

7. Gibbs, op. cit., 175-76.

8. Nehring, op. cit., 486-87; H. P. Stowell, *Literary Impressionism: James and Chekhov* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1980), pp. 15-30.

9. Compare: Sendrovich, "Chekhov and Impressionism," 134-151; Stowell, pp. 59-64; D. Chizhevskij, "Chekhov in the Development of Russian Literature," in *Chekhov: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. R. L. Jackson (New Jersey, 1967); V. Fritshe, "Vvedenie" in A. P. Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenij*, I (Moskva, 1929); A. A. Volkov, *Russkaja literatura XX veka* (Moskva, 1964), p. 387.

10. See V. Asmus, "Filosofija i estetika russkogo simvolizma," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 27-28 (Moskva, 1937); Volkov, op. cit., 380-86.

11. G. Sternin, *Khudozhestvennaja zhizn' Rossii na rubezhe XIX-XX vekov* (Moskva, 1970), pp. 89-94. The exhibitions of French impressionist painters in Russia began only in the mid 1890's. However, Zola's article on the

impressionist painters was published as early as 1876 in *Vestnik Evropy*.

12. Sternin, op. cit., pp. 26-28; K. Korovin seems to have been the first Russian painter on whom the French impressionists exerted a direct influence after he came in contact with their works in Paris in 1885.

13. "Impressionizm," *Literaturnaja entsiklopedija*, pp. 466-90.

14. E. Heier, "Social and Religious Disillusionment of the Age 1850-1900," in *Religious Schism in the Russian Aristocracy 1860-1900: Radstockism and Pashkovism* (The Hague, 1970), pp. 1-29.

15. P. Miliukov, *Outlines of Russian Culture*, ed. M. Karpovich (New York, 1960), II, pp. 53-54.

16. D. S. Merezhkovskij, *Izbrannye stat'i*, Introd. R. Matlaw (München, 1972), pp. 249-50.

17. Merezhkovskij, op. cit., p. 251.

18. See P. P. Gromov's introduction to *A. A. Fet* (Moskva, 1962), p. 33.

19. Merezhkovskij, op. cit., p. 252.

20. Turgenev as a forerunner of Symbolism has been dealt with by S. I. Rodzevich, *Turgenev* (Kiev, 1918), especially in the chapter on "Turgenev i simvolizm;" and by M. Ludkovsky, *The Other Turgenev: From Romanticism to Symbolism* (1973).

21. I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh* (Moskva, 1960-68), IX, 121. (Hereafter referred to as PSS.)

22. Turgenev, *PSS*, IX, 315.

23. A. Batjuto, *Turgenev-romanist* (Leningrad, 1972), p. 158.

24. S. E. Shatalov, *Khudozhestvennyj mir I. S. Turgeneva* (Moskva, 1979), pp. 278-79. See also M. K. Kleman, *Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev* (Leningrad, 1936); I. I. Veksler, *I. S. Turgenev i politicheskaja bor'ba shestidesjatykh godov* (Leningrad, 1934); and L. V. Pumianskij, "Turgenev novelist," in I. S. Turgenev, *Sochinenija* (1929), VIII, pp. 6-7.

25. Ludkovsky, op. cit., 41. Compare also M. Gershenson, *Mechta i mysl' I. S. Turgeneva* (Moskva, 1919), pp. 111-23.

26. Batjuto, op. cit., pp. 103, 137, 143, 146-47, 150, 158-59, 162-63. Compare also A. Walicki, "Turgenev and Schopenhauer," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, X (1962), 1-17.

27. Turgenev and Chekhov is a topic of continuous interest. Critics usually stress their common lyricism, poetic description and the general presentation of ineffective, superfluous types: M. L. Semanova, "Turgenev i Chekhov," *Uchenye zapiski LGPI im. A. I. Gertsena*, 135 (1957); S. E. Shatalov, "Cherty poetiki (Chekhov i Turgenev)," in *V tvorcheskoj laboratorii Chekhova* (Moskva, 1974), pp. 296-309; L. Nazarova, *Turgenev i russkaja literatura kontsa XIX nach. XX v.* (Leningrad, 1979).

28. Shatalov, op. cit., pp. 172-232.

29. "Tolstoj v 1880-e gody: Zapiski I. M. Ivakina," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 62 (Moskva, 1961), II, 50.

30. Turgenev, *PSS, Pis'ma*, VI, 34.

31. Turgenev, *PSS*, V, 390.

32. Turgenev, *PSS, Pis'ma*, II, pp. 84, 127, 455.

33. Turgenev, *PSS, Pis'ma*, XIII, 2, 37-38.

34. This is only a selection of devices which have been listed by various critics as being typical of impressionism. For details see the above-cited works and especially the article on Impressionism in the *Literaturnaja entsiklopedija*, which names no less than thirty different devices typical of impressionism.

35. *PSS, Pis'ma*, XIII, 2, p. 48.

36. *PSS*, IV, 35; on Turgenev's aesthetics compare also the chapter on "Problemy estetiki," in Batjuto, op. cit., pp. 166-239; and P. Brang, "Turgenevs aesthetisches Credo," *Festschrift für Max Vasmer zum 70. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 1956), pp. 83-90.

37. *PSS, Pis'ma*, XIII, 76; Batjuto, pp. 176-78.

38. *PSS, Pis'ma*, XIII, 2, pp. 24-27, p. 37-38.

39. Compare K. Pigarev, *Russkaja literatura i izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo* (Moskva, 1972), pp. 82-115.

40. I. I. Levitan, *Pis'ma, dokumenty. Vospominanija* (Moskva, 1956), p. 212.

41. *PSS, Pis'ma*, XIII, 2, p. 26.

42. Pigarev, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

43. L. N. Tolstoj, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij*, (Moskva, 1953), LXII, 315.

44. Compare also E. M. Efrimova, "Pejzazh v *Zapiskakh okhotnika* I. S. Turgeneva," in *Zapiski okhotnika I. S. Turgeneva, Stat'i i materialy* (Orel, 1955), pp. 247-80; M. Nierle, *Die Naturschilderung und ihre Funktion in Versdichtung und Prosa von I. S. Turgenev* (Bad Homburg, 1969), pp. 114, 131.

45. *PSS, Pis'ma*, III, 180.

46. *PSS, Pis'ma*, XI, 156. For details as to the role of music in Turgenev's life and works see A. K. Krjukov, *Turgenev i muzyka* (Leningrad, 1913).

47. G. Moore, *Impressions and Opinions* (New York, 1913), pp. 44-64; H. Muchnic, *An Introduction to Russian Literature* (New York, 1964), pp. 105-11; Pigarev, pp. 95-102; Compare also I. S. Zilbershtein, "Vospominanija I. E. Tsvetkova, 1874;" N. N. Fonjakova, "Spasskoe-Lutovino v etjudakh Ja. P. Polonskogo," in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 67 (Moskva, 1967), pp. 415-22; pp. 615-16.

48. It is the impressionism in Turgenev which caused Merezhkovskij, in his enthusiasm, to proclaim him an outright impressionist. However, just as much as the use of symbols does not make a writer a symbolist, in the same manner elements of impressionism, albeit abundant, do not make a writer an impressionist.

IX. Schiller's *Die Räuber* in the Light of Tolstoj's Concept of Art

In his study entitled "Schiller, the Inspirer of Russian Writers," the academician Jurij Veselovskij, one of the foremost comparativists, stated in 1906 that Schiller meant much more to Russian society than to either the French or the English, and that there is no reason to assume that the fascination with Schiller will ever diminish. He concluded: "For us he will remain the poet of inspiration, whose noble verse ... resounds like the bell from the towers of ancient Russia which summoned the people in days of joy and festivities and in days of grief and misfortune."[1]

The manner in which Veselovskij characterizes Schiller's reception in nineteenth-century Russia was subsequently substantiated with numerous studies by both Russian and Western scholars.[2] The enormity of Schiller's impact can only be fully appreciated if we keep in mind the prevailing discorded intellectual and social conditions of Imperial Russia. Throughout the nineteenth century, Schiller's "Freiheitsdramen" received the greatest attention, as they always did wherever there was depression and oppression. Through the Storm and Stress plays, *Die Räuber*, *Kabale und Liebe* and *Don Carlos*, Russia's academic youth perceived Schiller as a champion of human and social reforms. He became the spokesman of Russia's intelligentsia, who demanded not only the abolition of serfdom, but also dreamed of the establishment of an ideal Schillerian state, full of freedom and dignity.

Indeed, the veneration of Schiller in Russia was such that it can only be compared to Shakespeare's reception in Germany. In Russia, too, one spoke of "our Schiller" and of a "Russian Schiller." And although no honorary citizenship was bestowed upon him, as the French had done after the Revolution of 1789, he remained the idol of nineteenth-century Russian intellectuals and received a degree of adulation which was never accorded to Goethe. Goethe was too classical, too restrained for the Russian spirit, which was totally attuned toward a radical change, if not revolution by violent means. Thus, it is not surprising that the enthusiasm for Schiller must ultimately rest on *Die Räuber*, generally considered the first revolutionary drama of German literature. Indeed, if one isolates Karl's famous monologues, in which he denounces with burning eloquence the defects of state and ruler, the church and moral order, then the play could be interpreted as a dramatic statement of a revolutionary. And although the clumsy motto "in Tirannos,"[3] as H. Koopmann calls it, may express the spirit of the play and has contributed to a socio-political interpretation, the motto was not of Schillerian origin — it was attached to the second edition by the publisher.[4]

Schiller disdained it, as he did his honorary citizenship.

But whatever the origin of the various interpretations of *Die Räuber*, whether the play is viewed as a *Familiendrama*, or perceived from a religious-pietistic, from a socio-political, or from a purely Marxist point of view, it bears testimony to the fact that the play can be read on different levels and that, in the final analysis, the reader is free to resort to his own subjective interpretation and sensitivity. Indeed, the reader should have the same full freedom of interpretation as the author had in the creation of his work of art. But what if the author is unwilling to leave his art to a free interpretation, as he is determined to convey a particular message, or have his work perceived in a specific spirit? Such was the case with Schiller's *Die Räuber*, which was prefixed by a four-page long commentary. Here Schiller clearly sets forth that his concern is with the innermost workings of the human soul, with characters in a crisis caused by extreme egotism and idealism, and the inability to reconcile their demands with their conscience. It is the imposition of the moral ideal, on the one hand, and complete moral dissipation, on the other, which become the driving force of the play. In the preface, Schiller clearly spells out the demands he placed upon the dramatist and in doing so he reveals also the manner of his own intention: "Wer sich den Zweck vorgezeichnet hat, das Laster zu stürzen, und Religion, Moral und bürgerliche Gesetze an ihren Feinden zu rächen, ein solcher muß das Laster in seiner nackten Abscheulichkeit enthüllen und in seiner kolossalischen Größe vor das Auge der Menschen stellen..."[5]

Schiller expressed the hope that with his tragedy he has rendered no inconsiderable service to the cause of religion and morality and that he may justly claim for it a place among books of morality, for crime was met at last with the punishment it deserved and the lost one entered again the realm of the law, and virtue was triumphant. If this preface were taken into consideration more frequently, perhaps one would encounter a smaller spectrum of interpretations. But too frequently, it is not, and often the play is printed without this preface. True, Schiller himself omitted the preface from later editions, but initially it was meant to be an integral part of the play.

What is forever puzzling and even paradoxical is the diametrically opposed opinion directed toward a work of art, like *Die Räuber*, by the giants in literature. While the patriarch from Weimar dismissed it as a youthful outburst, the oracle from Jasnaja Poljana was forever an admirer of the play. Imbued with the classical spirit of harmony and restraint, Goethe, naturally, viewed *Die Räuber* as "Productionen genialer jugendlicher Ungeduld und

Unwillen über einen schweren Erziehungsdruck."[6] Yet, the seeming artistic weaknesses and discrepancies in the play, the exaggerated characters and implausible situations in which they find themselves, the naturalistic coarse rhetoric, which corresponds to the brutal violence of action, full of horror and atrocities — all this brutality and bestiality was not in the least offensive to Tolstoj, the pacifist and propagator of non-resistance to violence. On the contrary, like Schiller before him, Tolstoj at the height of his moralizing period, violates in his art the principle of pacifism and depicts extreme violence, only to have it serve both an aesthetic and a moral end. Even a fleeting juxtaposition of the central themes of their works reveals the striking resemblance of their objectives and concerns — to cure the ills of society through aesthetic and moral education. It is precisely the proximity of their thoughts and concepts, the Schillerian ideal of harmony among men and the Tolstojan sense of brotherhood, which caused Tolstoj to postulate *Die Räuber* not merely as the highest form of art, but as the highest form of religious art.[7]

It is true that after his conversion, beginning with the publication of his famous *Confession* (1882), not everyone accepted Tolstoj's criterion of artistic values. Due to the religious ethical essence, which he believed was indispensable for true literature, Tolstoj's analyses and conclusions regarding certain literary works had become highly controversial. His aesthetic judgement is, of course, bizarre when he condemns universally accepted masterpieces as bad art, including his own *War and Peace*. Goethe's *Faust II* was relegated to the realm of trifles, and in Shakespeare's plays he found no ethical tendency, only an exaltation of kings and princes, and English ones at that.[8] As to the rejection of his own novels, it was never taken seriously. He could easily afford such a denial, especially since he continued to remain a prolific, supreme literary master, even after the 1880s. He merely added a strong dose of ethics and morality to his otherwise purely aesthetic definition of art.

Considering the fact that Tolstoj selected *Die Räuber* from among world literature as the work which best expressed his concept of art, he left us but a few meagre entries in his writings regarding both the play and its author. Most commentaries deal only with the impact, i.e., *Wirkungsgeschichte*, and the enthusiasm with which he read the play on various occasions. By his own admission, we know that he read all of Schiller's dramas and that he disliked only *Wallenstein*. But *Die Räuber* was singled out as the drama which made the most profound impression upon him during his youth.[9] On November 1, 1853, he entered in his diary: "I was reading the biography of Schiller written

by his sister-in-law. One notices the superficial view of a sentimental lady about a great human being.... Too many domestic details have overshadowed the esteem he deserves."[10] The biography in question is *Schillers Leben. Verfaßt aus Erinnerungen der Familie, seinen eigenen Briefen und den Nachrichten seines Freundes Körner* (1830) by Karoline von Wolzogen, which appeared serially in Russian in 1853. A year later, in the fall of 1854, Tolstoj complained that he was not doing what he should and entered in his diary: "Instead of reading *Die Räuber*, I could have written something myself."[11]

A renewed interest in Schiller began with Tolstoj's preoccupation with aesthetics, which resulted in a number of articles over some fifteen years, and culminated in 1898 in his famous, albeit controversial treatise *What is Art?*[12] Although Schiller's writings on aesthetics were available to him in his own library, both in Russian and German, Tolstoj never made any direct reference to them. He was, however rereading Schiller's dramas beginning with *Don Carlos*, in February 1890.[13] On February 16, 1898, Sophia Andreevna, his wife, entered in her diary: "Lev Nikolaevich read in the evening Schiller's *Die Räuber* and was delighted with it."[14] This is further substantiated by V. F. Lazurskij, a tutor to Tolstoj's children, when he recorded in his memoirs of 1895 that Tolstoj treasured also *Maria Stuart* and *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, but above all preferred *Die Räuber*, about which he said: "And although everything is somewhat exaggerated it will remain for eternity — Karl Moor und Franz Moor."[15]

In rereading the world's classics for the purpose of selecting some works which would correspond to what he considered true art, Tolstoj could point to only a few writers. When it was implied to him that to undertake such a task is like "emptying the sea with a spoon," he could only reply: "But there is not much to empty."[16] Nonetheless, Tolstoj initially considered several of Schiller's dramas as representative of good art.[17] But in the final version of *What is Art?*, Tolstoj had only chosen *Die Räuber*, which headed the list of other acceptable examples like V. Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dostoevskij's *Memoirs from the Dead House*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These are the factual data of Tolstoj's preoccupation with Schiller, which tell us very little as to why he had reserved such an exclusive place for *Die Räuber* in world literature. The full answer can only be deduced from his aesthetic and ethical precepts, an indication of which can be derived already from the above selected works as they all reflect a deeply rooted edifying and moral sense.

However, in 1905, the centenary of Schiller's death, Tolstoj was directly confronted with the question: What influence did Schiller have upon him?

This question was posed by the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the Viennese newspaper *Die Zeit*, both of which had planned a special commemorative issue. Although Tolstoj had started to refresh his impression of the author of *Die Räuber* by reading in Schiller's *Sämtliche Werke* (1840), the posed question was never answered. Ill health prevented him from doing so. He wished, however, that he could dispatch a telegram saying simply" Schiller is alive, he has not died."[18]

Like Schiller, Tolstoj conceived himself as an educator of mankind and, like him, he felt that art should serve in the establishment of the ideals of humanity. Having embraced the sermon on the Mount as the formulation of his moral code, Tolstoj was forever guided by the precepts which would replace discord and violence with free accord, truth and brotherly love. Thus it was only natural that he should allocate to art an important function in the moral and spiritual regeneration of mankind. In his long and earnest search for clarity and the relationship between aesthetics and ethics, Tolstoj came to the conclusion that in a talented artist there is always complete harmony between aesthetics and ethics. In fact, he maintained in 1896 that "aesthetics is an expression of ethics ... i.e., art expresses those feelings which were experienced by the artist. If his feelings are noble and good, then his art will be noble and good and vice-versa. If the artist is a moral person, then his art will be moral...."[19]

When Tolstoj finally pronounced his aesthetic theory in a systematic manner in the treatise *What is Art?*, he surprised his contemporaries, for it was a formulation without the traditional concept of beauty. In the first part of his treatise he reviewed the various aesthetic theories up to his own time and discovered no less than seventy different definitions of beauty — this diversity in itself was already proof to him that beauty itself cannot be the essence of art.[20] It is with regard to the idea of beauty, which is the determining element in Schiller's concept of art, that Tolstoj necessarily had to dissociate himself from the aesthetics of the past. He neither attempted to define the elements of beauty not did he believe in an objective principle of beauty. As far as the formal elements were concerned, Tolstoj demanded from the artist brevity, originality, exactness, clarity and simplicity; excellence of form was a prerequisite for all the art.

Although Tolstoj did not find an ally among the traditional aestheticians, he praised Schiller's efforts and singled him out along with Jean Paul and Lessing, as possessing that rare combination of being at once a critic, theoretician and creator, who was able to fully translate his theories into living works of art. Needless to say, Tolstoj considered himself one of those

endowed with that rare combination[21] and legitimately entitled to deal with aesthetics.

Unable to find accord with existing concepts of art, Tolstoj provided his own definition which was complete and categorical. Although some of his ideas echoed the past, like that of "infectiousness," Tolstoj made it the cornerstone of his concept of art. According to Tolstoj, art is a human activity which consists in that the artist transmits feelings which he, the artist, has experienced. This had to be done by accepted means, through colour, lines, movement, sound and word, in such a manner that it infects others with identical feelings. Everything else which does not infect with a specific feeling is not genuine art, for it was mechanically produced, albeit skilfully, without the original experience, the source of inspiration.[22]

Art is thus a communication of feelings, which may be either morally good or morally bad.[23] Tolstoj's gradation of art is based on the degree and the kind of feelings evoked by the subject of art. In the realm of good art, which is infused with a morally uplifting spirit, Tolstoj permits the depiction of two kinds of feelings, and accordingly he postulates two kinds of art. One category is art which transmits simple feelings, joy and pity, humour and tranquillity, feelings associated with daily life. The other category is religious art, the highest form of art — "art transmitting feelings flowing from a religious perception of our kinship with God and of the brotherhood of man."[24]

After repeated emphasis on the depiction of feelings, which brings about a union of people through their common aesthetic experience, Tolstoj in his final formulation added a new dimension as to the subject matter suitable for the highest form of religious art, and thereby provides greater accommodation for Schiller's drama. This statement, which is too frequently disregarded, permits now not only the depiction of "positive feelings of love of God and one's neighbour," but also "negative feelings of indignation and horror at violation of love, which manifests itself chiefly in the form of words...." Immediately following this pronouncement, Tolstoj states: "If I were asked to provide examples of the highest form of religious art ... in literature, I would have to name Schiller's *Die Räuber.*"[25]

In essence then, Tolstoj defines good literary art as a form of communication, as an expression of feeling experienced by the author; the experience must be unique, original and sincere, and should arouse the same feeling in the reading public. The ultimate aim must be an expression of feeling, a feeling of universal quality which leads to the fraternal union of all men. Thus, the work of art should be accessible to everyone, touch all people

of all nations and classes. The aesthetic ideal, advanced by Tolstoj, which was to replace the old concept of beauty, is in reality identical wit his moral ideal. Aware, however, of the difficulties of achieving this ideal, he insisted that art nonetheless should depict the ideal, it should be there like a lantern, always ahead of us, showing us the way.

In perusing Tolstoj's later works, i.e., those after his conversion one will discover that even before the final formulation of his concept of art, he produced stories and dramas which were totally in harmony with his newly found ideals.[26] These works, most of which are based on Tolstoj's own experience, depict profound psychological torment and despair, brutality and violence and the ensuing process of purification and conversion.

Only in *Hadji Murat* (1912), Tolstoj's last masterpiece, is different; here there is no conversion, and none of the Tolstojan precepts are extolled. Tolstoj here depicts in a colourful fashion hatred and vengeance, savagery and killing, as if evil was man's most powerful attribute. In dethroning man as never before and in denouncing church and state and modern civilization as corrupt and hypocritical, *Hadji Murat* comes to bear a striking resemblance to *Die Räuber.*

The portrayal of the "violation of love," to arouse a feeling of indignation and horror at man's behaviour, was the aim of the story. Tolstoj overtly expounds no moralizing view and depicts only violence, deceit and butchery, and people who, like huntsmen, inflict deadly blows upon those who merely desire to live and be free. The sadism reaches its climax when "Hadji Aga [once a friend of Hadji Murat] stepped on the back of the corpse [Hadji Murat's], cut the head off with two blows and carefully rolled it away with his foot, so as not to soil his boots with blood."[27] The tragedy of this act lies not so much in cutting off the head, as in the phrase "and carefully rolled it away with his foot, so as not to soil his boots with blood." This is equal only to the romantic barbarism of Schiller's robbers, who relate their atrocities with a callous enjoyment and sadistic humour, as when an infant is thrown alive into the blazing flames with the words: "Armes Thiergen! sagt'ich, du verfrierst ja hier, und warfs in die Flamme."[28]

It is that tragic finality, the glaring baseness which looms over the work of Tolstoj and Schiller, which makes it possible for these stories to serve, simultaneously, a specific aesthetic and ethical purpose. The underlying idea is precisely to arouse a feeling of indignation at man's behaviour. In this sense, their work conveys a feeling of horror similar to that evoked by Picasso's *Guernica.* Only in this spirit could Tolstoj conceive *Die Räuber* and elevate it to the acme of good religious art.

Like Schiller, Tolstoj considered the drama the highest literary form and the most suitable manifestation of art through which the aesthetic experience could serve the advancement of humanity. The dramatist should be more than just an entertainer; he should be a teacher of life. In his essay "About Shakespeare and the Drama" (1906), which reveals striking parallels to Schiller's "Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet" (1784), Tolstoj reinforces his criterion of good dramatic literature and demands from the dramatist verisimilitude of action and language, originality and sincerity, infectiousness and the presentation of an important and moving theme. In applying his own theory of art to Shakespeare's dramas, Tolstoj provides us with an additional measure in determining, albeit indirectly, his preference for *Die Räuber.*

Although Tolstoj insists on the religious essence as an indispensable element of dramatic literature, he did not advocate morality plays. Aware, however, that with his insistence on the religious content of the drama he would be accused of demanding "religious teaching, didacticism and tendentiousness," all of which are incompatible with true art, Tolstoj anticipates his critics by stating: "By religious content in art ... I do not mean the direct teaching of some religious truth in artistic guise and not an allegorical depiction of those truths, but an expression of a specific outlook on life ... corresponding to the highest religious understanding, an outlook which was the impelling force to create the drama and which permeates the entire work without the author being aware of it."[29] The permeation of that specific and important outlook on life — a plea for the restoration of humanity without preaching it — this Tolstoj perceived most vividly in Schiller's drama.

By including Schiller's dramas in the repertoire for the theatre of the people, Tolstoj implied their educational quality.[30] It is of course not surprising that, when Tolstoj was asked in his later years which drama in world literature he considered most important, Tolstoj answered: "*Die Räuber* by Schiller," and added: "The theatre needs that which is simple and powerful without any frills."[31]

In characterizing *Die Räuber* thus, Tolstoj once again affirms that the play is a composite of all the elements of good art. Already the fact that Tolstoj considered Schiller a great human being presupposes that he would create only true dramatic literature, which in the opinion of the Russian writer is totally imbued with the religious essence. We may recall here Tolstoj's dictum that, if the artist's "feelings are noble and good, then his art will be noble and good." As to the sincerity of the feelings experienced by the author, we only need to recall Goethe, who viewed *Die Räuber* as the product of Schiller's

indignation against "einen schweren Erziehungsdruck." In his biographical account in the *Rheinische Thalia* (1784), Schiller tells us how he had to spend eight years, against his will in the military school where his plans and love for poetry were thwarted by the spirit of absolutism. In doing so, he also reveals the creative impulses, the adverse reaction to those unpleasant memories which made the drama an expression of a sensitive and intense personality, of an abused youth and the outcry of an angry spirit which is longing for justice.[32]

While these personal indignations and pent-up resentments against the forces which threatened Schiller's talent and freedom were the initial impulses to create *Die Räuber*, the final version of the drama culminated in an expression against evil and corrupt society, a society permeated with irreligion, where basic human values were no longer upheld. What had started out as a *Familiendrama*, which was to depict the consequences of the disintegration of the family order through intrigues and the loss of moral guidance, surged up into a universal hatred and denial of public institutions, state, church and even humanity itself. It is this rebelliousness of Karl Moor against the morality of the social order, unwarranted and unmotivated as it may be within the play, that aroused Tolstoj's feelings, since it corresponded totally to his own indignation over the corrupting influence of an irreligious society. What may appear exaggerated in "Karl Moor's declaration," to use Tolstoj's expression, was for the Russian writer the reality of the day. The similarity becomes obvious if one recalls how Tolstoj waged war against political and religious repression by the state, the deception by the church, and the abuses of judicial and administrative systems.

True, in this sense Tolstoj conceived *Die Räuber* as the radical revolutionaries did, however, with a major different. Tolstoj relentlessly demanded a change in society, but only through religious striving, through a moral and spiritual regeneration. Like Schiller, Tolstoj believed firmly that morality cannot be imposed, least of all by force, and that it must come from within, through reeducation in how to be a human being again. The fact that Karl Moor surrenders to the authorities does not imply acceptance of the prevailing moral order. His rebelliousness, however, and his ill-fated attempt to impose an ideal is both an arrogant usurpation of divine rights, and at the same time an indication of the necessity of propagating a new moral ideal of justice.[33] Schiller does not yet speak of the ennoblement of men through an aesthetic education, but there are more than glimpses of his later ideas. Throughout the play we are constantly reminded that the idealist, Karl, embarked on the path of a robber only because of his disillusionment and

feeling of betrayal by the very protector and guardian of the ideal of harmony and justice. This is constantly reinforced through the atrocities of the robbers, in contrast to the depiction of Karl's noble character and humanity, and the harmonious existence in his childhood. In moments of despair he is forever longing for that peace and harmony and exclaims: "O, ihr Tage des Friedens," "O all ihr Elysiumszenen meiner Kindheit!"[34] It is this naive, innocent, idyllic existence, where the moral and sensual are in full harmony, that foreshadows an ideal and ultimate goal of man, a higher moral order.

In the interim, however, in the absence of that ideal moral order, and so as to avoid the inevitable disaster to which one is doomed without any guidance, Schiller's play ultimately becomes a plea for trust in man's individual sense of right and wrong. In appealing to the dictates of conscience as a morally guiding force inherent in all man, even in a criminal like Franz, Schiller approaches Kant's Categorical Imperative. The frequent references to "Gott und Gewissen," to the "innere Tribunal"[35] and the final victory of the dictates of the moral conscience, as embodied in Franz's suicide and Karl's voluntary resignation, bear testimony to this. Like Schiller, Tolstoj believed that man is neither totally bad nor totally good and this is the redeeming factor in their concept of man. Tolstoj embraced Kant's Categorical Imperative and, like Schiller, he appealed to the conscience as a "moral regulator" of human behaviour.

Karl Moor, the central figure in Schiller's drama, who renders reality to all other characters, is for Tolstoj an everlasting reminder of the tragic aspect of life and an advocate of the restoration of moral justice. Whether rightly or wrongly, Tolstoj considered Schiller's *Die Räuber*, and especially the ideas incorporated in Karl's monologues, not only as an expression of the feeling and experience of its author, but a universal expression of the time. Tolstoj maintained in his pedagogical writings that J. J. Rousseau was able to exert an enormous influence on his century, because in reacting against formalism and artificiality he expressed the spirit and feelings of his fellow contemporaries. Himself an ardent disciple of Rousseau, Tolstoj asserts further: "...and if only Rousseau alone had felt this — there would have been no romantic movement in literature, there would have been no universal conceptions to regenerate mankind, the declarations of rights of the type of Karl Moor."[36]

Just like Rousseau, Karl Moor became the voice of mankind at a crucial moment as he expressed feelings about man and society which were in full harmony with his creator, and no less so with his Russian admirer. That Schiller aimed at an emotionally effective presentation, or what Tolstoj would

call infectiousness, and that he was extremely successful in transmitting those feelings in his first dramatic venture, is recorded in the frequently cited report of an eyewitness who attended the play's first production in Mannheim: "Das Theater glich einem Irrenhaus, rollende Augen, geballte Fäuste, stampfende Füße, heisere Aufschreie im Zuschauerraum! Fremde Menschen fielen einander schluchzend in die Arme, Frauen wankten, einer Ohnmacht nahe, zur Thüre. Es war eine allgemeine Auflösung wie im Chaos, aus dessen Nebeln eine neue Schöpfung hervorbricht."[37]

If this is a true account of the reaction to *Die Räuber*, and there is no reason not to accept it as such, then this report is of utmost significance, as it establishes the element of infectiousness in the play, which in turn aroused the audience, but which ultimately has its origin in the author. We have no evidence of whether Tolstoj was aware of this report or not. Had he been, he would have discovered in it a validation of one of his primary premises, namely, that true art must transmit and arouse genuine feelings previously experienced by its creator. "The greater the infectiousness, the better the art, as art, irrespective of the merits of its content,"[38] i.e., the greater the aesthetic experience, the more art fulfils its task and unifies people through that common aesthetic experience.

That this emotionally charged reaction, full of extremes ranging from despair and indignation to the point where strangers were falling into each other's arms, turned out to be an aesthetic experience of the Tolstojan variety, which could have originated only from the highest form of "religious" art, i.e., art imbued with the idea of brotherhood, needs no further elaboration.

In setting out consciously to offend virtue and morality, dehumanize his heroes and bring them to the abyss of despair only to have them regain their humanity through the voice of their conscience. Schiller in fact demonstrates in practice what later becomes a theoretical presentation in his *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*. No wonder, the wise man from Jasnaja Poljana selected the drama as a practical illustration of what he considered good religious art. He preferred *Die Räuber* over all other plays by Schiller, because it was not the product of thinking, it was an emotional release, a spontaneous outpouring of feelings full of natural vitality, at times primitive, impulsive savagery, qualities with which Tolstoj loved to endow the natural man in his own fiction. Above all, he admired Karl Moor, his strength and vitality, the tenacity and idealism of his action, misguided as it may have been. These aspects, coupled with a fiery, explosive and emotional language,[39] were most appealing to the irrational Tolstoj. However, Tolstoj, the pacifist and rationalist, who forever kept vigilance over that other side, the

author of *The Kingdom of Heaven Is Within Us*, who could have used Karl Moor's declaration, "Ich bin mein Himmel und meine Hölle,"[40] as the motto of his own inner torment and conflict, also discovered in *Die Räuber* a dual confirmation of his concept of art.

It is precisely for this reason, the depiction of violence which culminated in the mercy-killing of Amalia generating "negative feelings of indignation and horror at man's behaviour, the violation of love," on the one hand, and on the other, the victory of the voice of conscience, the "positive feelings of love of God and one's neighbour,"[41] that Tolstoj became fascinated with Schiller's play. In the free moral act of resignation by Karl, Tolstoj saw the triumph of his highest aspiration — the triumph of love for God and for our fellow man. (God was conceived by Tolstoj as spirit, as love, as the moral law inside us, and the man called Jesus was but the incarnation of moral behaviour.) The entire play, and especially the fall and rise of Karl Moor, is but the same theme of Tolstoj's own work after his conversion. It is in the eyes of Tolstoj, as it is for Schiller, a vindication of religion and morality.[42]

However meagre the direct evidence offered by Tolstoj regarding the artistic merits of *Die Räuber*, we know that he read Schiller's work several times throughout his life with an ever increasing enthusiasm; he attached timelessness and universality to the play and called it direct and powerful. Karl Moor, the embodiment of Schillerian idealism, who evoked both pity and love, was, in spite of some exaggeration, created for posterity. However, the ultimate evidence of admiration of the play was expressed when it was presented as exemplary of the highest form of art, and that by no lesser an artist than Tolstoj. Moreover, Tolstoj came to this conclusion not as the result of a casual mood or superficial attitude, but through an intense sifting and repeated effort over many years, to find in world literature that work of art which harmonized with his own aesthetic concepts.

NOTES

1. J. Veselovskij, "Shiller kak vdokhnovitel' russkikh pisatelej," *Russkaja mysl'* 2 (1906) 15. All translations from the Russian are mine.

2. Here is only a selection: Otto Peter Peterson, *Schiller in Rußland: 1785-1805* (New York: Bruderhausen 1934); Otto Peter Peterson, *Schiller und die russischen Dichter und Denker des 19. Jahrhunderts: 1805-1881* (New York: Ebda 1939); C. E. Passage, "The Influence of Schiller in Russia, 1800-1840,"

The American Slavic and East European Review 5 (1946) 111-37; Rudolf Fischer, *Schillers Widerhall in der russischen Literatur* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1958); Roman Samarin, "Schiller im Urteil der russischen Kritik," *Weimarer Beiträge* 1 (1956) 18-31; Dmitrij Tschizewskij, "Schiller in Rußland," *Ruperto Carola* 27 (1960) 111-20; Edmund K. Kostka, *Schiller in Russian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1965); Hans-Bernd Harder, *Schiller in Rußland: Materialien zu einer Wirkungsgeschichte, 1780-1814* (Bad Homburg: Verlag Gehlen 1969). Compare also: R. J. Danilevskij, "Shiller i stanovlenie russkogo romantizma," *Rannie romanticheskie vejanija* (Leningrad: 1972) 3-95.

3. Helmut Koopmann, *Friedrich Schiller, I: 1759-1794* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlerische Verlagsbuchhandlung 1966) 10.

4. For various interpretations of Schiller's *Die Räuber* see: H. Koopmann, *Friedrich Schiller, I*, 4-19, and H. Koopmann, *Schiller-Forschung 1970-1980: Ein Bericht* (Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft 1982) 54-66. The degree to which Schiller is still revered in the Soviet Union can be seen from the new translations of his works. Next to the voluminous edition of Schiller's work edited by N. N. Bil'mont and R. M. Samarin in 1955, there appeared four different translations of *Die Räuber* between 1950 and 1975.

5. *Schillers Werke: Nationalausgabe III* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger 1953) 5; "Whosoever proposes to discourage vice and to vindicate religion, morality and social order against their enemies, must unveil crime in all its deformity and place it before the eyes of men in its colossal magnitude." All translations from the German are mine.

6. Compare Koopmann, *Friedrich Schiller, I,* 15; "a product of ingenious youthful impatience, and as an indignation against a difficult and intense upbringing."

7. In the numerous studies dealing with Schiller in Russia, Tolstoj is hardly linked with Schiller. The reason is simply the fact that other writers like Zhukovskij, Lermontov, Gertsen, I. Turgenev, Goncharov and Dostoevskij, to mention only a few, provided much more substantial material for scholars, either through translation of his works or through prolonged commentaries thereof, while Tolstoj was content with only a few entries in his diaries and his theoretical writings, which nevertheless were of utmost importance.

8. L. N. Tolstoj, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij*, 90 vols. (Moskva: 1928-58) XXX, 349, 378-79. D. M. Makovitskij, "Jasnopoljanskie zapiski," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 90 (Moskva: 1979) I, 134.

9. P. I. Birjukov, *Biografija L'va Nikolaevicha Tolstogo* I (Petrograd: 1923) 60; Tolstoj, XXXV, 558.

10. Tolstoj, XLVI, 186, 439-40.

11. Tolstoj, XLVII, 22.

12. For details and publication of these works see Tolstoj, XXX.

13. S. A. Tolstaja, *Dnevniki*, 2 vols. (Moskva: 1978) I, 151, 154, 551, 558.

14. Tolstaja, I, 356.

15. "Dnevnik V. F. Lazurskogo," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 37-38 (Moskva: 1939) 487.

16. Ibid., 459.

17. Tolstoj, XXX, 413-14, 548.

18. Makovitskij, 235, 249-50, 510. For Tolstoj's library holdings see: *Biblioteka L'va Nikolaevicha Tolstogo v Jasnoj Poljane* (Moskva: 1972).

19. K. Lomunov, *Estetika L'va Tolstogo* (Moskva: 1972) 122; Tolstoj, LXXX, 119.

20. Tolstoj, XXX, 41-61. In preparing his treatise, especially in the part dealing with the survey of various aesthetic views, Tolstoj relied heavily on Max Schasler, *Kritische Geschichte der Aesthetik* (1872), Eugène Véron, *L'Esthétique* (1878), W. A. Knight, *Philosophy of the Beautiful* (1889), John Todhunter, *Theory of the Beautiful* (1872), R. Kralik, *Weltschönheit: Versuch einer allgemeinen Aesthetik* (1880), and Hippolyte Taine, *Philosophie de l'art* (1865).

21. Lomunov, 11.

22. Tolstoj, XXX, 149.

23. Tolstoj, XXX, 64-68.

24. Tolstoj, XXX, 159.

25. Tolstoj, XXX, 159-60.

26. Compare: *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886), *The Power of Darkness* (1886), *The Devil* (1889), *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), *Father Sergej* (1898), *Resurrection* (1899) and *Master and Man* (1895).

27. Tolstoj, XXV, 117.

28. *Schillers Werke* III, 64.

29. Tolstoj, XXXV, 267.

30. Lomunov, 320-22.

31. V. E. Vatsuro, et. al., eds., *L. N. Tolstöj v vospominanijakh sovremennikov* II (Moskva: 1978) 92.

32. Compare the introduction (by the editor) to *Die Räuber* in *Schillers Werke* III, vii-ix.

33. F. W. Kaufmann, *Schiller: Poet of Philosophical Idealism* (Oberlin: OH: Academy Press, 1942) 31.

34. *Schillers Werke* III, 80; "Oh, those days of peace," "Oh, all those heavenly days of my childhood!"

35. *Schillers Werke* III, 92-93, 122; "God and conscience," "the inner tribunal or judgement."

36. Tolstoj, VIII, 329.

37. See Koopmann, *Friedrich Schiller*, I, 14. "The theatre was like a madhouse, rolling eyes, clenched fists, stamping feet, hoarse outcries from the audience. Strangers fell sobbing into one another's arms; women staggered to the door, nearly fainting. There was a general confusion like a chaos, out of whose mists a new creation was about to break forth."

38. Tolstoj, XXX, 147.

39. *L. N. Tolstoj v vospominanijakh sovremennikov*, 143.

40. *Schillers Werke* III, 110; "I am my own heaven and my own hell."

41. Tolstoj, XXX, 159-60.

42. *Schillers Werke* III, 6-8.

X. Tolstoj and the Evangelical Revival Among Russian Aristocracy

The spiritual crisis experienced by Tolstoj between 1869 and 1877 was characterized by a continuous religious search which led him to intense studies of Western Protestantism and the Scriptures. His studies of the works of Protestant theologians like H. Zschokke, E. Renan, D. F. Strauss and his preoccupation with comparative religion in general caused him to emerge from this crisis with sincere and firm religious convictions which had more in common with Protestantism than Orthodoxy. The New Testament became the ethical guiding force through which mankind could arrive at a pure and true rational religion. He visualized and advocated a universal church in which cult and priest, dogma and denomination have outlived their usefulness.[1]

In reviewing Tolstoj's spiritual development, one is struck by its overwhelming similarity to the one culminating in the religious revival among the Russian aristocracy, which carried a distinct Evangelical expression. This revival, initiated by the English Lord Radstock in 1874 in the drawing rooms of St. Petersburg, reached staggering proportions within a short time. Colonel of the Guards, V. A. Pashkov, one of the wealthiest men of Russia and an ardent follower of Lord Radstock, became the principle leader and spokesman of the new teaching. Thus the movement was known both as Radstockism and Pashkovism. Since the task was the revival of religion and morality, the aristocratic Evangelicals founded the Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual and Ethical Reading. Apart from distributing the Bible and religious tracts, the Society held regular Bible readings and prayer meetings until such meetings were prohibited in 1884. Dostoevskij, who attended some of Radstock's services, is rather critical of the English Lord, but he admitted to others that "he performs miracles over human hearts; people cling to him; many are astounded: they are looking for the poor, in order to bestow benefits upon them as quickly as possible; they are almost ready to give away their fortunes."[2] Like Tolstoj, the members of the new religious revival displayed a continuous interest not only in religious and moral problems but also in social ones. They shared equally the low opinion of some of the clergy. Tolstoj's view, which he expressed as early as 1857 in a letter to his aunt, A. A. Tolstaja, could have been uttered by any of the Radstock followers: "I could fast all my life and I could pray a whole day in my room, I can also read the Scriptures and come to the conclusion that all this is very important; but to attend church, stand there and listen to the misunderstood and incomprehensible prayers, to look at the priest and the mixed crowd, this is

for me absolutely impossible."[3]

The dissenting declaration was derived from the same rationalistic approval of religion as that of many of his predecessors of Western Europe. Both the Radstockists and Tolstoj came to recognize the superfluousness of organized churches and the priestly hierarchy not only in Orthodoxy but also in any other denomination, whether Catholic or Protestant. But unlike the Radstockists, who believed in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, Tolstoj rejected the divinity of Christ and reduced the precept of the Gospel to a mere ethical system.

There is no specific documentary evidence available regarding Tolstoj's acquaintance with Radstockism in the first years after its emergence in the Russian capital. It is inconceivable, however, that the widespread news of the religious revival among his own class escaped his attention, even though at the time he resided on his estate in the Province of Tula. Commencing with 1876, Tolstoj learned of Radstockism from his aunt A. A. Tolstaja and directly from several members of the movement. Among them was his friend Count A. P. Bobrinskij and the foreign preachers Dr. Baedeker and V. A. Ditman. An important link between Tolstoj and the Radstockists was Tolstoj's closest associate, V. A. Chertkov, whose relatives, including his mother, were ardent adherents to the new teaching. Tolstoj responded to Radstockism in several of his literary works, including *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection*, and on numerous occasions in his diaries and letters.

Tolstoj's first reference to the new teaching reveals the impression which Bobrinskij with his Radstockist views had made upon the great author. Bobrinskij, Colonel of the Corps of Nobles and Minister of Transportation, a man of colossal intellect and friend of Radstock, underwent a similar metamorphosis as Tolstoj. Having recognized in Jesus Christ the living God and the solution to men's problems, Bobrinskij devoted his life and wealth between 1874 and his death in 1894 to the cause of the Evangelical movement. As a notable figure in this movement, he turned his estates and surrounding areas into centres not only for the spreading of the Gospel, but first and foremost for social and agricultural improvements. He became the living example of the repentant Russian nobleman, Bobrinskij's ardent nature may be gauged by his visits to Tolstoj and their ensuing religious discussions. It is said that the two men on one occasion spent eight hours on end until six in the morning absorbed in the supreme question of the revelation of God in Christ.[4] The impressions gained after a meeting of this kind are set forth by Tolstoj in a letter to Prince S. S. Urusov dated February 1876: "Recently I was visited by Bobrinskij, Aleksej Pavlovich. He is a remarkable person, and

as if on purpose our conversation turned to religion. He is an ardent believer and his words had the same effect on me as did yours. They provoked an envy of that greatness and peace which you possess."[5] A month later, in March of 1876, at the zenith of his religious quest, he once more expresses his admiration of Bobrinskij's faith and sincerity in a letter to his aunt, A. A. Tolstaja, lady in waiting to the Empress: "At no time has anyone spoken to me so well about faith than Bobrinskij. He cannot be contradicted, because he does not set out to prove anything; he merely asserts that he believes, and one feels that he is happier than those who do not possess his faith. Moreover, one senses that his happiness of faith cannot be acquired through the intellect but only through a miracle."[6]

Intrigued by the religious revival and its impact on his friend Bobrinskij, Tolstoj wished to know more about the initiator, Lord Radstock, and asked his aunt: "Do you know Radstock? What impression did he make upon you?"[7] Countess Tolstaja's answer to her nephew in March 1876 was an extensive account of Radstock and his followers in St. Petersburg. Her characterization of the Englishman, which contains both praise and criticism seems to be correct:

> I have known Radstock quite well for the last three years, and I like him very much because of his extraordinary integrity and sincere love. He is fully devoted to a single cause and follows his path without turning left or right. The words of Apostle Paul can almost be applied to him: "I do not wish to know anything but the crucified Christ." I say "almost" because in wisdom and thoughtfulness he is not only below Apostle Paul but also below many other less significant teachers of the church. He is a dear and kind sectarian who does not understand everything and who in his naiveté fails to see in how many aspects he deviates from the Gospel. He is fully ignorant of human nature and pays no attention whatsoever to it because, according to his system, every human being can divest himself in no time of all his passion and evil inclinations, provided he has the desire to follow his saviour. But where are these sudden and total conversions? Are there many examples if we exclude Apostle Paul, the chosen working tool of God? He talks often of such cases ... in which the conversion took place in about an hour's time. This is his weak point. But then, what devotion to Christ, what warmth, what immeasurable sincerity! His message resounded here like a bell, and he

> awakened many who before never thought of Christ and their salvation. But out of others he made complete spiritual caricatures, which is incidentally not his fault. Both the praise and the scorn which he received here [in St. Petersburg] were much too excessive. His public preaching I seldom attended, but I preferred to talk to him alone or in a small circle of friends, where I comforted myself in his warm-heartedness, thereby escaping all disputes on dogmatic questions, I think I was one of the few who judged him objectively. Bobrinskij is his disciple. Not long ago I read in a long letter to Zhemchuzhnikov the confession of his faith. I admired it and rejoiced over his sincerity and warmth. May God grant him to stay on his path, a path which is dangerous if one deviates from its humbleness! Herein lies the danger for these gentry who immediately become teachers.[8]

Countess Tolstaja's description of Radstock is decisive in the formulation of Tolstoj's concept of the English preacher. Having himself experienced an enormous psychological conflict before arriving at his own religious system, Tolstoj could hardly remain objective toward a preacher who believed in "instant salvation," nor could he appreciate his piety, one of the causes of his success.[9] Here is Tolstoj's answer to the Countess in April 1876: "How perfectly well you have described Radstock. Without having seen the original, one feels that he resembles a comical figure...." The objectivity employed by his kind and pious aunt in the description of Radstock vanishes; Tolstoj creates his own image — the comical preacher, if one takes only the negative parts from the Countess' description. He is in accord with Tolstaja, however, when he continues:

> I was also happy about your opinion (if I understood you correctly) that instantaneous conversion does not occur at all or but rarely and that prior to it one has to undergo pain and tortures. I am happy to think about this because I myself suffered and went through agony, and deep in my heart I know that this suffering and agony is the best of all my achievements in this world. And this achievement needs to be rewarded — and if it is not peace through faith, the consciousness of this effort is a reward in itself. But the theory of the grace of God which descends upon men in an English Club or in a meeting of shareholders seems to me always not only stupid, but also immoral.[10]

Such was Tolstoj's reaction to Radstockism in 1876 while he was still in the process of formulating his own religious faith. Indeed, at the time, he was still unable to tell Countess Tolstaja in what he actually believed, adding that it may seem "strange and terrifying, but it is not anything which is being taught by the church." He continues, however: "I not only despise and detest unbelief but also believe there is no possibility to live without faith and even less to die without it. And so I am gradually building my own religious system. Although my concepts are firm, they are neither very determinable nor consolatory."[11]

In this Faustian condition and with a dubious concept of the new religious revival in St. Petersburg, Tolstoj proceeded to portray Radstockism in the novel *Anna Karenina*, a work in which all the events described are nearly contemporary with the writing of the novel.[12] The story is placed in the winter of 1874 through the summer of 1876; the actual publication lasted from 1875 to 1877, i.e., the beginning of the religious revival in the Radstockism fashion. Although the novel contains no direct references to Radstock, it is obvious that Tolstoj had him in mind when he deals briefly with the English missionary, Sir John, in the following dialogue between Princess Betsy and Anna Karenina (Part II, Chpt. 7). Anna: "I have just been at Countess Lidija Ivanovna's. I stayed there longer than I had intended. Sir John was there. A very interesting man." Princess Betsy: "Oh, he is the missionary?" Anna: "Yes, he was telling us about life in India. It was very interesting...." Princess Betsy: "Sir John! Yes, Sir John. I have seen him. He talks well. Miss Vlaseva is completely infatuated with him." This noncommittal attitude of Tolstoj toward the missionary may be due to lack of specific knowledge of the Englishman, i.e., Radstock and his teaching, at the time between January and February of 1875, when he wrote the dialogue quoted above.[13]

In discussing St. Petersburg high society Tolstoj refers in the novel to a variety of unorthodox religious views. He mentions Spiritualism (Part I, Chpt. 14) and the "Little Sisters," a philanthropic, religious and patriotic society as well as "a circle of elderly, plain, virtuous and religious women and clever, learned and ambitious men," the so-called "Conscience of the St. Petersburg Society," the leading light of which was Countess Lidija Ivanovna (Part I, Chpt. 32; Part II, Chpt. 4). Tolstoj pays considerable attention to the pietistic-mystic current represented by Madame Stahl, her niece Aline, and the adopted daughter Varenka. To this new religion even Kitty Shcherbatskaja had been temporarily converted by Varenka. In the words of the narrator,

> it was revealed to her [Kitty] that besides the instinctive life to

> which she had given herself up till now, there was a spiritual life. This life was disclosed in religion, but it was a religion that had nothing in common with the religion that Kitty had known since childhood and which had found its expression in morning and evening mass at the "Widow's Home," where you met everyone, and in learning Old Church Slavonic texts with the priest: this was an exalted, mystical religion connected with a series of beautiful thoughts and feelings in which one could not only believe, because one was ordered to, but which one could love.

Kitty became so strongly influenced by Varenka that she began to avoid her high society acquaintances and to imitate Varenka's activities, thus dreaming of a future in which she would seek out those who were unhappy and needy, to distribute Gospels, and to read the Gospel to the sick, the criminals, and the dying (Part II, Chpt. 33). Although these activities are reminiscent of those of the Radstockists, the emphasis on the pietistic-mystical current recalls more the period of Alexander I as presented in *War and Peace*. In describing these religious movements Tolstoj remains a mere reporter of his time and does not yet pass judgement. It was not until Part V, Chapters 22-23, and Part VII, Chapters 21-22, that Tolstoj developed fully the Radstockist viewpoint and takes issue with it.

Beginning with Part V, Chapter 22 in the novel, the Radstockist belief is represented by Countess Lidija Ivanovna and Karenin. While the religious views of these two characters were hitherto presented ambiguously, they now begin to assume definite characteristics. Moreover, as Lidija Ivanovna and Karenin emerge as the apostles of the new teaching, Tolstoj draws them with a much more critical pen than in the previous chapters and in the earlier versions of the novel.[14] The embodiment of the worst possible manifestation of Radstockism in the two most unpleasant figures in the novel is already an indication of Tolstoj's negative attitude toward the Radstockist teaching. It is important to point out that Tolstoj began with his literary presentation of Radstockism (Part V, Chpt. 22) either in November or December of 1876, after a long interval of some eight months during which he was preoccupied with his own religious philosophical problems.[15] Evidence shows further that during this period from March to November of 1876 he acquired also a detailed knowledge of the Radstockists' teaching, which in turn found its reflection in the novel. Tolstoj's information stems in large part from Count Bobrinskij and Countess Tolstaja. There exists also the likelihood that he could have been acquainted with the works on Radstockism by Leskov and

Meshcherskij, all of which had appeared in print by the fall of 1876.[16] It is also possible that Tolstoj had read Dostoevskij's account on Radstock, which was published in March of 1876. Judging, however, from the similarity between the "spiritual caricatures" which Countess Tolstaja had described for her nephew and Tolstoj's Lidija Ivanovna and Karenin, one may conclude that the Countess contributed considerably to the literary creation of Tolstoj's own "spiritual caricatures."[17]

Tolstoj had Karenin succumb to the Radstockist creed at the moment of his lowest psychological ebb. Hopelessly deserted by his wife, ridiculed and despised, disgraced and in a state of isolation in his grief, he realized that he is no longer capable of continuing the unequal struggle. At that hour of lonely despair, when Karenin would have welcomed any consolation, Countess Lidija Ivanovna appeared and assured him of her friendship, urging him, however, to find support in love, "the love that He [Christ] has bequeathed to us.... It is in Him alone that we shall find peace, solace, salvation and love." Though in the past Karenin rejected the new "ecstatic mystical mood," he was now carried away with it and found pleasure in listening to this exalted message. Following this scene, Tolstoj expounds on the new religion and its followers:

> Lidija Ivanovna's help was extremely effective: she gave Karenin moral support by making him conscious of her love and respect ... and especially by almost converting him to Christianity ... that is, she converted him from an apathetic and indifferent believer into an ardent and firm follower of the new interpretation of the Christian doctrine, which had been spreading recently in Petersburg. It was not difficult for Karenin to be persuaded by the new views. Karenin, like Lidija Ivanovna and others who shared their views, was completely devoid of any depth of imagination ... of that spiritual faculty thanks to which the concepts created by imagination become so real that they require to be brought into harmony with other concepts and the actual reality. He saw nothing impossible or incongruous in the notion that death, which exists for the unbeliever, did not exist for him; and that, since he was in possession of complete faith, the extent of which he himself was the judge, there existed no sin in his soul.... He was already experiencing complete salvation here on earth (Part V, Chpt. 22).

In an earlier manuscript of Part V, Chapter 33, Tolstoj devotes much more space to the new teaching and to its fallacy. He points out that the essence of

Russian Christianity is love, good deeds, selflessness and above all the striving to live the life of Christ, while the essence of Radstockism is the belief in the atoning death of Jesus Christ through whom alone man can reach salvation.[18] Tolstoj's rejection of such a concept is obvious. In the final version of the novel he has even Karenin recognize the error and shallowness of his faith. But in his humiliation it was necessary for Karenin to reach that height, even though contrived, from which he, despised by all, could despise others. Such are the reasons, Tolstoj tells us, why Karenin "clung to his pseudo-salvation as though it were true salvation." Throughout the novel Tolstoj is apprehensive lest the doctrine of justification by faith breed hypocrisy and unkindness. He illustrates this in the behaviour of Lidija Ivanovna and Karenin toward Anna. One of the most inhuman acts is committed by them when they refuse Anna permission to see her son. Lidija Ivanovna begs Anna in a letter to take her husband's refusal "in the spirit of Christian love." To this the narrator merely adds: This letter achieved the secret purpose which Countess Lidija Ivanovna had concealed even from herself. It hurt Anna to the depth of her soul" (Part V, Chpt. 25).

The Radstockist doctrine of justification by faith is once more debated in Part VII, Chapters 21-22. This time Tolstoj abandoned the descriptive method in favour of the more dramatic presentation whereby Count Bezzubov (Landau), Lidija Ivanovna, and Karenin represent the new teaching, while Oblonskij, the outsider, is used to express the adverse view of Tolstoj: The conversation on religion in Lidija Ivanovna's drawing-room grows more intense when the Countess ascertains that a true believer has no sin — the sin has already been expiated. Remembering his catechism, Oblonskij was provoked to state: "Yes, but faith without works is dead." This notion is immediately rejected: "There it is, from the Epistle of St. James," Karenin said to the Countess, reproachfully implying that this topic had been discussed more than once. "How much harm had been done by a false interpretation of that passage! Nothing repels people more from faith than such a fallacious interpretation. 'I have no good works and therefore I cannot believe,' and yet there is no place where this is said. It is just the reverse." "To labour for God with works, to save one's soul by fasting," the Countess added with an expression of contempt, "those are the notions of our monks...." "We are saved by Christ who suffered for us. We are saved by faith," Karenin added approvingly. In support of her views Lidija Ivanovna produced an English book, *Safe and Happy or Under the Wing* (seemingly invented by the author), in which is described how joy and bliss are derived from faith (Part VII, Chpt. 22).

The practical result of this "true faith" is illustrated by Lidija Ivanovna when she relates the misfortune of Marie Sanin, who had lost her only child -- "She was in despair. And what do you think? She found this Friend, and now she thanks God for the death of her child. Here is the happiness given by faith." The thought that Marie Sanin is glad her child is dead left Oblonskij stunned and disgusted, no doubt a feeling shared by Tolstoj and by the reader of the novel.

In presenting this final episode, without any polemical discussion or counter argument, Tolstoj the artist masterfully discredits the doctrine of justification by faith, that is, if the strange behaviour of the Radstockists was indeed the result of the new teaching. Tolstoj the moralist, who advocated a life based on the precepts of the Gospel, could not master a modicum of understanding for this type of salvation. The acceptance of the doctrine of "easy salvation" could not induce good works nor any striving toward an ethical and moral life; instead, it deprives one of all perspective on human feelings. Accordingly, the Radstockists in the novel are devoid of true compassion and charity and become fanatics resembling those "spiritual creatures" of whom Countess Tolstaja spoke in her letter. It is unfortunate, however, that the uninformed reader of the novel is left with the impression of Karenin and Lidija Ivanovna as true representatives of the entire new religious movement. Tolstoj does not portray the noble spirit of Radstockism, of which Countess Tolstaja spoke and which was recognized even by the Orthodox Dostoevskij. Where are their philanthropic activities and their sincere help to the needy? Where is Lord Radstock himself or Count Bobrinskij, about whose faith even Tolstoj had marvelled? It would seem that Tolstoj was not concerned with all the phases of Radstockism. He had set out to portray the worst possible features of the new teaching, and consequently it is neither a true nor a complete picture of the religious revival in the Capital. It is, however, a true portrayal of those followers who did not understand the essence of Radstockism and who, with their distorted concepts, proceeded to convert others. The confirmation of this we find in a letter by Countess Tolstaja. After reading Part VII of the novel, she wrote to Tolstoj in May of 1877:

> ... and yesterday evening at the Empress's we read the April issue of *The Russian Messenger*, i.e., the text to the last part of *Anna Karenina*, and everyone admired it and marvelled, *how well and true you have depicted the type of those followers and adorers of Radstock, who without understanding the essence of his teaching* (which is not even fully formulated), *have distorted themselves and*

religion to the highest degree [italics mine].[19]

This letter has two-fold importance. It shows that Tolstoj's representatives of the new teaching constitute only a fraction of the entire religious movement, namely, those who misunderstood and distorted Radstock's original message, and second, that what Oblonskij witnessed and heard in the home of Lidija Ivanovna (Part VII, Chpt. 21-22) had nothing to do with a "spiritual séance," as is frequently assumed,[20] but was, as Countess Tolstaja observed, simply a gathering of Radstock followers. Tolstoj referred to Radstockism in the novel only as the "new teaching," without ever mentioning its actual name.

Tolstoj's criticism of the doctrine of justification by faith is entirely within the Orthodox tradition. His deliberate and severe slander of the Radstockist teaching in the novel may have been the result of Tolstoj's temporary return to the church of his forefathers. It was precisely in 1877, the year in which he completed *Anna Karenina*, that he, as never before, had attempted to accept the Orthodox teaching; he prayed, attended mass every day, observed a rigid fast and was a frequent visitor to Russia's Holy Centres, the monasteries. The forceful attempt, however, to find peace and the meaning of life in the organized church was soon abandoned. Subsequently, as he returned to the Gospel and to its ethics in the formulation of his religious system, he did not select the Epistle of St. Paul with its teaching of salvation by faith as the basis of his creed, but proceeded from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7,21) and the Epistle of St. James (2, 14-18). Herein lies the essence of Tolstoj's departure not only from Radstockism, but from any other creed which was based on St. Paul's epistle, which meant Protestantism as a whole, even though the great writer himself was permeated with the Protestant spirit.[21] The *sola fide* teaching of Radstockism had no place in his religious system, for with Tolstoj there existed only one path to God: the ethical consciousness. Mankind needs post signs and teachers to reach God and live the life of God; Christ, however, is only the most exalted teacher, neither an intermediary nor a bestower of free grace as conceived by the Radstockists.[22] The doctrine of free grace continued to preoccupy Tolstoj also after the 1880's. We find it mostly in his religious writings, which reveal a critical attitude. Only once does he show an appreciation of the Pauline teaching of salvation by faith as a prerequisite to the doing of good work, and as a gift which provides the freedom and capacity to perform the good.[23] In May 1884 he entered in his diary: "I am reading St. Augustine.... I thought a great deal about the teaching of atonement of Paul, Augustine, Luther, Radstock — the consciousness of one's own weakness and absence of struggle — and came

to the conclusion that it has great significance."[24] Nonetheless, Tolstoj the rationalist could not reconcile the concept of salvation by faith with his own views. Repeatedly, he emphasized that the new teaching demanded no moral and ethical change in the individual; it creates no incentive to do good work in people who are already saved through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Radstock's success among the aristocrats, he believes, is due to the teaching of the concept of free grace, which in reality permitted them to continue their former way of life, frivolous though it may have been. The question why Radstock had such success in high society is answered in a notebook entry in 1891: "They agree to everything. They attend church and visit the poor, but they do not change their life...." We find a revised answer to the same question in the diary entry of July 1891: "Because one does not demand a change of their [the Radstockists'] own life, the falseness of which is not admitted and because one does not demand the renunciation of force, of property and of the Princes of this world."[25] This statement is not only a simplification of the teaching of Radstockism, but also demonstrably utterly incorrect, for it mentions neither the prevailing Christian spirit which it provoked, nor its practical consequences. Seemingly, the great humanitarian, the defender of freedom of conscience, could not overcome the prejudice that any serious benevolent movement which emanated from his own class could be more than a fashion. In this respect, Tolstoj, who never observed the Radstockists in action, is of a different opinion from his contemporary Dostoevskij, who associated closely with the revivalists in the Capital and was able to state that Radstock "produced extraordinary transformations and inspired in the hearts of his followers magnanimous feelings."[26]

During the 1800's, Tolstoj's experienced an increasingly direct contact with followers of the new teaching both from among the aristocracy and from the common people, especially the so-called "Bible distributors." He even attended a prayer meeting in Moscow which was presided over by the foreign preacher Ditman.[27] Here is what he stated in his diary in May 1884: "In the afternoon Orlov arrived. With him I went to the Somovs. Ditman was preaching.... Some of it was good. But hypocritical. I left the meeting."[28] Nevertheless, this experience was to serve him later in the description of the Radstockist meeting in his novel *Resurrection*. Of much greater importance during these years was Tolstoj's acquaintance with Chertkov and the circle of Radstockists which grouped itself around his mother Elizaveta Ivanovna and his uncle Colonel Pashkov, who by that time had become the leader of the religious revival. Among the revivalists whom Tolstoj met were such prominent personalities as E. I. Shuvalova, wife of the Chief of Gendarmes,

M. V. Sergeevskaja, a descendant of the poet Pushkin, and A. I. Peuker, editor of the *Russian Workman*, a religious-ethical journal in the spirit of Radstockism.[29] Tolstoj's acquaintance with Chertkov in 1883 was of monumental importance in the dissemination of Tolstojism both abroad and in Russia. He translated and published Tolstoj's works an together they founded "The Intermediary" in 1885, a publishing concern which provided inexpensive, moralizing reading material for the people, a venture which had been carried on since 1876 by the Radstockist Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual and Ethical Reading. Chertkov became Tolstoj's most trusted friend and loyal disciple. An aristocrat, whose family had intimate connection at court, Chertkov grew up in an intense Radstockist atmosphere, the spirit of which he retained as an officer of the Guard as demonstrated by his Gospel reading to sick and wounded soldiers. Inspired by the philanthropic activities of the followers of Radstock and the desire to be of greater help to the needy, the twenty-seven-year-old Chertkov abandoned his military career and with it the potential post of adjutant to the Emperor, and in 1881 settled at his parents' estate, in a village of some 5000 inhabitants. Here he began to alleviate the plight of the peasants. On a non-profit basis he built stores, schools, a library, a tea-room, and set up a professional training-school. In all these undertakings he himself was actively engaged, living a life of privation and displaying a contempt for material riches to the point that he invited the displeasure of the neighbouring gentry.[30] We are reminded of Tolstoj's renunciation of possessions and his teaching of "Christian Communism," a teaching at which Chertkov arrived independently of Tolstoj. Indeed, it was not difficult for Chertkov to take the road toward Tolstojism as the principle of Radstockism had led to the same practical expression.

Although Chertkov became a dogmatic follower of Tolstojism and was bemoaned by his Radstockist relatives for having left Christianity, he never severed his contact with the movement and always came to its defence, as he did, indeed, in any case of religious persecution. Chertkov's letters to Tolstoj contain numerous references to the religious revival; he supplied the "grand old man" from Jasnaja Poljana with detailed information regarding the condition of the movement, particularly during the period of severe persecution in the 1880's. Horrified at the expulsion of the two principal Radstockists, Pashkov and Korff from Russia in 1884 for their unorthodox activities, Chertkov writes to Tolstoj:

> Having returned to St. Petersburg, I became disgusted at the news that Pashkov and his coreligionist Korff are being expelled from

> Russia.... I am not upset at the government's behaviour which always applies the principle of force, but I am disgusted that the Church, which considers itself the representative of Christ's teaching, approves such an act. I feel that this is the last drop for me. I do not share Pashkov's views, but at this moment, if I were asked to what religious affiliation I belong, I would say — to the Church of Christ, without mentioning any of the recognized denominations.[31]

(It was Lord Radstock who always maintained that he belonged to no other church but to that of Christ, an assertion shared by all Radstockists. In essence, this meant a return to Proto-Christianity before the emergence of various denominations with their diverse religious dogmas.)

In another letter from London, whither Chertkov had accompanied his mother, he reports on the "London Pashkovites," who attended an Evangelical conference in May of 1885. During her year-long residence in London, Chertkov's mother was a constant visitor in London's East End, where she became known for her charitable work among the poor. The impressions gained from such visits were discussed with Chertkov, who in turned expressed his astonishment to Tolstoj that "rich people who sing hymns, who solemnly read the Gospel with their household can silently enjoy luxury when they are aware that in London's East End thousands of workers, without income, are near starvation."[32] Chertkov's report could only confirm Tolstoj's suspicion, namely, that this new religious movement among the aristocracy was a mere fashion, allowing its members to remain rich and entirely selfish with no trace of true Christian brotherhood.

In spite of Chertkov's frequent references to the followers of Radstock, Tolstoj, unable to share the beliefs of the new Christianity, remained markedly restrained in his comments about the movement in which his best friend's mother and uncle played such a prominent role. In fact, Tolstoj claimed to be the offended one. He writes to Chertkov in July of 1884: "It is strange.... Your mother, Pashkov, the Orthodox Catholics and atheists judge me and reject me ... but I not only do not judge them (and this I say not only 'for argument's sake'), but in all sincerity, I welcome them and rejoice with them about their success...."[33] Indeed, although he did not share the convictions of Chertkov's relatives, he seems to have respected their dedication and admired them as human beings. After receiving the assurance that Chertkov's mother was really no longer negatively inclined toward Tolstoj, the great author seldom failed to pay his respect both to her and to

Pashkov. The closing lines from a letter by him to his friend dated June 1885 are typical: "Give my regards and best wishes of peace for her soul to your mother and extend greeting to the Pashkovs, of whom I always think with respect and love."[34] On one occasion he even envies the followers of the new revival. At the time, Tolstoj suffered from severe depression and loneliness owing to the dim prospect of ever fully practising what he preached and to the obstinate opposition of his wife to give up her possessions.[35] "In moments of this kind," he wrote to Chertkov in July 1884, "I feel the absence of intimate human contact — of that community, of that church which is possessed by the Pashkovites and the Orthodox. How pleasant it would be now to pass on my problems for judgement to those people of the same faith and to do what they tell me.... But all this will pass.... I feel God has not forsaken me."[36]

Tolstoj's moral and religious non-narrative writings during the 1880's were followed by a series of edifying short stories with the express purpose of popularizing his ideas via the literary media among the common people. In their content and manner of presentation they resemble the moralizing tales employed by the Radstockists in the dissemination of their teaching. We may also assume, particularly since Chertkov was a moving force behind Tolstoj's recent venture, that the inexpensive literature published by the Radstockist Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual and Ethical Reading was another stimulating factor in the publication of Tolstoj's own inexpensive literature, i.e., short stories with their ever present moral. These stories, admirably narrated, without any violent satire on state or church were not always particularly Tolstojan in their message. They are enlarged parables usually portraying a member of the lower classes in ideal Christian behaviour; consequently these tales received universal approval, the ecclesiastical censors not excluded. In the selection of his material for these stories, Tolstoj was hardly original; he reworked old subject matter familiar to the people, borrowed, translated and adapted to suit his purpose.[37] In this manner Tolstoj became indebted to the Radstockists for the theme of his short story, "Where there is love, there is God" (1885) and for the short play *The First Distiller* (1886).

"Where there is love, there is God" is in essence the same moralizing tale which appeared anonymously in the Radstockist journal *The Russian Workman* (1884) under the title "Uncle Martin." The particular issue of the journal containing the story had been forwarded by Chertkov to Tolstoj. According to Tolstoj's own admission, he liked it so much that he made only minor stylistic changes, added a few scenes and returned it to Chertkov for

publication.[38] The story was initially, as were all other popular tales by Tolstoj, published without the author's name or indication of his sources.[39] Its moral message is "Resist not evil" and "Sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor." The story revolves around the conversion of a poor shoemaker from disbelief to faith. At the moment of deepest frustration he was introduced to Bible reading by a friend and this brought forth a change in his life.

Tolstoj's play *The First Distiller* (1886) was written with the same purpose as all of his popular tales. It is a short humorous anti-liquor morality play based on the theme of a popular religious card, which had been distributed widely among the masses during the 1880's by the Radstockists and Pashkovites.[40] The illustrations on this card represented the devil sitting in the foreground demonstrating how to make spirits out of grain; the background depicted the consequences of the devil's teaching, quarrels, poverty, drunkenness and general immorality. The inscription underneath the picture read: "The First Distiller." In attempting to achieve the same purpose as the Radstockists, Tolstoj borrowed the inscription and adhered closely to the theme on the card, a subject already well known among the peasants. Tolstoj portrayed the devil, i.e., the first distiller, as being successful in corrupting many from among the rich classes, but he is unable to catch a single peasant. Only by introducing alcohol to the masses, or rather, by showing them how to make spirits, can the devil break the safeguard of the once incorruptible peasants.[41]

Tolstoj's last attempt to portray the religious revival among the St. Petersburg aristocracy is to be found in the novel *Resurrection* (1899). Although the novel, as no other of Tolstoj's narrative works, constitutes a synthesis of Tolstojism, it lacks the artistry of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, perhaps an indication of the speed with which it was completed. The highly impressive description of certain scenes alternates too frequently with tendentious passages profusely supported by quotations from the New Testament. For our purposes, however, the novel is a further indictment of the existing social and religious conditions. While the peasants and the political and religious prisoners are portrayed as the best members of a community, Tolstoj expresses a loathing for the double standard of his own class, which so carefully hides the suffering borne by millions. The long accounts of peasant and prison life, religious persecution, cruelty and injustice, are contrasted with brief descriptions of the society in the Capital, which had taken up the new Evangelical teaching. Except for Prince Nekhljudov, who is undergoing a complete regeneration, *Resurrection*, in

contrast to Tolstoj's earlier novels, contains no favourable description of characters from the nobility living the life of their social class.

Tolstoj's prototypes of the novel were again taken from actual life. Prince Nekhljudov, the hero of the novel, and his aunt, Countess Charskaja, a devoted Radstockist, are modelled after Tolstoj's friend Chertkov and the latter's aunt, E. I. Shuvalova. Two foreign characters in the novel, Kizewetter and the Englishman, are obviously sketches of one and the same personality, Dr. Baedeker, a disciple of Radstock and a frequent visitor to Russia.[42] The preacher Kizewetter is described as a German Evangelist who had adopted England as his permanent home. For about eight years he had been discoursing on the doctrine of salvation by faith in the drawing-rooms of the St. Petersburg nobility, but he was equally accustomed to preaching among the criminals. The Englishman introduced by Tolstoj toward the end of the novel is an erratic traveller who preaches and distributes New Testaments in the Siberian prisons. Dr. Baedeker was such a preacher in real life, a German who had resided in England since 1858. By 1894 he had toured the Siberian prisons and those of the Caucasus twice, with the express purpose of preaching to the inmates. It was he who continued evangelizing among the aristocrats after Lord Radstock was denied entry into Russia. One could, perhaps, question Latimer's identification of Tolstoj's characters as being modelled after Baedeker, were it not for their striking similarity and for the fact that Baedeker and Tolstoj met shortly before the novelist started with the writing of *Resurrection*. Tolstoj's account of Baedeker in his diary seems too similar to Kizewetter's picture in the novel to be a coincidence.[43] When Dr. Baedeker visited Tolstoj in Moscow in February of 1889, he was already well known, both among the aristocrats and the common people, particularly among the prisoners. His shrewdness and tact, and his intimate connections with the highest aristocratic circles helped him many a time to carry on his missionary work, although it must have been done within a hostile atmosphere full of suspicion and deceit.[44] Baedeker's visitation of the prisons (undertaken with the approval of the head of the Prison's Department) must have interested Tolstoj, for prisons had no place in his moral system, as his last long novel shows. The meagre report available from Baedeker's side regarding the meeting of the two men indicates that the preaching of the Gospel in the Russian prisons was one of the topics of their conversation.[45] Tolstoj himself seems to have maintained a dual image of Baedeker. The diary entry of February 1889 is more favourable than his portrayal of the Evangelist in the novel:

> After breakfast Baedeker arrived together with Shcherbinin [Count Shcherbinin, a Radstockist, was Baedeker's travelling companion and interpreter]. He [Baedeker] is a Calvinist-Pashkovite preacher. He said that he watches me; he spoke with pathos and tears in his eyes. But it was cold and not truthful. And yet he is a kind person. Preaching has ruined him. He said straightforwardly that each man is a missionary; he maintained and produced quotations from the Scriptures that one ought to preach the Word of God and that it is not sufficient to shine with good works among men. During all this time I was moved to tears. Why? I don't know.[46]

Tolstoj described the same visit a few days later to his daughter: "... I was visited by Baedeker — the Pashkovite preacher. He is very kind and we had a pleasant discourse because young Shcherbinin was present — a devoted Pashkovite."[47]

In *Resurrection*, however, the Evangelist is treated in a decidedly hostile manner. Tolstoj has him preach at one of the fashionable religious circles, the members of which held that the essence of Christianity lies only in a belief in the Redemption. Thus "the faithful," Tolstoj informs his reader, "repudiate all Orthodox church tradition with its saints, icons and sacraments." Prince Nekhljudov attended one of these meetings at the home of his aunt, Princess Charskaja. In the evening the large ballroom began to fill with people who came to hear the foreigner Kizewetter preach. Elegant carriages stopped at the front entrances In the richly furnished rooms sat ladies in silk and velvet, with false hair and padded figures, and with them were men in uniform and evening dress, and some half dozen common people: two manservants, a shopkeeper, a footman and a coachman.

Kizewetter, a "strong, grizzly German," spoke in English and his oratory was said to be so effective that even the most hardened criminals sank to their knees weeping and repentant. A thin young girl translated into Russian promptly and well: "Beloved brothers and sisters, let us for a moment consider what we are doing, how we are living, how we have offended against the all-loving Lord.... How can we be saved, brothers?" Here the preacher stopped and was silent for a while, tears flowing down his cheeks. For about eight years now, every time he reached this part of his address, he felt a choking in his throat and tears came into his eyes. Having heard sobs in the room, the orator began again in a sweet gentle voice to tell us of the easy and joyful way of salvation: "Salvation is in the blood shed for us by the only Son of God...." At this moment, Nekhljudov, deeply disgusted, frowned

and keeping back a groan of shame, left the room, an act reminiscent of Tolstoj's own behaviour when he left the Radstockist prayer-meeting presided over by the foreign preacher Ditman in Moscow.

It is obvious that Nekhljudov is the mouthpiece for Tolstoj's own reflections. Having become the spokesman of the peasants and sectarians, Nekhljudov, like his creator, no longer could move in the aristocratic circles without feeling ill at ease and reproachful of himself. The satirical picture of the foreign preacher, Kizewetter, and the mockery of the aristocracy of the Capital seems to reveal Tolstoj as still being unable to sympathize with a movement whose members, in his opinion, were the rich governed by selfishness. The fact that the lower classes sat side by side with the aristocrats during their prayer-meetings, something indeed unknown in Russia at the time, was for Tolstoj only a temporary outburst of emotion. He, who held brotherhood of all men as the essence of his creed, saw in the behaviour of the Radstockists, or the Pashkovites, merely parody of true Christian brotherhood. Tolstoj's account of the Radstockists in *Resurrection* is not, however, portrayed with the hostility found in *Anna Karenina.*

Tolstoj's second foreigner in the novel, the Englishman, is more sympathetically drawn than Kizewetter; he is one of the most attractive figures among the English clergy in Russian fiction.[48] Although the Englishman is modelled after Baedeker, his objectives go far beyond evangelizing. He appears to be a composite of many diversified interests. He travels in Siberia, visits the prisons, preaches to the prisoners, and distributes the New Testament among the criminals. Beside being an Evangelist, he is studying intensely the places of exile and prisons, he is forever taking notes like a newspaper correspondent, and is seemingly always on the lookout for a good story. He is also a sightseer and enjoys the luxuries of life. The latter's interests are not those of Baedeker, but those of the American, George Kennan, who had toured Siberia with the purpose of studying its prisons. Kennan published his findings in his book *Siberia and the Exile System* (London, 1891). Tolstoj read his book and undoubtedly drew from it extensively, particularly in describing the conditions of the prison in *Resurrection.*[49]

Although we have no full indication that Tolstoj is not at variance with the Englishman's preaching and is no more pleased with it than he was with that of Kizewetter, he no longer ridicules the man who conveys the message of "Salvation by Faith and Redemption." Tolstoj informs the reader, however, that when Nekhljudov has to translate the Englishman's message to the prisoners, he does so without enthusiasm; tired and indifferent, he followed

the Englishman from ward to ward with "a sense of having to fulfil an unpleasant duty." The Englishman's sermon was simple, short and delivered without emotion: "Tell them," he said, "that Christ pitied them and loved them and died for them. If they believe in this they will be saved." This rather laconic presentation was followed by the distribution of the New Testament with the words: "This book, tell them ... tells all about it." Although the Englishman's sermon, significantly, remained without comment both from Nekhljudov and from the omnipresent author, who is otherwise always ready to pass judgement, it is difficult to state whether Tolstoj simply neglected to attack the message of Salvation by Faith or no longer saw any harm in it.

While he may still have questioned the preacher's message, there seems to be no doubt that Tolstoj approved of the distribution of the New Testament. The eagerness and enthusiasm displayed by the prisoners when receiving the Bible bears testimony to it. Here is Tolstoj's description: "The Englishman took several bound Testaments out of a handbag, and many strong hands with their hard black nails stretched out toward him from beneath the coarse shirt sleeves, jostling one another." More significant yet is that Tolstoj employs the Englishman as a "tool of Providence." Through the reading of the New Testament, which the preacher had given Nekhljudov as a remembrance, the hero of the novel began to understand the meaning of life. A perfectly new life dawned for him, a true Christian life in Tolstoj's sense.[50]

NOTES

1. For details of Tolstoj's conversion and concept of religion see his own account in: *My Confession* (1879); *A Criticism of dogmatic Theology* (1880); *My Religion* (1884); *The Kingdom of God is within you* (1893). Compare also K. I. Staub, *Graf L. N. Tolstois Weltanschauung und ihre Entwicklung* (Kempten, 1907), 1-21; and particularly F. H. Philipp's *Tolstoj und der Protestantismus* (Giesen, 1959), 46-82; G. Florovsky, "Three Masters: The Quest for Religion in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature," *Comparative Literature Studies* (1966), III, 119-137.

2. F. M. Dostoevskij, *Dnevnik pisatelja za 1876 god* (Berlin, 1922), 157-160.

3. L. N. Tolstoj, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij. Jubilejnoe izdanie 1828-1928.* 90 vols. (Moskva: ANSSSR, 1928-1958), LX, 287. References to this edition

are cited hereafter as Tolstoj.

4. E. Trotter, *Lord Radstock, An Interpretation and a Record* (London, 1914), 198-199; Tolstoj, XLVII, 379.

5. Tolstoj, LXII, 249.

6. Tolstoj, LXII, 261, 303-307. The correspondence between Tolstoj and Bobrinskij on religious questions has not yet been located.

7. Tolstoj, LXII, 261.

8. *Perepiska L. N. Tolstogo s Grafinej A. A. Tolstoj 1852-1903: Tolstovskij muzej* (St. Petersburg, 1911), I, 267-268.

9. L. Müller, *Russischer Geist und evangelisches Christentum* (Witten/Ruhr, 1951), 94-95.

10. Tolstoj, LXII, 266.

11. Tolstoj, LXII, 267.

12. Compare N. N. Gusev, *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoj. Materialy k biografii s 1870 po 1881 god* (Moskva: ANSSSR, 1963), 366-368.

13. N. K. Gudzij, "Istorija pisanija i pechatanija *Anny Kareninoj*," Tolstoj, XX, 616.

14. Gudzij, 595.

15. Gudzij, 621, 623.

16. N. S. Leskov, "Grenvil' Val'digrev lord Radstok, ego zhizn', uchenie i propoved'," *Pravoslavnoe obozrenie* (1876), III, No. 9, pp. 138-178; No. 10, pp. 300-326; (1877), I, No. 2, pp. 294-334. V. P. Meshcherskij, *Lord Apostal v bol'shom Peterburgskom svete*. 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1876).

17. Philipp, 70.

18. Tolstoj, XX, 431-433.

19. *Perepiska L. N. Tolstogo s Grafinej A. A. Tolstoj...*, 284.

20. Compare Gusev, 358.

21. Compare N. N. Gusev, "'Ispoved,' Istorija pisanija i pechatanija," Tolstoj, XXII, 515.

22. Müller, 96-98; Philipp, 69.

23. Philipp, 70.

24. Tolstoj, XLIX, 98.

25. Tolstoj, LII, 45, 180.

26. Compare Dostoevskij, 157-160.

27. A. S. Prugavin, *O L've Tolstom i tolstovtsakh* (Moskva, 1911), 96.

28. Tolstoj, LIX, 88.

29. Tolstoj, LXXXV, 94, 118-120.

30. Tolstoj, LXXXV, 4-7.

31. Tolstoj, LXXXV, 67.

32. Tolstoj, LXXXV, 239.

33. Tolstoj, LXXXV, 77.

34. Tolstoj, LXXXV, 226.

35. Feeling a great sense of responsibility toward her many children, Tolstoj's wife could never share the religious, social and moral views of her husband. He wished to live a life of deprivation to the point that he made his own boots, ploughed and reaped. Rather like many critics, she felt that Tolstoj should pursue his former art and leave the shoemaking and farming to those who knew more about it.

36. Tolstoj, LXXXV, 223.

37. N. S. Leskov, "Otkuda zaimstvovan sjuzhet p'esy grafa L. N. Tolstogo *Pervyj vinokur*," *Sobranie sochinenij* (Moskva, 1958), XI, 133.

38. A. I. Nikiforov, "'Gde ljubov', tam i Bog.' Istorija pisanija i pechatanija," Tolstoj, XXV, 681-682.

39. A subsequent edition of the short stories was released under Tolstoj's name. As soon as this edition, which also contained the story "Where there is love, there is God," was published, Tolstoj was accused of plagiarism by R. Saillens, the original author of the short story "Le père Martin." For details see: A. E. Gruzinskij, "Istochniki rasskaza L. N. Tolstogo — 'Gde ljubov' — tam i Bog,'" *Golos minuvshego* (1913), III, 52-63; Tolstoj, LXXII, 99-100.

40. Leskov, "Otkuda zaimstvovan...," *Sobranie sochinenij...*, XI, 132-133.

41. "Pervyj vinokur, ili kak chertenok krajushku zasluzhil," Tolstoj, XXIV, 676.

42. N. K. Gudzij, "Istorija i pechatanija *Voskresenija*," Tolstoj, XXXIII, 371-373.

43. O. I. Stresnevskaja, "Doktor Baedeker prototip Kizewettera i anglichanina v *Voskresenii*," *Tolstoj. Pamjatniki tvorchestva i zhizni* (Moskva, 1917), III, 89-102.

44. For details of Dr. Baedeker's missionary work in Russia see R. S. Latimer, *Dr. Baedeker in Russia* (London, 1909), 77-109, 175-207.

45. Latimer, *Dr. Baedeker in Russia*, 207.

46. Tolstoj, L, 36.

47. Tolstoj, LXIV, 220.

48. Compare V. Kiparsky, *English and American Characters in Russian Fiction* (Berlin, 1964), 49.

49. Gudzij, "Istorija i pechatanija *Voskresenja*," Tolstoj, XXXIII, 391; compare also Kiparsky, note 8, p. 49.

50. Kiparsky, 49. For a general account of the Evangelical Revival among the Russian aristocracy see my book: *Religious Schism in the Russian Aristocracy 1860-1900 — Radstockism and Pashkovism* (The Hague, 1970).

XI. Grillparzers *Ahnfrau* in Rußland: A. Blok

Während Schiller und Goethe einen bedeutenden Einfluß auf die russiche Literaturentwicklung im neunzehnten Jahrhundert ausübten, blieb Grillparzer im Vergleich dazu so gut wie unbeachtet bei den russischen Dichtern. Die Gründe dafür liegen zunächst in Grillparzers eigenem Verhalten, da er sich nach dem Mißerfolg seines Lustspiels *Weh dem, der lügt* (1838) völlig von der Bühne zurückzog. Als dann gegen Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts Grillparzers Dramen dem russischen Geistesleben zugänglich gemacht wurden, fanden seine klassischen Humanitätsideen bei der schon sozialpolitisch eingestellten Intelligenz keinen Anklang mehr. Goethe und besonders Schiller — der auch heute noch ein Lieblingsdichter der Russen ist — jedoch feierten ihren Einzug in Rußland schon am Ende des achtzehnten und Anfang des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts und lieferten somit so manches Thema und die Form für die noch im Stadium des Wachsens und Keimens verharrende russische Nationalliteratur.[1] Bemerkenswert ist, daß gerade den Jugendwerken dieser beiden Dichter, d.h. den aus dem Sturm und Drang entstandenen Werken, der größte Beifall zuteil wurde. Besonders die Werke des jungen Schiller (*Die Räuber*, *Don Carlos*, *Kabale und Liebe*) verkörperten in den Augen der Russen die reinste Romantik und waren daher auch äußerst populär während der zwanziger und dreißiger Jahre des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, der Blütezeit der russischen Romantik. Als romantische Tragödie — im Gegensatz zu allen anderen Dramen Grillparzers — fand auch *Die Ahnfrau* ihren Weg auf die russische Bühne, und zwar während der dreißiger Jahre des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts und nochmals am Anfang unseres Jahrhunderts. Ihre Wirkungsgeschichte in Rußland zu verfolgen ist das Ziel der vorliegenden Arbeit.

Die zahllosen Aufführungen der Schillerschen *Räuber*, sowie die überwiegende Darstellung des Räubers überhaupt in der russischen Literatur während der Romantik zeugen davon, daß dies eines der beliebtesten Themen der Zeit war. In der Behandlung des Räubermotivs sah man eine Fortsetzung der Idee der Dekabristen, eine Variation des Freiheitsthemas überhaupt. Das Räubermotiv in der russischen Lyrik und im Drama war aber weniger eine Entlehnung aus dem russischen Volkslied, welches häufig den Räuberhäuptling besingt, sondern eher eine europäische Erscheinung, ein der Romantik nahegelegenes Thema, welches seinen Weg durch das Drama von Westen nach Osten fand. Otto Peterson versucht jedoch zu zeigen, daß im Gegenteil Schillers *Räuber* auf die Fülle der russischen Räuberthemen zurückzuführen sind. Obwohl eine interessante Hypothese, ist es doch kaum

anzunehmen, daß Schiller die Anregung zu seinem Räuberdrama nicht von Schubart erhielt, sondern von einem der fünfundvierzig aus Rußland stammenden Mitschülern der Militärakademie und der Karlsschule.[2]

Ein typisches Beispiel für die große Beliebtheit des Räuberthemas war eine Aufführung zweier aufeinanderfolgender Räuberdramen im Moskauer Theater am 19. Februar 1831; das eine war ein Zweiakter mit dem Titel *Ein Bandit oder Ein Räuber auf dem Balle* aus dem Französischen und das andere war Grillparzers *Ahnfrau*. Obgleich man sich vor der Aufführung: "C'est drôle: deux bandits à la fois!" zuflüsterte, hatte gerade Grillparzers Tragödie großen Erfolg. Die Ursache für diesen Erfolg lag zunächst in der Übersetzung der *Ahnfrau* durch den sehr begabten jungen Dichter Platon Obodovskij; ferner wurde die Rolle des Jaromir von P. S. Močalov, einem der bedeutendsten russischen Schauspieler, dargestellt. Während der romantische Dichter Obodovskij in der Theaterkritik als hervorragender Schillerübersetzer (*Don Carlos*, 1828) gefeiert wurde, galt Močalov als größter und edelster Interpret der Schillerschen Hauptrollen. Dieses Verdienst erwarb er sich auch in der Hauptrolle der *Ahnfrau*. V. Belinskij, Rußlands bedeutendster Kritiker, behauptete: "Močalov ist nich bloß ein Schauspieler und Künstler; er ist seelisch inspirierende Poesie ... um ihn als Bühnenkünstler zu erfassen, muß der Theaterkritiker zum Dichter, und zwar zu einem großen werden."[3]

Laut dem Rezensenten S. T. Aksakov, dem einzigen, der der Nachwelt von der Moskauer Aufführung der *Ahnfrau* berichtet, war die Rolle Jaromirs wie absichtlich für Močalov geschaffen:

> Jaromir [Močalov] war vortrefflich. In der Rolle des Jünglings für die üble Tat bestimmt, deren Last er sich bewußt war, wogegen er aber nichts tun konnte, war er in seinem Bereich, in seinem Element. Wilde Ausbrüche wütender Leidenschaft, das Aufwallen der Stürme in seiner brennenden Seele, der unablässige Wechsel von wahnsinnig wilder Freude und rasender Verzweiflung wurden von ihm meisterhaft dargestellt. Besonders in der Szene, in der Jaromir erfährt, daß der von ihm getötete Graf sein eigener Vater war und er sich nun als Vatermörder betrachtet, offenbart sich Močalovs künstlerische Größe und Kraft.[4]

Darauf folgt noch eine kurze Beschreibung der anderen Rollen, von denen auch die der Bertha gepriesen wird. Interessant ist, daß aus dem Grillparzerschen Grafen Borotin ein Graf Baronim wurde. Die Verwechslung dürfte wohl auf die Tatsache zurückzuführen sein, daß Aksakov das Stück nur

von der Bühne her kannte.

Abgesehen von dieser Aufführung der *Ahnfrau* scheint der Rezensent mit den Schicksalstragödien überhaupt vertraut gewesen zu sein, denn er vergleicht auch die "romantische Schicksalstragödie" Grillparzers mit denen von Zacharias Werner und Adolf Müllner, wobei Grillparzers *Ahnfrau* mit ihrem reichen poetischen Inhalt und tief erlebter subjektiver Stimmung weit über ihre Vorläufer gestellt wird. Aksakov bemerkt jedoch etwas ironisch: "Dieses Stück erweckt großen Lärm in Deutschland: es setzt jegliche Saite des phantasievollen Gemüts in Bewegung und holt sich dabei eine reiche Ernte an Tränen und Beifall."[5]

Aksakov betont, daß das Thema des "Familien- oder Erbfluches" eines der weitverbreitetsten Themen des deutschen Volksglaubens sei. Er will damit erklären, daß der Erfolg dieser Tragödie in Deutschland auf die Beliebtheit dieses Themas zurückzuführen sei. Da sein Urteil über das Drama lediglich auf der Bühnenaufführung zu beruhen scheint, konnte er auch den poetischen Stil des österreichischen Dichters in seiner Fülle kaum erfassen. Daher beschränkt er sich auf die Thematik und liefert dementsprechend eine detaillierte, meisterhafte Inhaltsangabe des verwickelten Stückes. Obwohl der Gedanke des Erbfluches, von dem Aksakov spricht, dem russischen Volk wohl kaum vertraut war, vermochte die *Ahnfrau* als Räuberstück und Schicksalsdrama ihre Zuschauer aufs Tiefste zu erschüttern. Das traditionelle Räubermotiv, obwohl verflochten mit mysteriösen übernatürlichen Kräften, blieb für den Zuschauer und den Bühneninterpreten doch eine Erscheinung der Wirklichkeit. Die sozial-psychologische Seite, die für den Autor der *Ahnfrau* sicher nur eine sekundäre Rolle spielte, wurde durch diese russische Aufführung in den Vordergrund gerückt. Grillparzers *Ahnfrau* erhielt somit in den Kreisen der gebildeten Russen eine neue Bedeutung und wurde damit auch einer neuen Interpretation unterzogen.

Die ungeheuerlichen Ereignisse während der napoleonischen Kriege, der mißglückte Aufstand der Dekabristen und die darauffolgende Unterdrückung während der Regierungszeit Nikolaus I., Vorfälle, die die Existenz des Individuums bedrohten, gegen die es sich aber nicht wehren konnte, machten so manche Russen zum Fatalisten. Man darf auch nicht vergessen, daß gerade um die Zeit der Aufführung der *Ahnfrau* (19. Februar 1831) die Cholera wie nie zuvor einen nach dem anderen dem Leben entriß. Die Angst vor dem Tode und vor allem das unerwartete Eingreifen des Schicksals, wie es in den Schlußszenen bei Grillparzer geschildert wird, verstärkte im Zuschauer das Gefühl, sich dem unheimlich dämonischen Schicksal wehrlos ausgeliefert zu sehen. Auch er konnte mir Jaromir ausrufen:

Tief verhüllte, finstre Mächte
Würfeln mit dem schwarzen Los
Über kommende Geschlechte ...

Ja, der Wille ist der meine,
Doch die Tat ist dem Geschick ...

Wo ist der, der sagen dürfte:
So will ich's, so sei's gemacht!

Kein Wunder, daß Aksakov gerade die Szene, in der Jaromir schreiend durch die kalte Umarmung der Ahnfrau in den Tod geht, als "seelenzerreißend" empfindet. Sie symbolisiert die Hilflosigkeit des Menschen vor den höheren Mächten. Auch die phantastische Bühnendekoration des Grabgewölbes, in dem Jaromir der Ahnfrau begegnet, erhöhte das schreckliche Gefühl der Erstarrung: "Diese Erstarrung verschwindet zwar bald, und die Seele erkennt sofort, daß sie mehr im Stadium der Angst verharre als gerührt sei; jedoch ihre ursprüngliche Wirkung ist trotzdem nicht minder mächtig und unüberwindbar."[6] *Die Ahnfrau* wird somit nicht vom Standpunkt des Erbfluches aus interpretiert, obwohl der Erbfluch eine treibende Kraft der Tragödie ist, sondern vielmehr sah man in den Schlußszenen die Betonung der Fragwürdigkeit und Brüchigkeit der menschlichen Existenz überhaupt. Die Tragödie muß, laut dem russischen Kritiker B. Eikhenbaum, im Zuschauer dasselbe hoffnungslose Gefühl hervorgerufen haben, welches die Beschauer des Bildes von Brjullov "Die letzten Tage Pompejis" befiel.[7]

Trotz des großen Erfolges der *Ahnfrau* am 19. Februar 1831 besitzen wir keine weiteren Daten über andere Aufführungen der Tragödie. Wenngleich auch keine bestimmte Verbindung zwischen der *Ahnfrau* und den russischen Dichtern der Zeit feststellbar ist, so will doch Eikhenbaum im Entwurf eines Dramas von Lermontov einen gewissen Einfluß der *Ahnfrau* vermuten. Lermontov, der sich in den dreißiger Jahren des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts intensiv mit dem Räubermotiv beschäftigte, soll angeblich als Siebzehnjähriger die Moskauer Vorführung der *Ahnfrau* gesehen haben. Die Anklänge an *Die Ahnfrau* in seinem Entwurf beschränken sich aber nur auf das Räuberthema; von der Schicksalsidee, dem mysteriös Dämonischen und der Anspielung auf den Ödipuskomplex ist keine Spur zu entdecken.[8] Offensichtlich sollten in Lermontovs Räuberdrama Räuber im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes erscheinen. Die Ähnlichkeit des Lermontovschen Entwurfs mit der *Ahnfrau* der ersten Fassung, d.h. ohne die Vergröberung der Schicksalsidee der zweiten Fassung,

ist wirklich auffallend. Aus Lermontovs knappem Entwurf können aber keine weiteren Schlüsse in Bezug auf die Entwicklung der Handlung gezogen werden.

Im Laufe des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts wird Grillparzers Name, abgesehen von akademischen Vorlesungen, kaum erwähnt. Der Kritiker Belinskij, dessen Feder kaum ein zeitgenössischer Dichter entging, befaßte sich nur flüchtig mit Grillparzer. Auch er muß *Die Ahnfrau* auf der Moskauer Bühne gesehen haben, denn er lobt Močalov in der Rolle des Jaromirs. *Die Ahnfrau* jedoch und das Schicksalsdrama im allgemeinen lehnte er vollkommen ab. Er betrachtet diese Art der Tragödie, in der die Menschen wie Puppen von unbekannter Gewalt am Draht gezogen werden, als reine Erfindung einiger deutscher Dramatiker. Das Triumphieren der höheren Mächte und das unmittelbare Eingreifen in die Existenz des Individuums findet er allzu unnatürlich. Schon im Zeitalter der Romantik forderte Belinskij vom Kunstwerk nationale Besinnung, Ideen zur Volkserziehung, soziale Tendenz und realistische Darstellung. So konnte er natürlich die Geisterwelt und die "phantastische Romantik Grillparzers," um mit ihm zu reden, nicht billigen.[9] Er konnte daher auch die sozial-psychologische Seite der *Ahnfrau* nicht wie seine Zeitgenossen und später die junge Generation der Russen am Anfang des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts schätzen. Von Belinskij erfahren wir auch, daß im *Odessaer Almanach* (1839) einige Auszüge aus Grillparzers *Sappho* von einem gewissen G. Protopov gedruckt wurden.

Erst gegen Ende des neunzehnten und am Anfang des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts zeigt sich erneut Interesse für Grillparzers Werke. Aus den russischen Nachschlagewerken ist feststellbar, daß in den Jahren 1891 und 1892 *Sappho* im Kleinen Theater in Moskau aufgeführt wurde. Auch wurden zwei weitere Übersetzungen von *Sappho* gedruckt. Eine erschien 1893 in der Zeitschrift *Artist* und die zweite, von Arbenin übersetzt, im Jahre 1895.[10] Bemerkenswert ist auch, daß gerade um diese Zeit, 1894, die Übersetzung der *Ahnfrau* von Obodovskij zum ersten Mal von seinen Nachkommen in lithographischer Form der Leserwelt zugänglich gemacht wurde.[11] Entsprechend dem erweckten Interesse für Grillparzer erschien auch ein Zeitschriftenartikel von S. J. Umanec unter dem Titel "Der vergessene Dramatiker" (*Trud*, 1893, S. 44-59), in dem versucht wird, Grillparzer der unverdienten Vernachlässigung zu entziehen. Ferner erschienen noch *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* und Auszüge aus der *Esther* in dem Buch von M. Frišmut, *Kritičeskie očerki i stat'i* (St. Petersburg, 1902).

Weitaus wichtiger und interessanter jedoch, als die bisher geschilderten russischen Versuche, Grillparzer näher zu rücken, ist die Aufmerksamkeit, die

der *Ahnfrau* von seiten des Dichters Alexander Blok (1880-1921) geschenkt wurde. Es ist zweifellos ein Lob für den österreichischen Dichter, daß gerade Blok, der bedeutendste Vertreter des russischen Symbolismus und einer der größten Lyriker Rußlands, nicht nur die *Ahnfrau* übersetzte, sondern diese auch den russischen geistesgeschichtlichen Verhältnissen angepaßt hat und sie einer Interpretation unterzog, die dem Grillparzerschen Frühwerk neue Bedeutung verlieh.

Das lyrische Werk Bloks stand bis etwa 1905 sehr stark unter dem Einfluß der auf mystischem Erleben beruhenden Theosophie Vladimir Solov'evs. Kein Wunder, daß ein mystischer Glaube an die Wiedergeburt der russischen Seele und damit auch die Einführung einer göttlichen Ordnung in Rußland die melodramatisch-romantischen Verse seiner Jugend kennzeichnete. Jedoch unter dem Eindruck der mißglückten Revolution von 1905 und nicht minder durch die Enttäuschungen in seinem persönlichem Leben verschwinden die Visionen und der hoffnungsvolle Ton. Der Traum wird Wirklichkeit. Seine eigene Frau, die er einst als Reinkarnation der Sophie, "des ewig Weiblichen" besang, sieht er nur noch als einfaches Weib. All diese tragischen Erlebnisse, hervorgerufen durch "unsichtbare Kräfte," versetzen den Dichter in eine pessimistisch-düstere Stimmung. Blok wird aber dadurch einer realistischen Lebensweise, die mehr der irdisch-menschlichen Existenz entspricht, nähergebracht.[12]

Der Versuch, sich von den nebulösen Ideen seiner Jugend zu befreien, führt ihn zur intensiven Beschäftigung mit dem Theater. Allein im Jahre 1906 verfaßt er drei Dramen: *Balagančik* (Der Schausteller), *Korol' na ploščadi* (Der König auf dem Platz) und *Neznakomka* (Die Unbekannte); darauf folgen auch kritische Aufsätze über das Drama und das Theater: "O drame" (1907) und "O teatre" (1908). Für Blok wird "das Theater jenes Gebiet der Künste, von dem man vor allem anderen sagen kann: hier berührt sich die Kunst mit dem Leben, hier stehen sie sich gegenüber, hier vollzieht sich die ewige Beobachtung der Kunst und des Lebens...."[13] Er träumt von einem Theater neuer Art, von einem lyrisch-romantischen Typus, in dem erhabene Gefühle, große Leidenschaft und erschütternde Erlebnisse ohne Moral oder sonstige Ideen zur Bühne gebracht werden. Der Weg zu diesem Theater muß seiner Ansicht nach unmittelbar über das romantische Drama führen.[14] In diesem Sinne schuf er dann auch seine eigenen Dramen, die mit Recht als lyrisch-romantisch bezeichnet werden, denn sie sind subjektiv und intim, voll Allegorie und Symbolik, und dazu noch voller Chaos und Visionen. In seiner Darstellung des herrschenden Zeitgeistes nach 1905 kann Blok, der Lyriker, sich doch nicht vollkommen von dem mystisch-romantischen Symbolismus

seiner Jugend befreien. Wichtiger jedoch ist, daß er in diesem Sinne auch Grillparzers *Ahnfrau* übersetzt, wobei er Maeterlink als bedeutenden Dramatiker anerkennt, ihn jedoch ablehnt, weil "das von ihm dargestellte Leben keinen Kampf der tiefen und scharfen Widersprüche aufweist."[15]

In Grillparzers *Ahnfrau* aber fand Blok zweifellos eine Reflexion seiner eigenen Auffassung vom lyrisch-romantisch gestimmten Drama. Hier fand er die Bloßlegung des Kampfes der scharfen Gegensätze einer leidenden Seele, das Eingreifen "unsichtbarer Kräfte" wie er sie selbst nach 1905 vernommen hatte. Allein schon die symbolische Darstellung des aussterbenden Geschlechtes der Borotin in der ersten Szene muß den Symbolisten Blok fasziniert haben:

> Fallen seh' ich Zweig' auf Zweige,
> Kaum noch hält der morsche Stamm.
> Noch ein Schlag, so fällt auch dieser,
> Und im Staube liegt die Eiche,
> Die die reichen Segensäste
> Weit gebreitet rings umher.

Den Rat, Grillparzers *Ahnfrau* möglicherweise zur Förderung seines neuen romantisch-lyrischen Theaters zu benutzen, erhielt Blok von K. A. Somov. Blok war zu der Zeit schon eng mit dem "avantgardistischen " Theater in Petersburg verbunden. Unter der Leitung V. Meyerholds wurden Bloks Dramen wie auch die der anderen Symbolisten aufgeführt. Die Gründerin dieses Theaters war die bekannte Schauspielerin Vera Kommissarževskaja, deren Name auch auf das Theater übertragen wurde. Zwischen 1906 und 1909 brachte ihr Theater nicht nur russische Stücke, sondern man inszenierte auch mit Vorliebe Dramen von Maeterlink, Ibsen, Wedekind und Hofmannsthal.[16]

Um dieselbe Zeit wurde Blok von der Kommissarževskaja um ein neues ausländisches Stück gebeten. Am 7. Januar 1908 schrieb er an sie:

> Entschuldigen Sie bitte, daß ich wegen meiner Erkältung Ihnen diese vier Bändchen der Dramen Grillparzers nicht persönlich überbringen kann. K. A. Somov machte mich besonders auf Grillparzers Jugendwerk *Die Ahnfrau* (1817) aufmerksam. Jedoch weit berühmter sind seine Dramen *Sappho* und *Das goldene Vlies*. Die Dramen *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* und *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* — sie alle wurden von der deutschen Zensur verboten.... Ich bin mit keinem der Grillparzerschen Stücke

> vertraut, aber nach dem, was ich von ihm weiß, kann ich mir vorstellen, daß seine heroische (vielleicht auch seine melodramatische) Romantik eine Wiederbelebung auf der russischen Bühne erreichen kann. Wenn Sie dies für möglich halten, werde ich mit großem Enthusiasmus an die Übersetzung herantreten.[17]

Dies waren Bloks erste Aussagen über Grillparzer, die höchstwahrscheinlich auf der Einleitung von Max Hesse zu der Leipziger Ausgabe der Grillparzer-Dramen basieren. Dem Brief ist ferner zu entnehmen, daß Blok mit der früheren Aufnahme der *Ahnfrau* in Rußland noch nicht vertraut war. Von der Übersetzung Obodovskijs erfuhr er erst zehn Jahre nach seiner eigenen Übersetzung.

Die Kommissarževskaja muß mit dem Vorschlag Bloks einverstanden gewesen sein, denn nach seiner eigenen Mitteilung sollte er mit der Übersetzung der *Ahnfrau* im Mai 1908 fertig sein. Im März desselben Jahres berichtete er an Andrej Belyj: "Ich arbeite fleißig — übersetze eine alte romantische Tragödie von Grillparzer — voll Schrecken und Gespenstern...."[18] Am 28. April lag schon die erste Fassung vor. Der ursprüngliche Termin für die Premiere mußte auf Januar 1909 verlegt werden, da die Kommissarževskaja bis dahin mit ihrer Truppe in Amerika gastierte.

Währenddessen beschäftigte sich Blok noch intensiver mit der Tragödie. Er hielt eine Vorlesung über das Stück und las es im August 1908 den Schauspielern vor. Zur gleichen Zeit arbeitete er an einem Artikel "Über ein altes Theaterstück [*Ahnfrau*]," welcher in der Zeitschrift *Reč* (1908), No. 280 erschien. Auch die eigentliche Übersetzung der *Ahnfrau* wurde noch im Herbst in Petersburg unter dem Titel *Pramater* in der Serie "Weltliteratur" des Verlages Pantheon der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich gemacht. Wie sehr Blok an dem Grillparzerschen Werk lag, ist daraus zu ersehen, daß er die Übersetzung mit einer vierzig Seiten langen Einleitung versah. Die Einleitung enthält zunächst Bloks eigene Interpretation des Stückes; eine Einführung über Grillparzer mit Sekundärliteratur; eine detaillierte Einführung Max Hesses aus der Leipziger Ausgabe der Dramen Grillparzers; J. Schreyvogels Einführung zur Ahnfrau und Grillparzers eigenen Kommentar zu seiner Tragödie.

Die Premiere der *Ahnfrau* fand am 29.Januar 1909 im Theater der Kommissarževskaja in Petersburg statt. Die Atmosphäre, in der sich die Vorbereitungen zur Aufführung und schließlich die Premiere selbst vollzogen, war äußerst ungünstig. Die Kommissarževskaja war sich der Tatsache vollkommen bewußt, daß sie ihr Theater aus finanziellen Gründen nicht mehr

würde aufrecht erhalten können. Sie ahnte schon das Ende ihres Theaters und erwartete wenig vom Erfolg des Stücks. Und wirklich: die Premiere der *Ahnfrau* war nicht nur die letzte Premiere des Theaters, sie wurde auch zum Symbol dessen Untergangs, denn *Die Ahnfrau* war das letzte Stück, das auf der Bühne des Theaters aufgeführt wurde.[19]

Die Reaktion der Theaterkritik war unterschiedlich. Der Schauspieler A. L. Seljabužskij sah in der *Ahnfrau* dieselbe Mystik wie in L. Andreev's Drama *Schwarze Masken*. Seiner Ansicht nach hätte die Kommissarževskaja *Die Ahnfrau* am liebsten nicht aufgeführt, "aber das wäre Blok gegenüber zu taktlos gewesen, da er doch das Stück auf ihre Anfrage hin übersetzte ... das hätte auch ihr Bruder, der Regisseur, nicht zugelassen — er hing mit Fanatismus an der *Ahnfrau* und wollte mit ihr frühere Fehlschläge ausgleichen."[20] Selbst Blok erwartete nicht viel, denn am Vorabend der Premiere schrieb er in sein Tagebuch: "Die Aufführung der *Ahnfrau* ist allem Anschein nach zu einem Fehlschlag bestimmt — es stört mich auch nicht weiter. Mein ungeheurer Ehrgeiz lernt, sich von Tag zu Tag immer tiefer zu verstecken — am liebsten möchte ich ihn vollkommen vor den Leuten verheimlichen! Aber vor mir selbst, wie?"[21] Kein Wunder, daß er sich um die Aufführung der *Ahnfrau* keine Sorgen machen wollte, er hatte ohnedies Kummer zu Genüge; am Tag der Premiere, am 29. Januar 1909, gebar ihm seine Frau das Kind eines anderen.

Bis zur Auflösung des Theaters der Kommissarževskaja am 8. Februar 1909 konnte *Die Ahnfrau* nur viermal aufgeführt werden. Da die Truppe gezwungen war, in den Städten Rußlands zu gastieren, wurde *Die Ahnfrau* im September noch einmal mit der Kommissarževskaja als Bertha im Kleinen Theater in Moskau gespielt. Die Petersburger Aufführungen "machten zwar von sich reden," aber das nur wegen der Übersetzung Bloks und des erstaunlichen Bühnenbildes des Künstlers A. N. Benois. Die Schauspieler selbst vermochten das Publikum nicht zu ergreifen; "sie konnten auch das feurige Temperament des Dramas nicht vermitteln."[22] Blok, der der Premiere der *Ahnfrau* beiwohnte, schrieb noch am selben Tag an den Regisseur Kommissarževskij und bedankte sich bei ihm und seiner Schwester für die Aufführung. Er fügte unter anderem hinzu: "Stellen Sie sich vor — ich habe mich nicht nur ergötzt, sondern es interessierte mich auch was weiter geschah, obwohl ich die Tragödie auswendig kann.... Es war mir ein Vergnügen, Ihr Werk und die Dekoration von Benois zu sehen und meine Verse zu hören, die ich liebe, die mir heute aber zu intim für die Bühne und für Grillparzer vorkamen."[23]

Eine Neuausgabe der *Ahnfrau* sollte genau zehn Jahre nach ihrer Erstaufführung erscheinen. Im Januar 1918 wurde Blok von dem Moskauer

Verleger M. Sabašnikov gebeten, das Stück in seiner Serie "Pamjatniki mirovoj literatury" (Denkmäler der Weltliteratur) neu herauszugeben. Er willigte ein und machte sich sofort an die Arbeit. Bemerkenswert ist, daß der Dichter gerade um diese Zeit auch an seinem bekannten Gedicht *Die Zwölf* arbeitete.[24] Bei der Vorbereitung des neuen Textes sah sich Blok gezwungen, das ganze Stück zu verbessern. Er war mit seiner früheren Übersetzung selbst nicht mehr zufrieden, denn wiederholt finden wir in seinem Tagebuch Ausdrücke wie: "Wie schlecht habe ich den IV. Akt übersetzt! ... Mein Gott, wer und wo war ich, als ich den V. Akt piratisierte!"[25]

Obwohl der verbesserte Text schon im Mai 1918 vorlag, wurde aus der geplanten Moskauer Neuausgabe nichts. Blok wollte *Die Ahnfrau* in der von Gorkij neugegründeten Serie "Weltliteratur" erscheinen lassen und bat daher den Verleger Sabašnikov, *Die Ahnfrau* für diesen Zweck abzutreten.[26] Aber auch hier erschien die neue Fassung der *Ahnfrau* nicht. Sie wurde erstmalig 1933 und seitdem in alle Gesamtausgaben der Blokschen Werke eingeschlossen. *Die Ahnfrau* erschien schließlich nach dem Tode des Dichters (1921) in der Serie "Weltliteratur" (1923), aber immer noch in der ersten Fassung mit der *Jüdin von Toledo*, übersetzt von E. R. Malkin und *Weh dem, der lügt* in der Übersetzung von S. Tuzim.

Wenn man Bloks Werke miteinander vergleicht, so ist die Übersetzung der *Ahnfrau* das längste Stück, das er je geschaffen hat. Auch zeitlich gesehen hat er sich mit der *Ahnfrau* viel länger und intensiver befaßt als mit irgendeinem anderen Werk. Die sorgfältige Verbesserung, die er noch 1918 vornahm, zeugt von seinem großen Wunsch, Grillparzers Werk in bester Form in der russischen Sprache erscheinen zu lassen. Was aber war es, das Blok an Grillparzer's Dichtung so bedeutend erschien? Aus welchem Grunde wurde die vergessene *Ahnfrau* plötzlich zum lebendigen Kunstwerk und noch dazu in Rußland?

Zunächst, wie oben bereits angedeutet, sah Blok in der *Ahnfrau* ein lyrisch-romantisches Drama und damit eine Übereinstimmung mit seiner eigenen Auffassung vom Theatralischen. Obwohl sie durch die Anpassung an russische Verhältnisse eine neue Deutung erhielt, blieb *Die Ahnfrau* für ihn zunächst ein Kunstwerk voll Lyrik und Musik, was ihn allein schon faszinierte. Blok, der aus der Schule des *l'art pour l'art* hervorging, machte sich mit diesem Maßstab auch an seine Übersetzung. Er versuchte nicht nur eine Entsprechung der Grillparzerschen Bilder in der russischen Sprache zu finden, sondern er strebte auch danach, die lyrisch-dramatische Stimmung, getragen von Rhythmus und Melodie, getreu zu übermitteln. Die Nebeneinanderstellung einiger Verse zeigt, daß man Ton und Fluß in der Übersetzung genau so

verspürt wie im Original. Wie bei Grillparzer wurden auch in der Übersetzung Alliteration und Anaphorik verwendet sowie Wörter gleichen Tonfalls aneinandergereiht oder an entsprechender Stelle wiederholt. Man vergleiche Berthas Monolog am Fenster im 1. Aufzug:

1. Eine grause Nacht, mein Vater!	1. Noč užasnaja, otec moj!
2. Kalt und dunkel wie das Grab.	2. Mrak i xolod, kak v grobu.
3. Losgerißne Winde wimmern	3. Vetry vspugnutye vojut
4. Durch die Luft, gleich Nacht-gespenstern;	4. I snujut, kak duxi noči;
5. Schnee soweit das Auge trägt,	5. Vse, čto vidit glaz, v snegu,
6. Auf den Hügeln, auf den Bergen	6. Vse xolmy i vse veršiny,
7. Auf den Bäumen, auf den Feldern	7. Vse derev'ja, vse raviny;
8. Wie ein Toter liegt die Erde	8. Kak mertvec, zemlja nedvižna
9. In des Winters Leichentuch;	9. V snežnom savane zimy;
10. Und der Himmel sternenlos,	10. I glaznicami pustymi
11. Starrt aus leeren Augenhöhlen	11. Nebosvod gljadit bezzvezdnyi
12. In das ungeheure Grab	12. V neob'jatnuju mogilu!
13. Schwarz herab!	

Der Vergleich zeigt ferner, daß die ersten neun Verse des Originals genau mit dem Inhalt und der syntaktischen Konstruktion der Übersetzung übereinstimmen. Nur die letzten vier Verse wurden von Blok auf drei reduziert, wobei aber vom Inhalt nichts verloren ging. Die Einheit des Stils und des Inhalts des Originals wurde somit auch in der Übersetzung aufrecht erhalten. Nur selten, aus sprachlichen Gründen und um die künstlerische Realität des Originals wiederzugeben, mußte Blok von dem Grillparzerschen Text abweichen.

Als meisterhafter Verskünstler vermochte Blok auch das bekannte Versmaß der *Ahnfrau* zu reproduzieren. Er verwendet wie Grillparzer den vierfüßigen Trochäus und bleibt dadurch nicht nur dem lebhaften Versmaß, sondern auch dem Temperament und der schwungvollen und klingenden Sprache des Originals treu. Aber auch die Stellen, an denen der regelmäßige vierfüßige Trochäus überraschend in einen Dreifüßler übergeht, werden beibehalten. Nicht minder erfolgreich behandelt Blok den Reim, bzw. die reimlosen Endsilben. Zu beachten ist, daß die reimlosen Endsilben in Berthas Monolog auch von Blok beibehalten werden. Dagegen werden die wechselnd männlichen und weiblichen Reime, wo immer sie auch im Original auftreten,

in der Übersetzung wiedergegeben. Man vergleiche einen Auszug aus Jaromirs Monolog im V. Akt. Hier wird auch das Reimschema a b b a c d c d e e f f aufs genaueste beibehalten:

1. Ha, und wenn ich ihn erschlug,	a	A! Kogda on byl ubit,	a
2. Ihn, der mich erschlagen wollte,	b	Tot, kto sam ubit' stremilsja,	b
3. Was ist's, daß ich zittern sollte?	b	Razve dux moj ustrašilsja?	b
4. Hat die Tat nicht Grund genug?	a	Kto strašit'sja mne velit?	a
5. Hab' ich ihm den Tod gegeben,	c	Esli v ravnoj, čestnoj styčke	c
6. War's in ehrlichem Gefecht,	d	Moj kinžal vraga srazit—	d
7. Ei, und Leben ja um Leben,	c	Žizn' za žizn', glasit obyčaj	c
8. Spricht die Sitte, spricht das Recht!	d	Pravo strogoe glasit!	d
9. Wer ist's, der darob errötet,	e	Č'ja duša trepeščet v straxe	e
10. Daß er seinen Feind getötet,	e	Esli vrag ležit vo praxe?	e
11. Was ist's mehr?— Drum fort mit euch,	f	Proč' somnen'ja! Čto so mnoj?	f
12. War ich sonst doch nicht so weich!—	f	Byl surovej ja dušoj!—	f

Die Merkmale, die bei diesem Vergleich auffallen, sind typisch für Bloks ganze Übersetzung der *Ahnfrau*. Er erwies sich hier zweifellos als großer Kenner des Grillparzerschen Werkes, denn es gelang ihm meisterhaft, nicht nur die organische Einheit, sondern auch die phonetische und rhythmische Instrumentierung und damit auch die einzigartige Manier, die Individualität des Dichters, zu übertragen.[27]

Daß Blok sich als hervorragender Übersetzer der *Ahnfrau* auszeichnete, war für niemanden überraschend. Man hatte von ihm als dem größten russischen Lyriker des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts auch kaum etwas anderes erwartet. Aber abgesehen von der *Ahnfrau* als Kunstwerk wird von seiten Bloks der Tragödie eine neue symbolische Bedeutung zuerkannt.[28] In dem oben erwähnten Aufsatz über das Trauerspiel — welcher dann in veränderter Form auch als Vorwort zur *Ahnfrau* (1908) diente — versuchte er zu zeigen, daß die reaktionäre Epoche, in der *Die Ahnfrau* geschaffen wurde, zu der schrecklich bedrückenden Periode in Rußland nach 1905, in der die Tragödie übersetzt wurde, viele parallele Züge aufweist. In beiden Epochen herrschte eine düstere Stimmung, die Gesellschaft war von einer unbestimmten Angst vor der Zukunft ergriffen. Man sollte hier auch an die persönliche Krise der

beiden Dichter denken, als der eine den Impuls zum Verfassen der *Ahnfrau* erhielt und der andere sie übertrug. Beide verspürten eine fatale Stimmung, die Einwirkung einer mysteriösen Kraft von außen und innen. Daher konnte - — nach Meinung Bloks — die Tragödie auch nur von einer "gedankenvollen, gequälten und leidenden Seele" geschaffen worden sein.

Obwohl aus der Mitte der Schicksalstragödien hervorgehend, ist *Die Ahnfrau* darüber hinausgewachsen. Die Tatsache, daß sich von dieser Art Tragödie nur *Die Ahnfrau* gehalten hat, ist für Blok ein Beweis dafür, daß der Dichter es verstand, seinen Charakteren, obgleich von höheren Mächten abhängig, "wirkliches menschliches Blut durch die Adern fließen zu lassen." Die Tragödie nähert sich somit dem wirklichen Leben. Darin sieht er auch die Gründe für das Sich-Behaupten der *Ahnfrau* auf der Bühne — sie hat sich in seinen Augen neben Poes *Fall of the House of Usher* und Ibsens *Rosmerholm* einen würdigen Platz errungen.

Je mehr sich Blok mit den mystischen Gedanken, dem sinnlosen Leiden und schließlich der Vernichtung der Menschen in der Tragödie befaßte, umso mehr wuchs in ihm das Verlangen, *Die Ahnfrau* auf russische Verhältnisse zu übertragen. Er behauptete damals (1908): "Wenn wir *Die Ahnfrau* ein oder zwei Jahre früher kennengelernt hätten, so würden wir sie kaum verstanden haben." Seiner Ansicht nach kann die

> Tragödie der Seele des österreichischen Dichters vollkommen nur während der schwarzen Tage verstanden werden, wenn das *Alte* immer noch nicht sterben kann, es noch umherstreift, sich über die Trägheit beklagt, die Lebenden hindert ... und wenn das *Neue* sich noch nicht behaupten kann, etwas überraschend Tränen vergießt wie Jaromir, ein Jüngling voll Mut und Kraft und dann sinnlos zugrundegeht wie Dutzende junge Russen, die sich selbst vernichten, weil sie eines ziellosen Daseins müde sind.

Blok, der sich der allmählichen Umschichtung der Klassen in Rußland bewußt war, erkannte darin auch die unvermeindliche Auflösung der russischen Adelsgüter und damit auch die Auflösung einer kulturellen Schicht. *Die Ahnfrau* wird also zum Symbol des Zerfalls des Adels, "welcher einst eine große Rolle spielte, jetzt aber wie die Georgine im Herbst, ohne Aroma, in der Feuchtigkeit und im Dunkeln der alten Gärten verwelkt." Blok war damals überzeugt davon, daß es für den Adel keine Wiederkehr mehr gebe, aber trotzdem konnte und wollte er nicht mit den Sozialdemokraten seiner Zeit ausrufen: "Es geschieht ihnen recht!" Man muß bedenken, daß Blok tief im

kulturellen Leben des russischen Adels verwurzelt war, um zu verstehen, warum *Die Ahnfrau* für ihn ein Symbol für den Untergang des russischen Adels darstellt. In diesem Sinne erklärt er auch: "Wer ihn [den Adel] wirklich geliebt hat, wer sich dankend an seinen wunderbaren Beitrag zur russischen Kunst und russischen Öffentlichkeit des vergangenen Jahrhunderts erinnert, wer wirklich begriffen hat, daß es Zeit ist, aufzuhören zu weinen, da ja seine wohltuenden Säfte für ewig zur Mutter Erde zurückgekehrt sind — wer all das weiß, der wird verstehen, mit welcher Atmosphäre das Familienschloß der Borotins gesättigt war...." Um aber die Größe und den Wert eines Untergehenden zu ermessen, sei es ein Brauch, ein Stand oder ein Individuum, muß man, so behauptet Blok, "vor allem den Untergehenden lieben, in seine verschwindende Seele eindringen; d.h. man soll trauernd darüber in Gedanken versinken."[29]

Blok sieht aber noch mehr in der *Ahnfrau*, etwas "Unausgesprochenes," ein tiefes Gefühl, ein Gefühl, welches unvermeidlich den Menschen zu gewissen Zeiten seines Lebens heimsucht, wenn er sich über sein Dasein Rechenschaft ablegt, oder wenn er schlummernde Gedanken wachruft, die ihn in eine unheimliche Angst versetzen. Dieses "Unausgesprochene" ist in dem Monolog des alten Grafen am deutlichsten enthalten (II. Akt); es ist das, wovor der tapfere Vater Angst hat, als er Jaromir vor seinem Hause und seiner Tochter bewahren will:

Warum kamst du auch hierher!
Glaubst du, getäuschter Jüngling,
Wir hier feiern Freudenfeste?
Sieh uns nur einmal beisammen
In der weiten, öden Halle,
An den freudenlosen Tische;
Wie sich da die Stunden dehnen,
Das Gespräch in Pausen stockt,
Bei dem leisesten Geräusche
Jedes rasch zusammenfährt,
Und der Vater seiner Tochter
Nur mit Angst und innerm Grauen
Wagt ins Angesicht zu schauen,
Ungewiß, ob es sein Kind,
Ob's ein höllisch Nachtgesicht
Das mit ihm zur Stunde spricht.
Sieh, mein Sohn, so leben die,

Die das Unglück hat gezeichnet!
Und du willst dem mut'gen Sinn,
Willst die rasche Lebenslust
Und den Frieden deiner Brust,
Köstlich hohe Güter, werfen
Rasch in unsers Hauses Brand?
O mein Kind, du wirst nicht löschen,
Wirst mit uns nur untergehn.

Als aber Jaromir sich bereit erklärt, dazubleiben und wenn nötig mit ihnen unterzugehen, da versinkt der alte Graf in *tiefes Nachdenken* — "weiß Gott nur worüber," fügt Blok hinzu. Jaromir, der dies beobachtet, wird von Bertha getröstet: "Laß ihn nur, er pflegt so öfter / Und sieht ungern sich gestört." Hier, in dieser Szene, sieht Blok "den zentralen Punkt der Tragödie," den eigentlichen Sinn des Stückes.

Das Nachdenken, das "Unausgesprochene" im Drama wird somit zum tragischen Element erhoben. Der Graf "pflegt so öfter" zu tun und wollte dabei nicht gestört werden. Aber worüber wurde nachgedacht? War es die zermalmende Schicksalsmacht, die sein Haus von innen und außen bedrohte? Beweinte er seine eigene Benachteiligung durch das Schicksal oder die des Menschen überhaupt? Es kann nur die Angst vor dem Nichtsein gewesen sein, aber auch Jaromirs Bereitschaft, in das Nichts zu versinken, denn unmittelbar vorher wurde ja nur von dem leidenden Dasein und dem Untergang gesprochen. Es ist daher nicht verwunderlich, daß Blok *Die Ahnfrau* ein "Werk voll Trauer und Gedanken" nennt; sie ist zwar kein *Ödipus* oder *Macbeth*, "aber sie ist eine intime Tragödie ..., die ihre Anziehungskraft so lange beibehalten wird, so lange die Menschheit Epochen durchleben muß, so wie Grillparzer es tat, und welche wir jetzt durchleben müssen." Daß gerade diejenigen, die so leidenschaftlich am Leben hängen, zugrundegehen müssen, und sie, die nur ruhen wollte, als einzige am Schluß triumphiert — gerade darin sieht Blok die Ironie des menschlichen Daseins.[30]

Die Ahnfrau, für deren Entstehung die Jugenderlebnisse des Dichters grundlegend waren, ist für Blok genau so wenig Schicksalsdrama im traditionellen Sinne wie für Grillparzer.[31] Vielmehr sieht er in ihr die Darstellung eines Lebenszustandes, eine Gemütsstimmung voller Angst und Unsicherheit. Blok konnte sich auch hier mit dem Dichter der *Ahnfrau* identifizieren, denn auch er litt seelisch und verspürte das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit von den Lebensmächten. In dem Unheimlichen, dem inneren Zittern, das das ganze Stückt durchdringt, sah auch er eine Reflexion seiner

eigenen Existenz. *Die Ahnfrau* wird somit zum Symbol der menschlichen Leiden, ja der menschlichen Existenz überhaupt. Dieser "geheimnisvolle tiefere Sinn der Tragödie," das Unausgesprochene, wird wegen der reichen romantischen Aufmachung, mit der das Stück ausgestattet ist, nicht immer sofort erkannt. All das und vielleicht noch mehr wollte auch Grillparzer sagen, als er einem jungen Kritiker eine Erklärung für *Die Ahnfrau* gab: "Tritt hinaus ins Leben, lass' Kummer und Leiden gegen die unbewehrte Brust anstürmen, und es wird dir mit Haarsträuben klar werden, was der *Ahnfrau* zugrundeliegt, und daß dieses etwas, wenigstens subjektiv, kein leeres Nichts ist."[32]

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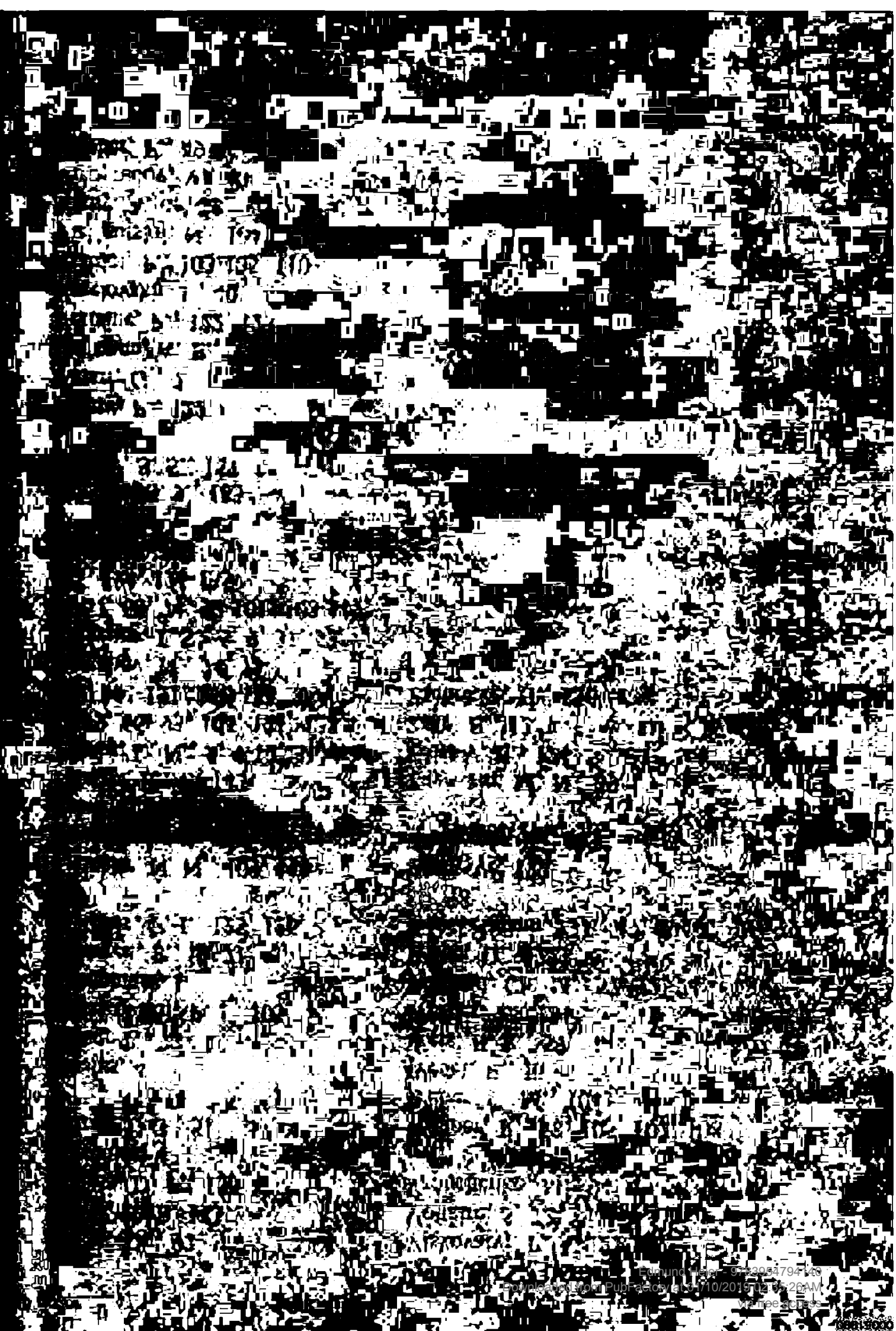

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